

Work Values on the Old Continent
Cross-national and intergenerational trends in work orientations
in 12 European countries: 1980 - 2000

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Abstract

The modern transitional labor market and the emerging knowledge society require flexible, adaptable, and multi-skilled workers. A workforce that no longer embraces conventional instrumental work values but that is inspired by expressive work values. This paper studies trends in work values in 12 European countries, using data from the European Values Study, covering the period between 1980 and 2000. It is found that support for expressive work values has not substantially risen; instrumental work values are still quite dominant in Europe. There is no evidence of a clear trend towards divergence or convergence of work values between different European nations. Generational divides are observed in the importance of work, and instrumental work values in particular. It is concluded that for Europe to become the most dynamic and competitive economy, there is still a world to win in terms of wider diffusion of expressive work values.

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Introduction: The transitional labor market and the de-standardization of the life course

The meaning of work for Europeans had changed substantially in the last few decades. At least two complementary issues have generated this change: the rise of the transitional labor market and the increasing destandardization of life courses. The notion of the 'transitional labor market' has rapidly penetrated the vocabulary of both social scientists and policy-makers in understanding major developments in the domain of work and in conceptualizing major labor market problems (Van den Heuvel *et al.*, 2001). In essence, this notion refers to how modern labor markets can ensure balanced relationships between work, care, education, and leisure and how smooth transitions to, on, and from the labor market can be facilitated. A guiding principle underlying the perspective of a transitional labor market is that in contemporary society combining work, household tasks, study, and leisure activities varies over the individual life course. A transitional labor market bridges the space between the domains of labor, care, education, and leisure and develops transitional combination scenarios for competing individual preferences (Muffels, 2001). The central idea of a transitional labor market - as developed by Günther Schmid of the Berlin Science Center (e.g. Schmid, 2000; Schmid & Gazier, 2002) - assumes that labor markets function better the more people are enabled to make smooth and pro-active transitions to, on, and from the labor market: "the borders between the labor market and other social systems have to become more open for transitory states between paid work and gainful non-market activities which preserve and enhance future employability" (Schmid, 2000: 223).

Making smooth transitions implies that employees can optimize their individual strategy of combining work, care, study, and 'free time'. Increasingly, these transitions vary over the individual life course and life cycle and vary between individuals. These variations pertain to what sociologists depict as a major social and cultural trend: the change from a standard biography to an individualized or free-choice biography in late modernity. The de-standardization of the life course is embodied in the phenomenon that individuals reflect upon and choose the combination of work, care, education or leisure that best suits their personal situation, ambition, and capacities. Under the influence of far-reaching processes of individualization, the personal life course becomes increasingly diversified and subject to personal values, choices, and preferences (Diepstraten *et al.*, 1998; Du Bois-Reymond & de Jong-Gierveld, 1993; Liefbroer & Dijkstra, 2000). The

standard 'common' biography in the last quarter of the previous century became subject to erosion, opening the way for a de-standardized biography in which people are required to project their own life course, plan their own future, reflect on different options, and think about the consequences of choices (Vinken *et al.*, 2002, Vinken *et al.*, 2003).¹ In other words, new competences, biographical competences, are called for.

The required competences closely relate to work expectations and work values. Today, the modern worker is not only expected to be a flexible and employable employee with a keen eye for maintaining and advancing his or her core skills, but is also obliged to strongly invest in the home front (both as partner and as parent), to take a substantial part of the household and care tasks, to keep up with the relational network, and to build up a varied and distinct leisure repertoire. These highly pressured societal and self-expectations often leave the modern individual with feelings of stress and underachievement: all tasks and activities compete for time with one another. Moreover: unlike in pre-modern societies, the boundaries between work, care, and leisure are subject to erosion and lead to broadly experienced feelings of pressure to meet with diverging expectations (Ester & Vinken, 2001). The permanent search for excellence has its personal price. The transitional labor market aims at addressing this social problem by employment arrangements that meet with these time constraint problems. Employees are asked to be more flexible, employable, and to be more motivated by intrinsic work values, which stress personal development, life-long learning, autonomy, and achievement. They need to advance and maintain both 'hard' and 'soft' skills. Employees on their part struggle with finding the right balance between work, care, education, and leisure. This struggle has a different meaning though, not only for different individuals but it also varies over the individual life course. It is precisely at this point that the transitional labor market approach comes in by aiming at facilitating individual transitions to, on, and from the labor market. But it also assumes a new mindset of the employee: in a post-industrial service-oriented knowledge economy, with a strong emphasis on flexibility, employability, and transition willingness, mere instrumental or conventional work values are no longer sufficient to do the job but have to be augmented by expressive work values which stress personal development, life-long learning,

¹ The issue of the choice biography is not so much the issue of free choice and that people freely make their own personal choices leading to highly individualized life course trajectories, but that people will have to acquire competences to reflect on their own life course and take responsibility for their life course. This might still lead to well-defined patterns of life course trajectories (Vinken *et al.*, 2003).

autonomy, and achievement. This means that the cultural factor as embedded in fundamental work values becomes a prominent factor on the labor market. It also means that competitive economies will have to make sure that their workforces are willing to embrace expressive work values. Economies that stick to conventional instrumental work values are likely to face non-competitiveness and serious problems in the area of innovation, flexibility, employability, and transition willingness. Here we arrive at the main issue to be addressed in this paper: do European societies differ in fundamental work values and is transition willingness related to values in the domain of work? Which society in Europe stands out from other societies in terms of a different profile of work values? In the following we shortly address the issue of work values somewhat further and will reveal the central research focus followed in this paper.

