
This is the **published version** of the bachelor thesis:

Miraglia Martins, Sofia. *From progress to order : Gen Z, Identity and the Crisis of Liberalism*. Treball de Final de Grau (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), 2025 (Grau en Història, Política i Economia Contemporànies / Contemporary History, Politics and Economics). 47 pàg.

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/330283>

under the terms of the  license.



From progress to order: Gen Z, Identity and the Crisis of Liberalism

Author: Sofia Miraglia
Tutor: Andreu Espasa

To God, for the gift of life, for every open and closed door, and for the strength to walk through them.

To my family, to whom I owe everything.

To my father, my greatest example of honesty, hard work, leadership, and discipline.

To my mother, my best friend, the purest soul and best woman I know.

To my siblings, who root for me from every corner of the world.

To all those who dare to question.

Abstract

This work seeks to understand the causes and motivations behind the growing political dissent among Generation Z in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. By analyzing the material crisis, demographic change, and the weakening of shared references of belonging, it is possible to identify a clear thread that has led a significant portion of young people in these countries to reject the traditional structures and narratives of the liberal system. I argue that, besides of technology, a key aspect of this crisis is the logic that prioritizes individual autonomy and liberation from social constraints, which could have led to social fragmentation and the creation of micro-identities—which nonetheless represent a contemporary alternative for a new form of collectivity. Although the liberal perspective itself has certain limitations in recognizing that collective belonging and historical continuity can be viewed as fundamental instruments of social cohesion, this study seeks to demonstrate that, for the younger generation—especially in a context of technological development, demographic changes, and economic crises—the sources of security to them may be restoring symbolic stability and moral guidance.

Este trabajo pretende comprender las causas y motivaciones que subyacen al creciente descontento político entre la Generación Z en Estados Unidos, Francia y el Reino Unido. Mediante el análisis de la crisis material, el cambio demográfico y el debilitamiento de los referentes comunes de pertenencia, es posible identificar un hilo conductor claro que ha llevado a una parte significativa de los jóvenes de estos países a rechazar las estructuras y narrativas tradicionales del sistema liberal. Sostengo que, además de la tecnología, un aspecto clave de esta crisis es la lógica que da prioridad a la autonomía individual y a la liberación de las restricciones sociales, lo que podría haber conducido a la fragmentación social y a la creación de microidentidades—que, no obstante, representan una alternativa contemporánea para una nueva forma de colectividad. Aunque la perspectiva liberal presenta ciertas limitaciones a la hora de reconocer que la pertenencia colectiva y la continuidad histórica pueden considerarse instrumentos fundamentales de la cohesión social, este estudio pretende demostrar que, para las generaciones más jóvenes —especialmente en un contexto de desarrollo tecnológico, cambios demográficos y crisis económicas—, las fuentes de seguridad pueden residir en el restablecimiento de la estabilidad simbólica y la orientación moral.

Keywords: Generation Z, identity, liberalism, belonging, fragmentation.

Artificial intelligence was primarily used to translate a portion of my original manuscripts from Portuguese into English, using the DeepL platform, which is designed for this purpose. I also used ChatGPT for preliminary evaluations of the thesis drafts, to simulate grades, provide feedback and general recommendations, translate the executive summary, and, finally, to support the Chicago academic formatting in the bibliography. None of the sections of the paper relied on the academic contributions of artificial intelligence, as it was used solely for review purposes. The analysis, interpretations and approaches were a product of my own work. AI was very helpful in allowing me to navigate between Portuguese and English, but it was, by no means, the producer of the academic content.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
The Material and Legitimacy Crises.....	5
The West and the Liberal thought, 2008 crisis, distrust in the system, economic setback	
Who are they? The Making of Generation Z.....	9
Indicators of wellbeing, technology, political perspective	
It's the demography, stupid!.....	15
Demographic changes in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom	
Who Belongs? Identity in Multiculturalist Societies.....	19
The new approach to nationality, social fragmentation and perception of identity	
Religion, Catholicism and Moral re-anchoring.....	25
The surge of Catholicism among the youth and religion as a response to modernity	
Conclusion.....	33
Bibliography.....	36

Introduction

In 1928, Karl Mannheim, a Hungarian sociologist, wrote about a long-standing phenomenon that could be observed around the world, across different eras and nations: young people, especially those in academic settings, mobilizing and organizing against the prevailing political and social order¹. Whether protests for greater sexual freedom, for an end to military conflicts, for greater investment in health and education, or demonstrations with the sole purpose of declaring “we are here,” the demands that have historically emerged from the youth have often been capable of initiating major processes of transformation, leading to the breakdown and/or establishment of new norms.

