

Young People in Russia: A Literature Review

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A LITERATURE REVIEW ON YOUTH IN RUSSIA?

United Nations agencies including UNFPA are seeking to understand how to facilitate the development and implementation of youth friendly population, family and social policies. At the same time, various UN mandates seek to reduce poverty, improve access to a range of youth friendly services including health services, support comprehensive sexuality education through a variety of formal and non-formal methodologies, help prevent gender based violence and other obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment and enhance youth participation in the whole process. Meanwhile, for most of Europe and Central Asia, the over-riding socio-economic situation, which conditions social and broader policy development, is the decline in population size with its concomitant ageing. Making the link between youth policy and population and development is a timely and cutting edge contribution of UNFPA to guiding country- and UN/UNFPA activities in the medium- to long-term, in the context of UN reform and the involvement of the Fund in youth issues within the UN system.

The United Nations Country Team in Russia has set up an inter-agency theme group on youth (UNYG), under the current chairpersonship of UNFPA. In January 2008, the theme group organised a workshop, with the participation of many youth policy stakeholders and the newly created State Committee on Youth, to look at the opportunities for youth policy development in Russia. The discussions at the workshop revealed that the time is ripe for an initiative that would bring together relevant knowledge and resources in favour of the implementation of the Russian authorities' policies in the field of youth. All stakeholders present reiterated the need for a better understanding of the actual situation of youth in Russia, for the evaluation of the implementation of the current youth strategy and for the creation of opportunities for young people to participate in the process.

In follow-up, UNFPA proposed that the UNYG could actively support youth policy in Russia by assisting the identification of debates that should be at the heart of youth policy development taking into account actual youth needs, existing documentary evidence and research resources and the opinions of the communities of relevant stakeholders. To this end, UNFPA, on behalf of the UNYG, commissioned a review of research from the five year period from 2002/3 to the 2007/8 about youth in the Russian Federation, with the combined aims of making a contribution to the development of evidence based youth policy implementation and of developing a practical partnership with the Russian Federal authorities in the field of youth, possibly focused on common research aims.

In anticipation of the preparation of the literature review, a second youth policy workshop was held including members of the UNYG and a variety of relevant stakeholders and representatives of the Federal authorities. At this time, the members of the UNYG and the other stakeholders present identified the priority themes of an eventual (common) youth research agenda. The research consulted for the preparation of the present literature review has been chosen in consideration of these priorities.

THE PRESENT DOCUMENT

PURPOSE

The United Nations Theme Group in Russia has commissioned the present literature review with the following two main objectives:

- to support the process of youth policy development in Russia by contributing to the identification of key topics and issues that should be at the heart of youth policy debate through a stocktaking of documentation, resources and stakeholders that can inform about key youth needs;
- to conduct an extensive review of literature published in Russia and internationally in Russian and English languages in the last five years focusing on existing and available academic research (both empirical and qualitative) on youth in Russia, related policy analysis and any studies based on programme evaluations, survey data or statistical research.

This document presents a stocktaking of research resources and identifies research directions already covered by the research community. In so doing, it presents an overview of the kind of research currently being undertaken by the wider youth research community concerned with issues related to Russian youth in both Russia and internationally. It also presents an overview of some key youth related themes that are no longer high on the research agenda, but which might warrant renewed attention.

STRUCTURE

A complex set of issues was raised at the youth policy workshop with Russian stakeholders held by the UN Theme Group on Youth in June 2008, as follows:

Health: health status/situation of young people; access to health services and experience of those; sexual health and behaviour.

Family: youth union formation (facts about and attitudes to); housing situation and needs, young people without families.

Education and Work: content and methodology (quality and relevance); access and affordability of education; education to work transitions; employability of young people, availability of employment opportunities for young people;

Social Integration: social relations; creative use of leisure / access to leisure facilities and opportunities; values; participation; involvement in decision making.

Citizenship: competence for citizenship; political culture; attitudes to and situation of youth in military service; legal status and knowledge of rights; consciousness of young people of themselves as actors with social / political influence or importance.

Other / Miscellaneous Issues: attitudes of young people to different social, political and cultural developments in contemporary Russian society; contact and exchange with the wider world; human security; opinion of young people on being young in Russia today.

This list of themes was explicitly taken into account when structuring the literature review. Elaboration on these issues is organised in three main chapters, according to the three main trends in the contemporary Russian public discourse on youth as observed in the research literature, analytical reports and relevant journalism on current affairs consulted. These trends offer insights into the way youth is conceptualised by society and state, conceptualisations that have an impact on the contents and objectives of policies that address young people's life situations. They are the discourse of demographic decline, the discourse of the youth condition in crisis and the discourse of young people as a political force in society. Within the three main chapters, each of the above priority issues is dealt with in more or less depth according to the quantity and recentness of the literature found.

During the workshop the following issues were also identified as **Transversal Issues**.

- minority / majority status of young people
- regional context in which young people live
- male / female experience (gendered experience of being young)
- perception of youth of their own situation vis-à-vis the above issues

We have attempted to make explicit reference to these issues by pointing to relevant recent literature that elucidates these transversal experiences of young people in relation to specific youth situations observed by research, where such literature was available.

SOURCES AND PROCESS OF COLLECTION OF MATERIALS

A wide range of sources was consulted in order to access relevant research. These included

Russian and international sources of scholarly literature, especially **academic databases**

- [JSTOR](#); [Muse](#); [SpringerLink](#); [Academic Search Elite](#); [Sage](#); [EcSocMan](#); [EastView](#)

(Academic) e-Journals

- such as Russian Education and Society, [Russian Social Science Review](#), [Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences](#), [Socis](#), [Vlast](#), [Vestnik Obshchestvenno Mnenia](#), [openDemocracy](#), [Social Reality](#), [Entre Nous](#), [STI Online](#)

Internet sources providing analysis of current social, economic and cultural development

- [Russian Analytical Digest](#); [Russia Profile](#); [EU-Russia Centre](#); [The Woodrow Wilson Center](#)

Professional literature related to youth and youth policy

- [European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy](#); [Forum 21 – European Journal on Youth Policy](#)

International organisations for empirical and policy analyses

- United Nations Agencies, OECD, Council of Europe, European Union

International sources of statistical information and data

- [UNECE Statistical Database](#), [Population Reference Bureau](#)

A variety of specialised non-governmental organisations specifically concerned with the interests of children and young people in Russia or globally or other related issues

- for example, [Doctor's of the World](#); [Digital Civil Rights in Europe](#); [Human Rights Watch](#); [Amnesty International](#); [Child Rights Information Network](#)

The institutional profile of authors writing about Russian young people is very diverse and includes academics and practitioners (of different youth related fields) who are associated to the Russian Academy of Sciences, a variety of private and state universities in the major cities and regions of Russia, specific departments of Russian / Slavic Studies at UK, US and Finnish universities, specialised (Policy) Research Institutes / Centres inside and outside Russia, individual researchers benefiting from (international) fellowships (both Russian and foreign) and Russian commercial research entities. Approximately two thirds of the materials included in the bibliography were authored by Russian researchers, some but not the majority, based abroad. One third was authored mainly in English, French or German. About half of the Russian language materials collected was also published in English translation.

The selection of materials included in the bibliography and the smaller selection reviewed in this document covers the time period from early to mid-2008 back to about 2000, although older sociological literature that has been important for the field of Russian youth studies has also been included for reference (largely from 1994 through 2000). Research interest in youth, as demonstrated by increased frequency in the publication of academic (especially sociological) articles on youth related subjects, grows from approximately 2004 onwards. It is noteworthy, though, that the increase of research interest in youth related issues has not translated into the publication of edited volumes exploring themes of specific concern, although this was relatively common practice in the field of youth sociology and youth cultural studies in the mid-1990s. In addition, it has not translated into the elaboration of comprehensive empirical overviews of the condition of young people using comparable, up to date, statistical data collected for the purpose. Recent research has relied heavily on survey methodology rather than statistical data analysis.

The materials included were collected in several phases in the period from April to August 2008. In the first place, access to Internet based academic databases was acquired. From April to June 2008, materials were collected from these academic databases and sorted according to the priority categories. In May 2008, a research visit was arranged to the Central European University in Budapest to access specific databases and its extensive collection of relevant books only accessible with library visitation rights (especially SpringerLink, which publishes a large number of Russian language journals). In June 2008, dovetailing with the 2nd youth policy workshop, the author was able to access additional Russian language materials with the assistance of UNFPA staff and the Russian research correspondent participating in the Council of Europe's youth research network and met several key academics involved in youth research, who provided additional resources and up to date information on research projects just completed, in preparation or due for (full or partial) publication during 2008. In the process of elaboration of the bibliography and the very literature review, further additional materials were suggested by colleagues and included.

Recent journalism about current affairs and analytical reports developed by the non-governmental sector were consulted on an ongoing basis during the entire research and drafting period for contextualisation purposes.

A GOLDEN GENERATION OR A LOST GENERATION? THE PREVAILING DISCOURSE ON YOUTH IN RUSSIA

According to much of the literature consulted in the elaboration of this literature review on youth in Russia, the prevailing public discourse tends towards the positioning of young people as essential to the health, wealth and future of the Russian nation and the state. While this is a common phenomenon for countries in the process of building both nation and state, in the case of Russia it appears as somewhat counter-intuitive or paradoxical.

On the one hand, **there are fewer young people than ever before** (proportionately to other age groups in the overall population. At the same time, according to the Population Reference Bureau **31.3 million people in the Russian Federation are aged between 10 and 29 (2006 data)**, equivalent to the total population of some medium size countries in Europe.¹ The official definition of youth in Russia, according to the Russian national youth strategy is 14 – 30 years of age.² Those aged 14 to 30 in 2008 were born between 1978 and 1993. On the one hand, **these young people represent the best-off and most mobile generation of Russians ever** and many have benefited significantly from the new freedoms that came with the transition away from Soviet Communism to the market economy. Those at the older end of the cohort were 9 years of age when Mikhail Gorbachev introduced *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* in 1986. They remember their Soviet childhoods. Those at the younger end of the cohort were born after Russia became a sovereign state in 1992 and experienced childhood in the context of the deep transformation of Russian society in transition. A significant proportion of this generation was raised by parents who lost jobs to the collapse of the planned economy, became poor in the wake of the restructuring of the Russian economy in the early 1990s and then lost their life savings in the 1998 crisis.³

Ten years after the Russian financial crisis, young people's lot seems to have improved, with more jobs and higher incomes available to those who study and work hard, and are willing to move to one or another city to find work. Nevertheless, and in spite of the fact that Russia's economy has recovered considerably, registering good growth on the back of high oil prices and its vast wealth of other much sought after natural resources, **young people still struggle with many challenges**. Russian policy makers are justifiably worried about the evolution of the condition

¹ Population Reference Bureau, [World Youth Data Sheet](#), Washington: PRB, 2006.

² The official state policy definition of a young person in Russia is a person aged 14 to 30 years. For the purposes of this paper we mean this age range when using the term young people, while acknowledging that simple age definitions do not capture the full complexity of the experience of being young and that youth is a stage of the life course that can begin earlier and end later depending on the environment in which the young person lives. For more on life course theory, generation, the construction of youth and background to youth studies, consult the [Youth Partnership](#).

³ UNCTAD/UNECE, [The Russian Crisis](#), paper prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), presented at UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board, October 1998; Chiodo, Abbigail J., and Owyang, Michael T., [A Case Study of a Currency Crisis: The Russian Default of 1998](#), The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review, vol. 84, no. 6, November/December 2002, pp. 7 – 18.

of youth, which in **the public view positions the current youth generation as at one and the same time “golden” and “lost”**.

This paradox has not been lost on observers of Russian youth as a theme in the public sphere. Douglas W. Blum, one of the most accomplished recent authors on the social significance of youth policy making for nation and state in Russia, points to the fact that “... public discourse about youth reveals widespread disgust.”⁴ Cultural globalisation and the Westernisation of Russian youth are publicly blamed for the fall from grace of the “golden youth generation”, although the structural disadvantages inherited by young people in the transition from the Soviet to the new Russian systems of education, governance and economy are also readily cited as reasons.

Youth issues and youth policy have become more important in Russia, especially since the accession to power of Vladimir Putin in 2000. There has been a lot of speculation about the reasons for the growth in interest in young people’s situation and youth policy development. **Three main trends are visible in the literature** consulted and they deserve more attention, as they represent underlying motivations, sometimes competing, for the state to engage in youth policy development. They offer insights into the way youth is conceptualised by society and state, conceptualisations that can have significant effects on the contents and objectives of policies that address young people’s life situations. These trends also form a public discourse on youth, one that is propagated in both media and politics. They are the discourse of **demographic decline**, the discourse of the **youth condition in crisis** and the discourse of **young people as a political force in society**. As we hope our literature review will show, such discourse is sometimes founded on fact and real evidence of the condition of young people. As often, though, the situation of young people is far from as extreme or catastrophic as might be implied by the tone of “moral panic” that has a tendency to colour discussions of youth in Russia.

There has been a lot of discussion in the Russian media about the current “generation”, who they are and what they are like, and how different they are from their elders, the *Perestroika* generation.⁵ Partially available results of recent survey research on young people’s value orientations and achievement strategies conducted by the Fund for Public Opinion⁶ points to three theses as concerns young people 16 – 26 in Russia.

Today’s young people 16 – 26 consider themselves and are considered a generation, but refer to its attributes with a variety of descriptors and are referred to by the wider society in a variety of ways, including Generation 21; Generation Y (to be clearly differentiated to Douglas Copeland’s infamous Generation X); Internet Generation, Google Generation, Blog Generation; Gamer or Nintendo Generation; i/MyPod Generation; Emo Generation; Putin’s Generation, Generation Pu, Stability Generation;

Today’s young people 16 – 26 are different from previous generations in that there is nothing Soviet about

⁴ Blum, Douglas W., [Current Trends in Russian Youth Policy](#), PONARS Policy Memo No. 384, December 2005, p. 110.

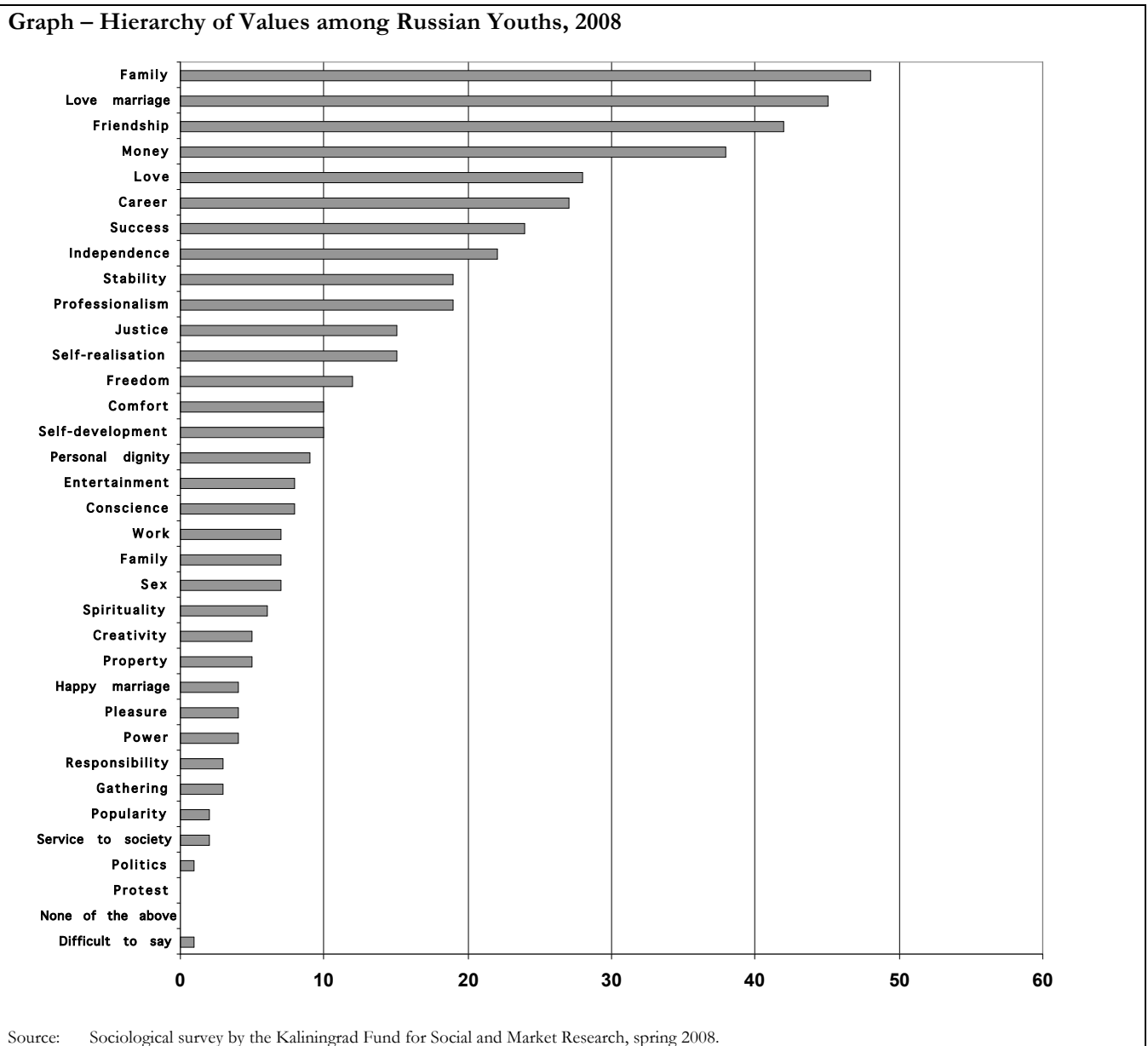
⁵ Chernenko, Elena, and Riklina, Vera, [Generation Pu](#), Newsweek (in Russian), no. 21, 19 May 2008; Tokareva, Marina, [Pokolenie Pu – eto khu?](#), Novaya Gazeta (in Russian), 2 June 2008.

⁶ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), Moscow: FOM, 2008 (complete study forthcoming).

them; they dream of great achievements and high earnings, but they are not as mercantile as their counterparts of the 1990s; they do not lack in ambition; they want families and careers; most of them do not want to work in the state sector, but their interest in state services has grown; and they desire and work towards self-realisation, autonomy and self-direction;

Today’s 16 – 26 year olds are a highly differentiated group. Differentiation can be observed along with two main groups of factors: social status of their family, their material circumstances, their preparedness for a higher education; and the place where they live; and their familiarisation with contemporary practices; their level of sociability and relationship with subcultures; lifestyles, etc.

The idea of a “new Russian youth generation” is also reflected values they espouse according to survey data.



The **idea of a stability generation** is an interesting one and has been discussed extensively among researchers of Russian youth values.⁷ It points to the need of young people for a perspective into the future that provides them with confidence and security. Between the financial crises of the 1990s and the personal security threats of the 2000s, it can be argued that the current generation of young people in Russia grew into valuing stability over all else. This argument has been used to explain the support that young people have demonstrated for the Presidential majority and the incumbent government. At the same time, today's young people are more innovative and, at least in relation to success in one's profession, willing to take risks for great rewards. And, in the hierarchy of values, stability only appears fifth. The question of how this generation ticks will be revisited during the course of this document.

⁷ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op.cit.; Zirkon, [Value Orientations of Russian Youth: Ideological Declarations](#), Fragments of Sociological Research, Presentation to the Roundtable "Sense of the Present", Goethe Institute Moscow, 29 November 2006.

PART I: WHERE HAVE ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE GONE? RUSSIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS

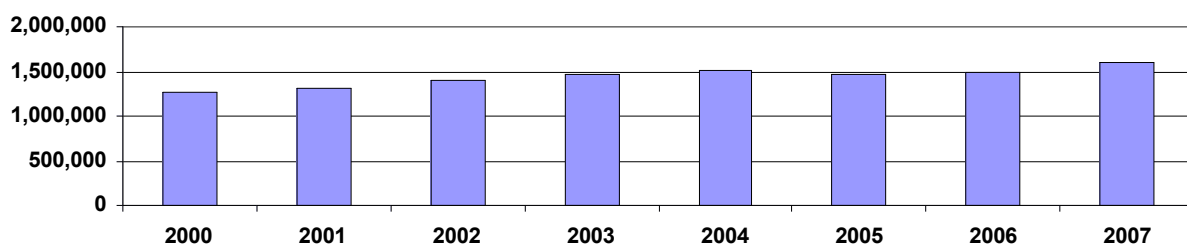
INTRODUCTION

Russia's demography has become a topic of national and international concern. In the international arena, Russia's assertiveness with regard to its near abroad is often thought to result from growing domestic malaise over the state of its population, which especially in Soviet ideology, was seen as one of its pillars of strength. Domestically, increased political and media attention to population concerns has created a **prominent social discourse of worry about the future of the nation**, in which young people feature prominently.

While the Russian birth rate began to drop in the 1960s in line with the second demographic transition, it completely collapsed in the 1990s. Most commentators blame the socio-economic decline of the initial transition period for the reluctance of Russians to have children. Demographers working for the state statistical authority established several forecasts of how the population will evolve until 2050. Three scenarios emerged from the work of the statisticians concerning the extent to which the population would decline by 2050 and these necessarily differ according to the assumptions about evolution in birth and mortality rates, as well as ideas about how migration patterns may develop: a worst-case scenario whereby the population of Russia will decline to 77,2 million, a middle scenario of 101,9 million and a best-case scenario of 122,6 million. In 2003, Murray Feshbach, forecasted decline to not more than 100 million as quite likely.⁸

In response to such demographic concerns, then, young people, their willingness and ability (whether in economic, health or social terms) to form unions that reproduce, has become a topic of significantly higher policy interest in the last decade. Young people have come to be seen as being in need of positive encouragement from the state to make the "right decision" and reproduce early and often. Those who make the right decision have increasingly been able to access higher levels of financial support for housing, child related and educational expenses, and indeed, the birth rate has begun to rise again.⁹

Graph – Live Births in Russia, 2000-2007



Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT and UN Statistics Division Demographic Yearbook) official sources.

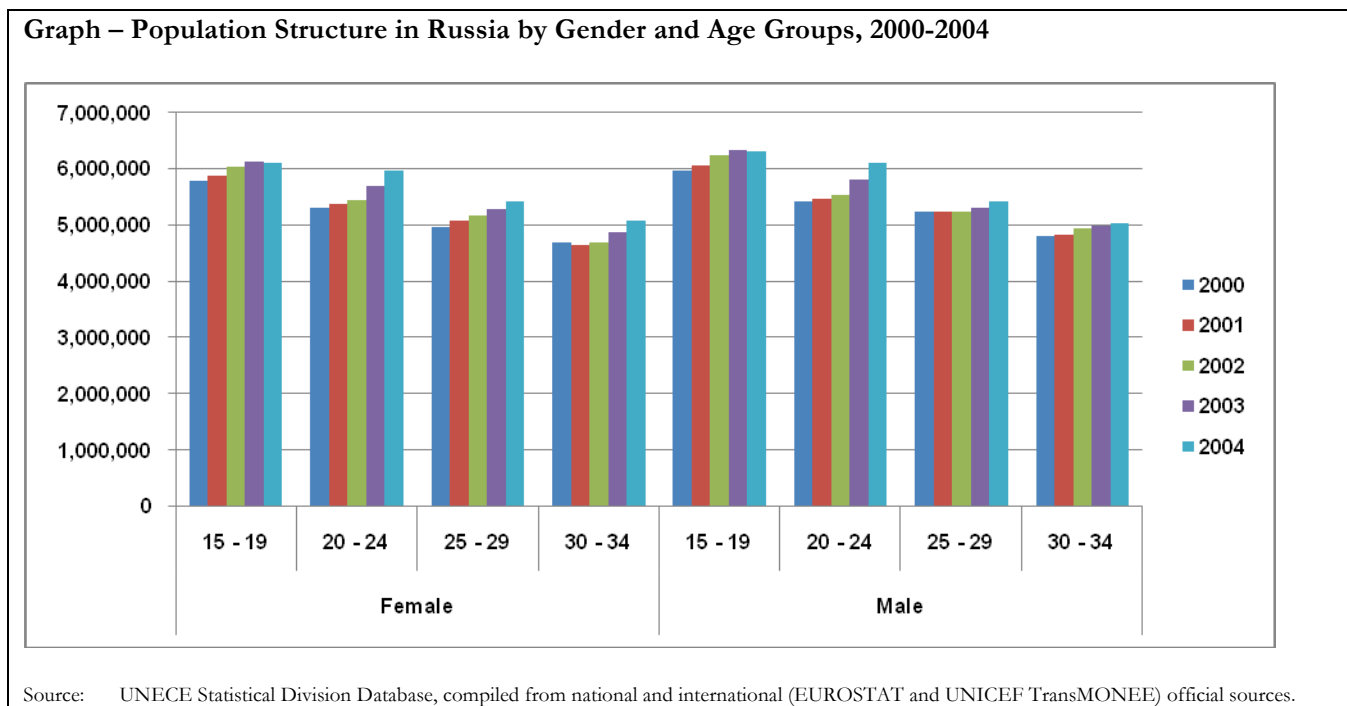
⁸ Statistical data from Feshbach, Murray, as quoted in: Sokoloff, Georges, *Russia's Metamorphosis 1984 – 2004*, Paris: Fayard, 2003, p. 609 (in French).

⁹ UNICEF, [Situation Analysis of Children in the Russian Federation 2007](#), Moscow: UNICEF, 2007.

Such developments come against the backdrop of an increased role for the Orthodox Church in affairs of state and the high level of popularity Russia's most prolific political leader of recent years, Vladimir Putin, and his party of power, United Russia, have achieved with the population at large, and young people in particular, with ideas a strong Russia.¹⁰

A/ YOUNG PEOPLE AND DEMOGRAPHY

Young people's share of the population in Russia nonetheless continues to shrink. Recent demographic research paints a stark picture of Russian society on the brink of crisis, occasioned by plummeting birth rates and rocketing mortality. **Young people between 10 and 24 make up only 22% of the Russian population**, according to the Population Reference Bureau (PRB). The graph shows the absolute numbers of youth populations aged 15 to 34, broken down by age group, from 2000 to 2004.



PRB further projects that by 2025 the number of young people aged 10 to 24 will have shrunk to just 22.4 million against today's 31.3 million.¹¹ **The challenge of reversing these demographic trends is complicated by the generally poor health of Russia's population, and the generally poor health of its young people.**¹²

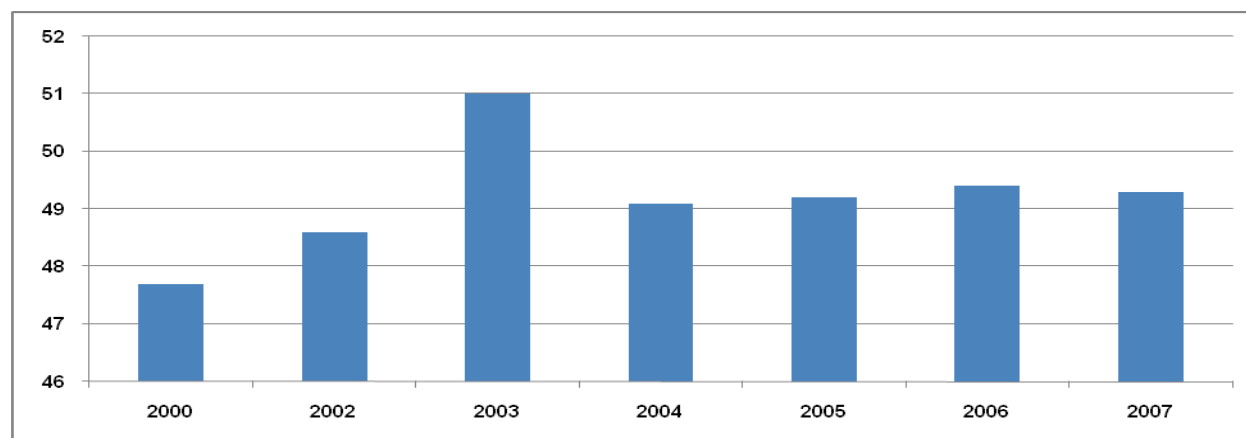
¹⁰ See, for example: Blum, Douglas W., Current Trends in Russian Youth Policy, op. cit., and Russian Youth Policy Shaping the Nation State's Future, SAIS Review, vol. XXVI, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2006, pp. 95 – 108; also [Putin will Kinder](#), Die Zeit Online (in German), 10 May 2008.

¹¹ Population Reference Bureau, [World Youth Data Sheet](#), Washington: PRB, 2006.

¹² See Twigg, Judy, and Pridemore, William A., [Russia's Health and Demographic Situation](#), Russian Analytical Digest, no. 35, February 2008; Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), Moscow: UNESCO and GTZ, 2005; An extensive study

Recent United Nations reporting on the demographic challenges faced by Russia predicts that even if the latest recovery in birth rates and reduction in mortality would continue for several years, **the working age population will continue to shrink over the long term**, with important implications for economic growth and sustainability.¹³

Graph – Labour Force in Russia, 2000-2007



Note: Labour force in percent of total population.

Source: UNECE Statistical Database, compiled from national and international official sources.

While Russia’s demographic trends have a lot in common with those of developed countries (low fertility, changing family structure, a high percentage of births outside of marriage, an ageing population), they also reveal characteristics observed in transition countries (growing social inequality, income insecurity, unemployment and shrinking access to essential public goods, notably, health and education). This shows how demographic policy is linked to broader social policy and demonstrates the negative consequences of leaving demographics unaddressed.¹⁴

International demography experts have also remarked on the political implications of the demographic crisis, especially in relation to the positioning of young people in the political discourse. Sokoloff discusses the way in which worries about demographic decline have influenced state policy in Russia:

“The implications of the depopulation of Russia have been the object of heated debate.¹⁵ ... The shrinking of the population is accompanied by the regrouping of the majority of the population in the European part of the country, to the detriment of the North and Siberia ... the demographers’ long-term forecasts ... have resulted in the fact that the future depopulation of the country is considered a weighty constraint in its foreign policy.”¹⁶

of the Russian demographic situation is provided by Eberstadt, Nicholas, [The Russian Federation at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: Trapped in a Demographic Straitjacket](#), The National Bureau of Asian Research, vol. 15, no. 2, September 2004.

¹³ Yelizarov, Valeriy (ed.), [Demographic Policy in Russia: From Reflection to Action](#), Moscow: United Nations in the Russian Federation, 2008.

¹⁴ Yelizarov, Valeriy (ed.), [Demographic Policy in Russia: From Reflection to Action](#), Moscow: United Nations in the Russian Federation, 2008, op cit.

¹⁵ For example, the communications of Alain Blum and Pierre Morel at the colloquium of 28 April 2003, on the European future of Russia, organised by the Club of CEPII and Les Echos, referenced in: Sokoloff, Georges: *Metamorphose de la Russie 1984 – 2004*, op. cit., p. 609.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Feshbach argues

“Predictions that Russia will again become powerful, rich and influential ignore some simply devastating problems at home that block any march to power ... a declining population is robbing the military of a new generation of soldiers. And worst of all, it’s facing a public health crisis that verges on the catastrophic”.¹⁷

The Russian authorities are all too aware of the implications of demographic decline, increasingly seen as a crisis, by the political elite as much as by the wider society. The state of the nation and the future of the state are at stake. The moral panic that couches this debate, especially when it comes to the “responsibilities” of young people is palpable in political speeches and policy declarations.¹⁸ As an element of the prevailing discourse in relation to young people, **demographic decline has become a strong motor for bringing youth issues back onto the political agenda.**

In the first place, this has come to mean a strong emphasis on stimulating the birth rate, **offering encouragement and support to young people to have more children.** Political will has translated into more resources for families. At the beginning of 2007, an estimated 44 billion roubles had already been spent for childcare allowances and “maternity capital” measures. Positive concrete measures have included increases in childcare allowances, provision of maternity leave, compensating the costs of pre-school childcare and the provision of “maternity capital” to families who have more than one child.¹⁹ At the same time, **there is a strong moral bias to this whole debate.** There are concerns in some circles that a strong emphasis on increasing the birth rate in a society where patriarchal values remain widespread and the two-parent family is considered the core of the nation (something that rather contradicts social reality in Russia, considering that the high divorce rate means that many children are raised in single parent families) might have detrimental affects on the life chances of young women, especially in relation to their sexual and reproductive health and rights and in employment.