Work values and research focus

Many attempts have been made by social scientists to map different values and different value structures across cultures (Roe & Ester, 1999; Super & Šverko, 1995; Vinken *et al.*, in press). Hofstede (2001) points at basic values such as power distance, individualism versus collectivism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty tolerance versus uncertainty avoidance. Schwartz (1994) differentiates values in terms of autonomy versus embeddedness, egalitarianism versus hierarchy, and harmony versus mastery. Work values are specific expressions of general values in the work setting and can be “ordered by their importance as guiding principles for evaluating work outcomes and settings, and for choosing among different work alternatives” (Ros *et al.*, 1999: 54). In this sense work values are more specific than general basic values. It is important to note that in modern society work values are typically considered as *salient*, *basic*, and *influential*.² The importance of the work role in many cultures makes work values into core values that take a cardinal position in the overall pattern of values (Roe & Ester, 1999).³ A classic distinction in the domain of work values is the one between instrumental (or extrinsic) and expressive (or intrinsic) work values (England & Ruiz Quintanilla, 1994; Van den Elzen, 2002; Zanders 1987, 1993). This distinction, as we will see, directly relates to the issue whether Western societies - and the Netherlands in particular - are indeed favoring work values that

² This is clearly demonstrated by research on ‘work centrality’ as carried out in the context of the ‘Meaning of Work Study’ (England, 1991) as well as the ‘Work Importance Study’ (Super & Šverko, 1995).

³ The authors propose a generic work values model at three levels (society, group/organization, individual) with three assumed (vertical and horizontal) links: general values, work values, and work activities (Roe & Ester, 1999).

reinforce flexibility, employability, self-development, achievement, and transitional willingness. *Instrumental work values* can be defined as conventional or traditional values which prioritize security over other aspects of work, i.e. work is primarily seen as necessary for providing one's livelihood, and which underline the importance of material job features such as good pay, comfortable working times and vacation arrangements, protection, and the absence of work stress. *Expressive work values* are defined as values that emphasize non-material or postmaterialist job characteristics such as the possibility of personal development, achievement and autonomy, having a say in the work organization, being able to take initiative, and having an interesting, responsible and challenging job. "Intrinsic work values directly express openness to change - the pursuit of autonomy, interest, growth, and creativity in work. Extrinsic work values express conservation of values; job security and income provide workers with the requirements needed for general security and maintenance of order in their lives" (Ros *et al.*, 1999: 55). Employees stressing instrumental or extrinsic work values attach a different meaning to the importance of work. Instrumental work values focus on "the security of the for grantedness", expressive work values stress "the ethic of self-development". It has to be added, though, that different meanings do not per definition imply that these work values are mutually exclusive or unrelated.⁴ Employees may very well support both instrumental and expressive work values.⁵ "The emerging emphasis on expressive work values does not mean that instrumental values are rejected or denied. On the contrary, such qualities are, to large publics, still highly relevant" (Halman, 1999: 41). Nevertheless, it can be argued that particularly in a service-oriented network economy that emphasizes flexibility, employability, and the willingness to make transitions, the wide diffusion of expressive work values is a sociological and cultural advantage.⁶ The more the workforce in a nation supports expressive work values, the better it is mentally equipped to be competitive and innovative in a globalizing, flexible economy, and to adjust to and profit from a transitional labor market. The 'new employee' will embrace expressive work values, whereas the 'traditional employee' will rather exclusively support instrumental work values.

⁴ Van den Elzen (2002: 75) found a Pearson correlation of .37 between conventional and expressive work values (based on the 1990 module of the European Values Study).

⁵ In their study of Dutch people's expectations of future developments in the domain of work, Ester & Vinken (2001) observed a continuous emphasis on both instrumental and expressive work values. Apparently, the emphasis on expressive values is not at the cost of instrumental values.

⁶ Ros *et al.* (1999), for instance found that intrinsic expressive work values are positively correlated with openness to change, whereas extrinsic instrumental work values are negatively correlated.

Data and methodology

In this paper we want to empirically analyze trends in both instrumental and expressive work values, as well as related work attitudes (such as centrality of work) in Europe. One of the major studies in the social sciences on cross-national values and value shifts is the *European Values Study*, a study currently consisting of three waves (1981, 1990, and 1999/2000), including almost all European countries and reserving a central place for work values and other work-related attitudes, opinions, and perspectives (cf. Arts et al., 2003).⁷ The three waves from the *European Values Study* (EVS) will be used in this paper. In analyzing these encompassing data sets we aim at answering the fundamental questions whether expressive work values are on the rise in Europe, and whether observable trends in work values tend to converge in European societies. Moreover, we will zoom in on work values of the youngest generation compared to those of older generations. The main reason for this is that young people in particular will have to shape the future knowledge economy and transitional labor market (Vinken *et al.*, 2002). The question then becomes important, even crucial, whether European youth (broadly defined) are supporting work values (and work attitudes) that are conducive to a knowledge society and the idea of a transitional labor market.

Findings

Instrumental work values

We defined instrumental work values as conventional or traditional values which prioritize security over other aspects of work, i.e. work is primarily seen as necessary for providing one's livelihood, and which underline the importance of material job features such as good pay, comfortable working times and vacation arrangements, protection, and the absence of work stress. A factor analysis of the 1999 data showed a strong dimension indicating instrumental work values across Europe.⁸

⁷ For full methodological details on the European Values Study see:

<http://www.europeanvalues.org>

⁸ This dimension (Eigenvalue of 1.39; explained variance of 9.3%) contains the following jobaspects (loadings between brackets): 'good hours' (.71), 'generous holidays' (.69), 'good pay' (.59), 'not too much pressure' (.59), 'good job security' (.53), 'good chances for promotion' (.42), and 'a job respected by people in general' (.31). Reliability analysis resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .72.