In the 19th century, European liberal revolutions saw significant participation from university students, particularly in the intellectual and political movements centered in Vienna². A century later, the United States and Europe were marked by a series of protests led by young people seeking civil rights, which established the 1960s as the heyday of counterculture³. Long before these events, as far back as the Middle Ages, English youth played an important role in the cultural spread of the Protestant Reformation⁴.

On the other side of the world, in a very different cultural context, shortly after the end of World War I, the May Fourth Movement in China began as a protest by young university students in Beijing. From this intellectual milieu emerged one of the most influential magazines of the time, “New Youth”. In one of its articles published in 1919, it stated: “We believe that the natural sciences and pragmatic philosophy are indispensable conditions for the progress of our current society, and that superstition and speculation must be abolished. We believe that respect for the individuality and rights of women is absolutely essential for the progressive evolution

¹ Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations” (1928), in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 276–322.

² Manfred Zentner, “Austria,” in *History Teaching and Education for Democratic Citizenship*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, n.d.), 75–81.

³ Gail Garberg, “The Eruption of Youth Culture in America,” *History@LMU*, Loyola Marymount University, 2020, <https://promotionofjustice.eadrummondhistory.lmu.build/the-eruption-of-youth-culture-in-america>

⁴ Susan Bridgen. “Youth and the English Reformation.” *Past & Present*, no. 95 (1982): 37–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650732>.

of our society.”⁵ Another emblematic case is the Indian independence movement, in which universities became centers of political mobilization and civic organization⁶.

This empirical reality was analyzed on numerous occasions throughout the 20th century by various sociologists in addition to Mannheim, such as Ronald Inglehart⁷. However, it was primarily in the second half of the century that national research institutes and other statistical agencies began conducting technical surveys on the prevalence of political ideologies by age group. The General Social Survey (GSS) was launched in 1972 as a project of the University of Chicago and, since then, has tracked the historical evolution of the American population’s political self-identification, divided into four different age groups. In Europe, the Pew Research Center and other research institutes also address the relationship between age and ideological positioning in their comparative analyses.

Youth rebellion is often directed towards what is understood as progress, or at least with what is perceived as progress within each historical context. In the United States and Europe, the data point in the same direction: young people between the ages of 18 and 24 tend to hold more progressive views compared to other groups analyzed. On the one hand, it is possible to understand this phenomenon through psychological factors related to the search for identity characteristic of youth (a process that often involves questioning the established order and social norms) and the prioritization of values such as justice, equality, and freedom in the process of forming an individual’s convictions.

On the other hand, the very narrative of liberal thought envisions the cumulative progress of humanity⁸, which may explain the ongoing “shift to the left” among young people. In this sense, it is worth discussing how the ideological center has shifted over the years. In 2026, being on the left or the right is definitely not the same as it was in 1850 or even in 2005. In the Western world, mainly after 1989, liberal capitalism has become the definitive model and, to a certain extent, the benchmark for the very definition of the political spectrum.

⁵ Thomas Bärthlein, “1919: Chineses Protestam contra Tratado de Versalhes,” DW Brasil, n.d., <https://www.dw.com/pt-br/1919-chineses-protestam-contra-tratado-de-versalhes/a-312530>

⁶ Wilkinson, T. “The Undisciplined Youth and a Moral Panic in Independent India, Circa 1947–1964.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35, no. 4 (2022): 507–526. <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12387>

⁷ B. Reimer, “No Values—New Values? Youth and Postmaterialism,” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 11 (1988): 347–360, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.1988.tb00376.x>

⁸ Nicolas de Condorcet, *Sketch for an Historical Picture of the Advances of the Human Mind*, trans. Jonathan Bennett (1795; repr., 2017), 95-99.