Available empirical evidence and survey data still point to **a broad variety of motivations for young people in Russia to form or not to form unions that produce children.** However, results are contradictory to an extent. On the one hand socio-economic conditions are cited and indeed the birth rate has slightly improved since the economic upturn and since special measures have been put in place to ensure young families’ material well being. On the other hand, lifestyle research among young people points to their desire to first complete education and experience working life, before embarking on having children.²⁰ This theme is elaborated upon in more detail under the “Family” section (Part II of the literature review).

¹⁷ Feshbach Murray, [Dying Inside: Behind the Bluster, Russia is Collapsing](#), Washington Times, 5 October 2008.

¹⁸ [Putin will Kinder](#), op. cit.

¹⁹ UNICEF, [Situation Analysis of Children in the Russian Federation 2007](#), op. cit., p. 26.

²⁰ Yelizarov, Valeriy (ed.), [Demographic Policy in Russia: From Reflection to Action](#), op. cit., and Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.

B/ THE “WHY” AND THE “HOW” OF YOUTH POLICY IN RUSSIA

Youth policy in Russia has not been the subject of much scholarly interest, if the results of this literature review are anything to go by. Although from time to time, a descriptive article about the content of youth policy in Russia has appeared in an international youth policy journal²¹, scholarly evaluations of youth policy and sociological analyses of the relationship between youth policy and wider societal trends are rare. Nevertheless, one international author has regularly published since 2005 on the relationship between youth policy, cultural globalisation and nation building in Russia. Blum’s work points to an **ambivalent and even precarious positioning of young people and youth policies in Russia as an instrument of the state in relation to nation-building objectives.**²²

Pointing to the way in which nation-building in Russia has involved the re-socialisation of the populace to behave like rational individualists and to the fact that the chief object of this process was young people, Blum argues that youth policies became an integral feature of the Russian government’s broader attempts towards stabilisation of society and state under Vladimir Putin, despite ongoing controversy over how it should be financed and what it should address. Youth policy in Russia has, therefore, concentrated on three main pillars:

- 1/ the **construction of proactive entrepreneurial citizens**, who nevertheless remain stalwart patriots and loyal subjects of the state;
- 2/ the **decentralisation** of the implementation of policies pertaining to youth to the extent necessary for perceived effectiveness and their centralisation to the extent necessary for control²³;
- 3/ active engagement to fade out the most negative and **maximise the most positive effects of cultural globalisation** (read Westernisation) experienced by Russia (which, in public opinion, is considered to be an important cause of the current youth crisis).²⁴

At the same time, youth became the object of intense interest, as it seemed to be the most vulnerable to the double-edged sword of globalisation: while opening up a world of possibilities, globalisation also exacerbated cultural fragmentation and diminished social cohesion.²⁵ Blum’s sociological analysis of the construction of social discourse regarding youth cultural trends and of official and non-official approaches to youth policy show that **Russia has embraced certain aspects of modernity and liberalism, while rejecting others, reasserting the place of national traditions.** Several features of the approach of Russian actors in the youth field (both governmental and non-governmental) to “what should be done about youth” emerge:

Cultural hybridisation: A process of ambivalent hybridisation is underway. It is expressed through the absorption or rejection of globalised culture (understood as Western influences) and the assertion

²¹ See, for example, Levitskaya, Alina, [Youth Policy – A National Focus of Russia](#), Forum 21, European Journal on Youth Policy, no. 9, June 2007.

²² Blum, Douglas W., [Current Trends in Russian Youth Policy](#), op. cit.

²³ The author refers to this characteristic as “management of democracy”.

²⁴ Blum, Douglas W., [Current Trends in Russian Youth Policy](#), op. cit., and [Russian Youth Policy: Shaping the Nation State’s Future](#), SAIS Review, vol. XXVI, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2006, pp. 95 – 108.

²⁵ Ibid.

of national culture (as defined by those concerned) by youth policy actors according to need and specific objective;

National identity discourse: There is a palpable sense of the need for young people to be “national”, which consists prescriptively of self–other differentiations as well as a set of legitimating values and norms. The formation of a homogenous national identity is best understood as a tendency, or better yet as a project, inasmuch as it is intentionally shepherded by political elites;

Lingering statism: Statist attitudes remain widespread, as demonstrated by the idea that it is possible to successfully design and oversee youth identity from above. This is certainly one of the legacies of Soviet governance;

Delegitimising totalitarian methods: Yet, at the same time, trying to impose any monolithic perspective on young people through youth policies is widely considered unacceptable and embarrassing, as revealing an outdated Soviet worldview;

Neo-liberal contents and processes: Attaining “modernity”, understood as cutting edge technology and vibrant market institutions, has become an important motor of youth socialisation, simultaneously appearing as pressure from outside and the desire to “catch up” on the inside.²⁶

Hence the interaction of the individual actors of the youth field (or “cultural entrepreneurs”) with their target groups, young people, is characterised as follows:

“In the area of national youth identity formation we find the entrepreneur partly in the role of chaperone and partly in the role of guardian of tradition and culture. In their public interventions – just as official and semi-official discourse – a number of contrasting normative claims are advanced ... As these claims are presented ... they tend to invoke a juxtaposition of two sets of values: **the foreign, modern and material versus the native, traditional and ideal**. The cultural entrepreneur seeks to reconcile the tension between them, manipulating symbols of the latter set in order to bound, sanitise, and partially displace the former. At the same time, the entrepreneur also tries to salvage some of the foreign, modern and material – especially the modernising power of individualism. This involves crafting a new national identity as well as separating global flows into discrete components, some of which are shored up while others are discounted or even discarded. Such artistry requires a subtle touch and sleight of hand to divert the youth from temptation while at the same time offering at least some material benefits – and this despite the state’s empty cupboard. It is the entrepreneur’s job to choreograph this intricate step.²⁷

This description of a complex interplay of political objectives, mechanisms of socio-cultural change Russia experiences under globalisation and the positioning of young people provides a **useful theoretical foundation on which to consider ongoing youth policy developments in Russia**, including Russia’s continued difficulty to decide on the form of governance the youth field should be subject to.²⁸

²⁶ Blum, Douglas W., *National Identity and Globalization: Youth, State, and Society in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

²⁸ At the time of writing the provisions of the Russian youth policy strategy adopted in 2006 for the period 2006 to 2010 had not yet been implemented, and due to a 3rd reshuffle of ministerial responsibilities for youth in Russia in as many years.

CONCLUSION

On the whole, Russian pro-natalism and nation-building efforts seem not to have affected young people negatively. It can even be argued that the demographic crisis and the attendant push that successive governments have made to increase the birth rate has **improved the material lot of many young families and profiled youth and youth policy as needing attention and resources from the state**. As much as worries about the potential of pro-natalism to limit the rights and chances of certain populations among youth, especially young women and sexual minorities, this review has revealed no evidence to suggest that this is the Russian authorities' intention, although it may nevertheless be a side effect of policies promoting higher fertility. It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that **the “demographic push” has not had significant positive knock-on effects** on implementation of specific youth policies, nor on the interest of researchers and practitioners inside the country to directly evaluate 1/ the process of youth policy making and 2/ actual results of youth policies developed and implemented at Federal or any other level of governance. While increased resources have been made available for children and families, additional resources have not been made available for youth policies *per se*, and the implementation of youth policy plans enshrined in the hitherto government youth strategy remains in question.²⁹

Of further importance, then, is the question of the very objectives of Russian youth policy. Until now, little literature has appeared, beyond that written by foreign observers and reviewed in this chapter, to discuss critically what youth policy in Russia should be about and by what it is motivated. If this literature is to be believed, and the analysis is convincing, then youth policy in Russia might not be so much about youth development or empowerment, as about the creation of loyal (maybe even quiescent) subjects of the state. The literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates the **precarious positioning of young people, and more importantly, youth policy, as possible instruments of state objectives**. The “why and the how” of youth policy in Russia is complex, influenced by many factors, not least of which are the imperatives of nation and state-building, the consolidation of state power and control over key institutions and the creation of mutually serving relationships between important constituencies in the population and the state. If the recent increases in the birth rate can be sustained, will young people and youth policy fall to the bottom of the policy heap again? Are young people an important enough constituency to be heard over other, larger and maybe needier, populations present in society – pensioners, for example? If one thing stands to the advantage of young people in advocating for their rights, it is their overall acceptance and promotion of the values of the market economy, and their general ability to adapt creatively to the conditions of the “New Russia”. They are the new Russian middle classes, the class endowed with entrepreneurial spirit and inherent loyalty to the Russian nation and state, whether by deliberate processes of socialisation of a more directive nature or simply as a result of the passage of time.³⁰

²⁹ At the time of writing, it was unclear whether this strategy would be revised or shelved altogether.

³⁰ Kuzio, Taras, [Ukraine Is Not Russia: Comparing Youth Political Activism](#), SAIS Review, vol. 26, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2006, pp. 67 – 83; Diuk, Nadia, [The Next Generation in Russia and Ukraine: Agents of Change?](#), presentation given at the Woodrow Wilson Center, 24 September 2007.

PART II: YOUTH IN CRISIS? THE CHALLENGES OF BEING YOUNG IN RUSSIA

INTRODUCTION

It is objectively challenging to be young in Russia. Many Russian young people's lives continue to be characterised by risk – here referring to an environment that presents threats to the life chances of young people³¹, rather than to the voluntary risks or risky behaviour many adolescents and young people demonstrate in the context of youthful experimentation in the transition to adulthood. Zubok refers to risk as reflecting

“... a certain period of transition as society moves from one stage of development to another and is connected with innovations in different spheres of society ... old social mechanisms and patterns of social relations have already lost their effectiveness but the new ones have not yet been fully worked out ... Risk in a society in transition occurs alongside other social, economic and political contradictions ... Long term instability, deep social contradictions, conflicts and unclear social goals [had] a significant influence on youth integration into society and social development of this social-demographic group”.³²

While poverty is certainly no longer endemic as it was in the 1990s, and Russia's economic fortunes have significantly improved³³, it is nevertheless estimated that up to thirty percent of the Russian population is still living in poverty³⁴ and the Russian economy is not immune to external shocks, as the global financial crisis of 2008 has clearly demonstrated.³⁵ While the extent of poverty among young people in Russia is not well researched, and this generation of young people are known to have adapted well to the conditions of the new economy, learning self-reliance and how to deal with modern technologies from an early age,³⁶ there remain significant disparities in the living conditions and life chances of young people living in the different regions of Russia.³⁷ Many young people experience structural disadvantages as a result of where they live, who their parents are and the overall economic, geographic and even political situation of the region of Russia, in which they live.

Structural disadvantage can mean that on specific development indicators, young people fare especially badly. **Some groups of young people fare consistently worse than average and can be considered especially vulnerable.** These include those in state care (disabled young people, orphans in institutions or young people in care as a result of mental health problems)³⁸; incarcerated young offenders; young men in the military³⁹; young people who appear

³¹ Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.; Federal Agency for Education (Centre for Social Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Complex Social Research, New Eurasia Foundation), *Russian Youth: Problems and Solutions*, Moscow: Federal Agency for Education, 2005.

³² Zubok, Julia, *Risk among Youth in Modern Russia: Problems and Trends*, in: Helve, Helena and Holm, Gunilla (eds.): *Contemporary Youth Research: Local Expressions and Global Connections*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, p. 89-102.

³³ See The World Bank in Russia, [Russian Economic Report](#), no. 16, June 2008.

³⁴ Bacon, Edwin, and Wyman, Matthew, *Contemporary Russia*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

³⁵ Aslund, Anders, [Russia's Coming Financial Crash](#), Project Syndicate, 2008; Lesova, Polya, [Russia's financial crisis is getting worse](#), Rusnet, 13 November 2008.

³⁶ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.

³⁷ Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.

³⁸ UNICEF, [New Measures Supporting Families with Children: Improving Living Standards and Raising Birth Rates?](#), Moscow: UNICEF, 2007.

³⁹ On the situation of young men in the military: [Amnesty International](#), the [Moscow Helsinki Group](#) and the [Union of the Committees of Soldiers Mothers in Russia](#). Anna Politkovskaya, the Russian journalist murdered in October 2006, has also written extensively about the situation of Russian soldiers; Politkovskaya, Anna, *Putin's Russia*, London: The Harvill Press, 2004.

foreign (young people of colour or those who can be associated by their appearance with the Caucasus or Chechnya)⁴⁰; young people on the street and young people with drug problems.

Comprehensive empirical studies of the condition of young people Russia-wide have not been conducted on a regular basis in recent years. The challenges of such empirical studies are clear in a country like Russia, where the diversity of the youth experience across regions and local realities make for high research costs, in terms of time and money, and challenging research designs in terms of approach and methodology. As much as recent interest in youth has been high, and has grown considerably, neither governmental authorities nor international agencies have undertaken regular, comprehensive, longitudinal, research into the situation of youth across this country so vast. Nevertheless, some comprehensive empirical studies have been attempted, usually in partnership between governmental authorities and development agencies, providing **ample evidence of both the frail condition of youth in Russia, and of the diversity of that youth reality across regions and across different groups of young people.**⁴¹ These point to several chronic problems that young people in Russia are particularly prone to or that affect young people disproportionately badly, for example, in the areas of health, education, housing and employment. Taken in historical perspective, these problems can be considered to be the accumulated legacy of a Soviet welfare system that ensured the same lowest common denominator of well-being to all citizens and the “wild-wild East” transition to the market economy where Russians suddenly found themselves having to pay high prices and bribes to access health care, education and even adequate nutrition.

Those empirical studies have been the occasion for the piloting of new methodologies for assessing the condition of young people in Russia. In one case, a study conducted by UNESCO and GTZ, developed a new model for the analysis of youth development, taking into account valuable regional perspectives. Considering the regional disparities mentioned above, and disparities between rural and urban areas that exist in Russia, studies of the condition of youth that rely on methodologies sensitive to the regional realities of young people are most useful. They demonstrates the **need for due consideration of the level at which engagement with youth development should take place, and question the extent to which the federal level is the appropriate level for decision making and implementation on all aspects of youth policy.** Unfortunately, at the time of writing of this literature review, the process of elaboration of the so-called “youth development index” piloted in the UNESCO / GTZ study and which still only exists in experimental form, had been shelved, and there seem to be no plans to take it any further by the authorities responsible for youth.⁴²

⁴⁰ On attitudes towards people of colour, foreigners and people from the Caucasus region, see Levada Analytical Centre, [From Opinion to Understanding. Russian Public Opinion 2007](#), Moscow: Levada, 2007; Human Rights First, [Hate Crime in the Russian Federation](#), New York: Human Rights First, 2008.

⁴¹ Twigg, Judy, and Pridemore, William A., [Russia's Health and Demographic Situation](#), op. cit.; Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.; Federal Agency for Education, Russian Youth: Problems and Solutions, op. cit.

⁴² Interview with Mark Agranovitch, Federal Agency for Education, in June 2008.

Following a series of five umbrella themes related to the condition of young people in Russia identified as most in need of attention by the youth policy stakeholders who attended the above-mentioned workshop in June 2008, this chapter of the literature review attempts to provide clues to the condition of young people in Russia. Due to the general absence of recent empirical analysis in regard of most of these themes, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive overview of the extent and pervasiveness of problems faced by young people in the spheres of health, family, education and work, relations with the law and social integration. Nevertheless, the literature reviewed provides indications as to some important trends in the evolution of the condition of young people as well as an overview the kind of scholarship 1/ that does exist, 2/ that is missing and 3/ that it would be necessary to undertake to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the condition of young people in Russia.

1/ YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

Ample literature points to the fact that young people in Russia, despite recent improvements in Russia's economic fortunes, are not generally in good health. In combination with available empirical research, recent survey activities and sociological research reveals that ill health is being transmitted across time from generation to generation. Demographic research points to a growing **crisis of ill health across Russia and all populations, but most worryingly among young people.**⁴³

The picture of youth health presented by the statistical data available is not encouraging. In terms of diseases, the instance of tuberculosis and cardiovascular disease in younger patients has grown. **Poor nutrition, a lack of physical activity, widespread smoking from an early age and the unchecked consumption of alcohol, also from an early age, all exacerbate the vulnerability of youth to disease and general ill health.**⁴⁴ OECD research points to young people in Russia having lower life expectancy and within their life expectancy worse health, than their counterparts in Western Europe.⁴⁵

Sexual health is a particular worry. As in other countries, young people are sexually active at an ever-younger age.⁴⁶ **HIV is spreading fastest among young people.**⁴⁷ As at the international level, HIV/AIDS statistics continue to be presented for children (under 15) and adults (15 to 49).⁴⁸

⁴³ Eberstadt, Nicholas, [The Russian Federation at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: Trapped in a Demographic Straitjacket](#), op. cit.

⁴⁴ Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.; Federal Agency for Education, Russian Youth: Problems and Solutions, op. cit.; Eberstadt, Nicholas, [The Russian Federation at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: Trapped in a Demographic Straitjacket](#), op. cit.

⁴⁵ Tompson, William, [Healthcare Reform In Russia: Problems And Prospects](#), Economics Department Working Papers No. 538, Paris: OECD, 2007, p.6.

⁴⁶ Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit., pp. 44 – 47.

⁴⁷ Denisenko, Mikhail B., and Dalla Zuanna, Gianpiero, [The Sexual Behaviour of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.; Feshbach, Murray, [Russia's Health and Demographic Crises: Policy Implication and Consequences](#), Health and National Security Series, Washington: Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, 2003; Jackson, Jeanne-Marie, [The Impending Price of Ignorance: Demographic Politics and Sexual Education in Post-Soviet Russia](#), Vestnik, issue 3, Winter 2005; Shakarishvili, A., Dubovskaya, L. K., Zohrabyan, L. S., Lawrence, J. S. St., Aral, S. O.,

Table – Estimated Number of Russian Adults and Children Living with HIV, 2001 and 2007

	2001	2007
Adults (15+) and children	390,000	940,000
Low estimate	260,000	630,000
High estimate	860,000	1,300,000
Adults (15+)	390,000	940,000
Low estimate	260,000	630,000
High estimate	850,000	1,300,000
Children (0–14)		
Low estimate		
High estimate		
Adult rate (15–49) (%)	0.5	1.1
Low estimate	0.3	0.8
High estimate	1	1.6
Women (15+)	86,000	240,000
Low estimate	50,000	150,000
High estimate	200,000	350,000

Note: These estimates include all people whether or not they have developed symptoms of AIDS.

Source: UNAIDS. 2008 Report on the Global AIDS epidemic.

While indications of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young people are available, statistics on HIV (and other STIs) could be further disaggregated to provide clear estimations of how many young people of different age, social and population groups are worst affected in different regions of the country. Nevertheless, it has become clear that **some sub-groups of young people are most at risk to HIV infection.** These include men who have sex with men, sex workers, young people on the street and injecting drug users. Nevertheless, transmission continues to rise among heterosexual young people, and women, who are neither socially excluded nor especially at risk due to some identifiable behaviour.⁴⁹

Table – HIV Prevalence among Young People in Russia, in Percent, 2007

	Male	Female
Prevalence among 15–24 year olds	1.3	0.6
Low estimate	0.6	0.3
High estimate	2.3	1

Source: UNAIDS. 2008 Report on the Global AIDS epidemic.

The regionalisation of HIV/AIDS has come to be considered worrying. There are a number of geographic “hot spots” where HIV prevalence rates are much higher than average.

Dugasheva, L. G., Okan, S. A., Lewis, J. S., Parker, K. A., and Ryan, C. A., [Sex Work, Drug Use, HIV Infection and the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections in Moscow](#), The Lancet, vol. 366, July 2005, pp. 57-60.

⁴⁸ The Federal AIDS Centre estimations are also made for children and adults, see <http://hivrussia.ru/stat/2008.shtml>.

⁴⁹ HIV/AIDS in Russia’s regions as reported by the [Policy Resource Center on HIV/AIDS](#) (information based on the Russian Federal AIDS Centre and Goskomstat data).

Table – Cumulative number of officially registered HIV cases in Russian regions with the highest HIV prevalence, as of June 30, 2008

Region	Cumulative number of registered HIV cases	HIV prevalence
Samara Region	32,995	1039.9
Irkutsk Region	24,605	981.2
Orenburg Region	17,754	837.8
St. Petersburg	36,790	805.4
Sverdlovskaya Region	35,238	801.7
Leningradskaya Region	13,037	798.2
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area	11,929	792.5
Kaliningrad Region	6,085	649.1
Ulyanovsk Region	8,463	644.9
Chelyabinsk Region	18,771	534.6
Moscow Region	31,961	479.0
Tver Region	6,303	456.9
Ivanovo Region	4,281	396.5
Primorsky Territory	7,465	374.0
Kemerovo Region	10,276	363.9
Saratov Region	8,451	327.1
Buryat Republic	3,083	321.2
Perm Territory	8,407	309.3
Tula Region	4,814	307.3
Total in these 19 regions	290,708	
Total in Russia	433,827	

Note: HIV prevalence refers to cases per 100,000 population.

Source: Russian Federal AIDS Centre and Goskomstat.

This is especially the case in the most economically developed regions, where business activities and drug use are concentrated. Russia's largest urban centres, Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as the strategically important cities of Kaliningrad, Togliatti, Norilsk, and Khanty-Mansiysk are epicentres for HIV/AIDS. More than 60% of all registered cases are concentrated in 16 well-developed and densely populated areas.⁵⁰ But, the age distribution of infection and disease is inadequately documented. UNAIDS points to the fact that **HIV prevalence in Russia's regions is strongly associated with four main factors: urbanisation, mobility, crime/drug use and income growth, and the association with mobility is the most significant.** Of greatest concern are regions with prevalence rates higher than 500 cases per 100,000, including the Samara, Irkutsk, Orenburg, Sverdlovsk, Leningrad.

Russian sources point to the following main trends of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Russian Federation

- 1/ the epidemic continues to steadily spread and **generally affects people of up to 30 years of age**;
- 2/ women comprise a steadily increasing proportion of HIV cases;
- 3/ the share of infections due to heterosexual transmission has risen considerably in recent years;
- 4/ injecting drug use remains the predominant means of transmission;
- 5/ the number of people living with HIV in the penal system is growing;
- 6/ the numbers of cases of AIDS and deaths caused by HIV/AIDS is increasing.⁵¹

⁵⁰ HIV/AIDS in Russia's regions as reported by the [Policy Resource Center on HIV/AIDS](#) (information based on the Russian Federal AIDS Centre and Goskomstat data), op cit.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Strongly related to the spread of HIV/AIDS is injecting drug use. Available analyses show youth substance abuse is widespread.⁵² **Drug taking begins ever earlier and escalates to injecting drug use sooner. Young people make up the majority of injecting drug users** in Russia and little prevention or rehabilitation is available to them, although some public / private partnerships in this area have had positive results for the small populations they can reach.⁵³ Harm reduction is quite new and is not accepted by many professionals, although it is recognised as a credible and effective method of HIV prevention.⁵⁴

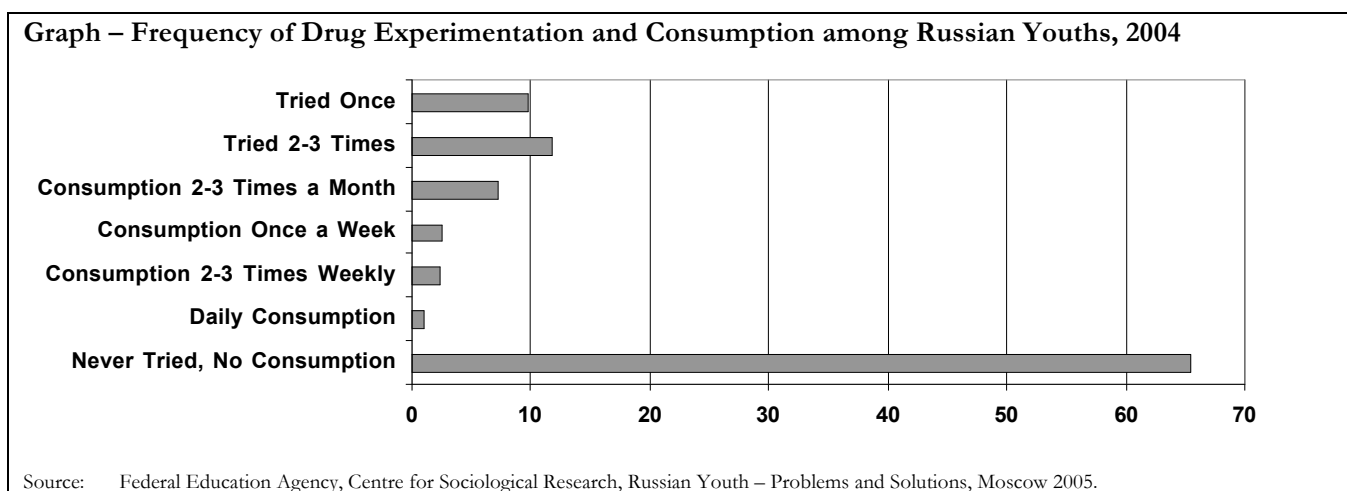


Table – Drug injecting behaviour of IDUs in Moscow, Volgograd and Barnaul

Characteristic	Moscow	Volgograd	Barnaul
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Duration of injecting			
2 years or less	45 (10)	101 (20)	154 (31)
3-5	104 (23)	186 (36)	107 (21)
6-9	185 (41)	168 (32)	111 (22)
10+	118 (26)	59 (11)	129 (26)
Main drug injected in last 4 weeks			
Heroin	279 (73)	424 (87)	277 (56)
Vint	96 (25)	37 (8)	135 (27)
Mak	8 (2)	21 (4)	84 (17)

⁵² While little analysis is available and more recent statistics for youth drug use than for 2004 were not available, in the UNECE statistical portal, for example, those empirical studies on the condition of youth carried out in the 2000s point in the direction of a worsening trend in substance abuse. See Pilkington, Hilary, [“Everyday” but not “normal”: Drug use and youth cultural practice in Russia](#), Final report of the research project conducted from 1 October 2001 – 30 June 2004, September 2004, University of Birmingham; Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.; Federal Agency for Education, Russian Youth: Problems and Solutions, op. cit. In addition, evaluations of pilot drug prevention and rehabilitation programmes provide some statistical information concerning IDUs. See Department for International Development, [Knowledge for Action in HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation](#), Report of findings for consultation among partners, Working Document, London: October 2006.

⁵³ Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.

⁵⁴ For more on Russian policy in relation to certain harm reduction approaches, for example, methadone substitution, see: Sorosi, Peter, [Why Russia says no to Methadone](#), Harm Reduction and Human Rights, 26 September 2008; Alcorn, Keith, [Russia will not give methadone to drug users, says health chief](#), Aidsmap News, 23 May 2006. Harm reduction specialists in Russia are nevertheless organised and have created a coalition for advocacy called the [Russian Harm Reduction Network](#).

Last day injected, number of times injected			
1	246 (54)	353 (68)	306 (61)
2+	206 (46)	164 (32)	193 (39)
Frequency of injecting			
Less than daily	365 (82)	428 (83)	398 (80)
Daily	82 (18)	87 (17)	99 (20)
Injected with used needle/syringes in the last 4 weeks?			
No	373 (85)	449 (89)	423 (85)
Yes	65 (15)	54 (11)	74 (15)
Ever injected with used needles/syringes?			
No	145 (35)	194 (39)	224 (47)
Yes	273 (65)	302 (61)	254 (53)
Injected with used needles/syringes of sex partner in last 12 months?			
No	325 (76)	432 (93)	423 (87)
Yes	102 (24)	35 (7)	65 (13)
Used communal spoon for preparation of drugs in the last 4 weeks?			
No	284 (67)	233 (47)	328 (67)
Yes	141 (33)	273 (53)	162 (33)
Ever injected home made drugs?			
No	412 (91)	386 (75)	448 (89)
Yes	43 (9)	131 (25)	53 (11)
Registered as an IDU?			
No	328 (78)	376 (74)	394 (80)
Yes	93 (22)	129 (26)	98 (20)
Ever been in drug treatment?			
No	296 (65)	286 (56)	355 (71)
Yes	157 (35)	227 (44)	146 (29)

Source: Knowledge for Action in HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation, Report of findings for consultation among partners Working Document, October 2006.

One important aspect of the youth health crisis is excessive alcohol consumption from an early age.⁵⁵ The context and culture of Russian society means that young people begin drinking early and graduate fast to strong alcohol. There is a general lack of awareness among families, social institutions and young people themselves about the dangers of alcohol abuse.⁵⁶ Drunkenness is also at the root of domestic violence, armed fights and accidental deaths among young people, especially young men. Recent articles and statistical materials published by the Russian Analytical Digest specifically points to the **role of alcohol in Russia's high violent mortality rate for young males**, even if it seems to be on the decline,

“... heavy drinking is among the strongest and most consistent predictors of homicide and suicide rates in the country even after controlling for a host of other social and economic factors”.⁵⁷

One recent report on youth alcoholism points to increased exposure and addiction to alcohol among minors:

⁵⁵ Twigg, Judy, and Pridemore, William A., [Russia's Health and Demographic Situation](#), op.cit.

⁵⁶ Ibid.; Agranovich, Mark et al., [Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth](#), op. cit.;

⁵⁷ This overview is largely confirmed by the research presented in Twigg, Judy, and Pridemore, William A., [Russia's Health and Demographic Situation](#), op. cit.

“Alcohol addiction among teenagers and children has soared since the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Russian Ministry of Health statistics, the number of children under 18 who are addicted to alcohol has risen from about 6,300 in the early 1990s to nearly 20,000 in 2007. Each year, the numbers creep higher”.⁵⁸

Related to overall ill health of youth people is smoking. Statistics presented by the Population Reference Bureau points to **28% of young women and 39% of young men between ages 15 and 19 who smoke regularly (2006 figures)**.⁵⁹ According to a 2007 WHO smoking has reached epidemic proportions among Russian men, 64.9% of whom smoke daily. The prevalence of smoking among young people is also high, with smoking among boys rising: in a recent WHO study, 27.4% of 15-year-old boys smoked at least weekly (an increase of 3.4% in four years), while 18.5% of 15-year-old girls smoked at least weekly. At a time when tobacco products are becoming more expensive in most countries in the European Region, their price in the Russian Federation fell by over 6% in real terms between 2002 and mid-2005.⁶⁰

Relatively **little is known about** the specificity of **the mental health situation of youth** in Russia and certainly the extent of mental illness among young people is not well documented. Comparative studies of mental health between rural and urban youth communities, as well as general literature families and on specific populations, points to mental health challenges among specific vulnerable groups.⁶¹ These include children and young people living in state care, street youth and those involved in identifiable non-formal peer groups or gangs, drug users and even young men in the military. Recent studies point to urban youth having more mental health difficulties, of the nature of depression and isolation, than rural counterparts, despite clear differentials in economic situation and life chances.⁶² Recent work by Myagkov and Smirnova points to the emergence of a range of new tendencies in the dynamics of suicide, including the **net lowering of the age at which suicide attempts take place, a masculinisation of suicide, a radicalisation of the methods used in suicide and a growth in “suicide potential” in Russian society**. These authors relate this to the changing nature of social relations and the lowering of levels of “solidarity” and “civilisation” in society.⁶³

⁵⁸ Jane Armstrong, [Russian youth keep hard-drinking tradition alive](#), Globe and Mail, 13 June 2008.