(Table 1 here)

Table 1 provides one overarching view of a diverse set of results. It shows the mean scores and standard deviations per country for the three waves of the EVS study. This allows us to draw conclusions on the absolute scores of instrumental work values adherence in a given country. As the scores are means on a scale ranging from 0 to 1 and as they are standardized across countries, we may perceive the mean scores as a proportional score (e.g., a score of 0,34 on a given item equals 34% of public support on this item) and compare these figures with the ones in other countries. Data show that in 1999 in many European countries instrumental work values are supported by almost a third to one half of the population in these countries. In Italy, Northern Ireland, and Ireland the support is stronger with around 60% of their populations backing the importance of instrumental work values. The Netherlands is no exception with scores in between most European countries with a 40% adherence to instrumental work values. Equal levels (with a maximal difference of five percent points) are found in Belgium, Austria, East and West Germany, Sweden, and Finland. Lower levels (more than five percent points below 40%) are found in France and Denmark. Higher ones (more than five percent points higher than 40%) are, as stated, seen in Italy and the two Irelands but also in Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, and Iceland. All in all, we may conclude that at the brink of the third millennium instrumental work values still have the support of a considerably sized minority in Europe. People still highly value the material aspects and revenues of work.

The longitudinal nature of the data also allows us to assess the trends in support for these values over time per country and compare these trends within a given country with the same trend in other countries. We can see, for instance, that over the last twenty years of the 20th century the popularity of instrumental work values increased slightly from 39% in 1981, 42% in 1990 to 46% in 1999. In France, the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Austria, and Sweden the rise over the last 20 years was modest. A much sharper rise is notable in Italy, the two Irelands, and Iceland, which are also countries with a higher than average level of support for instrumental work values at the end of the previous century. If we compare the changes in the last two decades with the ones in the last decade, the pattern is not simple and straightforward. In Italy change is linear with a sharp rise in the adherence to instrumental work value between 1980 and 1990 and even more so

between 1990 and 1999. If we look at Northern Ireland and Ireland this rise is typical only for the last decade of the 20th century, the period of rapid modernization of these countries. In Iceland the increase in support for instrumental work values was in the 1980s. After that decade the increase slowed down impressively. The Netherlands is comparable to Sweden in this respect. In both countries the level of support rose in the 1980s and declined again in the 1990s. Only modest change is found in France, Belgium, Denmark, and Germany, with France and Belgium showing a very modest decline in the 1980s and increase in the 1990s and with Denmark and Germany showing a modest but steady decline in the support for instrumental work values in both decades. We may conclude that at the end of the 20th century levels of support for instrumental work values, with some exceptions, are quite comparable in Europe, but that the development pathways to these more or less equal levels reflect diversity.

This conclusion is supported by the last figure in table 1, presenting the standard deviation of the 12 countries, part of all three waves of EVS. This standard deviation refers to the country level (the other standard deviations refer to data at the individual level within countries or, as the totals show, in all countries). This figure tells us most directly whether or not we are dealing with divergence or convergence between countries concerning value support. As can be observed, hardly any change towards overall divergence or convergence took place in the 1980s (deviation score developed from 0,07 to 0,08). In the 1990s there is a very modest trend towards divergence in instrumental work values in Europe (from 0,08 to 0,11). This trend is probably mostly due to the more explicit changes taking place only in Italy and the Irish countries. The trend is so modest, that for most of Europe we can conclude that there is neither divergence nor convergence of instrumental work values.

Expressive work values

We now turn to trends in expressive work values. Expressive work values were described above as values that emphasize non-material or postmaterialist job characteristics such as the possibility of personal development, achievement and autonomy, having a say in the work organization, being able to take initiative, and having an interesting, responsible, and challenging job. These values are also labeled as intrinsic work values, values that express an openness to change, the

pursuit of autonomy, growth, creative and interesting work. In the EVS study we could clearly replicate this dimension of expressive work values.⁹

(Table 2 here)

Expressive work values have hardly increased in support in the last two decades. Support increased somewhat, though, between 1980 and 1990. Between 1990 and 1999 changes are minimal. Almost 50% of the European publics adheres to these work values at the turn of the millennium. Of course, there are substantial country differences as far as the level and development of support for expressive work values goes. In Italy, Northern Ireland, and Ireland expressive work values have become much more important at the end of the 20th century (around 60% support). This development, but much less explicit, can also be found in France, Spain, and Belgium. In Great Britain and Denmark, no changes have taken place in the 1980-2000 period (each 45% in favor). In the Netherlands and Sweden, the number of adherents of expressive work values has risen between 1980 and 1990, but has dropped again between 1990 and 2000 to about 50% at that last year. In Iceland, the rise took place in the 1980-1990 period after which no change took place in the 1990s (stable at 60% support). After a stable 1980-1990 period the proportions of West Germans adhering to these values has dropped as well in the 1990-2000 period (also to 50%). One might argue that at the end of the 20th century people from Iceland as well as the Italians and Irish are the publics most favorable of expressive work values. Populations of all other countries are somewhat less supportive. Still, small majorities of these publics are favoring expressive work values as well. We cannot conclude that convergence or divergence developments can be discerned in Europe (see the modest change in the overall standard deviations of .07 in 1981 to .09 in 1990 to back to .07 in 1999 again). Country differences are there and they are neither diminishing nor increasing.

At the single item level no particular developments can be observed. There are only minor changes in the level of adherence to the 10 items making up expressive work values over the two decades under investigation. There is not a

⁹ This dimension (Eigenvalue of 4.50, explained variance of 30%) contains the following jobaspects (loadings between brackets): 'opportunity to use initiative' (.72), 'responsible job' (.65), 'job in which you can achieve something' (.64), 'job that meets one's abilities' (.61), 'interesting job' (.57), 'meeting people' (.57), 'useful job for society' (.56), 'a job respected by people in general' (.50), 'good chances for promotion' (.46), and 'pleasant people to work with' (.37). Reliability analysis resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .80. Correlation between instrumental and expressive values scales is .67 (see also Van den Elzen, 2002).

single item on which we can firmly conclude that a trend towards convergence or divergence is taking place.

The modern citizen is increasingly confronted with the ambition to balance the interests of work, family and social life, and leisure. These ambitions are part of nations' proposals for citizens to engage in society – see for instance the moves towards life course perspectives in the welfare state policies, but they are also part of the proposals of citizens themselves to live their life as their own, highly personal project of engagement. In the EVS study a wide range of data is gathered touching upon the central issue of the balance between work, family life, and leisure. We will present the main findings in this section.