In the context of the liberal Western world, Generation Z in Europe and the United States, born between 1997 and 2012, was socialized in an environment where the major historical struggles for civil rights had, for the most part, already been incorporated into the legal framework of democracies. In the United States, racial segregation laws had been abolished more than two decades earlier; in Europe, the European Union was moving forward with the admission of new members on the condition of institutional alignment with the principles of the free market, human rights, and liberal democracy. Simultaneously, the consolidation of the Schengen Area in 1995 abolished the EU's internal borders and represented a crucial step in the continent's economic and cultural integration. In the entertainment industry, films like *The Princess Diaries* (2001) and *Legally Blonde* (2001) contributed to the spread of female empowerment, shaping the pop culture of the moment, while legal recognition of same-sex marriage was progressively expanding.

The combination of material abundance (as evidenced by the success of the European welfare state and the American economic hegemony) with the promise of an exponential expansion of freedom, emancipated from the social constraints imposed by tradition and religion, was the fulfillment of the historic promise of a world, centered on science, humanity, and technological progress. As political scientist Mark Leonard wrote in 2005, "Europe represents a synthesis of the energy and freedom that come from liberalism with the stability and welfare that come from social democracy. As the world becomes richer and moves beyond satisfying basic needs such as hunger and health, the European way of life will become irresistible."⁹ This horizon, which seemed stable and unambiguous, began to weaken with the 2008 crisis.

The financial crisis has exposed structural weaknesses in the liberal capitalist model. In Europe, states are no longer functioning as "tax states" and have come to rely on debt and loans to sustain their political and social model. The economic recession has fueled growing resentment toward elites and "expert" bureaucracies, which have been unable to offer quick and effective responses to the middle classes, who have been particularly affected by the crisis¹⁰. Even more significantly, the loss of credibility of the European Union carries particularly relevant symbolism. More than a supranational organization, the EU represents the most advanced

⁹ Ivan Krastev, *After Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 8.

¹⁰ Krastev, *After Europe*, 13.

liberal project in contemporary times, implementing economic integration, overcoming borders, and disseminating universal values.

In light of these changes, a new trend has caught the attention of political actors. In describing the rise of the National Rally among young people in the 2024 French elections, *The New Statesman* used the term “unlikely political uprising,” reflecting the surprise at the right’s gains among this demographic¹¹. *Sky News*, for its part, in analyzing the Reform UK party conference in September 2024, noted that “a surprising number of young, white men” stood out among the participants¹². In a debate with students at the University of Cambridge in May 2025, Charlie Kirk, founder of the organization Turning Point U.S., stated, referring to the previous year’s U.S. elections: “We crushed the youth vote; even Democrats acknowledge it. Both young men and young women shifted dramatically to the right.”¹³

It is important to understand that the apparent shift in voting behavior could reflect an even deeper change in the ethical and moral outlook of a significant portion of Generation Z. Limiting this phenomenon to the political sphere and framing it as just another resurgence of fascism only reinforces the dichotomies and ideological frameworks inherited from the Cold War era. The challenge lies in moving beyond liberal paradigms to understand a phenomenon defined precisely by its break with liberalism itself. These transformations are evident in the growing interest in faith and Catholic tradition, in the reevaluation and questioning of national belonging, and in a growing distrust of liberal institutions.

In this context, we are left to ask: what explains the apparent growing attraction of conservative, traditionalist, and right-wing identities among Generation Z? This work aims to analyze the role of the youth in envisioning a post-liberal world, and particularly to understand the social, economic and political contexts that might be shaping the ideological and moral characteristics of Gen Zers that are seemingly embracing the far right. The countries selected for analysis are the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, which, not coincidentally, played a key

¹¹ Andrew Hussey, “How the Far Right Seduced France’s Gen Z,” *The New Statesman*, June 20, 2024, <https://www.newstatesman.com/international-content/2024/06/how-the-far-right-seduced-frances-gen-z>