⁵⁹ Population Reference Bureau, [World Youth Data Sheet](#), Washington: PRB, 2006.

⁶⁰ WHO, [Smoking among Russian men worst in Europe, and not yet declining](#), 31 May 2007.

⁶¹ Wasserman, Danuta, Cheng, Qi, and Jiang, Guo-Xin, [Global suicide rates among young people aged 15-19](#), World Psychiatry, vol. 4, no. 2, June 2005, pp. 114 – 120.

⁶² Glendinning, Anthony, and West, Patrick. Young people's mental health in context: Comparing life in the city and small communities in Siberia, Social Science & Medicine, September 2007, vol. 65, no. 6, pp. 1180 – 1191; Arefeev, A. L., A Generation That Russia Is Losing, Russian Education and Society, vol. 45, no. 11, November 2003, pp. 23 – 41; Miller, Laurie C., Chan, Wilma, Litvinova, Aina, Rubin, Arkady, Tirella, Linda, and Cermak, Sharon, Medical diagnoses and growth of children residing in Russian orphanages, Acta Paediatrica, December 2007, vol. 96, no. 12, pp. 1765 – 1769; Zashikhina, A., and Hagglof, B., Mental health in adolescents with chronic physical illness versus controls in Northern Russia, Acta Paediatrica, June 2007, vol. 96, no. 6, pp. 890 – 896.

⁶³ Myagkov, Alexander Iu. and Smirnova, Elena Iu., [The Structure and Dynamics of Juvenile Suicides: A Regional Research](#), Social Research (in Russian), no. 3, 2007.

Youth health awareness is poor. Survey based research points to the fact that young people continue to have a low level of knowledge about transmission of HIV/AIDS and other STIs and how to protect themselves.⁶⁴ There is a lack of dedicated health education in schools.⁶⁵ It is also apparent that comprehensive sexual health and sexuality education are almost totally absent from the Russian educational system.⁶⁶ The inadequacy of the general health prevention and treatment system in Russia means that young people do not know how to take care of their health or, if they do, **have to use poorly resourced public health facilities, that lack youth friendly services**, although health care reform is high on the government agenda and some positive trickle down improvements are expected as a result of latest reforms.⁶⁷ As much as improved incomes may be available, most young Russians are not able to afford private health care which is comparatively expensive and which geographical coverage is limited.⁶⁸

Considering STIs, especially HIV, youth risk behaviour has become the subject of much scrutiny. Pointing to the accepted discourse on youth risk behaviour, Belova presents an alternative approach to the study of the youth health perspectives, challenging the health professions' almost exclusive focus on addiction and dependence and the typically negative attitude towards youth lifestyle choices, describing three "health paradoxes" demonstrated by young people that if properly understood can provide insights into the way in which youth interact with health risks and, therefore, into how to improve the effectiveness of youth health promotion, as follows:

- while young people need good health, they **do not do anything to improve their physical condition**;
- the mass media promote healthy lifestyles, but at the same time present a **model of female beauty that is detrimental to women's health**;
- young people for the majority consider themselves well informed about health and health risks, but in reality they are **neither well informed nor actively seek correct information**.⁶⁹

This conceptual approach is confirmed by recent survey-based empirical research conducted in Khabarovsk Krai, which points to the fact that on a scale of items young people consider important, health comes close to the top. At the same time, they actively engage in health damaging activities, including smoking, drinking or they passively allow their health to deteriorate by not taking part in any form of physical activity, beyond that which is obligatory during education.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Bobrova, Natalia, Sergeev, Oleg, Grechukina, Tatyana, and Saidi Kapiga, [Social-Cognitive Predictors of Condom Use Among Young People in Moscow](#), Perspectives on Social and Reproductive Health, vol. 37, no. 4, December 2005, pp. 174-178.

⁶⁵ Jackson, Jeanne-Marie, [The Impending Price of Ignorance: Demographic Politics and Sexual Education in Post-Soviet Russia](#), op. cit.; Shubochkina, E. I., [Health Protection: Problems of Organisation, Direction and the Level of Responsibility: Smoking Among Youth as a Problem of Health Protection](#), Internet Conference, 16 April 2007 – 15 June 2007; Belova, N. I., The Paradoxical Youth Perspective on a Healthy Life, Social Research, no. 4, April 2008, pp. 84-86.

⁶⁶ Jackson, Jeanne-Marie, [The Impending Price of Ignorance: Demographic Politics and Sexual Education in Post-Soviet Russia](#), op. cit.

⁶⁷ Tompson, William, [Healthcare Reform In Russia: Problems And Prospects](#), op. cit.

⁶⁸ World Bank, Human Development Sector Unit, Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP), Europe and Central Asia Region, Voluntary (Private) Opt-Out Insurance: Is it Good for Russia?, March 2003.

⁶⁹ Belova, N. I., The Paradoxical Youth Perspective on a Healthy Life, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Berezutski, I.V., The Specificity and Problems of the Formation of Youth Potential in the Region of Khabarovsk – An Analytical Description, Khabarovsk: NIP, 2007.

The gendered nature of ill health in the former Soviet Union is researched by Boback, Murphy, Rose and Marmot. While considerable attention has been paid to the excess mortality of working age males, especially in Russia, less attention has been given to the health status of young women. According to their analysis, in almost all cases women report worse health than men do. Indicators of economic and educational status as well as corruption were strongly associated with gender health differentials.⁷¹

A/ SEXUAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Specific literature on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, their sexual behaviour and, especially, sexuality is limited. The vast **majority of the literature seems to relate HIV, rather than broader considerations of youth sexual health and policies aimed at its regulation and improvement.** Much scholarly literature consulted takes a critical stance towards the branding of young people as promiscuous, claiming that the absence of sexual education and adequate sexual health services for young people are to blame for the spread of HIV and the high abortion rate, rather than “deviant” youth behaviour.

Nevertheless, other voices are to be heard, and the notion of deviance in relation to youth sexual behaviour can be discerned in several articles consulted in the course of this review. For example, while Zaitsev and Zaitsev underline the importance of the absence of sexual education, they do so in response to what they consider increased “deviations” in sexual behaviour of young people and of divorce among young married couples. They consider the purpose of health-promoting sex education [*seksovaleologiia*] as to instil sound and healthy attitudes toward sexuality, making the case for young people to be taught what to think about sex, sexuality and sexual relations according to a canon of acceptable mores.⁷² **The moral dimension of this issue continues to cloud the debate.** Some authors point to continued taboos over the discussion of issues related to sex in Russian society.⁷³

Modern Russia is still grappling with the effects of the Soviet sexual revolution where policies inspired by ideological positions on the rights of women to manage their own fertility clashed with the pro-natalist demographic objectives of the regime. Enduring patriarchal values, only exacerbated by the transition, during which a return to official religion has taken place, clash openly with the relatively liberal sexual mores that Soviet modernisation inculcated in the Russian population.⁷⁴ For **young people** this means that they **are pulled between competing expectations concerning their fertility in the public and private spheres:** on the one hand, young people are clearly encouraged to have children, as many as possible, as soon as possible. On the other hand, they are berated for promiscuity.

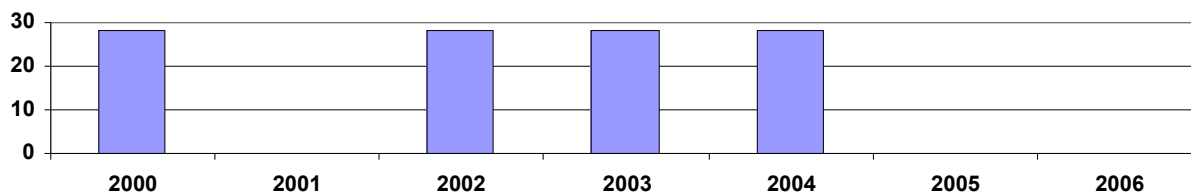
⁷¹ Bobak, Martin, Murphy, Mike, Rose, Richard, and Marmot, Michael, [Factors associated with gender differentials in Self-Reported Health and Activities of Daily Living in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union](#), Paper Presented at the European Population Conference, Barcelona, 2008.

⁷² Zaitsev, G. K., and Zaitsev, A. G., [Promoting Sex Education for a Healthy Life](#), Russian Social Science Review, vol. 47, no. 5, September-October 2006, pp. 12 – 28.

⁷³ Vovk, E., [HIV/AIDS in Russia: An Overview of Problems and Strategies](#), Social Reality: The Journal of Sociological Observation and Reporting (in Russian), issue 11, 2006.

⁷⁴ Vovk, E., [Gender Inequality and Women’s Role in Contemporary Russia](#), Social Reality: The Journal of Sociological Observation and Reporting, issue 3, 2006.

Graph – Adolescent Fertility in Russia, 2000-2006



Note: The adolescent fertility rate is the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19.

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Statistical Division Database, compiled from national official sources.

Young people become aware of this tension at a relatively young age, but are **not accompanied by relevant parental or social guidance about the risks and consequences of becoming sexually active.** Improving sexual and reproductive health and rights is key to improving youth health more broadly, but there is little evidence of the ways in which government programmes engage with key modes of delivery including existing channels of youth information and non-formal educational providers implanted in youth civil society.

Historical analysis of the study of youth sexual behaviour points to the conservative tendencies and a strong wish to “control” youth sexuality during the Soviet period, and a certain legacy is inevitable. Research from the late-90s points to young people in Russia having more “conservative” attitudes towards sex than their counterparts in other parts of Europe.⁷⁵ While information about prevention has become more widespread, ideas about “safe sex” are usually linked to concerns about getting pregnant rather than for the spread of HIV or other STIs, surprisingly even among medical students.⁷⁶

One recent study estimates that 80% of new HIV infections occur among people 15 to 30 years old.⁷⁷ Much of the research reviewed points to the **patchy use of condoms on the part of young people.**⁷⁸ Research published by Bobrova and colleagues in 2005, points to consistent use of condoms being associated with marriage and increased age. Multivariate analysis points to three variables that are significantly associated with consistent condom use for both sexes. These are: being single, belief that condoms offer reliable protection against unwanted pregnancy, high level of use among by peers. **The “youth” dimension of sexual behaviour – in other words, discovery, experimentation and spontaneity – are considered cause for concern** given the rapid spread of STIs, especially HIV.⁷⁹ Bobrova and colleagues argue that strategies to promote condom use should increase awareness about their effectiveness against not only unwanted pregnancies but also HIV and other STIs and that condoms should be

⁷⁵ Denisenko, Mikhail B., and Dalla Zuanna, Gianpiero, *The Sexual Behaviour of Russian Youth*, Russian Education and Society, vol. 45, no. 3, March 2003, pp. 6 – 15.

⁷⁶ Ibid and Bobrova, Natalia et al., [Social-Cognitive Predictors of Condom Use Among Young People in Moscow](#), op. cit.

⁷⁷ Doctors of the World (USA), [Study Finds 37.4% HIV Prevalence Among Street Youth in Russia](#), 12 November 2007.

⁷⁸ Shakarishvili, A. Et al., [Sex Work, Drug Use, HIV Infection and the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections in Moscow](#), op. cit.; Bobrova, Natalia et al., [Social-Cognitive Predictors of Condom Use Among Young People in Moscow](#), op. cit.; Denisenko, Mikhail B., and Dalla Zuanna, Gianpiero, *The Sexual Behaviour of Russian Youth*, op. cit.

⁷⁹ Denisenko, Mikhail B., and Dalla Zuanna, Gianpiero, *The Sexual Behaviour of Russian Youth*, op. cit.

recommended for married couples and people with one permanent partner as a contraceptive option as well as for disease prevention.⁸⁰

In view of the interaction between STIs and HIV infection, findings of high prevalence of STIs show that **disenfranchised populations such as young homeless people, sex-workers and injecting drug users have the potential to make a disproportionately high contribution to the HIV epidemic.** According to Shakarishvili and colleagues, interventions targeting these groups should be urgently implemented in the Russian Federation.⁸¹ Doctors of the World-USA, the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the City AIDS Centre in St. Petersburg have found that factors such as injecting drug use, unsafe sexual practices, homelessness, and being an orphan are prime drivers of HIV transmission in certain vulnerable sub-groups of young people, especially young people who live on the street some or all of the time.

“... 37.4% of street youth between the ages of 15 and 19 years old surveyed in St. Petersburg, Russia are HIV-positive, placing street youth in Russia among the populations most at-risk for HIV around the world ... They negotiate survival, performing odd jobs and engaging in activities that place them at risk for HIV, including transactional sex and drug use. Experts estimate there are 1 to 3 million street youth in Russia, with an estimated 10-16,000 in St. Petersburg alone.”⁸²

Table - Sexual risk by social and economic variables amongst a general population sample

Characteristic	N	Percent with risk behaviour	
Sex			
Male	2659	5.7	
Female	3120	5.2	NS
Age Group			
<=19	920	1.6	
20-24	851	6.1	
25-29	945	6.6	
30-44	2196	6.9	
>=45	867	3.6	$\chi^2= 44.5; p < 0.00001$
Location			
Urban	3268	5.6	
Pgt	377	5.6	
Rural	2134	5.1	NS
Highest Qualification			
University	1481	5.5	
Technical	1147	6.2	
secondary trade	941	7.5	
no secondary	348	8.0	
Basic	414	6.3	$\chi^2= 26.5; p < 0.001$
Employment status			
Unemployed	2,067	4.1	
Employed	3,712	6.1	$\chi^2= 10.4; p < 0. 01$
Wage Quintile			
Mean wage in last month p.958	661	5.3	
Mean wage in last month p.2098	600	5.2	NS

⁸⁰ Bobrova, Natalia et al., [Social-Cognitive Predictors of Condom Use Among Young People in Moscow](#), op. cit.

⁸¹ Shakarishvili, A. Et al., [Sex Work, Drug Use, HIV Infection and the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections in Moscow](#), op. cit.

⁸² Doctors of the World (USA), [Study Finds 37.4% HIV Prevalence Among Street Youth in Russia](#), op. cit.

Mean wage in last month p.3416	656	7.3	
Mean wage in last month p.5262	587	6.8	Test of top 3 quintiles vs rest
Mean wage in last month p.11328	585	7.2	$\chi^2 = 4.42; p = 0.04$
Confidence in finding job			
Absolutely Certain	558	8.4	
Fairly Certain	766	6.0	
Both Yes and No	560	4.8	
Fairly Uncertain	811	6.0	
Absolutely Uncertain	590	4.7	$\chi^2 = 8.84; p = 0.07$
Job Security			
Very Concerned	952	5.4	
A little Concerned	917	5.7	
Both Yes and No	481	5.8	
Not Very Concerned	700	5.9	
Not Concerned At All	643	8.6	$\chi^2 = 8.04; p = 0.09$
In the next 12 Months...			
You will live much better	272	7.0	
You will live somewhat better	1647	5.8	
Nothing will Change	2289	4.8	
You will live somewhat worse	282	4.6	
You will live much worse	130	5.4	NS

Source: Knowledge for Action in HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation, Report of findings for consultation among partners, working Document, Oct. 2006

Further exacerbating the situation of at risk populations such as young people on the street is stigma.

According to Vovk, the problem remains one of a lack of factual information about the HIV/AIDS and about those who are HIV+ or suffer from the disease, leading to the development of stereotypes and prejudices. The outcome of the struggle with HIV in Russia will depend largely on the willingness of ordinary people to learn about the risks of infection and to work actively on their attitudes to people living with HIV/AIDS.⁸³ **This underlines the importance of education in relation to attitudes** in Russian society vis-à-vis HIV/AIDS and at risk populations. Jeanne-Marie Jackson proposes that the recent political climate in Russia has been characterised by a return of the Orthodox Church to the public sphere and efforts to reassert “traditional Russian values”. Echoing Blum’s analysis of youth policy reactions to the cultural globalisation of Russian young people, these are juxtaposed against perceived Western influences, among them “deviant” sexual behaviour. This has contributed to hostility towards international sexual education initiatives, simultaneously necessitating and complicating international dialogue aimed at establishing an effective, nationally standardised sexual education and HIV-prevention curriculum for use in schools.⁸⁴

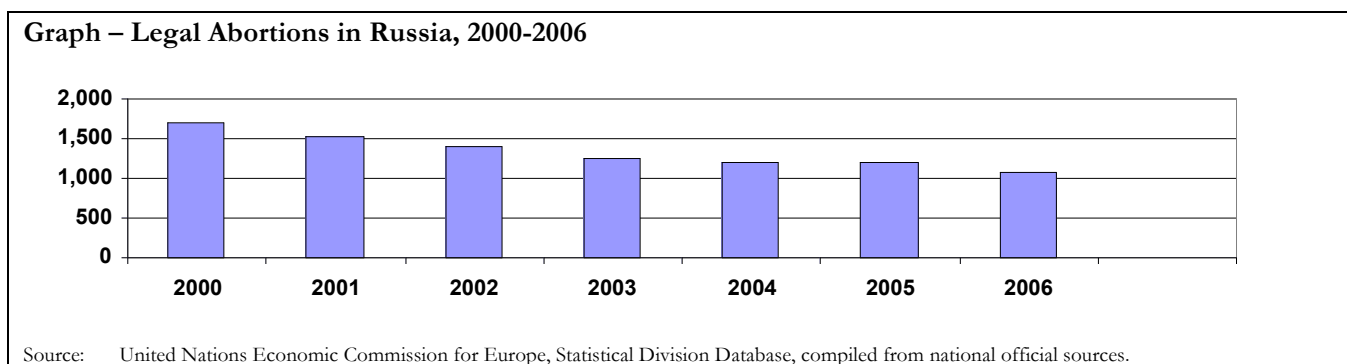
Beyond HIV, unwanted pregnancies and abortion are among the most discussed sexual health issues.

While there is controversy among statisticians and medical professionals over the real number of abortions in Russia, abortions continue to outnumber births. In 2006 there were 107 abortions per 100 births or more than a

⁸³ Vovk, E., [HIV/AIDS in Russia: An Overview of Problems and Strategies](#), op. cit.

⁸⁴ Jackson, Jeanne-Marie, [The Impending Price of Ignorance: Demographic Politics and Sexual Education in Post-Soviet Russia](#), op. cit.

half of pregnancies ended by abortion.⁸⁵ The incidence of abortion is, nevertheless, slowing down.



Contraceptive use continues to be low, whether as a result of a lack of knowledge or as a result of other obstacles, such as cost or the fact that it is increasingly frowned upon by Church and state. **Early pregnancy is perceived as quite widespread and abortion continues to be used as a means of fertility regulation** (as in the Soviet Union), with young women generally choosing abortion over unwanted pregnancy and early motherhood.⁸⁶ At the same time, adolescents show the fastest reduction in both abortion and birth rates. The extension of modern contraceptives to ever-growing numbers of Russian women can be considered at the root of these decreases in abortion. Nevertheless, what Sakevich and Denisov refer to as “ineffective” contraception is blamed for the fact that the Russian rate of abortion remains high. In the estimation of these authors, survey data show that **better and more targeted sexual health education leads to wider and proper use of contraception, as do registered forms of partnership. Better family planning services for young couples would serve to reduce unwanted pregnancies and the abortion rate.**⁸⁷

CONCLUSION

An important proportion of young people in Russia are in relatively poor health – this contrasts with some of Russia’s developing neighbours (China, for example) and Western and Central Europe.⁸⁸ Combined with broad penetration of HIV/AIDS into the youth population and its continued spread, Russia faces social and economic challenges related to the sustainability of its labour force’s productivity and how to cover the increased cost of medical care. It would seem that the public health care system is already feeling the strain. Breaking the vicious circle in which ill health is passed from one generation to the next requires dynamic measures to **target young people early through education (in and out of school), creating incentives for health and disincentives for negative health behaviour.** Currently, there seems to be a lack of coordination between the health, education and youth sectors, which limits policy effectiveness in this relation.

⁸⁵ Sakevich, Victoria, and Denisov, Boris, [The Future of Abortions in Russia](#), Paper Presented to the European Population Conference, Barcelona, 2008, op. cit.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

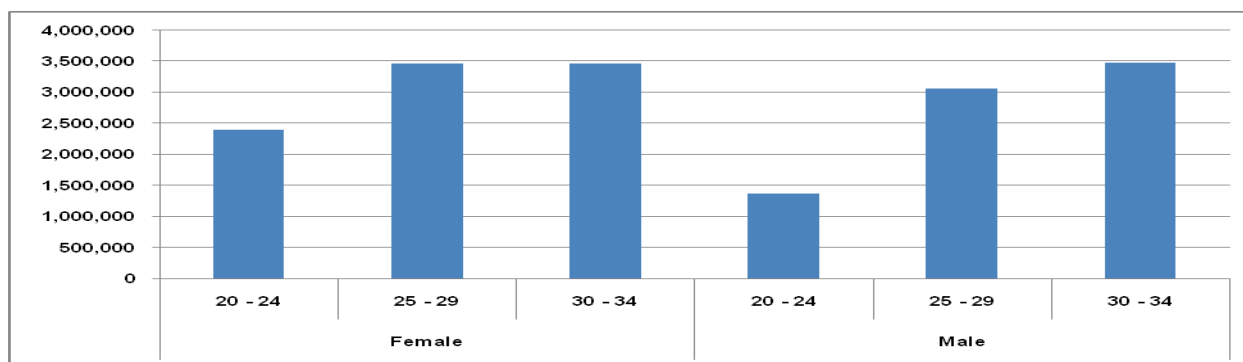
⁸⁸ Eberstadt, Nicholas, [The Russian Federation at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: Trapped in a Demographic Straitjacket](#) and Tompson, William, [Healthcare Reform In Russia: Problems And Prospects](#), op. cit.

2/ YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

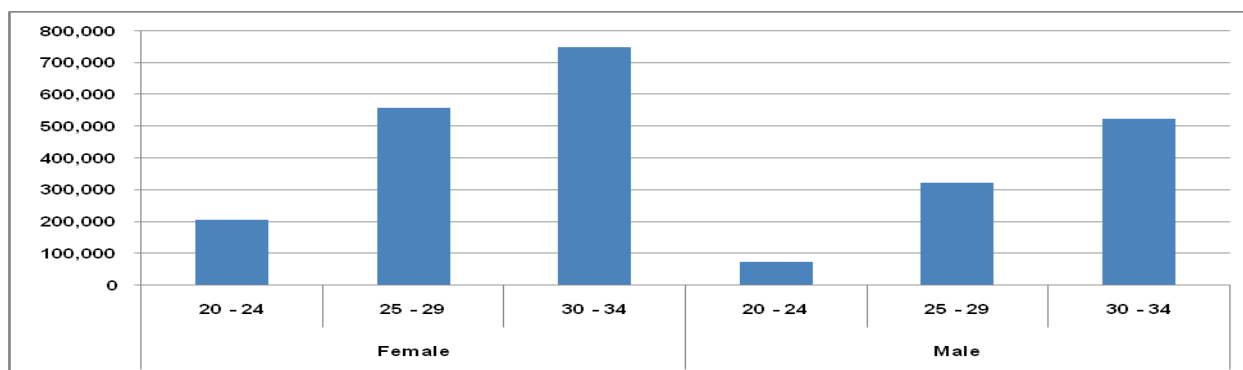
There seems to be limited research interest in the complex of issues revolving around youth union formation and attendant concerns of social policy to support such. It has nevertheless received both increased media and policy attention. **Among Russian national values, family is one of the main pillars with marriage, children and care and respect for elders continuing to be considered important.**⁸⁹ It is also an area fraught with dilemmas and contradictions. On the one hand, empirical research points to the fact that today's Russians still marry comparatively early but prioritise career over children and divorce often.⁹⁰ At the same time in surveys of value orientations young people report that one of the things they attach most value to in life is family.⁹¹

Graph – Married Russians by Gender and Age Groups, 2002



Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT) official sources.

Graph – Divorced Russians by Gender and Age Groups, 2002



Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT) official sources.

⁸⁹ Blum, Douglas W., National Identity and Globalization: Youth, State, and Society in Post-Soviet Eurasia, op. cit.

⁹⁰ Avdeev, Alexandre, and Monnier, Alain, [Marriage in Russia: A Complex Phenomenon Poorly Understood](#), Population: An English Selection, vol. 12, 2000, pp. 7-49.

⁹¹ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.; Zirkon, [Value Orientations of Russian Youth: Ideological Declarations](#), op. cit.; Maleva, T. M., and Sinyavskaya, O. B., Parents and Children, Men and Women in the Family and Society. A Collection of Analytical Articles based on a Research Project, vol. 1, Moscow: Independent Institute for Social Policy, 2007; UNICEF, [Situation Analysis of Children in the Russian Federation 2007](#), op. cit.

A/ YOUTH UNION FORMATION, REPRODUCTION AND FERTILITY

Historical analysis of the evolution of marriage from the 1960s through 2000, points to the fact that trends in union formation in Russia have largely coincided with overall European trends of increasing instance of late first marriage, a rise in celibacy, a strong increase in the frequency of divorce and an increase in births outside marriage. Only in the 1990s, did the age on first marriage in Russia rise again. There is one exceptional difference between Russia and other European countries in relation to trends in union formation. **Cohabitation outside marriage has not developed at the same speed as in other European countries.** According to Avdeev and Monnier, the continued shortage of affordable housing across Russia is one of the major factors preventing cohabitation outside of marriage from developing as a substitute to marriage. The youth/housing specific literature reviewed below, however, puts forward an alternative view.⁹²

Economic conditions are often cited as a mitigating factor to union formation and as a reason for reduced fertility among young people.⁹³ Nevertheless, causal links are far from established. Research on the family formation patterns of lone-mothers in Russia, for example, points to the fact that while occupation influences lone mothers' rates of partnership formation both before and after 1991, a significant effect of employment status does not appear until after 1991. Apart from economic factors, then, **demographic factors such as the age and number of children also importantly impact lone mothers' rates of partnership formation.**⁹⁴

Studies of young families since the 1990s point to trends such as declining satisfaction and a worsening emotional climate, growth in the instance of divorce, growth in single parenthood, especially single motherhood, declining sexual mores among young people, worsening relations between the generations, the valuation of career and profession over family and the appearance of a variety of forms of substitute for marriage. Underlying these trends are social rather than economic factors, and lifestyle choices according to several authors.⁹⁵ Dolbik-Borobei, for example, proposes that young people entering into marriage today are not prepared for the challenges of independent family life and this has an important influence on their reproductive activity. If this is indeed the case, **improving the birth rate will require socialising young people into the values of marriage, family and children and to provide support for young married couples** in the form of socio-psychological consultations on issues related to marriage, family, fertility and reproduction and parenting.⁹⁶

⁹² Avdeev, Alexandre, and Monnier, Alain, [Marriage in Russia: A Complex Phenomenon Poorly Understood](#), op. cit.

⁹³ Soloviova, Olga, [The Falling Birth Rate as a Problem of Contemporary Family Policy](#), Vlast, issue 1, 2008.

⁹⁴ Zabel, Cordula, [Patterns of partnership formation among lone mothers in Russia](#), Paper Presented at the European Population Conference, Barcelona, 2008.

⁹⁵ Roberts, Ken, Osadchaya, Galina I., Dsuzev, Khasan V., Gorodyanenko, Victor G., and Tholen, Jochen, [Economic Conditions, and the Family and Housing Transitions of Young Adults in Russia and Ukraine](#), Journal of Youth Studies, vol 6, no. 1, 2003, pp. 71 – 88.

⁹⁶ Dolbik-Borobei, A., [Student-Youth on the Problems of Marriage and Fertility/Reproduction](#), Social Research in Russian), no. 11, 2003. See also recent research that points to the prevailing view that single parent families, especially lone mothers which make up the majority, are unable to manage their parenting responsibilities: State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [System, in support of children without parental care in Russian Federation](#), MONEE Country Analytical Report, November 2006; State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [Children in conflict with the law in Russian Federation](#), MONEE Country Analytical Report, November 2006.

Issues related to sex, sexuality, fertility, reproduction and parenting continue to be difficult to discuss in public in Russia, according to Vovk. Survey based research on parenting points to the fact that Russians believe 1/ that the most important responsibility of prospective mothers is to take care of their health, so as to ensure the healthy start to their child's life and of prospective fathers is to strengthen their social standing so as to be able to provide the very best life conditions to their young family and 2/ young women in Russia are more likely to be considered valuable members of society if they are mothers; young men, on the other hand, will be evaluated first by their professional standing, and only then by whether they are fathers. These results clearly demonstrate **enduring traditional conceptions of the family in Russian society.**⁹⁷ **Research on “alternative” family constructions is absent.**

B/ HOUSING SITUATION AND NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The problem of the availability of adequate and affordable housing to young people in Russia is often referred to as an important reason young people themselves give for delays in having children. Despite the upturn in Russia's economic fortunes, the housing shortage that was already to be observed in the Soviet Union has not been overcome in the transition to private ownership. In fact, in some respects youth housing transitions have become more complicated considering high rents, costs for purchasing and procedures for accessing mortgages. This is also an area where regional and local differences in economic prosperity and welfare policies have created disparities across regions. But, the extent and regionalisation of the problem is not well documented. There is **little consensus on whether there is a causal or just a subjectively perceived relationship between the availability of housing and other prevailing economic conditions and the decision to marry and/or have children.** Several scholars refer to the **lifestyle choices of young people in favour of career and independence as having a more significant influence** than the difficulty to find adequate housing.⁹⁸ Roberts and colleagues ask to which extent the tougher labour market conditions and the creation of housing markets, are responsible for the decline in marriage and fertility rates in Russia and Ukraine during the transition period:

“ ... Changes in housing regimes cannot be held responsible in a straightforward deterministic way for the declines in marriage and fertility rates ... the inability to obtain their own places was not preventing our respondents from having children. ... There are indeed serious lifestyle costs of parenthood ... (But) explanations of trends in fertility and marriage are found in young adults' new lifestyles in the new consumer societies. Our point is that under post-Communism young people have options. If we are right, there is unlikely to be a return to the former demographic normalities ... when the countries' economies recover and as housing market transactions increase”.⁹⁹

This view clearly contradicts other research on the factors influencing union formation, and the timing of having children, as outlined above.

⁹⁷ Vovk, E., [Better Later? The Age of the Birth of the First Child as an Indicator for the Conception of Fertility and Reproduction](#), Social Reality: The Journal of Sociological Observation and Reporting (in Russian), issue 8, 2007.

⁹⁸ Roberts, Ken, Osadchaya, Galina I., Dsuzev, Khasan V., Gorodyanenko, Victor G., and Tholen, Jochen, [Economic Conditions, and the Family and Housing Transitions of Young Adults in Russia and Ukraine](#), Journal of Youth Studies, vol 6, no. 1, 2003, pp. 71 – 88, op cit.

⁹⁹ Roberts, Ken et al., [Economic Conditions, and the Family and Housing Transitions of Young Adults in Russia and Ukraine](#), op. cit.

The local context is significantly determining of the housing situation of young people in Russia. Even where favourable conditions prevail some young families face difficulties in accessing housing, which would imply a structural problem. A recent case study conducted in the town of Cheliabinsk points to sizeable allocations being made for local programmes to address the housing shortage (204 million roubles for housing young families specifically in 2006 and 2007), but that trickle down is felt to be slow and ineffectual by the families concerned.¹⁰⁰ Hence, **it would appear that the availability of resources is not the only factor determining young families accessing housing,** at least in that context.