Work is a highly regarded domain of life. The next table shows the importance of work according to the European publics.

(Table 3 here)

In the last twenty years, the importance of work has only slightly declined settling from 1990 to 1999 at an average between quite to very important for the European publics. In France, Belgium, and especially in Portugal the importance of work is on the rise. In Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Austria, West Germany, and Iceland the significance of work has not changed. In Northern Ireland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland work importance is decreasing. In all cases work is still regarded as quite to very important. The lowest levels in 1999, still indicating a 'quite important' level, are observed in Great Britain, West Germany, and Denmark, closely followed by the Netherlands. Looking at the standard deviations in 1990 (0,16) and 1999 (0,21) for all countries we conclude that there is a slight divergence of opinion in Europe in the last decade of the 20th century.

A generational divide?

We argued that young people in particular will shape the future knowledge economy and transitional labor market (Vinken *et al.*, 2002). In this section we will answer the crucial question whether European young generations support work values and work attitudes that are conducive to a knowledge society and the idea of a transitional labor market. We will analyze generational divides on the

two main work value dimensions (instrumental and expressive), on the issue of the importance of work and on the focal topic of gender equality. We will do so in two steps. First of all, generational divides at the level of mean and deviation scores are depicted and analyzed for the three waves of the EVS study. In a next step we further examine the generational divides and provide some detailed insights in the generational case by comparing with other categorizations that might be relevant, for instance the level of education, having work or not, and gender. Generation studies across Europe argue that cohorts whose members have, in their formative years, experienced the Second World War in the 1940s and its aftermath in the 1950s (*War Generation*), the cultural and political upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s (*Baby Boom Generation*), and the severe economic crisis and pervasive political shifts of the 1980s and 1990s (*Baby Bust Generation*) form distinctive generations (see, e.g., Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2000; Diepstraten *et al.*, 1999a,b; Edmunds & Turner, 2002; Kohli & Szydlik, 2000; Van den Broek 1996). This three-type generational categorization is used here. In the second analysis, when we compare generational and other categorizations, we will also use a dichotomous divide of generations, being the war and the postwar (the baby boom and the baby bust) generation.

Generational divides in Europe

Generational data of the different waves of EVS on instrumental work values, at first glance, present hardly any serious generational divide. In general, the youngest generation, born in 1960 or later, does not seem very distinctive from older generations in terms of their support for instrumental work values, when we only compare the number of possible differentiations with the real number of distinctions found. Still, the distinctions we can observe do seem to point to some trends.

In 1981, the youngest generation – the baby bust generation – in France, Italy, and Denmark is different in instrumental work value adherence compared to the oldest generation (war generation). In France and Denmark members of the youngest generation put more and in Italy put less emphasis on these values. In all other countries in that year, generations support instrumental work values to the same extent with sizable minorities supporting these values. Overall, looking at all 12 countries, the youngest generations have a slightly, but significantly higher adherence to instrumental work values than the oldest have. As we will see this distinction expands in time.

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Looking at 1990, the French and Italian generational differentiations of 1981 have blurred, but the one in Denmark has expanded from a distinction with the war generation to a distinction, emphasizing instrumental work values more, with both the war and middle generation (baby boomers, born between 1940 and 1959). Also, the youngest generation in Britain, West-Germany, Sweden, and Iceland now has a distinctive profile, putting more emphasis on instrumental work values than older generations do. Looking at all 12 countries as a whole, the baby bust generation adheres significantly more to these values than both the baby boom and war generation do.

(Table 4 here)

In 1999, the number of differentiations grows again. Again in France and in Denmark, and also in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, West Germany, and the Netherlands, generational divides emerge. Most divides exist between the youngest and the oldest generation. France is an exception in that the youngest generation is different from both the war and baby boom generation and in all cases the youngest puts more emphasis on instrumental work values than the oldest does. Across all 12 countries, in 1999 the baby bust generation is more supportive towards these values than both older generations are.

In conclusion one might argue that over the last two decades of the 20th century generational distinctiveness has grown in Europe with a younger generation increasingly divergent from older ones in terms of its higher support for instrumental work values. Do we find this pattern as well when we turn to expressive work values? Table 5 shows the details. The pattern of generational divides seems more complex regarding expressive work values. In this field of values we can observe a higher number of generational differentiations. In all

three waves of the EVS study it is found that the youngest generation is taking up a distinctive position.

(Table 5 here)

In 1981, young generations in Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland, West Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden all put significantly more emphasis on expressive work values than the oldest generations does. In Ireland and Denmark they do so even more than the baby boom generation. In 1990 in France and Italy, and again in Spain, Belgium, Ireland, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark this is again the case. In almost all countries the youngest generation differs from both two older generations (in France, Italy, and West Germany the distinction is between the youngest and the oldest generation). In countries where there are no significant generational divides, the highest proportions of supporters of expressive work values are found among the youngest generation.

In 1999, the popularity of expressive work values seems to be on a general rise. The older generations catch up with the young. Still, in France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Northern Ireland, West Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, the youngest generation is still favoring expressive work values significantly more than most older generations do. In France and the Netherlands these values are more popular among the baby bust generation than among both the war and baby boom generation. In Spain, Northern Ireland, West Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, the youngest (baby bust) generation differentiates from the oldest (war) generation only. In Italy and Belgium the differences lie between the baby bust and baby boom only. The fullest generational divide therefore is found in France and the Netherlands at the end of the 20th century, in other countries the youngest generation conflicts with particular generations only. In 1981, 1990, and 1999 we find that when looking at all countries at one glance, the youngest generations in Europe are different in much more strongly supporting expressive work values than all older generations do.

We can conclude that a generational divide concerning expressive work values is eminent in the last two decades with the youngest generations in Europe consistently over-emphasizing these values as compared to older generations throughout these two decades. With the exception of Great Britain (disappearing distinctions) and Iceland (no distinctions), this generational divide persists over

time in most European countries. The strongest generational diversities are found in France and the Netherlands.