¹² Serena Barker-Singh, “Something Remarkable Is Happening with Gen Z – Is Reform UK Winning the ‘Bro Vote’?,” *Sky News*, December 3, 2024, <https://news.sky.com/story/something-remarkable-is-happening-with-gen-z-is-reform-uk-winning-the-bro-vote-13265490>

¹³ Benjamin Siegel, “Charlie Kirk’s Influence on Younger Voters Helped Donald Trump,” *ABC News*, September 13, 2025, <https://abcnews.com/Politics/charlie-kirks-influence-younger-voters-helped-donald-trump/story?id=125518800>

role in shaping what is now known as the West. To produce a work that could truly offer an interpretive analysis of trends among young people in the chosen countries, it was necessary to make extensive use of data and primary sources. This strategy seeks to objectively demonstrate the specific realities (and, more importantly, their perceptions) of each of the three societies analyzed. To provide further context, it was also necessary to give historical references. The reflexive portion of this study was based primarily on the work of Karl Mannheim, Zygmunt Bauman, and conclusions were grounded in the book “Why Liberalism Failed” by Patrick J. Deneen.

The Material and Legitimacy Crises

More than just a geographical designation, the West is a historically formed concept that defines the civilizational product of the cumulative processes through which a specific group of countries came to share cultural, political, and social characteristics—a significant part of them rooted in liberal principles, such as freedom, democracy, reason, private property, and individualism. The development of this societal model can be traced back to pivotal historical marks associated with the Greek philosophy and the Christian faith, which helps us understand the possible internal frictions between these moral pillars and liberalism’s ongoing drive toward emancipation and individualization.

In the face of the conflicts brought about by industrialization and the capitalist system of production, as well as attempts at revolution and social change on a scale never before seen, liberalism proposed a new form of organization that went beyond the defense of freedom. The new liberal order was intended to be underpinned by individual autonomy, mechanisms to protect people against abuses of power, rationality, and faith in progress. The major innovation was the promise of stability, social cohesion, and a shared ethical framework through mechanisms that would not, by necessity and objectively, depend on fixed moral authorities, traditions, or religion¹⁴.

The achievements and advances associated with the liberal system are countless, ranging from economic growth to the expansion of citizenship and human rights (a notion whose very

¹⁴ Edmund Fawcett, *Liberalism: The Life of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 4–8.

conception is made possible by liberal logic). It is also important to note that liberalism has changed significantly since 1830. We might mention classical liberalism, the neoliberalism of Reagan and Thatcher, or Keynesianism; in all these cases, however, as well as in others, all the schools of thought that have emerged are based on the same principles—some of them mentioned beforehand¹⁵.

However, the system was not without its flaws. Apocalyptic and pessimistic views on the liberal West are nothing new—such as the one presented in the 1923 book *The Decline of the West*—, but it is undeniable that major crises have impacted Western countries over the past two decades. Perhaps the most defining moment for France, the UK, and the United States in the 21st century was the 2008 crisis, as none of the countries affected by it have managed to fully recover from the downturns caused by the recession. Regardless of the actual economic recovery based on the figures from that time (such as unemployment rates), the major legacy of the financial crisis was a crisis of legitimacy within the system.

German sociologist Wolfgang Streeck argues that 2008 marked the moment when the liberal system broke with the notion of continuous progress and economic growth, but that this event was inevitable given the long-term unsustainability of the liberal social-democratic model. Despite the exceptional economic growth, rising real wages, and expansion of social welfare in the postwar period, by the 1970s the first signs of a system—according to Streeck—doomed to failure began to emerge. This decade marked the end of capitalism's golden age, and major shocks such as the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the oil crisis, rising international competition, stagnating productivity, the decline of industry, and the slowdown in economic growth had two main impacts: first, the belief among governments that the welfare state was too costly and that economic deregulation was necessary for the economy to thrive again—a reaction that took shape through neoliberalism; second, the growing reliance on borrowing to maintain public services and social stability, leading to a steady rise in public debt¹⁶.