C/ YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT FAMILIES

The situation of children and youth without families is a theme that has received media attention and is of considerable concern for the Russian authorities. The fate of Russian children growing up on the street became internationally renowned with the case of the Moscow and St. Petersburg's railway station children.¹⁰¹ Experts have estimated that there are **between 1 and 3 million young people and children living on the street in Russia.** One recent study points to **HIV prevalence of 37.4% among this population.**¹⁰² According to Doctors of the World street children face enormous challenges in accessing support

“... Public health, education, and other social services are routinely denied to street children based on their lack of official documentation, eliminating the only safety net they have. Many at-risk children and youth end up in institutions, which do not offer better alternatives. Understaffed and under-resourced, state institutions for youth are often dangerous and abusive environments”.¹⁰³

Many local and international non-governmental organisations, charities and development agencies are working to fill the gaps in public provision, by providing drop-in centres, temporary shelters and training to service providers and public sector workers. Recent UNICEF research points to serious steps being taken by the Russian authorities to decrease the number of children and young people living on the street.¹⁰⁴

At the same time, the situation of children and youth in state care deserves equal attention. According to a recent UNICEF analysis:

“The number of orphaned children and children deprived of parental care continues to grow. Considering that the number of orphaned children is increasing against a background of an overall fall in the number of children within the population, the tendency for the share of orphans in the child population to rise is an extremely alarming one. For instance, at the end of 2000, **orphans and children left without parental care accounted for 2% of the child population under the age of 18 years,** whereas by the end of 2004 they already made up 2.5%.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Gurevich, M.A., and Radilovskaya, T. Iu., [The Question of Young Families' Housing in Cheliabinsk](#), Social Research, no. 8, 2007.

¹⁰¹ Médecins du Monde Sweden, [Assessment Mission to St. Petersburg](#), February 2001; Brown, Danielle, [Sustainability of Public Health Projects in Russia: A case study of projects addressing HIV/AIDS and Drug Abuse in Russian Youth](#), University of Virginia, Center for Global Health, June-August 2007; [Moscow's Railway Station Children: NAN Foundation's Experience in Working with Homeless Children Living at Moscow Railway Stations](#), “Working with Youth at Risk” series, issue 10, 2006.

¹⁰² Doctors of the World (USA), [Study Finds 37.4% HIV Prevalence Among Street Youth in Russia](#), op. cit.

¹⁰³ Doctors of the World (USA), [Support for Street and At-Risk Children and Youth](#)

¹⁰⁴ State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [System, in support of children without parental care in Russian Federation](#), op. cit.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The children and young people growing up in the care of the state in residential (educational) facilities (commonly referred to as children's homes) can be orphans, children taken into care by the state because their parents have social problems including poverty, alcoholism and drug abuse, children placed in the care of the state by parents who are aware that they cannot take care of them adequately or children who were homeless for a time and have been placed in the care of the state to get them off the street.¹⁰⁶

Public opinion in this respect is revealing of the contradictory positioning of children and young people without families in the minds' eye of the Russian population – on the one hand, **survey research points to the wish of Russians to help those without families and their willingness to consider fostering or adoption. This positive attitude is nevertheless accompanied by deep-seated misgivings about the ability of a child that has lived in state care to adapt to “normal” family life.** They are considered more prone to criminality and deviance. Children from orphanages are understood as developing a specific type of personality. They are lacking inner mechanisms of active and free conduct, and instead tend towards dependence, reactivity and mental illness. Accordingly, few believe that children living in the institutions of state care can be re-educated to integrate them into society and recent research points to a reduction in the number of foster families.¹⁰⁷

The **behaviour and ability to adapt to life conditions outside of state care as young adults**, of children and young people reaching the age of majority in state residential homes seems to be significantly **influenced by the experience they have inside the institution.** Under-resourcing plays an important role in the quality of education offered to these children, for example, which necessarily impacts on their life chances. But, more important for their behavioural development, seems to be the experience of life “inside”. Participant observation in such institutions points to the fact that this is characterised by isolation from other children, the battle for a bit of privacy, limited contacts with the outside world, deprivation of individuality and a depersonalisation of relations. Implied in this analysis is that **the consequences of institutionalisation may be overcome with adequate investment** (in the material comfort and facilities available) **and reform of the conceptual basis** (especially, the pedagogical and social concepts) **on which the institutions are organised.**¹⁰⁸

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above, it would appear that attitudes in regard of the situation of the Russian family have become polarised – the pervasiveness of Western values imported from outside are often blamed for the collapse of the Russian family and the crisis of Russian youth. Policy responses to concerns over the health and welfare of the Russian family in the traditional sense have led to large investments in measures to support young families. The

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Vovk, E., [Children Living in Children's Homes: An Overview of Problems](#), Social Reality: The Journal of Sociological Observation and Reporting (in Russian), issue 10, 2006; State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [System, in support of children without parental care in Russian Federation](#), op. cit.

¹⁰⁸ Astoians, M.S., Orphaned Children: [An Analysis of Life and Practices in a Residential Institution](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 4, April 2007, pp. 23–42.

extent to which this development is an instrument of higher order nation-building efforts on the part of the Russian elite in power is difficult to assess. But, what is clear is that family is back on the agenda and this is having some positive side effects for young people. On the other hand, instrumental views on union formation can also have negative side effects for the freedom of young people, especially young women, to decide by themselves about fertility and union formation and on the social acceptance of those who decide for non-standard family options.

As much as it would be premature to make conclusions concerning the prevailing conditions for the socialisation inside the family on the basis of the above research, in the literature relating to families, ample reference is made to the breakdown of the family and its essential socialisation mechanisms for the proper upbringing of young people and to the dis-improvement of relations between young people and their elders. The vulnerability of children and young people to negative family situations, including poverty, domestic violence, homelessness and various forms of abuse, is regularly raised in development literature.¹⁰⁹ Literature on family related problems provides indications of the pervasiveness of disturbing family dynamics and the disruptive effects these can have on young people's behavioural development.¹¹⁰ In the context of prevention programmes, **more attention to the way in which intergenerational relations and socialisation within families take place would be warranted, along with more focus on adolescents and young people, and not only children**, in empirical and sociological research.

The life chances of youths without parental care are extensively impacted by their experience of institutionalised life and education. While positive measures to improve the living conditions of children in state care are taken by Russian authorities, **further attention should be paid to the education of young people who reach the age of majority in such institutions to ensure functional labour market and housing transitions.**¹¹¹

3/ YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION AND WORK

INTRODUCTION

In terms of youth related themes, the fields of education and work are among the best researched, if considering the results of this literature review. A very large part of the literature found during this process had something to do with young people in education or on their way to work. On the one hand, this could mean that the areas of education and labour market research are given high policy priority and are better financed. On the other hand, the predominance of education and work related literature could also be the result of the relative ease of researching such themes in comparison to other, more complicated, politically problematic or less mainstream topics in relation to young people. Of course, it is also true that the largest portion of the transition from childhood to adulthood takes place (for the majority) in education and the labour market, although the predominance of research into the

¹⁰⁹ UNICEF, [Situation Analysis of Children in the Russian Federation 2007](#), op. cit.; UNFPA in Russia, [Violence in the Family – Violence in Society: Analytical Report Based on Research Conducted between July and December 2006](#) (in Russia), Moscow: UNFPA, 2007.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

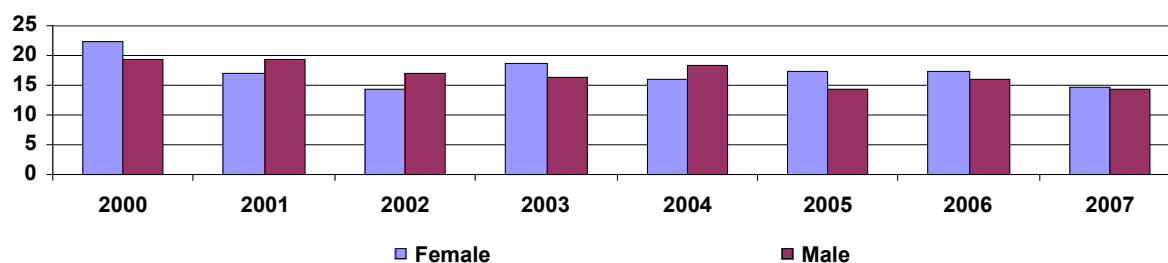
¹¹¹ State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [System, in support of children without parental care in Russian Federation](#), op. cit.

elite level of education, almost to the exclusion of other groups in education (students in vocational education, low achievement students, etc) cannot be said to be representative of the situation of most young people.

The research consulted in relation to education points to its “social elevator” functions for young people, and young people self-report their belief that a good education is the best way for them to attain the better standard of living they aspire to.¹¹² At the same time, the transition to the market has created social stratification previously unknown in Russia, and one of the areas where this is most visible is the area of access to higher education. **Higher education is increasingly organised on a fee-paying/tuition basis. Informal relations continue to be important in determining young people’s access to quality educational institutions.**¹¹³ The literature is also critical of the overall lack of investment by state authorities in education. Russian education spending is currently estimated at just 3.8% of GDP by the UNESCO “Education at a Glance” project.¹¹⁴ Many education experts point to the long-term implications for the quality and relevance of education of low investment and some claim that Russia would now have sufficient public resources to be able to invest much more.¹¹⁵

In relation to the labour market, young people have fared better in the last years. It has become less difficult for young people to access employment, with the overall availability of employment having grown with the economic upturn. Nevertheless, **young people report their difficulties to access employment at their level of qualification, and their life strategies often include the ambition to access interesting work, not only well-paid work.**¹¹⁶ In addition, the literature points to the fact that **certain sub-groups of young people have more difficulty to access employment, including young women and young people living in rural areas.**

Graph – Youth Unemployment in Russia by Gender, in Percent, 2000-2007



Note: The youth unemployment rate is the share of the young unemployed in the active population (employed + unemployed) aged 15-24.
 Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT and ILO) official sources.

¹¹² Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.

¹¹³ Shevchenko, I. O., and Gavrilov, A. A., [On Illicit Economic Relations in the Sphere of Higher Education](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 3, March 2007, pp. 87 – 101; OECD, [Equity in Education Thematic Review. Country Analytical Report: The Russian Federation](#), Paris: OECD, 2004.

¹¹⁴ UNESCO, [Education at a Glance: Russian Federation](#), June 2008.

¹¹⁵ Mkrтчian, Gamlet M., [The Stratification of Young People in the Spheres of Education, Employment and Consumption](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 4, April 2006, pp. 6 – 24; Davydov, Iu. S., [The Bologna Process and the New Reforms of Russian Education](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 7, July 2006, pp. 17 – 32.

¹¹⁶ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.

Youth unemployment is currently estimated at approximately 13%, in comparison to the figures for 2000, which lay at over 20%. Nevertheless, unemployment for young women was slightly higher than for men. According to a study from 2007, about half of the young people living in rural areas are not able to find work of any kind.¹¹⁷

A/ QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION (IN RELATION TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS) AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

In the public debate on education, significant dismay has been expressed over the recent poor performance of the Russian education system in comparison to those of other countries. The Soviet Union achieved universal literacy in comparatively little time and its education system was respected for its high level of achievement in the natural sciences. But, since the beginning of the transition, the situation has changed. Low levels of investment in education over many years are having an impact. In the six years **between the 2000 and 2006 PISA studies, Russia's educational performance dis-improved.**¹¹⁸ Russian students performed “statistically significantly below the OECD average”. Russian students placed 33rd-38th in science literacy, 32nd-36th in mathematics literacy, and 37th-40th in reading literacy. The UNESCO “Education at a Glance” indicators updated in January 2008 also point to dis-improvements in primary school completion in comparison to the peak performance around 1991.¹¹⁹

According to Galina Kovaleva, coordinator of the 2006 PISA survey in Russia,

“This means that our school students are inferior to their peers from many countries in the ability to use their knowledge in practice, make conclusions, understand the essence of things, and even display civil activism in dealing with science related problems”.¹²⁰

Some experts say that the traditional strengths of Russian schooling in the natural sciences cannot be revealed by the PISA study, since it has other goals, mainly dictated by the needs of a modern information society. This suggests that **Russia's current education system provides students with a substantial amount of theoretical knowledge, but does little to develop their ability to go outside the curriculum and apply it in practical life.**¹²¹

The quality and relevance of higher education is the topic of much discussion among educational specialists. The quality debate is often predicated on Russia's educational performance in relation to and approximation through reform of international standards. As emergent trends in society that have an influence on the kind of competencies young people coming out of the education system need are documented by international organisations, national education systems and professionals attempt to take such into account.¹²² Davydov analyses Russia's educational

¹¹⁷ Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, *Young People in the New Russia: Lifestyles and Value Priorities*, Moscow, 2007, p. 141.

¹¹⁸ The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), [Executive Summary](#)

¹¹⁹ UNESCO, [Education at a Glance: Russian Federation](#), op. cit.

¹²⁰ [Is Pulp Fiction Russia's Failure](#), Moscow News no. 51, 2007.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² An excellent guide to the challenges facing contemporary education has been published by OECD, entitled [Trends Shaping Education](#), Paris: OECD, 2008.

reform plans in comparison to the Bologna Process¹²³ not hiding disappointment at the slow pace of implementation and the low level of investment in bringing the Russian education system into line with European standards. Most of all, disappointment is expressed that **policy initiatives fail to bring the state back into the sphere of education, which he considers the state to have all but exited in the 1990s.**¹²⁴

Similar observations concerning the role of the state in relation to education are made by Ziitdinova. In her opinion, education policy serves as an instrument for ensuring the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and is essential for ensuring the social, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural development of society. In this regard, she comments:

“There are three social goals in the present educational policy in Russia: expansion of the system of education on a tuition basis, including secondary education, an aspect that is in conflict with world practices and this country’s constitution; a tendency to turn education into an instrument of social selection, worsening discrimination in regard to access to an education; and the division of the educational system into two sectors, one for “the elite” and one for all the “rest”. Yet, Russia’s economy has the ability to make more substantial investments in education ... It is the task of all the players in the country’s educational socium not to allow education to be turned into a “social elevator” that only carries the majority of the population downwards.”¹²⁵

These and other problems of educational reform are easily observed on the example of **rural educational institutions, which are disadvantaged in comparison to those in cities, suffering from under-resourcing, a difficulty to attract well qualified and motivated teachers, infrastructural degradation and poor maintenance.**¹²⁶ Gur’ianova proposes that internal and external differentiation among rural schools in a country with such diverse rural realities as Russia is an important consideration for successful rural educational reform.¹²⁷

A significant **dimension of the quality and relevance of education is its contents and the approach to teaching and learning taken by educational professionals.** In transitional Russia curriculum content has changed considerably. The complexity of curriculum reform can be seen in the analysis of the content of the pedagogical materials used to teach social work in Russian higher education institutions. Yarskaya-Smirnova and Romanov argue that for the moment the text books used in educating social workers do not constitute a basis on

¹²³ The [Bologna Process](#) aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 has put in motion a series of reforms needed to make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents. Reform was needed then and reform is still needed today if Europe is to match the performance of the best performing systems in the world, notably the United States and Asia. The three priorities of the Bologna process are: introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

¹²⁴ Davydov, Iu. S., [The Bologna Process and the New Reforms of Russian Education](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 7, July 2006, pp. 17 – 32; Kamenskaya, Yulia, On the Question of the Use of European Experience in the Establishment of the Russian System of Education, *Vlast* (in Russian), no. 2, February 2007, pp. 75 - 79.

¹²⁵ Ziitdinova, F. K., Russian [Educational Policy in the Light of Experience in Other Countries](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 5, May 2007, pp. 62 – 63.

¹²⁶ Gurianova, M.P., [A Typology of the Rural Schools of Russia](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 4, April 2006, pp. 58–74.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

which to achieve the minimum level of competence in the area of gender and cultural sensitivity.¹²⁸ In their opinion, social workers need to develop competence to identify discrimination and ensure the effective protection of human rights, requiring changes to teaching approaches and curriculum contents. Merridale makes a similar argument on the example of popular history, as taught in schools among other contexts.¹²⁹ Merridale says:

“It is clear that professional academic history is becoming more remote from the popular kind, that philosophical debates about Russian uniqueness do not help people to understand their family histories, still less the tensions that get enacted every May on Victory Day. It is also clear that there are cultural traditions, styles of thinking, that have not been much affected by communism’s collapse, and that these must form the starting point for any revision of historical paradigms. It will never be enough to simply cut and paste the models that are fashionable in the West ... (But), the transition that really counts is between generations. The difference between the people who remember Stalin and the shock troops of *glasnost* is one fundamental stage. But the children who have never known communism at all, who have grown up with advertising and freedom to talk back, are different again”.¹³⁰

In the opinion of this author, the time has come for some of the harder historical debates to be addressed, not just among intellectual historians, but also among ordinary people and in the schools.¹³¹

This debate goes to the heart of education, asking the question of what should be its fundamental objective. If the objective is to educate a generation of critically literate citizens the contents and pedagogical approaches that will be used will differ considerably from those used if the objective is to educate subjects of the state and the market. **The literature on the quality and content of education points to the technical orientation of educational reform, which focuses on the marketability of skills rather than on broader educational objectives related to life-competence and social progress.**¹³² It is hardly surprising that the literature on this aspect of education paints a mixed picture of opinions and positions, demonstrating little consensus.

B/ EDUCATION TO WORK TRANSITIONS

Mkrtchian makes the argument that **in contemporary Russia social stratification is particularly influenced by access to intellectual resources**, in other words, education. His surveys of the behavioural priorities of the market generation show that young people

“... are oriented towards a high level of aspiration to acquire an education and professional qualifications. Knowledge, qualifications, profession and specialty constitute the essential conditions necessary for them to attain a competitive position in the labour market ... The factor of material well-being represents an indicator of the manifestation of status under the new conditions of social mobility and stratification. (In order to achieve this) a new work ethic and behavioural priorities are needed: the

¹²⁸ Yarskaya-Smirnova, E.R., and Romanov, P. V., [Gender and Ethnicity in School Books for Social Work and Social Policy](#), Social Research (in Russian), no. 5, 2006.

¹²⁹ Merridale, Catherine, [Redesigning History in Contemporary Russia](#), Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 38, no. 1, January 2003, pp. 13–28.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 27. On redesigning history curricula, see also Zajda, Joseph, and Zajda, Rea, [The Politics of Rewriting History: New History Textbooks and Curriculum Materials in Russia](#), International Review of Education, vol. 49, no. 3–4, 2003, pp. 363–384.

¹³¹ On the debate over history teaching, see for example, Zajda, Joseph, and Zajda, Rea, [The Politics of Rewriting History: New History Textbooks and Curriculum Materials in Russia](#), International Review of Education, vol. 49, no. 3–4, 2003, pp. 363 – 384; Zdereva, G. V., [Training Future Schoolteachers to Teach Patriotism to Students](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 47, no. 11, November 2005, pp. 47 – 56.

¹³² Zajda, J., [Lifelong Learning and Adult Education: Russia Meets the West](#), International Review of Education, vol. 49, no. 1–2, 2003, pp. 111–132.

ability and readiness to take on higher workloads, solid discipline, and the actions of individual initiative. It is these “internal” factors that are so important to change one’s social position and move up from lower to higher strata ... **Under conditions of inequality, young people become differentiated into “strong” and “weak” from the standpoint of their vital chances in the sphere of education, the labour market and consumption**”.¹³³

This analysis is confirmed by more recent surveys of young people’s professional orientations and ambitions. For example, the survey based research of Zapesotskii, which points to the fact that

“Over two thirds of students think of themselves as *purposeful, hardworking, methodical and successful people*. Even if that kind of self-assessment describes their “idealised” image of the self rather than their actual character, still it does not give a solid reason to say that loss of interest in dealing with macro-social problems is to be accounted for by the psychological cliché of “adolescent escapism”. It appears that the choice of a path in life, the goals of which lie primarily within the limits of private endeavour, is an indication that the generation of upper-grade students in 2006 is distanced from the romanticised revolutionary behavioural strategies of the 1990s and is pragmatically revising their system of values, in which **socially significant objectives are giving way to individually significant objectives**”.¹³⁴

Recent survey data published by the Public Opinion Foundation collected within the “Next Generation – Generation XXI” study points to the following **typology of Russian young people according to their professional value orientations**.

Young people 16 to 26 can be classified according to five categories of professional group, as follows:

Yuppies: These young people dream of becoming entrepreneurs. They choose their profession based on the availability of opportunities for professional development and on the possibility to earn a high level of income. They enjoy sport, tourism and going to the disco. They like to relax in cafes, restaurants, nightclubs and at leisure centres. Their major motivation in life is self-realisation. This group is to 62% female;

Gosreserv (State Officials): These young people would like to become officials in public service in a variety of central state institutions. They choose their profession based on the prestige associated with state service and on the guaranteed package of social benefits. They enjoy music (for example, singing) socialising and being with friends, sport, reading and going to the cinema. They like to relax in parks and at libraries. Their major motivation in life is prestige. This group is to 56% male;

Office Plankton (Clerks): These young people are equally motivated by interesting work and pay and they, therefore, would accept to work in several professions: management, law, accountancy, programming, marketing, etc. They choose their profession based on interest in the work and in the possibility to earn a high level of income. They do not have distinct forms of leisure, but they like to relax at Internet cafes, restaurants and nightclubs. Their major motivation in life is money. In the 18 – 20 age bracket this group is equally made up of males and females;

Budgeters: These young people would like to work as doctors, teachers or as scientific workers. They

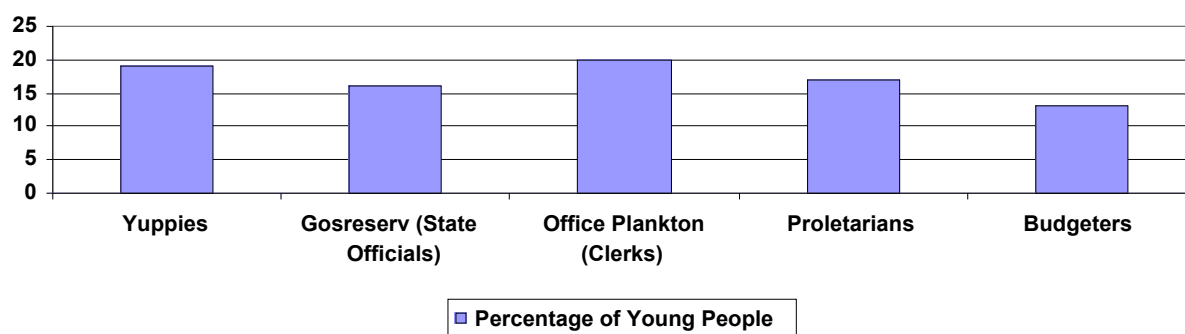
¹³³ Mkrтчian, Gamlet M., [The Stratification of Young People in the Spheres of Education, Employment and Consumption](#), op. cit.

¹³⁴ Zapesotski, A. S., [Children of the Era of Changes – Their Values and Choice](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 9, September 2007, pp. 5–17.

choose their profession based on interest in their work, on how easy it is for them to get to work and on the possibility it will afford them to get their own place to live. Their main forms of leisure include: reading and music (singing). They like to relax at libraries, houses of culture, and the local club. Their major motivation is to gain the approval of persons in positions of authority and to be considered educated. To two thirds this group is made up of women.

Proletarians: These young people are not oriented to any particular profession and do not think in terms of “dream jobs”, although they prefer work in commercial organisations. Many of these are “older” young people, aged around 25 years. Two thirds are male. They choose their profession based on the level of income it will offer them and how close their job is to their home. Their main forms of leisure include fishing and hunting. They do not have specific places where they like to relax. Their major motivation is money.

Graph – Young People in Different Socio-Economic Groups in Russia, 2008



Source: Public Opinion Foundation, New Generation, Moscow: FOM, 2008.

But, **many young people face profound challenges in their education to work transitions.** This is certainly the case for **rural young people.** Young people in rural areas face a moral dilemma: on the one hand, they feel a sense of responsibility to their parents who will have difficulty to manage without the physical and financial assistance of their children and on the other, systems of support for young people to stay on the land have changed beyond recognition with the introduction of the market economy. Mikhieev points to the pragmatism of the life orientations of rural youth:

“... An increasing strategic role is played by education in achieving success in life, interpreted in the market sense: a high income, prestige, and a career. People’s orientations to have their own business, to work in the private sector remain steady. Yet strategies of not working for a living do not find much widespread support among upper grade students in rural schools, and their proportion is diminishing ... **The material condition of the rural family, which lags consistently behind the rising costs of educational services, is a very powerful factor that serves to correct people’s life plans**”.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Mikhieev, P. A., [The Dynamics of the Life Values of Rural Youth](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 2, February 2006, p. 74.

The education to work transitions of young people in Russia are also determined by the expectations of the labour market towards their level of qualification and ability to deal with the tasks presented to them in the practical working context. Avraamova and Verpakhovskaia argue that **young people see higher education qualifications as a necessary but not sufficient condition to find employment**, because they are one of the key demands of contemporary Russian employers. At the same time, informal relations and organisational culture, also determine the labour market success of graduates. The comparison of the expectations of employers and graduates conducted by these authors reveals **three main problems: 1/ informal relations deform the labour market, 2/ low pay, especially in the public sector, makes for a lack of interest on the part of graduates and 3/ the educational market is highly differentiated in terms of the quality of the education offered.**¹³⁶

A typical youth mechanism for solving labour market difficulties at home is to consider study or labour migration. Manshin and colleagues argue that the study migration of young people from Russia takes place for a complex of personal and socio-economic reasons. A 2008 study of the social potential of young people in the Khabarovsk region points to high potential for youth emigration away from that region. When asked to where they would like to migrate, a majority of young people choose Moscow and St. Petersburg or foreign countries.¹³⁷ Most young people who leave to study point to their wish to improve their chances on the international and Russian labour markets by gaining a qualification abroad. But, Russia has few bi-lateral agreements with other countries, making it relatively difficult for Russians to access work abroad, especially in developed Western countries. In addition, the internal regulation of private business dealing in labour migration is relatively weak. **This analysis points to certain risks for young people wishing to migrate for the purposes of work, including that of human trafficking.**¹³⁸

The literature on education and work among young people reviewed in this section points to complex interactions between young people's ambitions, their ability to access a quality education and the expectations of employers towards the skills of graduates coming onto the labour market, as determined by contemporary social and economic trends¹³⁹, as important factors in their chances to successfully negotiate the insecurity of the time in transit between education and labour market. The overarching implication of the above is that **the fields of education and work are becoming ever more stratified, with the emergence of groups of “winners” and “losers” occupying the extremes.** Most young people manage somehow to get an education and to get one or several jobs to pay the bills. But real success has come to be viewed in terms of high incomes and high prestige consumption – something alien for generations of older people raised during the Soviet period, during which education and civilisation was

¹³⁶ Avraamova, E. M., and Verpakhovskaia, Iu. B., [Employers and College Graduates in the Labour Market: Mutual Expectations](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 3, March 2007, pp. 20 – 21.

¹³⁷ Berezutski, I. V., The Specificity and Problems of the Formation of Youth Potential in the Region of Khabarovsk – An Analytical Description, op. cit., p. 40.

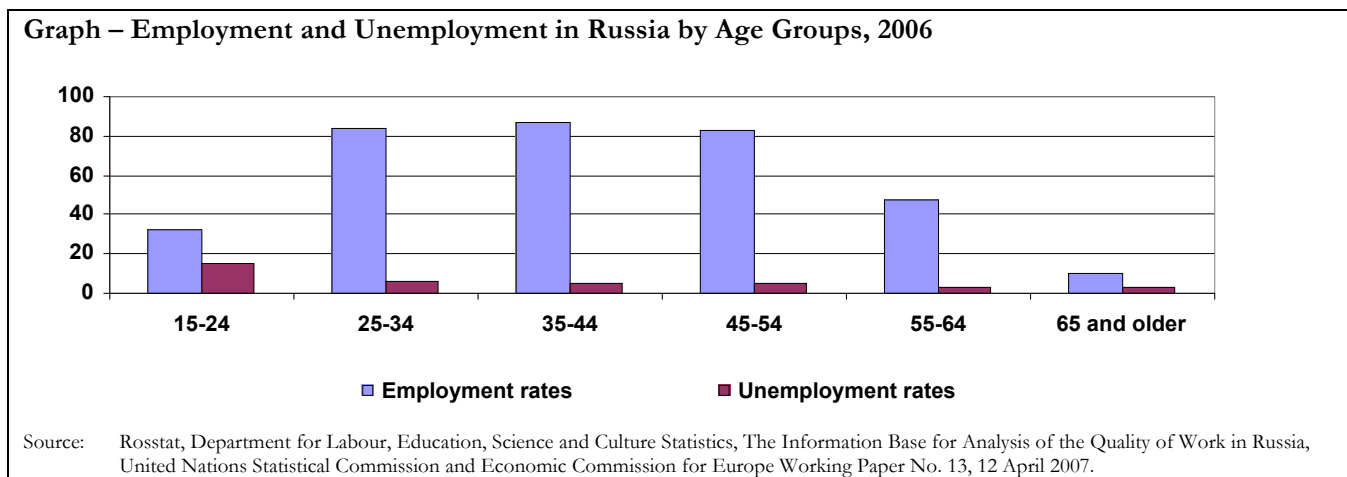
¹³⁸ Manshin, R., Pismennaya, E., and Timoshenko, O., Study and Work Migration of Young People from Russia, *Mezhdunarodnaya ekonomika (International Economics)*, issue 9, 2007, pp. 61 – 66.

¹³⁹ OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, [Trends Shaping Education - 2008 Edition](#), Paris, OECD, 2008.

considered the higher value. In making the transition from school to work, then, **young people have to negotiate their own ambitions, the dynamic nature of a changing employment market and the often-critical attitudes of the wider society** to their choice of life orientation.

C/ EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AVAILABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The question of whether graduates of education (whatever the level) have learned competencies that are desired and relevant for the labour market is of course an important one for the successful transition of young people into full adulthood. An equally important question is whether there are sufficient employment opportunities for young people, at their level of qualification. Recent data on youth employment and unemployment points to an improvement of the situation of young people on the labour market, certainly as a result of the general upturn in Russian economic fortunes.



In addition, **the question of employability affects young people from different social contexts in different ways.** As much as the elite secondary and tertiary education available in the cities may be criticised for its declining quality and relevance (see above), **the situation in rural areas is acute**, with the availability of education to rural youth often being determined by the willingness of teachers to move to rural areas to teach, and subsequently, on the qualifications and knowledge of those teachers. At the same time, rural and peripheral communities are known to be at a disadvantage when it comes to the availability of diverse employment opportunities.¹⁴⁰

Little literature was found specifically dealing with either the employability of young people or their concrete employment opportunities, whether in cities or in rural areas. Nevertheless, the general literature on unemployment in rural contexts and on the gendered nature of the professional self-determination strategies of young people can be informative. Research quoted above points to the fact that **younger people in rural areas have few**

¹⁴⁰ Evidence from Khabarovsk points to the difficulties of rural youth; see Berezutski, I. V., The Specificity and Problems of the Formation of Youth Potential in the Region of Khabarovsk – An Analytical Description, op. cit.

opportunities to access employment, especially in line with their ambitions or personal wishes. The availability of employment, or lack thereof, is an important motivating factor for young people to migrate away from the countryside.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, Wegren and colleagues' analysis of the condition of the rural unemployed demonstrates that rural households with one unemployed member are not as badly off as one might expect, with the unemployed person (especially if young and physically fit) contributing productively to household tasks (additional food production, for example) and that while reform has brought with it the beginnings of stratification among low-income rural households with unemployed members, many have taken more initiative becoming small time entrepreneurs. **The stimulation of this entrepreneurial potential through investment will be important for helping those young people who do want to stay in the rural context to do so.**¹⁴²

Gender inequalities in the labour market can make it more difficult for young women, especially those of "typical" reproductive age, to find work. While the gendered experience of being young is dealt with in a later section of this review, the gendered nature of the professional self-determination strategies of young people is informative in relation to issues of employability among youth. Skutneva argues that when it comes to the sphere of work, young people, especially young men, demonstrate pragmatic values. For young women, education is the key to improved quality of life, as it is seen as an additional guarantee for accessing employment. Young women's attitudes to education and the labour market are influenced by their increased difficulty to access employment over their male counterparts since the beginning of the transition

"Gender stereotypes and attitudes begin to be formed at an early age via socialisation under the influence of agencies of socialisation, namely the family, the mass media, and at the stage of young adulthood the stereotypes serve as the basis for actual behaviour".¹⁴³

Table – Youth Unemployment in Russia by Age Group and Gender, 2000-2007

Age	Gender	Year						
		2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
15 – 19	Female	660,000	880,000	1,199,000	859,000	840,000	802,000	723,000
	Male	1,207,000	1,118,000	888,000	1,159,000	1,114,000	1,057,000	1,013,000
20 – 24	Female	3,351,000	3,337,000	4,044,000	3,372,000	3,419,000	3,474,000	3,569,000
	Male	4,065,000	3,955,000	3,422,000	4,107,000	4,090,000	4,161,000	4,265,000
25 – 29	Female	3,852,000	4,242,000	4,865,000	4,296,000	4,377,000	4,510,000	4,600,000
	Male	4,734,000	4,837,000	4,268,000	4,896,000	5,010,000	5,052,000	5,176,000

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT and ILO) official sources.