The importance of work for the three generations involved in our study is shown in table 6.

(Table 6 here)

It is striking that there is on the one hand an increasing number of generational differences concerning the emphasis on work and on the other hand a decrease in the breath of generational divides. In 1990 the youngest generation, overall, has a distinctive view on the importance of work compared to the two older generations. In 1999 this youngest generations only diverts from the oldest generation, the war generation. Still, the pattern at country-levels is complex.

In 1990 the baby bust generation thinks work is less important than older generations in Spain, Austria, West Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. In Spain, Austria, and West Germany the baby bust generation perceives work as less important than the baby boom generation only. In the Netherlands the baby bust thinks work is less important compared to the war generation only. In Sweden, Finland, and Iceland the youngest, baby bust generation is less convinced of the importance of work compared to both older generations. In Belgium, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland they perceive work as more important than the older generation (i.e., the war generation) does. At the level of all countries taken together, the youngest, baby bust generation is placing less emphasis on work compared to the baby boom generation and more emphasis compared to the war generation.

In 1999 the key distinctions are those between the baby bust and the war generation. Only in Italy, Belgium, and Austria there are no generational differences. In all countries there are significant distinctions between the baby bust and war generation where in almost all cases the baby bust generation attributes more importance to work than the war generation. In Finland the baby bust generation perceives work as more important than the war generation and less important than the baby boom generation. In Iceland the baby bust generation views work as less important compared to both older generations.

All in all, at the end of the 20th century young generations in almost all European countries put more emphasis on the importance of work than the war generation. In some countries in the early 1990s they attributed less importance to work than

the baby boom generation did, but this particular generational divide has disappeared in the late 1990s.

The relative impact of generational divides

Of course, it is important to further examine the generational divides and provide some detailed insights in the generational case by comparing with other categorizations that might be relevant, for instance the level of education, having work or not, and of course, gender. One might argue that the findings mentioned above do not allow for final conclusions regarding the extent to which the value diversities found are truly generational. It is clear that at a single moment in time it is hard if not impossible to discern generational from age or life cycle effects, and, moreover, to identify period effects taking place at that moment in time as well. Only by identifying these three effects can one draw firm conclusions on the existence of generational divides in Europe. This is why we have conducted a final analysis aimed at addressing the generational effect that might be at work, in our case concerning instrumental work values, expressive work values, the importance of work, and gender discrimination. We have done so for a small selection of countries in order to be able to address these effects in more detail. The analyses include some basic proxies for life cycle effects, being the educational and work items.¹⁰ One might argue that having attained a higher level of education and having a job are outcomes of age progress in the life cycle and can thus be regarded proxies of life cycle effects (see De Graaf & De Graaf, 1988). We have included the research year as a proxy for period effects, in this case we compare the state of affairs at the 1999 period with the 1981 period. In a first step we enter the life cycle and period effects, after which we include the three generations discussed above, first as a dichotomy discerning the two youngest postwar generations from the war generation, and secondly as a three-type differentiation which allows us to address the distinction of both the baby bust and the baby boom generation as compared to the war generation (reference group).

Expressive work values are found significantly more among the higher educated

¹⁰ The key issue is to technically discern age from cohort effects in time series analysis. Incorporating age as a variable in the analysis and the variable cohorts – also based on age – as well leads to serious problems of multicollinearity as both variables are highly correlated. More substantially: the aim is to assess effects of being in a certain phase in the life cycle and not being in another (age effects) and to discern these effects from having had specific and determining formative experiences in the certain phases of the life course (cohort effects). Age itself is of course only a rather crude indicator for these age effects. A better indicator is one that taps into the transitions taking place in the life course. See for more details and attempts to overcome the identification problem Van den Broek (1996) and Diepstraten *et al.* (1999ab).

and those with employment.¹¹ There is also an effect of the year 1999, a proxy of a period effect: in 1999 expressive work values are more stressed than in 1981. In Germany these values are also more popular. When the higher level of emphasis on expressive work values in 1999 is generational, then the period effect (wave 1999) should diminish if not disappear in favor of generation membership. This does not happen when we introduce generations in the equation. The period effect remains as strong and as significant even after adding generation effects.¹² Moreover, the generation effect is not significant when we include the dichotomy of generation classifications (war vs. postwar). The level of support for or the slight rise in expressive work values that we noted above, is not part of an overall change due to the absence or presence of severe experiences (e.g. war experience, the experience of lacking securities, little wealth, etc.) in Expressive work values are found significantly more among the higher educated the formative periods of the postwar and war generation respectively. When distinguishing between war versus postwar generation what seems to remain are the period effect, the effect of Germany, and the relatively strong education effect. In other words, living at the turn of the millennium, being German, and having attained a higher level of education is the basis of the modest change towards expressive work values. Still, this is not the complete picture. When we discern three different generations in a next step, we do find that there is a generation effect, being that the baby bust generation is significantly more in favor of expressive work values – in line with what we found above – than is the war generation. The baby boom generation does not divert from the war generation. In conclusion: the higher educated, Germans, those living at the end of the 20th century and members of the baby bust generation (in that order of importance) are more in favor of expressive work values. Instrumental work values are especially favored by, again, Germans and by the British, the employed and people living at the end of the 20th century. After adding the generation dichotomy the employment and period effects diminish. The effects of Germany, Great Britain and the postwar generation remain notable. In all cases instrumental work values are emphasized more strongly, meaning that the postwar generation is favoring instrumental work values regardless of their employment status or any other status. The separation of the baby boom and baby

¹¹ We discuss positive differentiations of at least .02 from 1.0 of the significant odd ratios presented.