Streeck argues that the third and final phase of the attempt to "buy time" took place through the expansion of private credit beginning in the 1990s, when it became possible to sustain consumption through household debt, as wages had stagnated. In this context, it is worth

¹⁵ Fawcett, *Liberalism*, 58.

¹⁶ Ronzoni, Miriam. "How Social Democrats May Become Reluctant Radicals: Thomas Piketty's *Capital* and Wolfgang Streeck's *Buying Time*." *European Journal of Political Theory* (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115601602>

engaging in an almost psychological reflection on liberal capitalism, since, at the time, debt was becoming acceptable because the prevailing mindset still assumed that economic progress would continue, and that credit was merely an advance on an inevitably prosperous future. It is already well known that this was not the case.

In the United States, the group most affected by the crisis was the youth. In addition to being the age group with the highest unemployment rate, according to a 2010 study, young people who would graduate from college that year would “earn approximately 17.5 percent less per year than comparable peers graduating in better labor markets”, and the wage gap would only fade away within 17 years. This means that not only were starting salaries lower, but the prospects for a significant portion of those individuals’ working lives—as well as for those who were about to enter the labor market—were subject to worse conditions than those faced by previous generations¹⁷.

In another study focused on the UK, it was found that experiencing a financial crisis has a direct impact specially on the perceptions of meritocracy among people under 17 and over 25. In addition to psychological damage related to feelings of personal failure, it has been found that “youngsters growing up during recessions tend to believe that success in life depends more on luck than on effort; they support more government redistribution but have less confidence in public institutions”. Further demonstrating that unemployment in early adulthood has lasting negative effects, the study stated that “a six-month spell of unemployment at age 22 results in an 8 per cent lower wage at 23 and even at ages 30 and 31”.¹⁸

Besides the economic turmoil in the European Union and the United States, the governments’ response at the time contributed to the deterioration of social conditions. The decision to impose austerity measures on the public while bailing out the banks was seen as a major betrayal. The great irony is that institutions created the very mechanisms that later led to their own discredit. In Europe, pre-existing inequalities within the eurozone resulted in a vicious cycle of rising public debt, unemployment, and further austerity; moreover, the inability of national central banks to respond to the crisis in a manner tailored to the realities of member

¹⁷ Michael Greenstone and Adam Looney, “The Long-term Effects of the Great Recession for America’s Youth,” *Brookings Institution* (The Hamilton Project), September 3, 2010, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-long-term-effects-of-the-great-recession-for-americas-youth/>.

¹⁸ David N. F. Bell and David G. Blanchflower, *Young People and the Great Recession*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 5674 (Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor, 2011), 18–19, <https://docs.iza.org/dp5674.pdf>

countries has called the European project itself into question due to Brussels' apparent inability to manage the crisis. Furthermore, in France, England, and the United States, the view took hold that the growth prior to 2008 was also a false promise, as the prosperity bubble eventually burst¹⁹.

On top of the deterioration of legitimacy of the system, the fact that the traditional parties of the liberal postwar order have been unable to offer effective solutions to the population was the first step toward what is now clearly a growing trend toward political fragmentation. The latest local elections in the United Kingdom were clear indication that the expected political cycle of alternating power between the Conservatives and Labor has come to an end, at least for now²⁰. The main winner was Reform UK, a party that emerged from movements advocating for Brexit. Even in the United States, the world's oldest democracy, the predictability between Democrats and Republicans was not enough to curb the Trump phenomenon or the internal conflicts within the Democratic Party. In France, Euroscepticism has been embraced by Le Pen's party, and overall, it seems that old solutions are not enough to solve today's problems.