This literature points to a more complex picture of factors influencing employability and employment opportunities (for example, social attitudes and social capital) than the purely economic ones increased

¹⁴¹ Wegren, Stephen K., O'Brien, David J., and Patsiorkovski, Valeri V., [Russia's Rural Unemployed](#), Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 55, no. 6, September 2003, pp. 847-867.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Skutneva, S. V., [Strategies of Young People's Self-Determination in Life in the Sphere of Work](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 8, August 2007, p. 52.

availability of employment.

CONCLUSION

The volume of education and labour market research found in this review notwithstanding, it seems researchers in this field are critical of the policy-making community when it comes to the importance they attach, in terms of investment, to education and support for the labour market transitions of young Russians. **Current policies are not considered adequate for the needs of modernisation of the Russian education system.** In particular, authors are sceptical concerning chances for the improvement of the quality and relevance of education and by implication for the qualification and employability of young people. Despite the upswing in Russia's economic fortunes, researchers point to **insufficient investments, a lack of integration with international educational developments**, including at the level of international educational standards and trends, and the emergence of an educational market on which **education is sold as a commodity**. These developments are seen as contributing to increasing stratification between educational winners and losers.

At the same time, the labour market chances of young people with qualifications have significantly improved in comparison to the 1990s, and it is possible for young people to find relatively well-paid work in the cities, even if this is not always in their chosen field of specialisation or at their level of qualification and even if young people would appreciate more secure employment.¹⁴⁴ The growth of a “youth middle class” seems to be well underway. Nevertheless, researchers working at the intersection between education and the labour market point to the fact that a lack of investment in both academic and vocational educational reform limits the ability of the education system to sustainably feed the labour market with relevantly qualified employees.

Finally, much of the literature reviewed reveals that Russian education researchers are uncomfortable with the fact that “real success”, in terms of both access to prestigious education and high incomes, remains the preserve of an elite many of whom have political affiliations, good family connections or can afford to pay bribes, rather than being determined exclusively by educational merit.¹⁴⁵

4/ YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LAW

INTRODUCTION

The theme of how young people interact with the law has become a popular theme for public debate, both in the media and politics. There is a perception in Russia that juvenile crime is constantly on the increase and is becoming worse, with youth crime being implicitly associated with organised crime. Despite the fact that the Russian economy

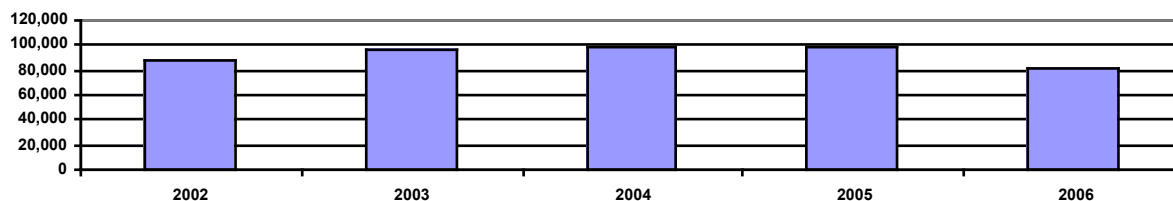
¹⁴⁴ Skutneva, S. V., [Strategies of Young People's Self-Determination in Life in the Sphere of Work](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 8, August 2007; Abasov, Z. A., [Projections of Students of Higher Pedagogical Educational Establishments on their Professional Strategies](#), Social Research, no. 4, 2006; Volkova, N. V., Typology of the Strategies of Young Karelian Economists, Social Research, no. 1, 2006.

¹⁴⁵ Shevchenko, I. O., and Gavrilov, A. A., [On Illicit Economic Relations in the Sphere of Higher Education](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 3, March 2007, pp. 87 – 101.

is now doing better, and that one of the major motivations for young people to become involved in some form of crime (financial gain, unemployment) should no longer be so acute, young people are still disproportionately represented among criminals. This certainly exacerbates the sense of young people being out of control. According to UNICEF:

“In Russia, like in any other country, criminals are largely young people. The average age of an offender in Russia is about 28 years. Persons aged 17-25 are most of all involved in unlawful activities. Young people under 30 account for more than a half of all crimes”.¹⁴⁶

Graph – Juveniles Convicted in Russia, 2002-2006



Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Statistical Division Database, compiled from national official sources .

Statistical analysis points to worrying trends in the development of the dynamics of juvenile crime.

“A trend has been registered in the past decade towards the steady growth in the absolute number of crimes committed by young people aged 14-29 and their share in the total number of offences. At the same time ... the share of crimes committed by minors demonstrates some fluctuations compared with the general trend towards gradual decline: after reaching the lowest level of 10.2% of the total number of crimes in 2000, this share started to grow again. Meanwhile, the youth crime rates grow every year; from 1995 to 2003, its share increased by 8 percentage points to reach 45.2%”.¹⁴⁷

The same report identifies **recidivism as one of the biggest challenges of addressing with juvenile crime.** Juvenile crime is also becoming more serious.¹⁴⁸

Russia’s difficulties with regard to the incarcerated youth population – which is one of the largest in Europe – have been widely reported.¹⁴⁹ Pridemore points to the overall implication of the above:

“As each new cohort (of juvenile delinquents) reaches adult age, it will have sizeable proportions of individuals who have low levels of education, little work experience, histories of drug and / or alcohol use, and records of formal contact the justice system”.¹⁵⁰

Further, in light of recent research into HIV/AIDS transmission in Russia, the high level of juvenile incarceration is of considerable concern. As in any state in the process of development of the rule of law, there is little tradition in Russia of dealing with juvenile crime in a progressive manner. Nevertheless, awareness of juvenile crime and

¹⁴⁶ State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [Children in conflict with the law in Russian Federation](#), MONEE Country Analytical Report, November 2006.

¹⁴⁷ State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [Children in conflict with the law in Russian Federation](#), MONEE Country Analytical Report, November 2006.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Pridemore, William Alex, [Social Problems and Patterns of Juvenile Delinquency in Transitional Russia](#), Russian Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, vol. 39, no. 2, 2002, pp. 187 – 213

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 208.

juvenile justice as a problem that needs to be tackled with sensitivity and in respect of international standards has grown considerably and some important steps have been taken recently to address the issue to restorative justice for young people. According to UNICEF:

“... In December 2003 Russia considerably amended its Criminal Code ... The amendments made to article 87 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation prioritise “alternative punishment” for juveniles who have committed crimes, i.e. coercive measures of educational character (warning, placement under the supervision of parents or persons acting in the place of parents or to any specialised public institution, compelling to redress the damage caused, the restriction of leisure and the establishment of special requirements for the behaviour of the minor)”.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, the generally poor living conditions and disciplinarian approach taken to juvenile incarceration continue to be problematic and significant **further investment will be needed to ensure the human rights of incarcerated juveniles.**¹⁵²

Early research by Pridemore argues that social problems are at the origin of juvenile delinquency in transitional Russia, pointing to the vulnerability of young people in relation to family, education and labour market as well as the relationship between alcohol and drug use, the availability or lack of leisure activities and problems with juvenile justice as factors that have contributed to ongoing increases in juvenile crime¹⁵³ More recent research by Savina confirms this analysis of the causes of youth crime, pointing to traumatic experiences that young people go through in their immediate social environment and psychosocial process that lead young people defined as “difficult youngsters” from plain disruptiveness into criminal activity. She argues that **the extent to which such youngsters are bound up with peer-groups that negatively influence their judgement and the extent to which adult society and the institutions of education support or do not support them in their time of need are determining factors.**

“The social significance of the shortcomings in performance of institutions of education lies in the fact that ... they are not bringing the kind of influence to bear that is necessary to compensate for shortcomings in upbringing in the home and to oppose the negative influences of informal group association. Socially significant problems that schools face include: insufficient knowledge of the personality of the students; sources of negative influence on them; pedagogical mistakes in the use of methods of upbringing and insufficient attention paid to the vocational guidance of adolescents”.¹⁵⁴

This analysis raises the question of “positive” socialisation, and how to ensure such especially when the family fails to do so.¹⁵⁵ It also underlines the importance of preventative measures that will mitigate against young people becoming involved in crime in the first place.

¹⁵¹ State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [Children in conflict with the law in Russian Federation](#), MONEE Country Analytical Report, November 2006.

¹⁵² Ibid., also Kaner, Jessy, [The colony for Russia's young offenders](#), BBC, 4 December 2006.

¹⁵³ Pridemore, William Alex, [Social Problems and Patterns of Juvenile Delinquency in Transitional Russia](#), op. cit., pp. 207 – 8.

¹⁵⁴ Savina, N. N., [Problems of Adolescent Crime in Russia](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 50, no. 4, April 2008, pp. 65–74 (also *Pedagogika*, no. 1, 2007, pp. 33–39).

¹⁵⁵ Zorkaya, Natalia, Contemporary Youth: On the Problem of Defective Socialisation, Review of Public Opinion, no. 4, (96), July to August 2008, pp. 8 – 22.

Considering the growth of the phenomenon among younger and younger persons, its relationship to organised crime and the trafficking industry and to the spread of HIV and other STIs, the problem of prostitution among young people is a concern. Unofficial statistics estimate that in 2000 the number of sex workers in Moscow had risen to approximately 400,000. According to 2004 research on the worldwide prevalence of female sex work provides: 0.5% for the whole country.¹⁵⁶ According to figures from Humanitarian Action from 2007, about 18% of street children in St. Petersburg are commercial sex workers.¹⁵⁷ Many of those apprehended for prostitution are young girls, some as young as ten years of age. Many different types of prostitution involving adolescents can be identified, among them “musical” prostitution (takes place at concerts and clubs where young people gather to hear music) and more traditional forms. Adolescents who get involved in prostitution are young women who have become separated from their families (students living away from home, people who have moved other cities or rural areas to find work) and girls who come from troubled families or who have experienced psychosocial trauma in childhood (the majority, according to this author, or adolescent prostitutes). While young men who sell their bodies (called *Alfonsy* in Russia) are mentioned in the literature their reasons for engaging in prostitution are not elucidated.¹⁵⁸

Stigmatisation of young people who have fallen foul of the law, whatever the reason, remains a significant obstacle for their future integration into society.

5/ SOCIAL INTEGRATION

INTRODUCTION

In the local mythology of what is good and special about being Russian, the value of solidarity appears among the most important. At the same time, there is a strong impression of a breakdown in social solidarity. It is certainly true that the transition of Russia from the command to the market economy has created new forms of relationship in society – competition of the kind found in the modern market was little known and understood in the Soviet Union, although it is a fallacy that competition for jobs, status and other benefits did not exist. And this has certainly had an influence on inter-generational relations – pre-1989 generations, especially those who were educated and worked in Soviet Russia, have problems to identify with the individualistic and materialistic approach of young people.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, new forms of structural and physical violence, related to the emergence of organised crime, have become pervasive in society, making for a sense of physical insecurity to accompany the sense

¹⁵⁶ Estimates of the number of female sex workers in different regions of the world can be found in: United Nations Development Programme, [Reversing the Epidemic. Facts and Policy Options](#), Bratislava: UNDP, 2004; Vandepitte, J., Leyerla, R., Dallabetta, G., Crabbé, F., Alary, M., and Buvé, A., [Estimates of the number of female sex workers in different regions of the world](#), Sexually Transmitted Infections, no. 82, June 2006; pp. 18 – 25.

¹⁵⁷ Brown, Danielle, [Sustainability of Public Health Projects in Russia: A case study of projects addressing HIV/AIDS and Drug Abuse in Russian Youth](#), op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ Ivanova, L., [On Certain Aspects of the Problem of Adolescent Prostitution](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 46, no. 2, February 2004, pp. 49 – 50.

¹⁵⁹ Zorkaya, Natalia, Contemporary Youth: On the Problem of Defective Socialisation; op cit; Berezutski, I. V., The Specificity and Problems of the Formation of Youth Potential in the Region of Khabarovsk – An Analytical Description, op.cit;

of social insecurity caused by the vagaries of an economy in development. The emergence of conflicts around intercultural differences has come as a surprise to many Russians. The Soviet Union claimed to have eliminated the arbitrary differences of nationality, ethnicity and gender, but may only have suppressed long-standing resentments born of colonial domination and oppression. The latter day struggles of the Russian Federation with secessionism, terrorism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and homophobia are conspicuous for their violence. But at the same time as they may lament what they consider to be the decline in civilisation of their society, Russians (also young Russians) are attracted to the idea of the uniqueness of the Russian nation. The emergence of neo-Nazism has shocked the Soviet generation. These developments have contributed to the climate of moral panic over the perceived “youth crisis”.

A/ SOCIAL RELATIONS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS

Little specific literature on the way in which young people interact with each other and with people from other generations was found, although overall the literature does point to **poor relations between young people and their elders (especially in positions of authority)** as a backdrop to problems of youth socialisation.¹⁶⁰ For example, Andreev points to the profound qualitative shifts that have taken place in Russian society since 1991. He argues that the potential for conflict is growing: intergenerational gaps are appearing, along with alienation among social, demographic, and ethnic groups and various forms of exclusion and discrimination.¹⁶¹ A recent regional study of the social potential of young people in the Khabarovsk Kraj finds that **the family no longer has an important socialisation function** for young people, but rather the **immediate social circle and peer group has come to replace it.**¹⁶²

The nature of contemporary “intercultural” relations involving young people in Russia is revealed by the broader context literature about attitudes towards minorities and the rise of xenophobia and intolerance in Russia. This scholarship sheds light on the factors that construct people as “different” in the eyes of the youth population. Although it would seem that only a small minority of young people hold extreme views in relation to people who are different,¹⁶³ recent research points to young people having “conservative” attitudes and it is relatively well known that foreigners, especially those of colour, often do not feel very welcome in Russia.¹⁶⁴ According to the annual report for 2007 of the Sova Centre for Information,

“... Racist violence continues to grow at a high rate ... including numerous everyday violent conflicts triggered by ethnic and racial hatred. In contrast, criminal prosecution of individuals who have committed violent crimes has decreased for the first time since 2003. Right-wing radical groups are

¹⁶⁰ UNFPA in Russia, [Violence in the Family – Violence in Society: Analytical Report Based on Research Conducted between July and December 2006](#), op. cit.; State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics Goskomstat of Russia, [Children in conflict with the law in Russian Federation](#), op. cit.; Zorkaya, Natalia, Contemporary Youth: On the Problem of Defective Socialisation.

¹⁶¹ Andreev, A. L., [Society Through the Eyes of the College Student: The Civic Position of Young People in School](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 4, 2006, pp. 25 – 38.

¹⁶² Berezutski, I.V., The Specificity and Problems of the Formation of Youth Potential in the Region of Khabarovsk – An Analytical Description, op.cit, p. 42.

¹⁶³ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op cit.; Garza, Thomas J., [Conservative Vanguard? The Politics of New Russia's Youth](#), Current History, October 2006, pp. 69 – 71.

¹⁶⁴ Lev Gudkov, [In a Pre-Pogrom Condition](#), Kommersant (in Russian), September 8, 2006.

consistently active ... provoking ethnic conflicts and riots ... Not infrequently, government agents, pro-governmental political parties ... provoke massive xenophobic sentiments. In 2007, these included the anti-Estonian campaign, a series of xenophobic and often explicitly racist public actions staged by pro-Kremlin youth movements, etc. Indeed, they effectively competed with the ultra-right groups.¹⁶⁵

Dorozhin and Mazitova's analysis points to the fact that foreign students face extensive structural difficulties in adapting, although the situations presented are quite differentiated, varying from subjective feelings of exclusion to real acts of discrimination. **Considering the labour shortage, and immigration as a potential response to it,¹⁶⁶ these authors believe that the benefits for Russia would be high if some more attention was paid to integration issues.¹⁶⁷**

The HIV+ population also suffers from prejudice. One survey of members of the educational community including students, educators and parents reveals that the percentage of respondents "not likely to manifest tolerance towards people infected with HIV" is 40% for students, 30% for teachers and 30% for parents. Respondents tended to avoid contact with HIV+ people for fear of becoming infected, indicating misconceptions about transmission. But, situations of kinship can lead to correctives in behaviour, indicating that opportunities for mutual discovery and the building of relationships could improve levels of tolerance.¹⁶⁸ This study does not elucidate on the stigmatisation of HIV+ persons according to their sexual orientation and no specific literature was found to testify to attitudes towards homosexuals with HIV. Nevertheless, homophobia in Russia is generally reported to be widespread, by news media and gay rights groups. **Gays and Lesbians, especially those who openly display their sexual orientation, have increasingly become the target of right-wing extremist violence.¹⁶⁹**

B/ THE GENDER DIMENSION OF THE YOUTH EXPERIENCE

Attention has been paid to the differing experiences of young men and women in empirical studies commissioned by development organisations. Nevertheless, **specific empirical and sociological research on the gender dimension of being young in Russia is hard to come by.** This was, however, a popular topic both at home and abroad in the initial transition period.¹⁷⁰ While many gender researchers do make passing reference to differences between the attitudes of specific age groups of men and women to specific issues, and it is noticeable that young people often have quite different opinions to their elders, also in relation to gender issues, this does not constitute a

¹⁶⁵ Galina Kozhevnikova, [Radical Nationalism and Efforts to Counteract It in 2007](#), Annual Report, Moscow: SOVA Centre, 2007.

¹⁶⁶ [Putin highlights demographic slump as Russia's biggest problem](#), RIA Novosti, 10 May 2006.

¹⁶⁷ Dorozhin, Iu. N. and Mazitova, L.T., [Foreign Students: Some Problems of Social Adaptation](#), Social Research, no. 3, 2007.

¹⁶⁸ Popova, N. V., [College Students' Attitudes Toward People Infected with HIV](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 4, April 2007, pp. 60 – 75.

¹⁶⁹ Some recent news include Jackson, Patrick, [Gay pride challenges Moscow](#), BBC, 17 February 2006; Greenwood, Phoebe A., [Crucible of Hate](#), The Guardian, 1 June 2007.

¹⁷⁰ The best known work from this time is Pilkington, Hilary (ed.), *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*, London: Routledge, 1996. This volume includes articles by a wide range of Russian and international researchers, including Sue Bridger, Rebecca Kay, Marta Bruno, Irina Taratkovskaia, Elena Dimitrieva, Lynne Attwood, Mariia Kotovskaia, Natal'ia Shalygina, Anne Murcott, Annie Feltham, Tat'iana Zabelina, Elena Omelchenko, and Tat'iana Shechepanskaia.

basis for understanding how young women and men experience their gender. Nevertheless, ample research has been carried out on the logic of gender relations in Russia, on gender inequality, especially in relation to the situation of women in the labour market and on the attitudes of the general public to gender issues.

The backdrop cited by the literature to the current state of gender relations in Russia is the formalised gender equality of the Soviet period, during which women were declared equal, and being emancipated had to go out to work, but the level of their work in the home was not eased. According to most authors, the traditional division of labour between men as breadwinners and women as homemakers has largely persisted in the value systems of the people. Nevertheless, recent survey research conducted by Vovk on the persistence of traditional gender roles provides evidence that **a combination of both egalitarian and traditional models for gender roles prevails**, without clear tendencies in thinking or practice towards either extreme. When it comes to bread winning, Russians are inclined to adhere to a traditional emphasis on men, while with regard to housekeeping, they favour equal responsibility of men and women. This hybrid constellation displays considerable stability over time, as comparisons with previous surveys indicate no change. **The youngest cohort of Russian adults shows somewhat greater inclination to a more equal distribution of household responsibilities.** Nevertheless, the elevation of women to primary income earners is not in sight. This mixed picture implies that in present-day Russia, men are somewhat more actively assuming female responsibilities than women take over male roles.¹⁷¹

Other authors point to the fact that **the transition has also not brought full emancipation and equality to women.** During the transition to the market economy, women were among the first to lose their jobs, differentials in pay for the same work became common, women with children found it more difficult to balance work and home responsibilities due to changes in childcare conditions and young women found it more difficult to enter the labour market due to prejudices with regard to their prospective motherhood. At the same time, the period from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s has witnessed a significant increase in awareness (social and political) of gender issues and of the problem of gender inequality. Rimashevskaja states that **the current state of gender relations poses challenge because it can be**

“... a source of additional social tension, of social “clashes” ... Studies have shown that gender stereotypes affect social relations. The apparently innocent reinforcement of patriarchal ideology is followed by a transition to economic discrimination in the spheres of work and property, then by female poverty and unstable families and finally by gender asymmetry in health, and depopulation. As a result we find ourselves in a vicious cycle of declining population quality.”¹⁷²

Employment is one of the areas where gender inequality seems to be most obvious. There continues to be inequality between women and men when it comes to recruitment and selection practices, wages paid for work done, chances for advancement and promotion and all other important indicators. At the same time, survey results

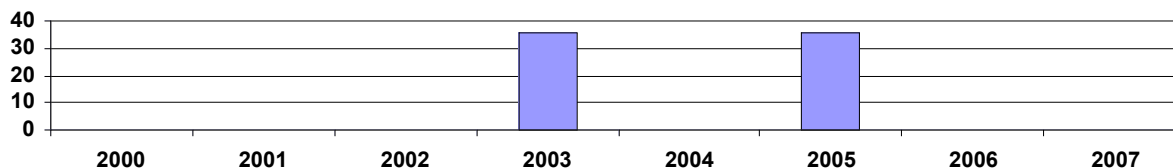
¹⁷¹ Vovk, E., [‘Man-Breadwinner’ and ‘Woman-Housewife’: Traditional Family Roles in Norms and Practices](#), *Social Reality: The Journal of Sociological Observation and Reporting*, issue 5, 2007.

¹⁷² Rimashevskaja, Natalia, *Gender Stereotypes and the Logic of Social Relations*, *Russian Politics and Law*, vol. 46, no. 1, January–February 2008, pp. 6–19 (see also *Svobodnaia mysl*, no. 3, 2006, pp. 100–110).

show that, generally speaking, the majority of Russians today recognise women's desire, right and not infrequently ability to work and build careers on equal terms with men. Being a housewife and fulltime mother remains a legitimate life trajectory. Women, according to Vovk,

“ ... are facing cultural and financial dichotomies. As far as the work-family dichotomy is concerned, the chief gender inequality and discrimination factor is seen by Russians in the fact that a woman cannot perform well simultaneously as a professional and a housewife, while unable to abandon either role.”¹⁷³

Graph – Gender Pay Gap in Russia, 2000-2007



Note: Gender pay gap is the difference between average monthly earnings of male employees and of female employees as a percentage of average monthly earnings of male employees.

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (ILO) official sources.

Young women continue to be vulnerable to domestic violence, according to research conducted by UNFPA Russia. Somewhat shockingly it points to the fact that almost 100% of those surveyed, whether women or men, had come into contact with domestic violence in the family at some point, whether by their own direct experience or through the reported experience of others. In specific relation to young people, it was noted that while very few couples will go to a marriage or relationship counsellor to receive support for overcoming violence in the couple, those who do tend to be young couples (between the ages of 25 – 30 years). It is possible to infer that young people might be more inclined to discuss such issues with someone outside the family than their elders, pointing to potential gains with generational change. **Public information and education campaigns and the institution of an accessible and publicly visible support and care infrastructure for the victims of domestic violence, especially women and children, are urgently needed in Russia.**

Earlier research on the gendered experience of youth by Pilkington and colleagues from the mid-1990s points to the fact that issues such as the resurgence of masculinity, problems of female employment and employability, the absence from any scholarship of the experience of rural women, issues of “equality” and “difference” in relation to femininity and sexuality, reproductive health and fertility, and the pervasiveness of oppression and violence towards women have been on the table for a decade or longer. The complex issue of young women's involvement in youth (male dominated) sub-cultural groups and movements as having both emancipatory and subjugating value is an issue that would require attention once more, given the number of young people living on the street.¹⁷⁴

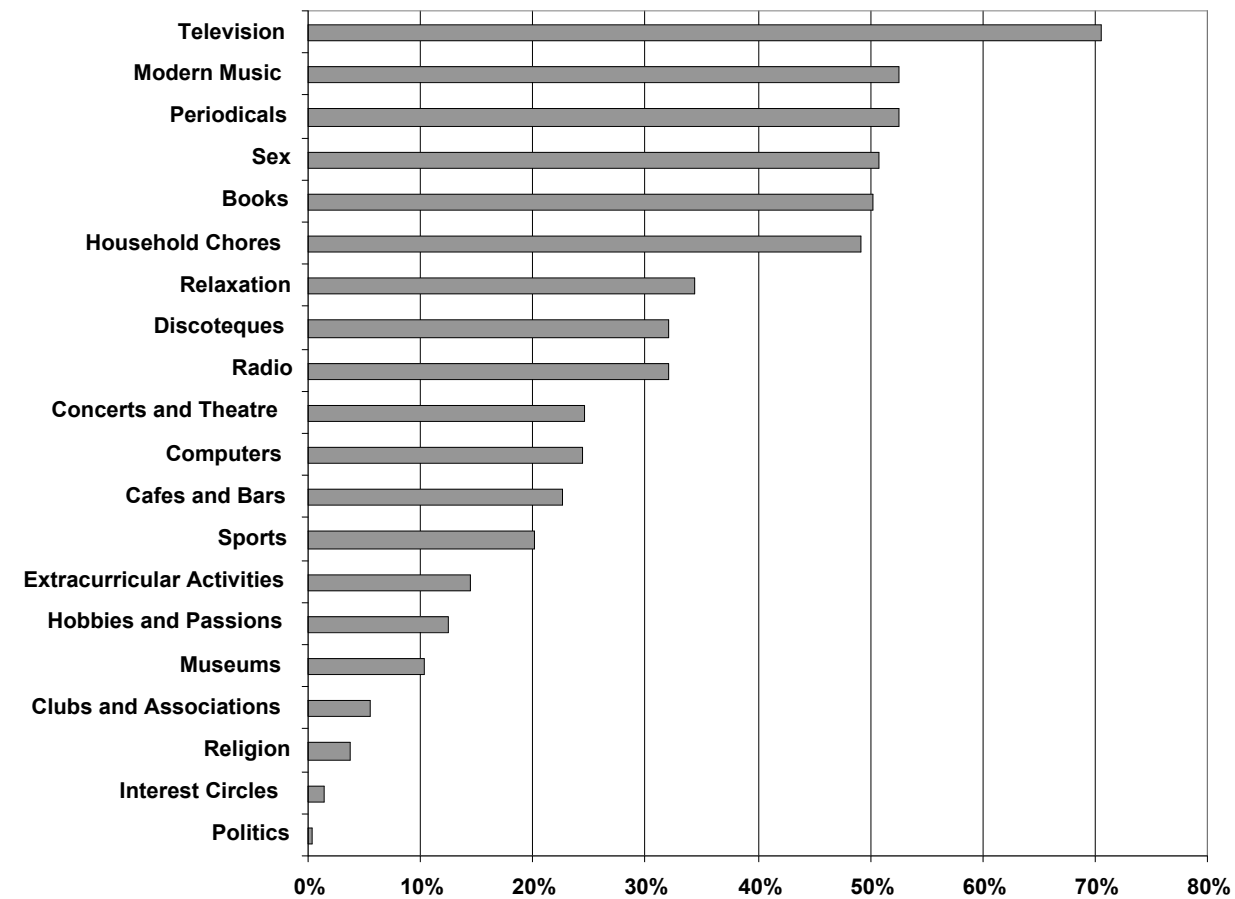
¹⁷³ Vovk, E., [Gender Inequality and Women's Role in Contemporary Russia](#), op. cit.

¹⁷⁴ Hilary Pilkington (ed.), [Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia](#), op. cit.

C/ CREATIVE USE OF LEISURE, ACCESS TO LEISURE

Again, surprisingly little literature was found about the way in which young people in Russia use their leisure time, and certainly, no comprehensive study on this theme has been published recently, and this despite the fact that quite a lot of attention has been given to the theme of young people's consumption and differing forms of civic and voluntary engagement (that literature is covered in Part III). As an indicator, empirical research from the early-2000s points to the following distribution of the use of leisure time by young people.

Graph – Leisure Time Activities of Russian Youths, in Percent, 2001



Note: The survey invited multiple answers from respondents. As a result, percentages do not add up to 100.

Source: Federal Education Agency, Centre for Sociological Research, Russian Youth – Problems and Solutions, Moscow 2005.

New research conducted by the Fund for Public Opinion, points to the **increasing stratification of leisure time pursuits according to available spending money** – those with higher incomes can afford to spend their leisure

time in paid pursuits, such as going to discos, restaurants, bars and fitness clubs. Others, with less disposable cash, will spend their time at the library, in parks and in outdoor pursuits that do not necessarily cost money.¹⁷⁵

At the same time, **the formidable youth infrastructure that existed during the Soviet period and provided leisure time and sport opportunities to almost all young people has been superseded.** Ideological content bias aside, behind this infrastructure lay a clear conception of the role and position of young people in society and a strong vision of what youth policy should do. As in many spheres in post-Communist societies, many of the relevant and functional aspects of the old system have become discredited or been disregarded and fallen into disrepair, although some youth movements and organisational structures have survived.¹⁷⁶ The market seems to have stepped in where the state has stepped out. Young people certainly have more choice with regard to entertainment and even mobility (although contemporary European visa regimes have once again limited youth mobility from Russia) but with the market, access to leisure has become a matter of consumption, a matter of the financial capacity of young people. This has created forms of stratification that are new for society, but with which young people themselves have nevertheless grown up.

In relation to access to leisure, Zuev explores practices of free travelling among young people in contemporary Russia. Free travelling is seen by young people as an approach for dealing with spatial exclusion, and helps to understand how young people struggle with the information, financial and physical limitations. According to Zuev

“... Free-travelling ... helps us to see that gaining access is a way to negotiate power ... Access entails struggle and ... a young person goes through a self-proof and a proof-to-the-others procedure. **Free travelling may be one of the spheres within reach of Russian young people without higher education or extensive family’s financial resources, where they can demonstrate their grown-up status and independence.** The practice of free-travelling supplies young people with an alternative channel besides the financial or educational spheres where they can achieve social recognition ... In its knowledge economy aspect, free-travelling ... supports a meritocracy principle and separates itself from the principle of patriarchy, where age is the ultimate power resource”.¹⁷⁷

An important aspect of the leisure and access debate is the digital reality of young people. It is fashionable to discuss the digital, plugged-in nature of contemporary young people’s lives but little scholarship is available on this subject. According to Svnarenko, two main factors slowed down the information boom in Russia: the economic crisis during the first part of the 1990s and the fact that the older generations who remained in political and economic power grew up and lived in conditions of severe restrictions on the transmission of information.¹⁷⁸ Certainly the Russian authorities see the enhancement of the digital competence of young people as a priority, with

¹⁷⁵ See the leisure time pursuits of the different social types of young people outlined above; Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.