¹² Only the employment variables diminishes somewhat in strength (but not in significance) when we include the dichotomous generation variable (war vs postwar), indicating that having employment is only partly a feature of the younger (postwar) generation itself. The same goes when we include the three-type generation categorization and the small decline in the effect of education.

bust generation still leaves us with a significant and notable generation effect. The baby boom, but especially the baby bust generation is more in favor of instrumental work values, like the British and especially the Germans are. The importance of work is above all a matter of having employment. Also the French, Belgians, the Swedes and the higher educated think work is important. Adding the war vs. postwar generation dichotomy decreases the impact of having a job notably (and the one of having a higher education slightly). The postwar generation is much more convinced of the importance of work (again, this is regardless of having a job, being from a particular country, etc.). The same is found when we make the baby boom and baby bust distinction. These two younger generations each regard work as more important, and so do people from France, Belgium, and Sweden and most of all, the employed. As far as the importance of work goes, there are no gender or period effects.

(Table 7 here)

Regarding the different generational positions we can conclude that generational divides are notable especially concerning the importance of work, followed by instrumental work values and finally, to the least extent, expressive work values. More important than generational divides, however, are other features, respectively having employment (higher importance of work), being from Germany (stressing instrumental work values more), and having a higher education (more in for expressive work values).

Conclusions

The modern labor market and the emerging knowledge society require flexible, adaptable, and multi-skilled workers. The employee in the modern work organization is continuously challenged to be creative, innovative, mobile, and to advance portable 'hard' and 'soft' skills. On balance, the advancement of an individualized life course within the context of a transitional labor market and a knowledge society asks for a work force that no longer merely embraces conventional instrumental work values but that is inspired by expressive or intrinsic work values. In this paper we focused on analyzing trends in value domains that are directly relevant for a transitional economy: instrumental and

expressive work values and the centrality of work. In drawing the main conclusions of our analyses of the EVS data we concentrate on the key value and attitude shifts taking place in Europe, on the question of convergence or divergence, and finally on generational divides.

Instrumental work values are slightly more popular at the end of the 20th century compared to the early 1980s. Support for expressive work values has not risen, at least not in the last ten years of the 20th century. The importance of work has declined slightly, but stays of key importance for Europeans. Concerning instrumental work values and expressive work values there is no evidence for a trend towards either convergence or divergence. There is a slight trend towards *divergence* in the importance people attribute to work. In the Netherlands and again Scandinavian countries work importance is in decline. There is no evidence of convergence or divergence regarding instrumental and expressive work values in Europe. Divergence is detectable regarding the importance of work.

Generational divides

It seems that generational divides have grown over the last two decades of the 20th century with a younger generation more strongly supporting instrumental work values than the war generation (born before 1940) does. The baby boom generation (born between 1940 and 1959) and especially the baby bust generation (born after 1959) are more in favor of instrumental work values. Also in regard to expressive work values, the baby bust generation in Europe is consistently strongly emphasizing these values. The two younger generations each place more importance on work. Regarding the different generational positions we can conclude that generational divides are notable especially concerning the importance of work, followed by instrumental work values and finally, to a lesser extent, expressive work values.

This result indicates that for Europe to become the most dynamic and competitive economy, there is still a world to win in terms of the wider diffusion of expressive work values. These findings do tone down high expectations that a shift towards a transitional labor market will be a smooth one for all European publics. The comforting message is that the youngest generation in most of Europe seems to be

preparing for this shift, at least in their cultural framing: they are the ones strongly emphasizing expressive work values (besides instrumental ones, one has to keep in mind), and regard work of great importance for their future lives.

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TABLES

Table 1: Instrumental work values

Instrumental values	Means			Diff.		Std. Dev.		
	1981	1990	1999	99-81	99-90	1981	1990	1999
France	0,27	0,26	0,34	0,07	0,09	0,22	0,22	0,25
Italy	0,34	0,42	0,61	0,27	0,20	0,25	0,27	0,29
Spain	0,49	0,47	0,53	0,04	0,06	0,31	0,30	0,30
Portugal		0,59	0,48		-0,11		0,32	0,29
Belgium	0,40	0,38	0,41	0,02	0,03	0,29	0,27	0,30
Great Britain	0,38	0,39	0,48	0,10	0,09	0,29	0,26	0,27
Northern Ireland	0,40	0,41	0,60	0,19	0,19	0,27	0,25	0,29
Ireland	0,39	0,43	0,59	0,20	0,16	0,27	0,28	0,31
Austria		0,41	0,41		0,00		0,22	0,25
East Germany			0,39					0,22
West Germany	0,53	0,49	0,45	-0,08	-0,04	0,29	0,28	0,25
Netherlands	0,37	0,46	0,40	0,02	-0,06	0,29	0,29	0,26
Denmark	0,33	0,29	0,28	-0,05	-0,01	0,26	0,23	0,22
Sweden	0,39	0,53	0,38	0,00	-0,14	0,27	0,30	0,28
Finland		0,36	0,41		0,05		0,26	0,26
Iceland	0,37	0,49	0,50	0,13	0,01	0,26	0,27	0,28
United States	0,55	0,54				0,28	0,28	
Norway	0,45	0,36				0,29	0,24	
Total	0,42	0,43	0,46	0,04	0,02	0,29	0,28	0,29
Mean 12 countries*	0,39	0,42	0,46					
Std. dev. 12 countries	0,07	0,08	0,11					

* 12 countries that participated in 3 waves: France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Ireland, West Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland

Table 2: Expressive work values

Expressive values	Means			Diff.		Std. Dev.		
	1981	1990	1999	99-81	99-90	1981	1990	1999
France	0,32	0,40	0,46	0,13	0,06	0,24	0,24	0,27
Italy	0,37	0,46	0,66	0,28	0,19	0,26	0,28	0,30
Spain	0,43	0,41	0,45	0,02	0,05	0,32	0,31	0,34
Portugal		0,57	0,47		-0,10		0,33	0,31
Belgium	0,37	0,42	0,49	0,12	0,07	0,31	0,28	0,29
Great Britain	0,48	0,46	0,45	-0,03	-0,01	0,28	0,27	0,28
Northern Ireland	0,40	0,41	0,56	0,16	0,14	0,29	0,24	0,32
Ireland	0,40	0,47	0,59	0,20	0,13	0,27	0,28	0,32
Austria		0,47	0,49		0,02		0,25	0,28
East Germany			0,45					0,27
West Germany	0,58	0,57	0,50	-0,09	-0,07	0,27	0,26	0,27
Netherlands	0,42	0,59	0,53	0,12	-0,05	0,28	0,27	0,25
Denmark	0,43	0,43	0,45	0,02	0,02	0,27	0,24	0,23
Sweden	0,44	0,64	0,50	0,06	-0,14	0,27	0,27	0,25
Finland		0,41	0,48		0,07		0,29	0,26
Iceland	0,46	0,61	0,60	0,14	0,00	0,25	0,27	0,30
United States	0,60	0,56				0,29	0,30	
Norway	0,53	0,47				0,30	0,26	
Total	0,46	0,49	0,51	0,06	0,03	0,29	0,29	0,29
Mean 12 countries*	0,43	0,49	0,52					
Std. dev. 12 countries	0,07	0,09	0,07					

*12 countries that participated in 3 waves: France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Ireland, West Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland

Table 3: Importance of work

<i>Importance of work</i>	Means*		Diff. 99-90	Standard Deviation	
	1990	1999		1990	1999
France	3,52	3,62	0,10	0,68	0,66
Italy	3,57	3,55	-0,02	0,61	0,63
Spain	3,57	3,56	-0,01	0,65	0,66
Portugal	3,29	3,52	0,23	0,58	0,62
Belgium	3,46	3,55	0,09	0,72	0,71
Great Britain	3,12	3,09	-0,03	1,07	0,95
Northern Ireland	3,29	2,95	-0,34	0,98	1,08
Ireland	3,53	3,29	-0,24	0,75	0,86
Austria	3,53	3,54	0,01	0,66	0,70
East Germany		3,36			0,92
West Germany	3,09	3,12	0,03	0,84	0,92
Netherlands	3,38	3,29	-0,09	0,72	0,82
Denmark	3,39	3,19	-0,20	0,73	0,83
Sweden	3,62	3,42	-0,20	0,60	0,75
Finland	3,47	3,37	-0,10	0,64	0,75
Iceland	3,46	3,50	0,04	0,71	0,60
United States	3,41			0,88	
Norway	3,68			0,58	
Total	3,44	3,40	-0,03	0,75	0,79
Mean 15 countries**	3,42	3,37			
Std. dev. 15 countries	0,16	0,21			

*range is 1 'not at all important', 2 'not important', 3 'quite important', 4 'very important'

**15 countries that participated in 2 waves: France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Austria, West Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland

Table 4: Instrumental work values by generation by wave

Instrumental values*	EVS wave 1981					EVS wave 1990					EVS wave 1999					
	%	War	Boom	Bust	Total	Diff.	War	Boom	Bust	Total	Diff.	War	Boom	Bust	Total	Diff.
France		25	28	29	27	yes/war	24	26	27	26	no	31	32	37	34	yes
Italy		37	32	31	34	yes/war	42	41	41	42	no	62	59	62	61	no
Spain		48	49	52	49	no	47	45	48	47	no	49	54	54	53	no
Belgium		37	42	43	40	no	39	37	39	38	no	41	40	42	41	no
Great Britain		36	39	40	38	no	37	40	42	39	yes/war	40	49	49	48	yes/war
Northern Ireland		37	44	41	40	no	40	42	41	41	no	55	59	63	60	yes/war
Ireland		38	39	39	39	no	44	41	45	43	no	61	59	56	59	no
West Germany		52	54	56	53	no	45	50	53	49	yes/war	42	44	48	45	yes/war
Netherlands		36	38	40	37	no	46	45	49	46	no	36	39	43	40	yes/war
Denmark		30	35	39	33	yes/war	22	29	35	29	yes	25	28	30	28	yes/war
Sweden		37	40	44	39	no	54	49	55	53	yes/boom	37	38	40	38	no
Iceland		36	39	37	37	no	51	44	52	49	yes/boom	47	49	52	50	no
Total		39	40	41	40	yes/war	41	41	44	42	yes	45	46	48	46	yes
Mean 12 countries		37	40	41	39		41	41	44	42		44	46	48	46	
Std. dev. 12 countries		7	7	8	7		10	7	8	8		11	11	10	11	

*scale (alpha =.72) consists of 7 aspects of a job that people say are important: 'good hours', 'generous holidays', 'good pay', 'not too much pressure', 'good job security', 'good chances for promotion', 'a job respected by people in general'

War = war generation, born before 1940; Boom = baby boom generation, born 1940 - 1959; Bust = baby bust generation, born after 1959

Diff. = does the youngest generation (baby bust) differ from the older generations? yes = differs from both older generations; yes/war = differs from war generation, but not from baby boom generation; yes/boom = differs from baby boom generation, but not from war generation; no = no difference between generations; differences are analyzed with *one-way anova* (post hoc multiple comparisons, Tukey HSD test)

Table 5: Expressive work values by generation by wave

Expressive values*	1981					1990					1999				
	War	Boom	Bust	Total	Diff.	War	Boom	Bust	Total	Diff.	War	Boom	Bust	Total	Diff.
France	31	33	34	32	no	37	40	42	40	yes/war	41	44	50	46	yes
Italy	37	37	37	37	no	43	46	49	46	yes/war	65	63	68	66	yes/boom
Spain	41	44	48	43	yes/war	38	39	44	41	yes	41	46	48	45	yes/war
Belgium	33	40	41	37	yes/war	40	41	46	42	yes	48	46	51	49	yes/boom
Great Britain	46	49	51	48	yes/war	44	47	48	46	no	41	47	46	45	no
Northern Ireland	40	41	34	40	no	41	40	44	41	no	51	57	57	56	yes/war
Ireland	37	40	45	40	yes	46	43	52	47	yes	59	60	58	59	no
West Germany	56	60	63	58	yes/war	54	58	59	57	yes/war	47	50	52	50	yes/war
Netherlands	37	44	47	42	yes/war	57	57	64	59	yes	48	51	58	53	yes
Denmark	37	46	53	43	yes	35	44	51	43	yes	39	45	48	45	yes/war
Sweden	41	46	49	44	yes/war	64	62	66	64	no	46	50	52	50	yes/war
Iceland	45	48	44	46	no	59	59	63	61	no	58	60	61	60	no
Total	40	44	46	43	yes	45	47	51	48	yes	49	52	54	52	yes
Mean 12 countries	40	44	46	43		47	48	52	49		49	52	54	52	
Std. dev. 12 countries	7	7	8	7		10	9	9	9		8	7	6	7	