¹⁷⁶ The National Youth Council of Russia, a platform of youth organisations, includes 41 all-Russian and inter-regional organisations and 32 regional youth councils; see www.youthrussia.ru.

¹⁷⁷ The author conceptualises free-travelling as a spatial practice, that is as a set of techniques, allowing young people to gain access to foreign space and in foreign space (foreign here does not necessarily refer to abroad); see Zuev, Dennis, [The Practice of Free-Travelling: Young People Coping with Access in Post-Soviet Russia](#), *Young Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, vol. 16, no. 5, 2008, p. 22.

¹⁷⁸ Svnarenko, Arseniy, [Conquering Space and Mobilising the Nation: the specifics of the use of information technologies by the young generation of Russians](#), *Forum* 21, no. 9, 2007, pp. 154 – 162.

computer literacy conceptualised as a value in the new economic reality, developing and implementing large-scale programs to enhance e-learning. **Computers and access to Internet are certainly becoming more affordable, and mobile telephones have become extensively widespread among young people in Russia, but traditional social stratification still determines the digital divide in most countries, Russia included and especially in rural areas.**¹⁷⁹ Authors such as Garza point to the importance of specific non-*Popsa*¹⁸⁰ youth media that deal in a more or less profound manner with youth issues. In Garza's words

“ ... Magazines such as *Pluch* and *OM* promote a culture of Russian youth that is fashionable, intelligent and decidedly upwardly mobile. Both magazines depict the urban youth scene through reviews of films, books, clubs and restaurants as well as of politicians and contemporary writers ... In 2005, a new 24 hour cable channel *O2 TV* was inaugurated, catering exclusively to young Russians. The channel, which is available in more than 160 Russian cities and has 14 million subscribers warns its viewers ‘You are what you watch’. It operates in tandem with a sophisticated interactive website (www.02tv.ru) ... There is a steady increase in the use of popular media directed at provoking the political consciousness.”¹⁸¹

Lonkila and Gladarev, write about cell phones and young people's social networks in contemporary Russia. Cell-phone use has not replaced face-to-face communication in Russia, but is used for preparing future meetings and coordinating mutual interaction or maintaining one's personal network. Cell-phones have also **introduced a degree of privacy and emancipation that for young people was previously difficult to achieve in conditions of shared or family accommodation.** Nevertheless, Russian sociability may suffer by the overbearing attention received by cell-phone communication and the cell-phone has created new opportunities for social control between parents and children, spouses or partners in relationships.¹⁸²

It has also become popular to study if and how ICT are vectors of enhanced political awareness of young people. Internet activism did develop fast in the early 2000s and blogging remains popular, despite increased controls on “critical” or “political” Internet.¹⁸³ Ssynarenko argues that the potential for social networking represented by ICT in a country as vast as Russia is having an influence on young people's conceptions of nation, state and citizenship:

“The development of ICT and mass communication technologies in Russia has also had a consolidating impact on Russian national identity ... for many Russian young people the concept of nation and patriotism today are less about the state, and more about “Mother Russia”, “*Otchestvo*” (Fatherland), “*Rodina*” (Motherland) – a cultural community, a cultural territory of Russians which is larger than the administrative borders of the Russian state. At the same time, an important part of patriotism in Russia is the “Great *Derzhava*/State” which through Internet and electronic Mass Media is being popularised among Russian-speaking Diasporas in neighbouring countries, thereby shaping

¹⁷⁹ Navas-Sabater, Juan, [Extending the reach of the Information Society beyond Moscow and St. Petersburg: policies and incentive mechanisms for universal access](#), presentation given in the Global Knowledge Russia Conference, Moscow, 9 December, 2002; Centre for Democracy and Technology, [Bridging the Digital Divide: Internet Access in Central and Eastern Europe](#).

¹⁸⁰ The Russian denomination for trashy pop music.

¹⁸¹ Garza, Thomas J., [Conservative Vanguard? The Politics of New Russia's Youth](#), op. cit.

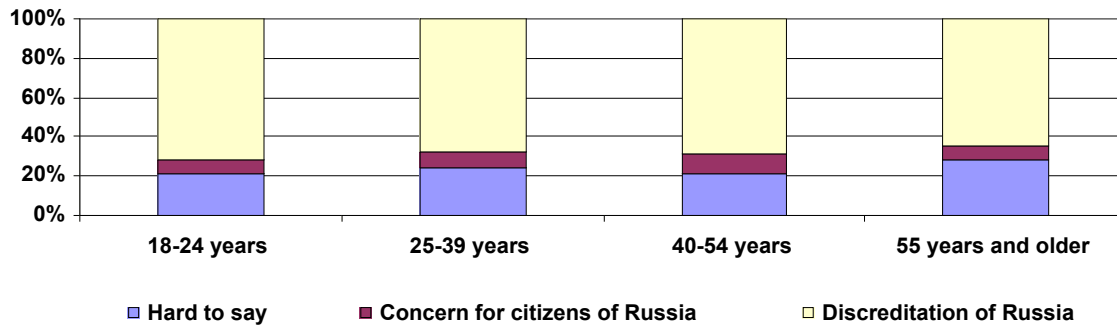
¹⁸² Lonkila, Markku, and Gladarev, Boris, [Social Networks and Cellphone Use in Russia: Local Consequences of Global Communication Technology](#), *New Media & Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2008, pp. 273 – 293.

¹⁸³ [Putin wants control of Russian Internet](#), *European Digital Rights*, 7 November 2007; [Kremlin eyes internet control](#), *The Guardian*, 3 January 2008; [Russian prosecutor wants Internet control](#), *BarentsObserver.com*, 22 June 2007; Heller, Regina, and Fossato, Floriana, [Social Movements and the State in Russia](#), *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 50, November 2008.

notions of “them” and “us”¹⁸⁴.

But, little is known about the relationship of young Russians to their Russian-speaking peers living in the former Soviet republics of the near abroad, beyond the highly mediatised case of the removal of a Soviet World War II memorial in Tallinn in 2007.¹⁸⁵ It is well known that young people who get involved in this kind of action are a tiny minority and generally belong to the nationalist fringe. At the same time there is an increasing sense of young people in Russia being attracted to nationalist ideals. Recent survey based research points to fear among young people of Western intentions, although it is less pronounced than for people older than 55.

Graph – Perceptions of Western Intentions vis-à-vis Russia, by Age Groups, 2008



Note: Answers to the question “What do you think, are Western accusation of violations of democracy in Russia motivated by concerns over the situation of citizens in our country, or are they rather launched with the aim of discrediting our country and of achieving some advantage over it?”

Source: Public Opinion Bulletin, No. 4 (96), July-August 2008. Survey conducted in July 2008.

Some mention of young people’s relationship with the idea of a “greater Russia” is made in the literature reviewed in Part III. **But, more research would be warranted, both in relation to the possible ICT “how” of young people’s national identity formation and in relation to its very content.**¹⁸⁶

D/ YOUNG PEOPLE’S PERCEPTION OF THEIR OWN SITUATION

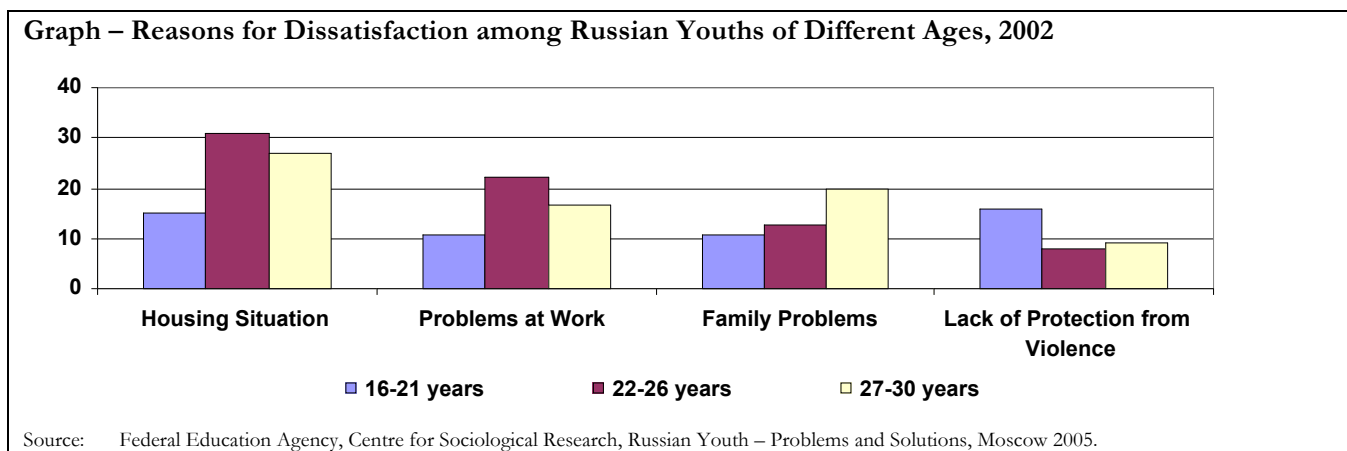
If young people are rarely asked about their experience of their gender, they are even more rarely surveyed on their experience of being young. Rather the tendency, especially in domestic research has been to write about what young people do, how they behave and what their preferences are. It may seem like a nuance, but surveying the values and preferences of young people at a given moment in relation to key social themes (typically of late: religion, patriotism, the market economy and entrepreneurship) is not the same as asking them how they feel about being young in that given moment with all its social, political, cultural and economic specificities. What little research was found on the way young people see the youth experience points to **young people being neither significantly**

¹⁸⁴ Svynarenko, Arseniy, [Conquering Space and Mobilising the Nation: the specifics of the use of information technologies by the young generation of Russians](#), op. cit.

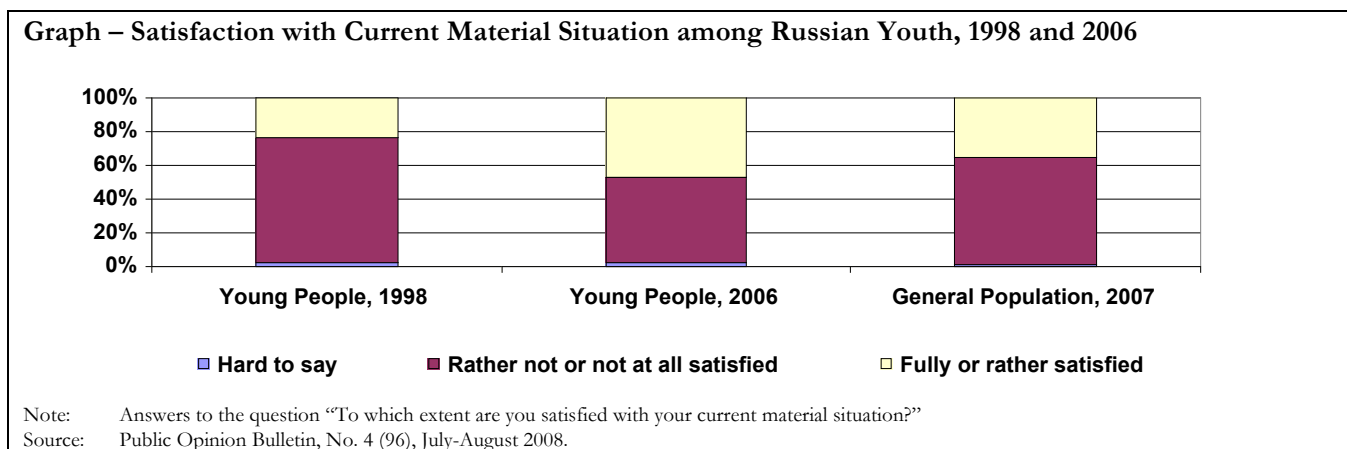
¹⁸⁵ In April 2007, disputes broke out between Estonian and Russophone communities, as well as between Estonia and the Russian Federation, over the relocation of a World War II memorial, the Bronze Soldier, in Tallinn. The controversy peaked in two nights of riots in Tallinn and the besieging of the Estonian embassy in Moscow for a week; see [Estonia removes Soviet memorial](#), BBC News, 27 April 2007; [Soviet Memorial Causes Rift between Estonia and Russia](#), Spiegel Online, 27 April 2007; [The Tõnismäe Second World War Memorial](#), Estonia Today, April 2007; [Russian delegation lays wreath at WWII memorial in Tallinn](#), RIA Novosti, 9 May 2007.

¹⁸⁶ Zorkaya, Natalia, Contemporary Youth: On the Problem of Defective Socialisation, op. cit.

satisfied nor significantly dissatisfied with their lot. In fact, a large degree of self-reliance is found in young people's attitudes towards who should be responsible for solving their problems and overarching pragmatism.¹⁸⁷ For example, survey based data from 2002, paints the following picture of satisfaction / dissatisfaction among young people in general.



And, comparative data for 1998 and 2006 specifically on satisfaction with the material situation points to the following picture.



Further a study from 2007 and the results so far available from the “New Generation – Generation XXI” study conducted by the Fund for Public Opinion (2008) point to the **evolution of youth values, at least in relation to considerations such as education, work life and the conception of success, in the direction of pragmatism and materialism.** Sokolov, however, warns against generalisations. While admitting that the generally positive, but

¹⁸⁷ Roberts, K., Osadchaya, G., Dsuzev, I., Khasan, V., Gorodyanenko, Victor G., and Tholen, J., [Economic Conditions, and the Family and Housing Transitions of Young Adults in Russia and Ukraine](#), Journal of Youth Studies, vol. 6, no. 1, March 2003, pp. 71 – 88; Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.

not-uncritical, assessments of their own generation by the young people surveyed are necessarily subjective, the author **rejects assertions that all young people “share certain common vices”**.¹⁸⁸

CONCLUSION

At the same time as concern over the condition of young people is certainly warranted, public concern (in ordinary society as well as in politics) has come to be expressed not so much over those difficult circumstances in which young people make the transition to adulthood, but over young people’s negative or anti-social behaviour, seen as “out of control”. **There has been a significant stigmatisation of Russian young people’s behaviour.** In popular discourse they are portrayed as being in bad health, dependent on drugs, drunk, violent and criminal, as spreading HIV with their promiscuous behaviour, as socially passive, as not knowing the meaning of responsibility, as caring only about “making a buck” and as having become too materialistic and individualistic and not being patriotic enough. Interestingly, several of these traits, notably being materialistic and individualistic are considered Western or at least, in the popular mythology of Russian uniqueness, as non-Russian.¹⁸⁹ Of course, such opinions are largely held by older people, who compare their vague memories of how they behaved (had to behave) during their youth years (under Soviet Communism) to the behaviour of today’s youngsters and young adults with sheer horror. Blum candidly sums up the *Zeitgeist* in the following terms,

“... (There is) anxiety that Russia was truly on the verge of losing a generation, which in turn spawned a state-led effort to rectify the problems of youth.¹⁹⁰ ... According to one typical report, nothing less than the very fate of Russia itself was at stake, in as much as the younger generation ‘grows within itself the shape of the future’, and yet is also especially likely to make ‘erroneous choices’.¹⁹¹

In European youth research literature two main lines of thought refer to youth crisis. In the first, young people are understood as causing social discord and as being at the origin of social problems facing modern societies – urban gang violence, crime and terrorism being among the most popular – and, therefore, as an inherent security threat. In the second, young people are seen as being disproportionately negatively affected by the existence of social problems that cause them legitimate grievance, such as drugs, poverty or unemployment. In this line of thought, young people’s tendencies towards rebellion and even violence can partially be explained by their marginalisation and sense of alienation from society.¹⁹² Different as these may be they have one important feature in common.

Arguments that refer to youth crisis, however, inherently underestimate the agency of young people.

Widespread concern that “something must be done” to bring young people back into the fold of normal development, lest society as we know it collapse, has been a strong motivator for the emergence of coherent and

¹⁸⁸ Sokolov, A.V., [Intellectual and Moral Differences Among Today’s College Students](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 48, no. 9, September 2006, pp. 43–59.

¹⁸⁹ Blum, Douglas W., [Russian Youth Policy: Shaping the Nation State’s Future](#), SAIS Review, vol. XXVI, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2006, pp. 95 – 108; Blum, Douglas W., [Current Trends in Russian Youth Policy](#), op. cit.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ The “Youth Doctrine of Russia”, article 1.1, as quoted in Blum, Douglas W., [Russian Youth Policy: Shaping the Nation State’s Future](#), op. cit., p. 98.

¹⁹² Ohana, Yael et al., [“Counting on Youth” - Youth Policy Review, Europe and Central Asia](#), Moscow: UNFPA, 2007 (login: est, password: welcome).

resourced youth policies in several countries. It has also been the gateway through which international development agencies have been able to gain acceptance on the part of governments for their active contribution to youth policy development. The youth crisis tone in the discourse in Russia has pushed youth issues up the political agenda. Nevertheless, there has been a lot of what can only be called “moral panic” over the appearance of a seeming youth crisis in Russia. Young people, as a population, have (in the opinion of this author) unjustly got a bad reputation in Russia. How much of this has to do with the angst and projections of older people who were used to young people being spoken to but not heard, discussed as if they were not there, and now cannot cope with the new conditions of relative freedom in which young people may express themselves, is difficult to assess. This is probably because **the real extent of the problems that young people are objectively challenged by – drunkenness, excessive smoking, suicide, HIV, crime and violence and educational failure, to name but a few – is simply not well enough documented.** The diversity and richness of the research on the situation and condition of youth reviewed notwithstanding, and without wishing to underestimate the huge task involved in the elaboration of such, comprehensive empirical studies have tended to be based on data that is between five and ten years old at the time of writing and its comparability is problematic, limiting the contemporary policy relevance of the conclusions drawn. The more up to date data presented in the graphs and tables in this chapter points to a much more differentiated picture of the youth condition and reality. It seems only to be a minority of young people who are “out of control” and while certain sub-groups of young people are extremely vulnerable, these still represent a small proportion of Russian young people. It is well known that young people do not form a homogenous community. Even on the basis of up to date research it is problematic to draw hard and fast and comprehensive conclusions about what young people “are like” and, therefore, how policy should address their needs.

In relation, then, to how to overcome the lack of up to date and relevant data on which to base policy making for youth needs, a multiplication of studies is probably not the answer. **A more integrated and coordinated approach to the elaboration of empirical studies of the condition of youth between federal authorities, specialised research institutes nationally and in the regions, relevant elements of the non-governmental sector and international organisations with development aims would be required.** It would certainly be **advisable (and a good use of work already done) to work from existing formats,** such as the experimental “youth development index” referred to above to take just one example. According to officials at Rosstat, the national statistical authority, it is in a position to extract specific youth statistics (aggregated for the Federation or disaggregated for the regions) on request from the relevant ministerial authorities. Interestingly, the time lag between collection and processing is only 6 to 18 months.¹⁹³ Further, while focusing on the “condition of youth” allows researchers to remain independent of politics, it also means that research does not take a stand on important issues. **Researching the experience of being young in combination with the condition of youth can provide a more holistic picture of youth needs and potential policy priorities.**

¹⁹³ Interview with Rosstat responsables in the Department for Population Statistics, Moscow, June 2008.

As such the overriding implications for this author of the literature reviewed in this chapter are that:

- some problems disproportionately badly affect some young people, so it is necessary to find out more about the extent and pervasiveness of these problems in the overall youth population and among specific groups seen to be vulnerable or disproportionately badly affected – **what is certainly missing remains a full-spectrum baseline study on all aspects of the youth condition using one methodological approach and primary level data;**
- the regional realities of young people are not visible enough in empirical research conducted to date and should be prioritised in new research initiatives;
- young people in difficult situations are themselves often well aware of the most appropriate approaches for facing up to and overcoming their difficulties – they would need better-targeted support and attention to manage the process independently – and should be included in policy making efforts;
- **evaluation of the implementation of specific youth policies and sectoral policies directed at young people is required if their effectiveness is to be improved.**

One further conclusion can be drawn in relation to “youth crisis” in Russia. If there is one area in which young people might be considered in crisis it is health. The indication is that the health situation of young people will not immediately improve without significant interventions. Youth policy is not about youth health *per se*. It is, however, about supporting the health sector to take youth health needs and concerns into account in their reform process. **At the current time, such cross-sectoral synergies do not seem to be systematic. This is certainly an area where the technical assistance of international organisations and the experience of other countries that have had to deal with similar challenges would be useful. Facilitating this kind of synergy fits well with United Nations mandates and higher order goals of ensuring human rights and dignity.**

PART III: RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS OR AGENTS OF DE-STABILISATION? YOUTH AS A POLITICAL FORCE

INTRODUCTION

The Russian transition has been accompanied by heated debates about how the new generation, many of whom were not even born, let alone educated, under Soviet Communism, would accept their role as citizens of a democratic state. The idea of the time it takes to develop a democratic political culture is encapsulated in this famous quote from Lord Ralf Dahrendorf:

“The formal process of constitutional reform takes at least six months; a general sense that things are looking up as a result of economic reform is unlikely to spread before six years have passed; the third condition of the road to freedom is to provide the social foundations which transform the constitution and the economy from fair-weather into all-weather institutions capable of withstanding the storms generated within and without, and sixty years are barely enough to lay these foundations.”¹⁹⁴

Transitions away from authoritarianism to the market economy and electoral politics have not necessarily meant that democracy has taken hold – examples of this can be found all over the world. The difference between the so-called “procedural minimum” for democracy and the spirit of the system (that values above all the active participation of citizens and the accountability of political elites) is quite large. The so-called democratic deficit is to be observed in many political systems – including in the European Union – and this has inspired major discussions about how to bring the political system closer to the people and inspire their active participation. In many post-Communist states this continues to be a big dilemma. **Young people openly reject the kind of ritualistic participation that was forced on young people under Communism today.** They, rightly or wrongly, associate it with formal politics choosing to stay away. Voting is absolutely not attractive but is both a key responsibility and right of democratic citizenship, one of the few formalised mechanisms of participation afforded the citizen in the decision making process, the regular use of which is considered essential to learning how to be a citizen. European youth research documents the ways in which young people’s participation in society and, therefore, active citizenship (in the sense of their contribution to society in some form or another) is changing – moving away from formalised groupings such as youth political parties and membership based youth organisations and morphing in the direction of temporary, non-formal, associations of young people with a similar concern or cause. Some would say, a retreat out of the public sphere, politics and contestation and into civil society or even the private sphere.¹⁹⁵

In Russia, the general absence of young people from the public sphere during the transition and their seeming total withdrawal from political activity during the 1990s created widespread concern. Important national figures asked

¹⁹⁴ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1990, pp. 99 – 100.

¹⁹⁵ For example, the papers presented at the Research Seminar “Young People and Active European Citizenship” organised by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Directorate of Youth and Sport in the field of youth at the European Youth Centre Budapest from 23 – 25 November 2006, including: Barber, “‘Choice, Voice and Engagement’ – An Exploration of Models and Methods which Promote Active Youth Citizenship in the new Europe”, Ehs, “Civic Concern: European Identity beyond Emotions and Metaphysics: An Argument Against Mythification”, Dobberneck, “European Citizenship between Patriotic Sentiments and Universal Rights”, and Wenzlaff, “Youth, Culture, Negotiation and Politics”, publication forthcoming; Forbrig, Joerg (ed.), *Revisiting Youth Political Participation. Challenges for Research and Democratic Practice in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2005.

how this apathy ridden, uncaring, politically and socially incompetent generation would lead the nation, the state, out of poverty and into prosperity. In the 2000s, the picture changed a lot. All of a sudden, young people were all over politics. But, this has not been universally interpreted as positive for Russian democracy.¹⁹⁶

The rise to prominence of highly active, visible and disciplinarian youth organisations (most notably *Nashi*) in support of then incumbent President Vladimir Putin, and the phenomenon it represents, poses a challenging dilemma.¹⁹⁷ It is certainly positive that so many young people have regained their confidence and wish to participate actively in the society. However, many people at home and abroad feel uncomfortable with the approach of organisations such as *Nashi* to the personage of former President Putin. Although a highly contested and much denied allegation, such organisations have been accused of harassment (and even physical violence) against people they consider enemies of Russia.¹⁹⁸ Further complicating the situation is that top activists in such organisations were given positions of relative importance in President Putin's government. A clear relationship between support for the Presidential majority and key jobs in government is problematic when the activists concerned are not members of a political party who subject themselves to election.¹⁹⁹ Scholars of transition to democracy have researched the double-edged effects of civil society, noting that some forms of civil society activity can even lead to the end of democracy.²⁰⁰ It is challenging for Russian democracy and civil society that its youth generation's re-awakening to politics has taken the form either of radicalisation or of political cooptation.

Others take an alternative view and point to the fact that though some elements of continuity with Russia's authoritarian past continue to shape contemporary Russian political culture, the last twenty years of social, political and economic transformation have created equally far-reaching changes in the approach of Russians to politics.

“Russians’ experiences of “democracy” during the tumultuous years of transition may be another factor in the reformulation of their subjective feelings towards politics. It is still difficult to say how the events of the last twenty years have really affected Russian political culture, but in conclusion two points can be tentatively put forward. Firstly, the experience of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* has given expression to elements, which were to some extent already present in Soviet Russians. Secondly, the disillusionment and trauma of the 1990s may have enhanced the people's need for stability as human beings, not necessarily, as authority-loving Slavs.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Heller, Regina, and Fossato, Floriana, [Social Movements and the State in Russia](#), op. cit.; Dzieciolowski, Zygmunt, [The future's ours: Russia's youth activists](#), openDemocracy, 19 January 2008; Waldermann, Anselm, [Russian Youth and the Putin Cult](#), Spiegel Online, 11 February 2007; Diuk, Nadia, [The Next Generation in Russia and Ukraine: Agents of Change?](#), op. cit.; Orttung, Robert W., [Russia](#), in: Nations in Transit 2008, op. cit.

¹⁹⁷ Although this has been denied and remains highly contested, it is almost certain that Nashi has received significant support directly from the Kremlin during President Putin's time in power. See: Heller, Regina, and Fossato, Floriana, [Social Movements and the State in Russia](#), op. cit.

¹⁹⁸ In April and May 2007, Nashi members held daily protests in front of the Estonian embassy in Moscow in protest of the moving of the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn to a military cemetery (fn. 59); [Youth activists say Estonian Embassy siege in Moscow over](#), RIA Novosti, 4 May 2007.

¹⁹⁹ Heller, Regina, and Fossato, Floriana, [Social Movements and the State in Russia](#), op. cit.; Dzieciolowski, Zygmunt, [The future's ours: Russia's youth activists](#), op. cit.; Waldermann, Anselm, [Russian Youth and the Putin Cult](#), op. cit.

²⁰⁰ For a typology of civil society's blessings and curses for democracy, see Forbrig, Joerg, [A Source of Democratic Legitimacy? Civil Society in East Central Europe](#), original paper presented at the conference entitled “The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: New Approaches in Graduate Studies”, held in St. Anthony's College Oxford, 24 – 26 May, 2002.

²⁰¹ Denton, Alexandra, [Russian Political Culture Since 1985](#), Vestnik, issue 5, fall 2006.

So while it might be tempting to explain youth conservatism through the lens of inherited political culture, none of the above can plausibly be considered to be a uniquely Russian phenomenon.

Nation and state building require the inculcation of national values in the citizens who will perpetuate the system. Young people are crucial to nation and state building efforts; they will carry on the political tradition being formed. It cannot be denied that **a large number of young people identify with the “New Russia”, in which materialism and individualism rule, but one where Russian values and Russianness also have pride of place.** But, here begins the contradiction. Many Russians consider materialism and individualism as non-Russian. Russianness is also associated with Orthodoxy, Slavic ethnicity and heterosexuality. How does the Russian state deal with this contradiction between the pragmatic and romantic in its relationship with the young people it would like to inculcate into national values? And what do “national values” mean for young people? How do they understand citizenship? What is the political culture of young people in Russia? The process referred to as “hybridisation” by Blum, developed upon above, in which young people and the different socialisation agencies dealing with young people find ways to negotiate these contradictions, with some intriguing results, is a useful concept for the analysis of the ways in which values, citizenship and national identity take shape among young people in Russia today.

A/ VALUES AND CITIZENSHIP

A rich literature about the value orientations, political and social culture and citizenship of young people has developed since the early 2000s. Research interest has increased with at least one large-scale study coming on stream just at the time of the writing of this review, in October/ November 2008. The volume of available literature was extensive (see Long Bibliography, section on Citizenship). The selection presented here can, therefore, be considered representative of the overall spectrum of concerns that are part of the debate on youth values. It presents quite a mixed picture, often depending on whether research is based on primary or secondary sources, and sometimes on the moral position of the author.

Empirical analysis of the internal structure of the transition generation, born during *Perestroika*, shows that there have been abrupt and dynamic changes in the distribution of social roles between its members. According to Lisauskene, this is a **generation of independent and purpose-driven individualists who are devoted to communicative freedom, “romantics” of consumption, emancipated, self-assured and ambitious.** Clearly this view presents an alternative and contrasting view to that of many of the crisis researchers reviewed in Part II.

It fits with the idea of young Russians embracing materialist and pragmatic values, something that is also considered explanatory of Putin’s popularity among so many young people.²⁰² His election to the presidency in 2000 resulted also from the strong support he received among young voters, especially in the urban centres. Aged 48 and

²⁰² Lisauskene, M. V., [The Next Generation: Pragmatic Perfectionists or Romantics of Consumption](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 4, April 2007, pp. 76 – 86.

physically fit, Putin attracted youth with the promise of a new forward-looking leadership, one that not only understood but embraced Russian energy and entrepreneurship. But, Putin was not only popular among Russian youth. In Garza's opinion, his **policies in relation to the war in Chechnya, as well as Islamic terrorism in Russia, polarised youth opinion** into two ideologically opposed groups: anti-war and, therefore, anti-presidential majority liberals and pro-presidential majority and pro-war nationalists. Simplistic as this classification may seem if one compares it to the more sophisticated expressions of values outlined in survey based studies reviewed below, Garza nevertheless makes a convincing argument about how the so-called *neformaly* (or informal groups of young people that appeared with the liberalisation of the *Glasnost* period) and which were largely anti-political, focusing on style, music and the youth experience, have morphed into other kinds of political and social organism, with political expressions, including anti-war activism. These groups, implicitly bound up with the evolution of youth lifestyles and sub-cultures, were extensively studied during the 1990s, and would once again warrant attention.²⁰³

Three comprehensive and recent survey-based studies on the issue of youth values have been undertaken by different research actors in Russia in 2006, 2007 and 2008, demonstrating the growth in interest in the value orientations of young people. Research Group Zirkon (a commercial research provider) evaluated the **political activity and participation of young Russians aged from 16 to 24** in 2006. Zirkon's survey focused on issues such as interest in politics, political activism and participation and protest activity.²⁰⁴

Table – Interest among Russian Youths in Membership of Political Parties or Youth Organisations

	July 2005	March 2006
I would like to become a member	15	21
I would not like to become a member	76	69
I am already a member of a political party, youth political organisation	2	1
Hard to say	7	9

Source: Research Group ZIRKON, Socio-political activity of young people, selected sociological research results presented at the seminar "Politiya" 25 May 2006.

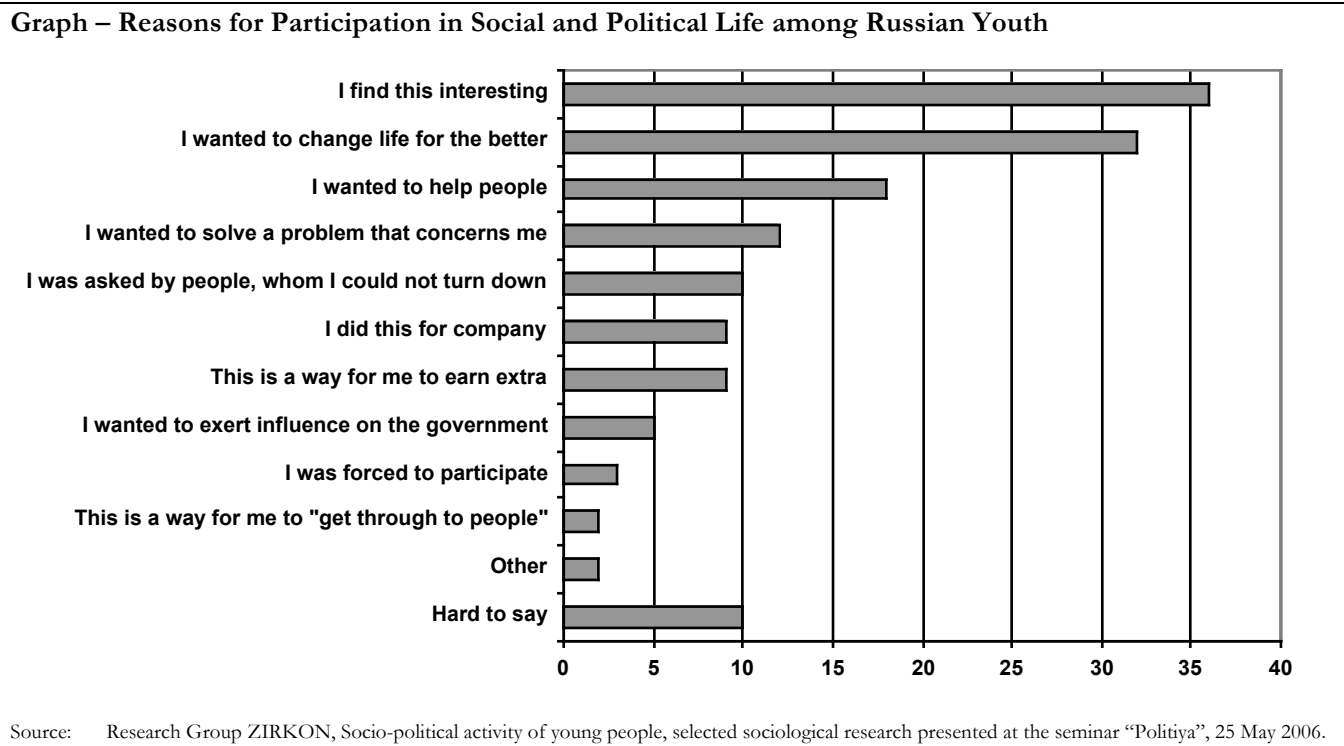
The results of this research show that young people are not interested in political parties, but that between July 2005 and March 2006 the trend was in change, with more youths becoming interested in joining a political party.

Answers on participation in social and political life show that interest in membership of a political party may not be the only measure of interest in political participation (see table below). The 2007 Friedrich Ebert Foundation study finds that 14% of young people are interested in politics and up to 20% try to keep themselves informed about the political process. Nevertheless, two thirds of the young people surveyed point to the fact that they have no interest in politics. This study points to the **broad and deep effects that "mass culture", in particular media, is having on young people and to the overall de-"ideologisation" of the Russian population, not just of young**

²⁰³ Garza, Thomas J., [Conservative Vanguard? The Politics of New Russia's Youth](#), op. cit.

²⁰⁴ The author received several products from the project to consult, as follows: Zirkon, [The Socio-Political Activity of Young People: Some Initial Results of a Research Project](#), Input to the seminar 'Polity' (in Russian), Moscow, 25 May 2006; Zirkon, [Value Orientations of Russian Youth: Ideological Declarations](#), op. cit.; Zirkon, Youth of Russia: Values, Opinions and Imaginations: Packet of Materials, December 2003.

people. It nevertheless, points out that a large number of young people do not know how to make their voice heard in political decision-making, and their absence from such processes should not be misinterpreted as passivity or as willing acquiescence.²⁰⁵ The “New Generation – Generation XXI” study conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation, and which at the time of writing had not been fully published, points to similar conclusions in relation to the life orientations of students and young people. It finds a **causal relationship between level of education and active interest or participation in political issues** – students of the more prestigious institutions of higher education are more likely to be inclined to be well informed about politics.²⁰⁶



One 2007 study characterises young people as entrepreneurs, maximalists (in terms of success), hard workers, family-types, hedonists or careerists. It further finds that young people between the ages of 17 and 26 have become more self-reliant, believing that if they wish to achieve something significant in their lives, whether professionally or in terms of social status, they will have to work hard for it themselves by improving their competence and knowledge, even if they acknowledge that the economic situation of the country significantly influences how far their efforts will be successful. The **“human potential” of young people is formed under the influence of where the young person grows up and the social capital they have access to. Young people who live in cities not only have a broader outlook but more chances to succeed than their counterparts living in rural**

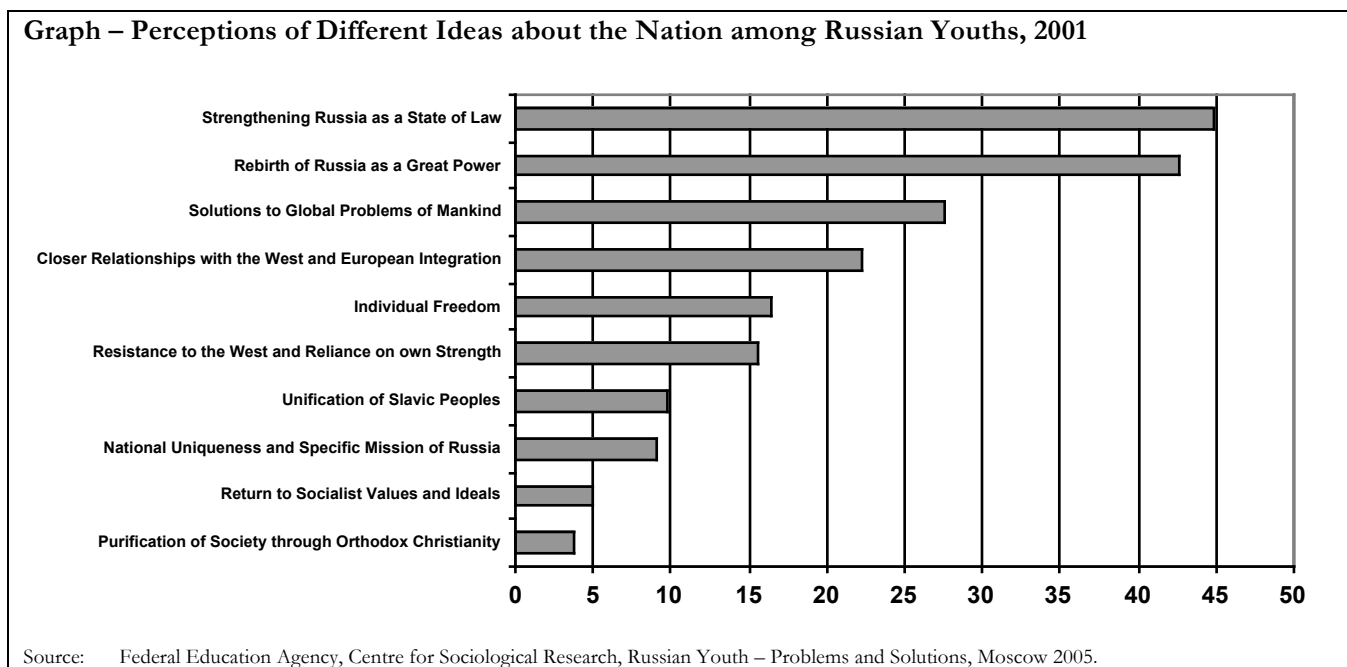
²⁰⁵ Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, *Young People in the New Russia: Lifestyles and Value Priorities*, op. cit., pp. 138 – 143.

²⁰⁶ This has been found to be the case in other countries and political traditions. See for example: Ritter, Jessica A, [A national study predicting licensed social workers' levels of political participation: the role of resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks](#), *Social Work*, October 2008. Other studies point to the crucial relationship between involvement in non-formal educational activities and participation in politics; see, for example, Kuenzi, Michelle T., *Non-formal Education, Political Participation, and Democracy: Findings from Senegal*, *Political Behaviour*, vol. 28, no. 1, March, 2006.

areas. Young people who have a good family situation, both in material and social terms, find it easier to make effective use of their human capital.

B/ IDENTITY, RELIGION, PATRIOTISM

The transition, in which Russians found themselves living in a different country, with a different name and a different political structure, brought with it fundamental questions about what can be considered Russian identity and what can be considered “otherness”. **Survey based research among students reveals that their conception of Russian state-citizenship and, therefore, of Russian identity, is linked with ideas of the strong state, a strong and technologically advanced army, the history of nation and state, the great past including victory in World War II, patriotism, the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of the population and the country’s place and position in the world.** Early research paints a slightly more differentiated picture.



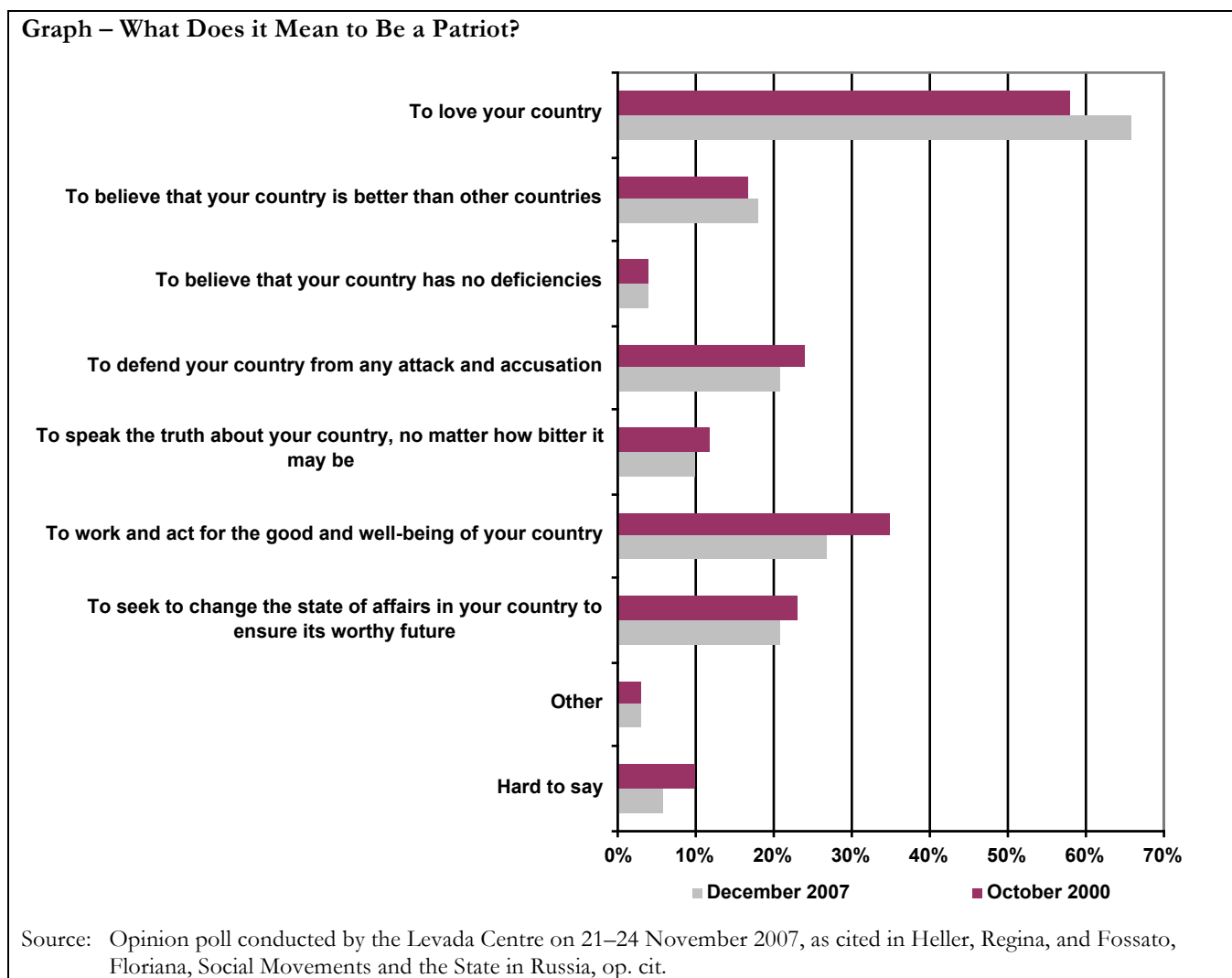
At the same time, according to recent research, most student-youths are neither ethno-centric nor xenophobic, recognising that Russia has a long history of multi-culturalism, although among those who do hold nationalistic and ethnocentric attitudes (along the lines of “Russia for the Russians”) anti-Westernism is also pervasive.²⁰⁷

An important dimension of the debate around youth values and citizenship in Russia has been the return of official religion. Russianness and Russian identity are commonly associated with Orthodoxy and a strong role has been accorded to the Russian Orthodox Church in some affairs of the Russian State. At the same time, Russia has a multi-religious population and many Russians have no religion at all, having embraced secularism and atheism.

²⁰⁷ Arutionova, E. M., [Russian Identity in the Imagination of Muscovite Students](#), Social Research (in Russian), no. 8, 2007.

According to some authors, the renaissance of religiousness in Russia notwithstanding, the quality of spiritual life has not improved. How do these developments play out in the identity of young people in Russia? On the basis of surveys conducted with students on aspects of religiousness such as trust in the institutions of the church, participation in religious services, adherence to responsible norms of behaviour, belief in God, “deviant” behaviour and views on widely accepted moral principles, Chrienko finds that **contemporary youth demonstrate dual discourse and behaviour when it comes to religious and moral dictates. Almost all young people do things, which in the eyes of their religious authorities are neither considered moral nor permitted. At the same time, they generally consider themselves believers, can differentiate between good and evil and believe that religion should play an important role in society.**²⁰⁸

Loyalty to country and nation, referred to as patriotism, is also a subject of concern for Russian citizens and authorities. Recent research points to the following understanding among the population of patriotism:



²⁰⁸ Chrienko, A. P., [Metamorphosis of the Religious Determination of Contemporary Youth](#), *Social Research* (in Russian), no. 7, 2007.

In Russia, an important marker of patriotism, both historically and today, has been service in the army. But, the dire conditions that conscripts face in the Russian army are well known, both at home and abroad. Peacetime deaths and casualties have been documented, the result of outdated and broken equipment, inadequately maintained ordinance and negligence among officers. Probably of most concern, though, are the cruel and inhuman “rites of passage” that the newest conscripts are put through by their comrades. Incidents in which conscripts have died or been maimed for life have been reported by Human Rights groups working on behalf of conscripts and the press.²⁰⁹ An increasing number of young men have demonstrated their unwillingness to serve in the army. Surveys conducted by the Ministry of Labour on demand for alternative service, which was introduced by Presidential decree in 2004, estimated that anywhere between 10,000 and 100,000 people would request alternative service per year. Sceptics, including conscripts’ rights organisations, point out the stipulation that civilian service will have to be served outside the home region of conscripts and as the army is the only organisation that can supply housing to those who want to do alternative service, the majority will be sent to military units to serve as civilian personnel. There has been some concern that those doing alternative service will, therefore, become the target of bullying.²¹⁰ No specific evaluation of the popularity of alternative service since its introduction was found, so it is not possible to judge the extent to which such concerns have been proven correct or incorrect.

Young people’s attitudes to military service are a point of concern for the authorities as it remains an important responsibility of citizenship for young men in Russia. According to Novik and Perednia positive ideas about the military among young people include that the uniform is attractive, being a soldier is about honour and decency and represents justice. Negative ideas about the military include that living and working conditions are poor, young recruits are “hazed” by older soldiers (*dedovshchina*) and one is separated from one’s family. **Based on their survey, about 30% of young people consider the military positively, negatively and neutrally, respectively. About 10% are specifically negative, and according to the authors, these are young people who intend to dodge the draft.** The scholarship found on young people’s attitudes to the armed forces, limited as it may be, demonstrates a negative bias towards young people who openly show their unwillingness to serve in the armed forces.²¹¹

Several authors point to the lack of explicit educational measures to inculcate a proper level of patriotism in young Russians. For example, Gavriliuk and Malenkov argue that young people today are endowed with some consciousness of “what it means to be a citizen” and are inclined towards patriotism and “love of country”. In their opinion, the **basic conditions for the establishment of civic education in schools are present, but teachers would need training to be able to implement it.**²¹²

²⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch, [The Wrongs of Passage: Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of New Recruits in the Russian Armed Forces](#), New York: Human Rights Watch, 2004.

²¹⁰ Fedyukhin, Igor, [No Alternatives: Experts say the law on alternative civilian service will not be popular](#), Vedomosti, 23 July 2003.

²¹¹ Novik, V. K., and Perednia, D. G., [The Image of Today’s Russian Armed Forces in the Eyes of Young People](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 50, no. 2, February 2008, pp. 45–58.

²¹² Gavriliuk, V. V., and Malenkov, V. V., Civic-Mindedness, Patriotism, and the Upbringing of Young People, Russian Education and Society,

C/ COMPETENCE FOR CITIZENSHIP

A key concern among responsible authorities has been the **question of the competence of young people to actively engage in their citizenship. This debate has often focused on “how to teach patriotism” and “Russian values” to young people through institutions of socialisation (primarily, schools)** rather than on the development of critical political and social literacy, the identification of the kinds of formal and non-formal educational activities that can serve this purpose or on the re-training of professional educationalists to conduct this work. As in the case of the section on “creative use of leisure time” in Part II, the scantiness of the literature on civic education in the civil society sector found during this review reveals a **general lack of attention to the area of non-formal education through voluntary and civil society activities.** At the same time, and as will be further explored below (under the section dealing with political and social participation of young people) it is well known that Russia has a vibrant sphere of social organisations, many of whom are providing civic education on a voluntary basis to young people at the local level. A body of literature that describes, rather than analysing, the political socialisation of Russians, among them young people, does exist. More general in nature, and focusing mostly on the formal side of political socialisation, it nevertheless offers some insights into the way the issue is seen in the research and political communities.

Sorokin, for example, argues that it is through institutional participation that young people develop an understanding of their and the society’s value orientations and learn to navigate the social and political landscape. Education on the principles of tolerance, responsibility and trust in the actions of the institutions of state facilitates the integration of young people into the political and social environment and their identification with generally accepted values and norms. Such education can also be a factor of stability in society. At the same time, **in the context of transformation, formalised socialisation mechanisms become weaker, opening the way for informal and spontaneous socialisation to influence the political awareness of young people.**²¹³ Konoda proposes that the process of political socialisation of Russians is not yet sufficiently developed. This may be because **young Russians are not sufficiently knowledgeable of their rights and opportunities for participation in the social/political life of the state, because they lack skills and opportunities to present and defend their own interests or because trust in the institutions of state and society remain weak.**²¹⁴

Another important element of competence for citizenship is knowledge of one’s legal status and of one’s rights. Questions may certainly be raised with regard to 1/ whether young people know their rights and 2/ how young people acquire that knowledge given the apparent lack of dedicated educational programmes for civic education. According to Zubok and Chuprov, the level of young people’s legal culture is one of the indicators of

vol. 50, no. 2, February 2008, pp. 31 – 44.

²¹³ Sorokin, Oleg, [The Characteristics of the Formation of Political Awareness of Contemporary Russian Youth](#), Vlast (in Russian), issue 8, 2007.

²¹⁴ Konoda, Iveta, [Political Socialisation in Contemporary Russian Society](#), Vlast (in Russian), issue 4, 2007.

their development. Young people's level of legal culture, as demonstrated by their level of information about their own rights and the extent to which they are legally protected, their knowledge of cases of violations of rights and the normative legal regulation of their everyday behaviour, tends towards liberalisation, at least in comparison to their less well informed Belarusian contemporaries.²¹⁵ Survey based research conducted by Gureva and Kopkareva on the values of student youth point to a **strong link between students' understandings of political and legal values and moral principles**. The students' assessments of legal acts and political practice stem from their accordance with ideas of what is just. Justice involves objectivity, clarity of legal interpretation, proportionate punishment, and a high level of legal order, for example. **The implication of this research is, therefore, that students have both an awareness and respect for the basic value of the rule of law.**²¹⁶ Nevertheless, a recent study of the social potential of young people in the Khabarovsk region points to young people not being strongly aware of their rights and the channels provided by local youth policy for actively defending them.²¹⁷ The 2007 study conducted by the Ebert Foundation also points to the disenfranchisement of young people from decision-making.

D/ CONDITIONS FOR CIVIC ACTIVISM

It is the natural role of civil society associations and organisations (among them youth organisations) to consider and evaluate the state of the youth condition and the actions of the government in relation to their issues of concern (whatever these may be – poverty, human rights, youth policy) as well as to voice criticisms and to demand rectification of problems or insufficiencies that may exist.²¹⁸ There has, therefore, been growing unease, both inside and outside the country, over the space available for associations to engage in activities which demonstrate an alternative opinion to those expressed by the “official line” on key issues of state concern. All the literature consulted on this theme, domestic and foreign, points to the fact that the **space for the enactment of civil society's watchdog and accountability functions over state power has been adversely affected by the recent changes to the legal and administrative provisions for civil society organisations**. For some kinds of organisation, and especially those concerned with the defence of human rights inside the country, the conditions for civic activism have visibly deteriorated.²¹⁹

The most conspicuous and the best-documented measure in this relation is the 2006 reform of the Russian legislation on the operation of Russian and foreign non-governmental organisations inside Russia. In April 2006 the

²¹⁵ Zubok, Iu. A., and Chuprov, V. I., [The Legal Culture of Young People from the Standpoint of Transformation Strategies](#), Russian Education and Society, vol. 49, no. 7, July 2007, pp. 73–91.

²¹⁶ Gureva, Liudmilla, and Kopkareva, Svetlana, [Legal and Political Values of Youth](#), Vlast (Russian), issue 3, 2008.

²¹⁷ Berezutski, I. V., The Specificity and Problems of the Formation of Youth Potential in the Region of Khabarovsk – An Analytical Description, op. cit., p. 43.

²¹⁸ In general terms, the role of civil society vis-a-vis democracy has been described in terms of several functions, including the control of state and political power, interest representation and mediation, political socialisation of citizens, integration of social and political communities, and delivery of specific public goods and services; for more detail, see Forbrig, Joerg, [A Source of Democratic Legitimacy? Civil Society in East Central Europe](#), op. cit. These roles are equally relevant in the youth field, albeit with a problem focus, institutional settings and manifestations specific to young people; for an overview, see Forbrig, Joerg (ed.), Revisiting Youth Political Participation. Challenges for Research and Democratic Practice in Europe, op. cit.

²¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, [Choking on Bureaucracy: State Curbs on Independent Civil Society Activism](#), New York: Human Rights Watch, 2008; Amnesty International, [Russian Federation: Freedom limited - the right to freedom of expression in the Russian Federation](#), 2008.

Russian government issued the first executive order to implement the new non-governmental organisation (NGO) legislation. This act was the first concrete step in realising the new regulations on registration and accountability procedures for Russian non-governmental organisations and their foreign donors. The first draft of this law was criticised by the international community and Russian civil society, after which it was amended in some respects. **Evaluations of the new law's implementation to date, point to the ambivalence of its measures, not least because official rhetoric is inconsistent with bureaucratic practice. The government has sought to justify the new law by referring to the fight against terrorism and money laundering. But, these evaluations argue that recent legislative and institutional measures have provided new ground for government scrutiny and control of any NGO working in Russia.**²²⁰ This conclusion is confirmed and critically underlined by Human Rights Watch which claims that organisations that work on controversial issues, that might be capable of galvanising public dissent or that receive foreign funding have become a target for deeper scrutiny.²²¹ Ananeva argues that in Russia today, the development of civil society is both difficult and controversial and raises fundamental questions about the direction of Russia's democratisation process. In her analysis, **the transformation of the political system in Russia has led to closer state control over civil society, as the state insists on a monopoly on political decisions, while it views civil society merely as a supportive element that implements state policies.**²²²

CONCLUSION

There has been a lot of speculation about the motivations of the Russian government to deliberately limit civil society.²²³ In relation to young people, this represents a complex problem. Some analysts consider that measures taken in relation to the conditions of civil society have been motivated by fear that a colour revolution, such as that that took place in Ukraine or Georgia, could take place in Russia.²²⁴ Young people and civil society were at the forefront of those revolutions, which swept away soft-authoritarian regimes.²²⁵ The extent to which young people are conceptualised as a destabilising political force and to which this translates into specific policies cannot be assessed other than speculatively, due to a lack of relevant research. The outside observer cannot, however, but question the extent to which the 2006 changes made to the legal arrangements regulating non-governmental organisational activity will have an effect on the free and voluntary participation of young people in civil society and in determining the policies that affect their lives. It is worrying that the **knock on effects of such measures include that many Russian youth organisations, and, therefore, young people will once more have**

²²⁰ Schmidt, Diana, and Vinogradov, Dmitry, [The Implementation of the New NGO Law](#), Russian Analytical Digest, no. 3 July 2006.

²²¹ EU-Russia Centre, [Russia and the Rule of Law](#), EU-Russia Review, issue 6, April 2008; and Orttung, Robert W., [Russia](#), in: Nations in Transit 2008, Budapest: Freedom House, 2008, pp. 495 – 518.

²²² Ananieva, Marina, [The Current State of Civil Society in Russia](#), Vlast (in Russian), no. 5, 2008, pp. 15 – 18.

²²³ Schmidt, Diana, and Vinogradov, Dmitry, [The Implementation of the New NGO Law](#), op. cit.; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, [On Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation](#), Analysis of Law no. 18, Budapest: ICNL, 2006; Dejevsky, Mary, [Russia's NGO law: the wrong target](#), openDemocracy, 15 December 2005.

²²⁴ Carothers, Thomas, [The Backlash against Democracy Promotion](#), Foreign Affairs, vol. 85, no. 2, March-April 2006.

²²⁵ Forbrig, Joerg, and Demes, Pavol (eds.), [Reclaiming Democracy. Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe](#), Washington: German Marshall Fund, 2007; Forbrig, Joerg (ed.), Revisiting Youth Political Participation. Challenges for Research and Democratic Practice in Europe, op. cit.

difficulty to take advantage of the international assistance that is due to them from foreign youth cooperation and exchange programmes and that many worthwhile activities will no longer be funded or be able to operate because they fall foul of the authorities.

E/ EXTREMIST YOUTH SUBCULTURES

There has also been concern about the emergence of extremist youth subcultures in Russia. The phenomenon of neo-Nazism and the emergence of skinhead movements in Russia has come as something of a shock, especially to older people with memories of the Second World War. But, these groups have been around and active since the early 1990s. By that time, research on youth subcultures had become quite popular, although it was more differentiated than it is today, focusing on more sub-cultures, including punks, rockers and some very specific Russian formations of the late Soviet and early transition period, such as the *Afgantsy* and *Liubery*.²²⁶ Since then, however, research interests seem to have narrowed and scholarship of sub-cultures has more and more focused on extremist youth sub-cultures, mainly skinheads.

In this relation, there is good cause for concern. There has been a marked rise in instances of violence against individuals and property motivated by racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance in Russia. According to Human Rights First, the number of violent hate crimes against individuals in Russia continues to grow steadily. In 2007 there were at least 667 victims of racially motivated violence, including 86 murders. Up to August 2008, 65 people were killed as a result of racial and other bias-motivated assaults.²²⁷ Lev Gudkov at the Levada Centre estimates that Russia is in a “pre-pogrom” condition.²²⁸ **Young people are often the ones who perpetrate the most violent acts of racism. These are not often acknowledged as such by the authorities, but passed off as minor misdemeanours without significant punishment.**²²⁹ According to several sources, neo-Nazi sympathisers, a significant number of which are young men, number 10,000 or more, forming up to 150 extremist organisations.²³⁰

Research shows that geopolitics plays an important role in this development in specific regions. The proximity of China and the immigration of workers from that country have become, and will remain, critical for the economy of the Eastern *rayons* of Russia. In a demographic situation where the local (Russian) population is steadily shrinking, Chinese immigration is inevitable and necessary, but this has yet to be understood by the broader society. According

²²⁶ *Liubery* were predominantly male young people from the Moscow suburb of *Liubertsy* and espoused a neo-fascist ideology based on the slogan “Russia for the Russians”. *Afgantsy* were young veterans returning from the Afghan war who became one of the most vocal opposition groups in the last years of the Soviet Union and a source of support for young Russians returning from the Chechen wars; see Pilkington, Hilary (ed.), *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*, op. cit.; Garza, Thomas J., [Conservative Vanguard? The Politics of New Russia's Youth](#), op. cit.

²²⁷ Human Rights First, [Hate Crime in the Russian Federation](#), op. cit.

²²⁸ Lev Gudkov, [In a Pre-Pogrom Condition](#), *Kommersant* (in Russian), op. cit., as quoted in Orttung, Robert W., [Russia](#), op. cit., pp. 585-586.

²²⁹ Tarasov, Aleksandr, *Offspring of Reforms – Shaven Heads Are Skinheads: The New Fascist Youth Subculture in Russia*, *Russian Politics and Law*, no. 39, no. 1, January-February 2001, pp. 43 – 89; Tarasov, Aleksandr, *Changing Subcultures – Observations on Skinheads*, *Russian Politics and Law*, vol. 46, no. 1, January–February 2008, pp. 31–49.

²³⁰ Butkevich, Nikolai, [Russia's Anti-Fascists Fight Back](#), *Transitions Online*, 3 January 2007; Pitulova, Nadezhda, [A Better Class of Fascists](#), *Transitions Online*, 3 January 2008; [Russia Has 150 Extremist Youth Groups With 10,000 Members](#), *Russian Spy*.

to Golobkova, the emergence of extremist youth organisations should be understood against this backdrop.²³¹ Removing the social conditions that have given rise to a radicalisation of religious and national attitudes in Russia will require a comprehensive government programme.²³²

Ursul argues that in Russia the reasons for youth radicalisation might be linked to feelings of antipathy towards people they associate with terrorism, especially those from the Southern Caucasus.²³³ Several scholars, journalists and non-governmental organisations have documented the development of attitudes of suspicion towards people coming from that region.²³⁴

At the same time, **empirical and social analysis does not substantiate the idea that Nazism in Russia is a serious political force. Instead, it appears to be a conglomerate of great power aspirations, nationalism, authoritarianism and social demagogy, all of which have strong roots in Russian society.** In Ursul's opinion, racial ideology bears little chance of success in a multi-ethnic society, such as Russia. Nazi groups are confined to the fringes of social and political life, without realistic prospects to assume political power but with sufficient potential for de-stabilisation.²³⁵ Tarasov confirms the fragmentation and lack of serious political clout of Nazism in Russia. **But, he also argues that the government has used public fear and feelings of antipathy towards those considered non-Russian to distract from other important problems and nevertheless warns against complacency, proposing that it is not so much an issue of political power which makes skinheads dangerous as their social influence over young people.** Because skinheads form a subculture and are not registered anywhere, they cannot be closed down, dissolved or deprived of registration. Several new trends are visible in Russia: 1/ whereas skinheads used to be drawn from well-off social strata, today's new recruits are from lower social strata; 2/ skinhead culture used to be homogenous, today different groups deliberately differentiate according to the regions they are active in (this is known as "local colour"); 3/ many groups have switched from racist ideology and acts of racist violence to fights against political and cultural enemies (see the case of skinheads against punks); and 4/ skinhead groups are merging with local youth criminal gangs. For this author, this implies that

“Contemporary Russia ... is increasingly choosing pre-Revolutionary Russia as its ideological reference – that is it adopts models that are monarchic, Orthodox, Christian, great-power, and anti-revolutionary (images associated with the ultra-nationalist Black Hundreds). The presence of a larger number of youth subcultures in itself points to a spiritual crisis in society. The involvement of young people in these subcultures indicates that adult society is not capable of offering young people attractive norms, so youth prefer self-isolation and social escapism. In the conditions of present-day Russia, however, the presence of various youth sub-cultures – given favourable set of circumstances – could also prove to be a positive social factor, a form of spontaneous resistance by society to the nationalist, militarist,

²³¹ Golobkova, Yana, [The Situation of Extremist Youth Organization in the Far East of Russia](#), *Vlast* (in Russian), issue 7, 2007.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Ursul, Vitali, [Skinheads: Myth or Reality in Today's Russia](#), *Vlast* (in Russian), issue 1, 2008.