*scale (alpha =.80) consists of 10 aspects of a job that people say are important: 'an opportunity to use initiative', 'a responsible job', 'a job in which you feel you can achieve something', 'a job that meets one's abilities', 'a job that is interesting', 'meeting people', 'a useful job for society', 'a job respected by people in general', 'good chances for promotion', and 'pleasant people to work with'

War = war generation, born before 1940; Boom = baby boom generation, born 1940 - 1959; Bust = baby bust generation, born after 1959

Diff. = does the youngest generation (baby bust) differ from the older generations? yes = differs from both older generations; yes/war = differs from war generation, but not from baby boom generation; yes/boom = differs from baby boom generation, but not from war generation; no = no difference between generations; differences are analyzed with *one-way anova* (post hoc multiple comparisons, Tukey HSD test)

Table 6: Importance of work by generation by wave

Importance of work Means*	1990					1999				
	War	EVS Boom	wave Bust	Total	Diff.	War	EVS Boom	wave Bust	Total	Diff.
France	3,50	3,53	3,55	3,52	no	3,53	3,65	3,64	3,62	yes/war
Italy	3,60	3,55	3,57	3,57	no	3,55	3,56	3,55	3,55	no
Spain	3,53	3,63	3,54	3,57	yes/boom	3,43	3,65	3,57	3,56	yes/war
Portugal	3,31	3,30	3,26	3,29	no	3,40	3,62	3,57	3,52	yes/war
Belgium	3,39	3,52	3,48	3,46	yes/war	3,49	3,58	3,56	3,55	no
Great Britain	2,72	3,36	3,44	3,12	yes/war	2,36	3,27	3,24	3,09	yes/war
Northern Ireland	3,07	3,41	3,41	3,29	yes/war	2,25	3,15	3,29	2,95	yes/war
Ireland	3,43	3,60	3,55	3,53	no	2,82	3,43	3,44	3,29	yes/war
Austria	3,49	3,62	3,46	3,53	yes/boom	3,50	3,60	3,51	3,54	no
West Germany	3,00	3,22	3,06	3,09	yes/boom	2,69	3,32	3,35	3,12	yes/war
Netherlands	3,49	3,33	3,35	3,38	yes/war	3,01	3,36	3,37	3,29	yes/war
Denmark	3,37	3,40	3,38	3,39	no	2,99	3,24	3,24	3,19	yes/war
Sweden	3,68	3,63	3,52	3,62	yes	3,21	3,47	3,48	3,42	yes/war
Finland	3,57	3,54	3,21	3,47	yes	3,14	3,52	3,36	3,37	yes
Iceland	3,55	3,52	3,32	3,46	yes	3,61	3,58	3,41	3,50	yes
Total	3,35	3,49	3,42	3,44	yes	3,20	3,49	3,46	3,40	yes/war
Mean 15 countries	3,38	3,48	3,41	3,42		3,13	3,47	3,44	3,37	
Std. dev. 15 countries	0,26	0,13	0,15	0,16		0,44	0,16	0,13	0,21	

*range is 1 'not at all important', 2 'not important', 3 'quite important', 4 'very important'

War = war generation, born before 1940; Boom = baby boom generation, born 1940 - 1959; Bust = baby bust generation, born after 1959

Diff. = does the youngest generation (baby bust) differ from the older generations? yes = differs from both older generations; yes/war = differs from war generation, but not from baby boom generation; yes/boom = differs from baby boom generation, but not from war generation; no = no difference between generations; differences are analyzed with *one-way anova* (post hoc multiple comparisons, Tukey HSD test)

Table 7: Expressive work values, instrumental work values, importance of work, and gender discrimination by sex, education, employed/non-employed, country, and generations, 1981 and 1999: odds ratios

	Expressive values	Instrumental values	Importance of work
women	0,9	0,9	1,0
higher educated	2,0	1,0	1,4
employed	1,2	1,2	5,5
wave 1999	1,3	1,2	1,0
Belgium	0,7	1,1	1,8
Germany	1,5	2,2	0,6
France	0,5	0,6	2,6
Great Britain	1,0	1,2	0,4
Sweden	0,8	0,9	1,4
women	0,9	0,9	0,9
higher educated	2,0	0,9	1,3
employed	1,1	1,1	4,5
wave 1999	1,3	1,1	0,9
Belgium	0,7	1,1	1,8
Germany	1,5	2,3	0,6
France	0,5	0,6	2,6
Great Britain	1,0	1,2	0,4
Sweden	0,8	0,9	1,4
baby boom/bust Generation	1,1	1,3	1,6
women	0,9	0,9	0,9
higher educated	1,9	0,9	1,3
employed	1,1	1,1	4,5
wave 1999	1,3	1,1	0,9
Belgium	0,7	1,1	1,8
Germany	1,5	2,3	0,6
France	0,5	0,6	2,6
Great Britain	1,0	1,2	0,4
Sweden	0,8	0,9	1,4
baby boom	1,0	1,2	1,5
baby bust	1,2	1,5	1,6

Men, lower educated, non-employed, wave 1981, the Netherlands, and the war generation are the reference categories