²³⁴ Malakhov, Vladimir, [Racism and Migrants](#), *Eurozine*, March 2003; [Statement of Mr. Doudou Diène](#), United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Fifth Session of the Human Rights Council, 11 June 2007.

²³⁵ Ursul, Vitali, [Skinheads: Myth or Reality in Today's Russia](#), *op. cit.*

and anti-democratic tenets being imposed by those in power”.²³⁶

Survey research points to an ambivalent picture: results for self-reported tolerance contradict results for the perception of “others”. Recent survey research points to the fact that quite a lot of young people think that Russia has enemies although the survey does not specify who these enemies are thought to be.²³⁷



F/ SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Very little literature that analyses the extent, depth or scope of the social participation of young people in Russia in different kinds of civil society organisation is available. Nevertheless, it is well known that within Russia civil society there is a vibrant and broad based sphere of organisations that address social issues or have a charity motive and that many of these are youth led or youth run. Many of these have long track records of caring for those who fared worst as a result of the transition to the market economy, among them children and youth, working against intolerance and for social integration among different communities.²³⁸ At the same time, in surveys young people self-report a lack of interest in politics and that they are not interested in becoming members of organisations.²³⁹ This is an area of extensive scholarship in regard to young people in other countries. The “associative life” of young people in the wider Europe has been extensively studied in the late 1990s, and continues to be a subject of scholarship in specialised journals of youth studies.²⁴⁰ A recent study on the history of youth work policy since its initial emergence in Europe a century ago, points to the evolution of youth work and youth policy out of broad based youth movements.²⁴¹

²³⁶ Tarasov, Aleksandr, *Offspring of Reforms – Shaven Heads Are Skinheads: The New Fascist Youth Subculture in Russia*, *Russian Politics and Law*, no. 39, no. 1, January-February 2001, pp. 43 – 89; Tarasov, Aleksandr, *Changing Subcultures – Observations on Skinheads*, *Russian Politics and Law*, vol. 46, no. 1, January-February 2008, pp. 31-49, op cit.

²³⁷ See also, Levada Analytical Centre, [From Opinion to Understanding. Russian Public Opinion 2007](#), op. cit.; Heller, Regina, and Fossato, Floriana, [Social Movements and the State in Russia](#), op. cit., p. 10.

²³⁸ Useful links to many youth initiatives against racism and xenophobia are also provided by the OSCE-ODIHR’s [Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System](#).

²³⁹ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.; Zirkon, [The Socio-Political Activity of Young People: Some Initial Results of a Research Project](#), op. cit.

²⁴⁰ See, for example, Vanadruel, M., Amerio, P., Stafseing, O., and Tap, P., *Young People and Associations in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of European Publishing, 1996.

²⁴¹ Coussée, Filip, *A Century of Youth Work Policy*, Gent: Akademia Press, 2008.

In Russia, some empirical analysis of the extent of youth organisation participation in different kinds of organisation has been done in the late 1990s. The most recent statistical evidence of such dates to around 2001, and points to the fact that about 7% of Russian young people were at that time involved in some form of social or civil society organisation.²⁴² Research on civic engagement and dis-engagement in Russia from the mid-2000s points to a general lack of participation in civic and even social activity by the general population.²⁴³ Up to date information concerning the level of participation in Russian youth organisations was not found. The National Youth Council of Russia unites 41 all-Russian and inter-regional organisations and 32 Regional youth councils (Roundtables) as its members, but it is not known how many young people are concretely involved in the activities of these structures.²⁴⁴ **Survey based research and anecdotal evidence from discussions with youth related professionals continues to point to a rate of youth participation in different kinds of association (not necessarily political parties or youth organisations) of well under 10%.**²⁴⁵ It is possible to infer some ideas about social participation from other research relating to values and citizenship among young people. Much of the research reviewed in this context points to young people's wish to be involved in more than just consumption. Social or charity based organisations, perceived by most young people as non-political, are quite attractive.²⁴⁶

The lack of even descriptive analyses of such is problematic for the youth field in Russia, as it is through such scholarship that policy makers and practitioners gain an understanding of the contours of the participation of young people, and their motivations for getting involved, the scope and extent and level of development of “youth work practice” in the sense of the non-formal educational work done by volunteers, semi-professionals and only rarely enough, by youth or social work professionals, with young people.

One potential reason for the seeming absence of scholarship on this theme may be that such organisations are so locally implanted and do such local level work, that they rarely come to the attention of researchers interested in broad social trends. At the same time, **the development of such “citizen initiative” as would be represented by the social activities of informal groups of young people or youth associations at the local level has been an explicit objective of the Russian government's youth strategy.**²⁴⁷ It would stand to reason that the authorities responsible for youth would have some form of mechanism for tracking the implementation of their strategy in this sphere. But, again in the absence of relevant evaluation material, it would be purely speculative to make any further comments.

²⁴² Federal Agency for Education, Russian Youth: Problems and Solutions, op. cit.

²⁴³ White S. and McAllister I., Dimensions of disengagement in post-communist Russia, The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, vol. 20, no. 1, March 2004, pp. 81 – 97.

²⁴⁴ Information publicly available on the website of the [National Youth Council of Russia](#).

²⁴⁵ Interview with Alexander Sokolov, Chairman of the National Youth Council of Russia, Moscow, June 2008.

²⁴⁶ Public Opinion Foundation, [New Generation](#), op. cit.; Zirkon, [The Socio-Political Activity of Young People: Some Initial Results of a Research Project](#), op. cit.; Zirkon, [Value Orientations of Russian Youth: Ideological Declarations](#), op. cit.; Heller, Regina, and Fossato, Floriana, [Social Movements and the State in Russia](#), op. cit.

²⁴⁷ Konseptsiya Federal'noy tselevooy programmy 'Molodezh' Rossii' na 2006 – 2010 gody (Concept of the Federal Programme 'Youth of Russia' for 2006 to 2010), Moscow, 2005.

Concerning youth involvement in decision-making, the absence of research or even programmatic evaluations on the involvement of young Russians in policy development, even at the Federal level, is glaring. Anecdotal evidence for the existing channels of youth participation is not hard to come by. We are aware that in the transition to the new Ministry for Youth and Sport, it was planned to create two new advisory committees, both of which are intended to serve as supporting mechanisms to the new ministry in their policy making and programme implementation efforts, and we have been informed by the National Youth Council of Russia that it, at least, will be represented in these advisory boards. But, the involvement of the National Youth Council can hardly be considered representative of even a minority of youth organisations in the Russian reality. The level of participation of young people on the regional and local level in decision-making is impossible to assess based on the literature found in the course of the literature review.

Even on the Federal level, **the full extent or lack of formal channels for youth participation in decision making is not known**, although to the best of the ability of this author to judge it is quite limited – relying on newly created youth parliaments, the representation of some youth organisations in advisory and steering groups in certain areas of policy making at the Federal level and the existence of the National Youth Council and some student organisations. This by no means substitutes for a real co-managed system of youth and youth related policy-making in which broad based youth concerns are taken into account through the participation of representatives of diverse groups of young people. But, the extent to which this has something to do with current Russian government approaches to governance (see Ananeva on the relationship of civil society to governance under the section dealing with “conditions for civic activism” above, and other research on government limits to civil society) or to do with Russian young people’s attitudes to participation is not possible to assess. **Some research, not just into the values of young people, but into their motivation, desire and concerns in relation to general policies affecting their lives and youth policy development would be warranted, as would actual evaluation of the opportunities for them participate in the current system.**

CONCLUSION

The positioning of young people in relation to the state and the wider society, as constructively contributing citizens or as de-stabilising deviants, is a dynamic process. What can be inferred from the above is that it is never as simple as young people are “one or the other”. In particular circumstances, young people can be a de-stabilising force, but most often this has little intrinsic relation to being young. The history of revolution tells us so much. Young people have been involved at the forefront of every important revolutionary battle known to human kind, including those that brought democracy to the Soviet Bloc in 1989. But, just as soon as the revolution is over, they will go back to what they like best to do – studying, working, hanging out with their friends and generally taking very little notice of politics.

This does not mean that young people are apathy-ridden apoliticals. It does mean that they are rational in their

social and political choices. They choose when and how to get involved (in other words, when and how to exercise their citizenship). But this happens, if and when they are offered an opportunity to consider getting involved. Our impression from the research reviewed, therefore, is that there is **no lack of knowledge about youth values**, nor do youth policy makers lack access to that knowledge because for the absolute majority, it is publicly available and is even circulating quite openly in the youth field. Rather, there is a **dearth of knowledge about the participation practices of young people and about the extent of youth participation in decision-making. Rectification of this knowledge gap requires evaluation of current systems and mechanisms of participation, and in depth field research into what is going on in local and regional non-governmental, social and cultural organisations.**

From the current information base, one gets the strong impression that Russian young people do not have viable, relevant and easily accessible opportunities to participate, especially in decision-making processes. Those of a formal nature that do exist are regulated by gatekeepers (as in any other elite oriented society) and those of an informal nature are largely regulated by market forces, in both cases creating issues of access. **The success of youth participation policies is as much dependent on the creation of opportunities to get involved as about offering support for taking up and making the most of the opportunities offered. It would seem that currently neither are sufficiently developed nor articulated in Russian youth policy practice.** The multiplication of research into what young people believe or how they think in relation to this or that value orientation, will not change that.

PART IV: CONCLUSION – IMPLICATIONS OF THE “YOUTH IN RUSSIA” LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review was to identify debates central to youth policy development taking into account real youth needs, existing documentary evidence and research resources and to consider the implications of the general youth research situation the literature presents. The stakeholders involved in the United Nations Theme Group, are thereby provided with information about how to position their action in relation to youth research and youth policy development in the Russian Federation in the short to medium term. The conclusion to the review, therefore, considers the condition of youth research as observed in the literature review, the implied relationship or lack thereof between youth research and youth policy development and themes that would need to be further addressed in research and policy making as a basis for identifying wider strategic priorities for the UNTG in relation to youth policy development in Russia.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND TRADE-OFFS OF YOUTH RESEARCH IN RUSSIA

On the basis of the review of literature conducted, other background reading, anecdotal evidence from actors of the youth and youth research field in Russia and information collected during field visits to Moscow in January and June 2008, it is possible to make several observations concerning the condition of youth research in Russia. These observations relate to the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated by the community and to the opportunities and trade-offs that challenge it. Subjective as the following views may be, they are based on more than a year of observation and more than six months of active research.

Strengths

Russia's youth research community is well established. It has a good reputation, also internationally, for producing youth researchers and quality youth research, in line with international standards of empirical and sociological research. Policy makers, at home and abroad, recognise the expertise of the field and take it seriously, engaging actively with it when research about young people is periodically required for development purposes.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian youth researchers joined the ranks of the international youth research community, and they have consistently demonstrated willingness and openness for international youth research partnerships, producing some of the best known works of scholarship on Russian youth, although participation in international cooperation has been quite contingent on the personalities involved. Participation in recent years has been more sporadic, partially as a result of generational change in the community. And as mentioned above, the Russian field is extremely diverse and one can find researchers active on youth in many different disciplines within social sciences, from sociology, which is most common, to law. This diversity also

represents a richness of interdisciplinary perspectives that adds legitimacy to the research produced.

Weaknesses

Just like anywhere else in the world, while demonstrating considerable strengths, Russian youth research faces many challenges. Not least of these, the Soviet legacy is something that also other fields of scholarship in Russia are grappling with. In the context of youth research, memories of ideologically determined and instrumentalised research have made for a curious paradox. On the one hand, one can clearly identify a penchant for survey based and empirical research – almost as if to say, the numbers tell us the truth – and a tendency to shy away from deep interpretation and evaluations, for fear of being branded “political”. On the other, much research (at least much of what was found during this literature review) continues to be highly normative, working with concepts common during the Soviet period (such as deviance) as a basis for evaluation. This kind of scholarship generally assumes a high moral tone.

As much as Russian social scientists have made considerable progress in aligning with international standards of sociological research, and Russian youth researchers could even be considered at the cutting edge of such processes, recent literature consulted points to a lack of embedding in wider international sociological debates around the condition and experience of youth. This may have something to do with the fact that for several years Russian youth researchers have not actively participated in international youth research cooperation activities such as those organised by the International Sociological Association or the Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe, except sporadically. Equally, this could mean that issues such as youth lifestyles, youth transitions in the context of the life course, youth subcultures, youth political and social participation and youth citizenship, in the way they are researched in Europe and the wider-West, do not find resonance with Russian reality or with perceived Russian uniqueness. The literature, however, does not reveal a concrete reason, just the absence of certain themes.

Of further concern, and not unrelated, is the over-emphasis on research on certain aspects of the youth experience, almost to the exclusion of others. There might be many reasons why values and attitudes of young people in Russia, to point to just one such issue, are so actively researched at the present time. Funding for any kind of research is hard to come by in Russia these days, and for youth research, it seems little public funding is available. Hence, market forces determine the orientation of youth research. This is certainly not an exclusively Russian problem, but the fact that a problem is widespread in other countries, does not take away from the effects it has in Russia. Competition (for funding and maybe credibility or prestige) is one of the reasons for which the members of the youth research community rarely meet and coordinate efforts.

Opportunities

Taken together weaknesses and strengths point to challenges and opportunities. In our opinion, the current *Zeitgeist* makes for a fascinating and opportunity-laden moment for the Russian youth research community. Three elements

characterise that *Zeitgeist*: international emphasis on the benefits for development of investing in youth early; growing policy interest on the part of the incumbent political elite in youth; and continued growth in consumption in a particular corner of the youth population fuelled by the economic upturn. These three things make for an atmosphere conditioned by the desire to understand better the needs, concerns and wishes of young people, positioning the youth research community as key. But, seizing the opportunity will challenge youth researchers to first and foremost come out of their specific corners of the academic world, take an interest in making a concrete contribution to youth policy development and work on overcoming their lack of a sense of community and the policy making elite to let them.

Trade-Offs

All of the above points to key dilemmas or potential trade-offs facing the youth research community in its path to cooperation. Four such dilemmas can be posed as interlinked questions. The first dilemma relates to **trust and legitimacy**. If to be considered as evidence for the development of youth policy, what kind of youth research (empirical or sociological or both or a mixture?) and probably more problematically, whose youth research (local, international, university-based, commercial, independent, government commissioned, specific individuals?) should be taken into account? The second dilemma relates to developing a **consensus**. With so many interests at play, what should be at the top of the research agenda and who should define it? The third dilemma relates to **cooperation**. In a context of competition for scarce resources, what is the added value of cooperation for those concerned? The fourth and last dilemma relates to the **contents of research**. If the aim is to contribute to youth policy development, what subjects should be researched?

As youth policy experts in Europe and elsewhere often repeat, in an ideal world, youth policies would be designed and decided upon by young people supported by concerned and expert adults with the know-how in relation to policy development, supported by up to date research evidence provided by a community of independent youth researchers with direct links to the youth field and young people's life situations. The whole process would take place in the so-called "magic triangle" of youth policy.

This literature review process has provided us with the opportunity to make some observations with regard to the current relationship between research and policy-making in Russia.

At the Federal level at least, it would seem that

- Russian youth policy-makers are concerned that their policies should address the real needs of young people;
- Russian researchers would be interested in contributing to policy-making, but are shy of being dragged into political debates and fights;
- The Russian authorities responsible for youth have no specific policy on youth research
- No formalised and concrete mechanisms for the inclusion of the research community in policy-making have

been put in place yet;

- The Russian regional centres of scholarship on youth would be relevant partners for further evidence based policy making efforts in addition to current stakeholders.

CURRENT AND FUTURE YOUTH RESEARCH DEBATES

While clearly youth research has more functions than just contributing to youth policy development, current and prospective debates can provide insights into the necessary **contents of youth policy**. If our literature review can be considered representative, the majority of current youth research is concentrated on the following broad categories of issues:

- The condition of Russian young people, understood in development terms and covering all possible youth problems;
- The values of young people, especially in relation to the so-called “new Russian reality” of a market economy, the institutions of democracy and the rule of law;
- The citizenship of young Russians, meaning how young Russians understand their relationship to the state and nation, and so-called Russian national values;
- The educational chances of Russian young people, understood in the broadest sense from educational potential of the youth population to the performance of the education system;
- The Russian demographic dilemma, understood as the question of why young Russians are not contributing as much as desired (by themselves or by society) to increasing fertility.

Again, if we consider our review comprehensive, then it reveals some issues (many of which appear high on youth research agendas in other countries and internationally), which 1/ used to be researched extensively and seem to have disappeared from contemporary youth research in Russia; 2/ are significantly under-researched; and 3/ are not researched at all. These are

- The subjective experience of being young in Russia (including in terms of gender, minority/majority status and sexuality);
- The extent of contact of Russian youth with the outside world (cultural globalisation);
- The relationship of Russian youth with the Russian near abroad and Russian-speaking communities outside of Russia;
- The (dynamic) nature of intergenerational relations and young people’s subjective experience of them;
- The nature and content of social interaction among contemporary Russian young people, including through virtual channels;
- Youth participation (social, cultural, etc), in civic and social life, formal and informal mechanisms for that and participation in formal decision-making processes on youth policy, locally, regionally and at the Federal level;

- Contemporary youth lifestyles, subcultures and leisure practices, including gender and other dimensions;
- Youth access issues including access to consumption, leisure, education, employment;
- Quantitative measures of the extent of youth problems (e.g. poor health, drugs, crime, educational failure, sex work) among youth and specifically vulnerable sub-groups of youth (street youth, young people in state care, young offenders, IDUs, HIV+ youth).

In terms of target groups, there is a strong (or over-) emphasis on students of higher education, and other young people in education. This might be because these young people are a kind of “captive audience”, easily accessed in comparison to other target groups. At the same time, contemporary youth research in Russia, at least that reviewed, conspicuously focuses attention on the lowest rung or the highest rung on the social ladder. The masses of “ordinary” young people, who are neither drug addicts nor honours students, seem to fade into obscurity. This is complemented by the almost complete absence of so-called “marginal groups”. Rural youth, peripheral youth, young people with HIV, young people with disabilities, young people perceived as foreign, appear rarely.

There are many possible reasons for why such research gaps have appeared, and not all of them are instrumental. In many cases, the absence of certain issues from the research agenda boils down to the lack of funding. In the context of a research market, where research is commissioned for specific purposes, and those who commission pay, certain issues will not get further than the stage of a “good idea”. Sometimes, the reason is nothing more complex than a lack of interest on the part of the research community – because the theme has been over-researched, or has run its course, or seems no longer to be relevant. But, if it is the current political climate that determines what gets researched, and what gets passed over, there is cause for concern.

A UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTION TO EVIDENCE BASED YOUTH POLICY MAKING?

Considering the above, what might a partnership of UN agencies such as that represented by the United Nations Theme Group on Youth do to support evidence based youth policy development in line with the objectives of specific agencies’ mandates, in Russia? Three areas deserve further consideration:

a/ The establishment of youth research agendas

As of now, there exists no consensus on the youth research agenda needed for evidence-based policy making in Russia. There exists no mechanism by which such a consensus could emerge. Of course, there are issues of legitimacy in regard to “who can take the lead” on establishing such. But, this should not mitigate against

- 1/ the UNTG considering what its own research agenda should look like in light of its objectives as a partnership and in light of the specific objectives of individual agencies and
- 2/ the UNTG discussing this openly with diverse range of national counterparts in the youth sector across the governmental, non-governmental and research communities

In so doing, the UNTG would contribute actively to the establishment of a youth research agenda in Russia, would consider the place of research and evidence in its programming, and create opportunities for a cross-section of stakeholders to engage in debates about youth policy making that rarely take place.

b/ Linking policy and research

Offering opportunities to develop consensus over youth research agendas is one approach to linking policy and research. In the end, these are represented by communities, and for as long as they do not meet, little effective cross-fertilisation and synergy can emerge. At the same time linking policy and research also means to advocate across the boundaries of the different communities – in relation to the contents of research and policy, in relation to the processes through which policy is made including research, and in regard of the policy of the state on youth research – both internally (within the UNTG) and externally (towards national stakeholders). To the extent that we are able to judge the contact of the UNTG to the youth research and youth policy communities remains sporadic. The key advocacy functions of such a partnership are limited by this. The UNTG would be well advised to consider its strategy for active collaboration with the wider community of youth policy stakeholders, in addition to its strategy for cooperation with the governmental authorities responsible for youth.

c/ Engaging with the research market

Advocacy requires engagement with the reality, and the reality of Russian youth research is one dominated by market forces of competition and ownership. As organisms that commissions research, the UN and other internationals, are part of that market. But, the market does not guarantee that the scope of necessary themes and issues will be considered. If “added value” and “complementarity” are the watch words of international organisations working in national contexts, then the UNTG should consider how it can develop a better understanding of the youth research market, thereby identifying gaps and needs not covered. The UNTG will then possess the basic information it needs to make decisions about where best to invest its own resources, and on which issues to advocate that national authorities devote resources. This process should include considerations broader than those of incumbent governmental authorities responsible for youth to cover the full spectrum of youth policy issues.

The kind of action outlined above in relation to research must be contextualised within a wider strategy of engagement with the Russian youth field. As this author has previously recommended, in relation to the possible role of the UNTG vis-à-vis youth policy making in Russia, this strategy of engagement could focus on the following areas:

- The complementarity or otherwise of youth-related aspects of national health, development, social, labour, and other policies (and their relationship to youth policy);

- the identification of areas where synergy between UN and government action would make more effective use of scarce resources (strategic alignment of objectives and resources);
- advocacy for the implementation of participative youth policy making mechanisms towards government;
- fostering relationships with youth NGOs concerned with youth policy development (including those involved in educational, health or social work) and supporting their capacity to be active using those youth policy development mechanisms;
- the establishment of joint evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to identify indicators and assess the effectiveness of youth policy implementation;
- the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to government authorities in areas of youth policy development where current capacity is weak or lacking.

In relation to improving the effectiveness of UN agencies and their youth programming in Russia, five further areas of action can be identified:

- the development of a more participatory method of youth related programme development, i.e. involving local youth organisations and communities in regions of focus of UN activities;
- the development of participatory evaluations of UN youth-related programming with beneficiaries and national counterparts;
- the assessment of capacity within of UN agencies and the theme groups for providing technical assistance to government authorities in youth policy development;
- the identification of synergies with the action of other international institutions in relation to Russian youth policy (e.g. Council of Europe, European Union, Commonwealth of Independent States, Shanghai Cooperation Council) in cooperation with the relevant authorities;

At the time of writing, the responsible governmental authorities for youth affairs are once more in transition, this time from State Committee on Youth Affairs to Ministry of Youth and Sport. It is not clear at this time, whether the new ministerial responsables will implement the provisions of the established Russian youth strategy, or whether they prefer to develop a new strategy from scratch. In June 2008, when this author conducted fieldwork in Moscow for the literature review, the agenda seemed open. Three important possibilities in relation to youth policy development, and the role of research within it were raised, during meetings with different stakeholders in youth field during that field visit. The first was a plan to convene an all-Russian Congress on Youth Research with the aim of bringing the community together and discussing contemporary youth research agendas. The second was a plan for the governmental authorities to develop a large-scale empirical research project on the condition of youth in Russia. The third was the plan to establish two advisory boards to the governmental authorities on youth policy development. It is not clear what the fate of these three specific activities has been. The UNTG would be well advised to actively inform itself in this concern and opportunities to participate in such initiatives that will be undertaken, as a concrete first step towards making a contribution to youth policy development in Russia.

Annex 1

Russian Regions' Ratings by Human Potential Development Index and Youth Development Index

Region	HPDI rating	YDI rating
Altay territory	36	47
Arkhangelsk region	33	16
Astrakhan region	26	32
Belgorod region	10	10
Bryansk region	49	41
Volgograd region	22	30
Vologda region	15	13
Voronezh region	30	27
Moscow with region	2	2
St.-Petersburg with Leningrad region	5	3
Jewish autonomous region	55	54
Republic of Kabardino-Balkarian	19	24
Kaliningrad region	50	49
Kaluga region	42	38
Kamchatka region	48	46
Republic of Karachaevo-Circassian	43	50
Kirov region	39	35
Kostroma region	47	40
Krasnodar territory	16	26
Krasnoyarsk region	8	9
Kurgan region	54	53
Kursk region	29	19
Lipetsk region	7	6
Magadan region	32	14
Murmansk region	24	20
Novgorod region	40	42
Novosibirsk region	21	31
Omsk region	23	37
Orenburg region	17	23
Penza region	44	45
Perm region	11	15
Pskov region	53	44
Republic of Adygea	45	51
Republic of Altai	52	56
Republic of Kalmykia	18	17
Republic of Kareliya	35	29
Republic Mary El	51	48
Republic of Mordovia	28	12
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	6	22
Republic of Northern Ossetia-Alania	13	36
Republic of Tyva	57	57
Republic of Khakassia	46	52
Rostov region	25	25
Samara region	4	5
Saratov region	27	28
Sakhalin region	34	43
Smolensk region	37	39
Tambov region	41	33
Tomsk region	3	4
Tula region	38	34
Tyumen region	1	1
Republic of Udmurt	14	8
Khabarovsk territory	20	21
Chelyabinsk region	12	11
Chita region	56	55
Republic of Chuvash	31	18
Yaroslavl region	9	7

Source: Agranovich, Mark et al., Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth, Moscow: UNESCO and GTZ, 2005.

Annex 2: Stakeholders of the Russian Youth Research Community

This literature review revealed no shortage of youth research in Russia. A wide variety of scholars and academics engage sporadically in some form of research about all sorts of young people, depending on their particular research interest, their academic field and which institutions they work for. In this review, research in both Russian and English were found in the fields of demography, sociology, psychology, anthropology, medicine, education, political science, law, justice to name a few. As the long bibliography produced in the course of the literature review will attest, volume, most definitely is not the problem.

The above notwithstanding, few of those writing about young people consider themselves youth researchers, per se. It seems, therefore, that youth issues, especially their interdisciplinary nature, make for attractive opportunities to publish. Researchers flirt with the theme for one or two years, manage to write a referenced article or two before moving on to “more serious things” when the fascination wears off. This, by no means exclusively Russian phenomenon, can be observed more or less all over the world. The idea of interdisciplinary “youth research” as academic subject matter in the social sciences has, nevertheless, a strong tradition in Russia. In the Soviet Union “knowledge about young people” was important for the authorities, to predict and pre-empt deviations from the ideological line and to keep young people in step with the onward march of socialist progress. The position of social science, and particularly sociology (where youth research tends to feel most at home) was, however, ambivalent and along with psychology, tainted with social control. Empirical scholarship about young people had a place, and the associated research community transformed into the field of independent sociological youth research in the Russia that emerged with the fall of the Soviet Union. The field and the community remain relatively small (even isolated) and are associated with particular founding scholars, university departments and academic institutions in different parts of Russia.

To the best of our knowledge and ability to judge, and on the basis of information collected during the field visit made to Moscow in June 2008, the members of this **academic youth research community** include (this list is not exhaustive):

In Moscow: The Russian Academy of Science Institute for Regional Economics and Institute for the Sociology of Youth; Moscow Humanitarian University Institute of Youth (formerly, Scientific Research Centre for Youth in the Komsomol Higher Educational Institute)

In St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University Scientific Research Institute for Complex Social Research

Regional Youth Research Institutes in Novosibirsk, Volgograd, Cheliabinsk, Orenburg, Kazan and Ekatarinburg

Each of these research locations has its own specialisations and traditions in youth research including but not exclusively covering Juventology, quality of life, quality of youth, rural experience, extremism, mentalities, types of young people, childhood and adolescence, pedagogical issues, socialisation, legal and political culture.

Beyond the academic sphere described above, and while possibly not considering themselves members of the youth research community per se, other actors contribute to researching youth in Russia. The other actors can be grouped according to the following classification:

Non-governmental actors (national and international): Many national, regional and local “non-commercial” organisations contribute to the production of knowledge about young people in Russia, in line with the need for evidence-based programmes in the context of larger projects financed by international and national donors, or as means of underpinning their advocacy efforts. Usually, this takes the form of research on “youth and ...”: youth and human rights, youth and citizenship, youth and volunteering, youth and the environment, among others. More often than not, this kind of research is based on secondary source materials, existing statistical and empirical data, small survey samples and some focus group discussions. It is conducted outside of the academic sphere, although tries to respect academic standards, and is later used within the work of the organisation and by its partners (including local authorities) for a specific purpose. This kind of research is rarely systematically collected and remains not widely disseminated. Local and independent think tanks and research institutes of a non-commercial nature are also active. Their research is made public and can be accessed without charge, and they often partner with public or academic institutions in the preparation of large-scale research projects. In this literature review, such organisations included the New Eurasia Foundation, the Fund for Public Opinion, the Levada Centre and the Russian National Youth Council.

Commercial actors: It seems that in Russia information about young people is actively sought by large commercial entities (both local and international) wishing to capture youth markets. Beyond market research, they also have an interest in the broader context of youth lifestyles, values and attitudes. In addition, governmental institutions needing specific information about young people regularly turn to commercial entities, especially when they require results in a short time frame. Several commercial research organisations are active in the Russian youth research scene and serve the needs of those wishing to commission research on young people. More often than not the results of these research activities are not made public, becoming the property of the organism that commissioned it. In this literature review, this kind of organisation is represented by the ZIRKON Research Group.

Governmental actors: From federal through regional to local levels, governmental authorities regularly commission, and sometimes even conduct, youth research. To the best of our knowledge, and at the time of writing, the Russian Federal authorities responsible for youth, which were in transition from State Committee on Youth Affairs to Ministry of Youth and Sport, had a department responsible for youth research. This department

had cooperated with non-commercial organisations, foundations and the Russian Academy of Science on the development of youth research projects, producing both sociological and empirical analyses of the situation of youth.

International organisations: International and inter-governmental organisations (including United Nations agencies), bilateral development agencies and some international non-governmental organisations with a presence in Russia have been active in partnerships and alone in relation to youth research. These research projects (for example, those of the Ebert Foundation, GTZ, UNESCO, UNFPA) often, but not always, involve governmental partners.

Key foreign researchers: Finally, there are few key foreign academics who have consistently specialised in issues relating to Russian youth, publishing research conducted inside Russia, in cooperation with Russian academics involved in the youth research field, and comparative research on Russia with other countries (from the perspective of their particular research interest, of course). The list of foreign researchers is not long and they are mostly based in the United States and the United Kingdom (at universities with strong departments of Russian or Slavic Studies). Some of the research conducted by these academics can be considered seminal, having determined the further course of youth research in Russia or having become the recommended reading for university courses in the West on Russian youth and youth policy. These foreign academics include Hilary Pilkington, Douglas Blum, Alastair Pridemore, and their work has been extensively referred to in the literature review.

Taken together, these actors form a rich community, endowed with a tradition, expertise and resources. But, while many of these actors have some form of communication in relation to the contents of youth research or in the context of particular projects on which they may cooperate at a given moment in time, this interaction is not coordinated by a youth research policy or within a youth research cooperation mechanism. Any synergies that may be developed do so on an ad hoc and informal basis.