Now, young people preparing for independence face a very different reality from that lived in past generations, mainly the baby boomers, who managed to benefit from stable and sustained economic growth, the expansion of the welfare state, low unemployment, and rising real wages²¹. In American society, the median age of all homebuyers in 2025 was 59 years old, 15 years more than in 2010²². Despite its strong tradition of protecting labor rights, 81% of new employment contracts in France in 2024 were short-term, reflecting a structural transformation of the labor market and the growing difficulty of securing jobs that offer stability²³. To find out "what's holding the younger generation back," the UK's Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) has committed to investing over a billion pounds to help young people enter the job market, given

¹⁹ Meixing Dai, "La grande crise systémique de 2008 : Causes, conséquences et mesures de politique," *Bulletin de l'Observatoire des politiques économiques en Europe* 19, no. 2 (2008): 3–13, <https://hal.science/hal-04080462>

²⁰ Stephen Coleman, "English Local Elections 2026: A Story of a New Kind of Politics," *The Conversation*, May 8, 2026, <https://theconversation.com/english-local-elections-2026-a-story-of-a-new-kind-of-politics-282409>

²¹ Stephen A. Marglin and Juliet B. Schor, eds., *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 39–73.

²² Eleanor Pringle, "In Just 15 Years, the Average U.S. Homebuyer Went from 39 to 59 Years Old: Top Analyst Reveals How the Housing Market Has Warped in One Generation," *Fortune*, November 13, 2025, <https://fortune.com/2025/11/13/average-homebuyer-59-years-old-senior-citizen-housing-market-affordability/>

²³ Thibaud Métais, "La France face à l'explosion des CDD ou des missions d'intérim courtes," *Le Monde*, March 27, 2026, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2026/03/27/emploi-la-france-face-a-l-explosion-des-contrats-de-tres-courte-duree_6674459_823448.html

that more than 700,000 college graduates are unemployed and receiving social benefits in the country²⁴. Other data related to the current economy underscore the reality Generation Z faces in achieving stability:

1. The hiring rates in the American job market as of March 2026 is lower than in 2020 and just 0.7 percentage points higher than in the Great Recession²⁵.
2. To revive the bloc's economy, the European Union's launched the NextGenEU program, worth over 648 billion euros in investments and grants, placing a strong emphasis on training young workers and fostering entrepreneurship²⁶.
3. The UK'S service-sector-intensive economy has roughly 70% of all workers in positions that AI could potentially perform or enhance²⁷.

In addition to the economic crisis, it appears that other factors can also shape Generation Z in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Who Are They? The Making of Generation Z

From Mannheim's perspective, each generation is shaped by the historical reality of its time, which leads to the development of a distinct generational consciousness²⁸. There are countless examples of generations marked by the political and social context of their nations: in Spain, the generation of 1898 is characterized by deep pessimism, a result of the decline of the Spanish Empire; after World War I, the "Lost Generation" was shaped by the trauma of war, the collapse of certainties, and disillusionment²⁹; the "Sampo Generation" in Korea gives up on developing their personal and romantic lives in the face of the constantly rising cost of living and social pressure to achieve professional success³⁰. Thus, it is against the backdrop of an era marked by

²⁴ Rose, Beth. "Over 700,000 Graduates out of Work and Claiming Benefits, Analysis Suggests." *BBC News*. January 26, 2026. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1klry2rjm0o>

²⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary". Published May 5th 2025.

²⁶ European Commission, "NextGenerationEU," accessed May 25, 2026, https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en

²⁷ Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. *Assessment of AI Capabilities and the Impact on the UK Labour Market*. London: UK Government, 2026.

²⁸ Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," 276-320.

²⁹ Maxine Davis, *The Lost Generation: A Portrait of American Youth Today* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), 33.

³⁰ Grace Moon, "The Young Koreans Pushing Back on a Culture of Endurance," *BBC Worklife*, January 9, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200108-the-young-koreans-pushing-back-on-a-culture-of-endurance>

economic, political, and social crises that Generation Z shapes its personality, social and political relationships, and even its artistic and philosophical output.

While the United States, France, and the United Kingdom have seen objective improvements in quality of life over the past four decades (as evidenced by the Human Development Index in these three countries), other indicators point to new trends related to subjective well-being decline in other areas. In a survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics, 33% of young Britons aged 16 to 29 reported that they often feel lonely, a record high among all age groups surveyed³¹. In France, nearly 30% of young people reported having had suicidal thoughts within the previous year³², while in the United States, young individuals aged 18 to 24 account for the highest number of people with depression³³. The psychological crisis among the young could be linked to profound social and economic changes that intensified in the 21st century.

In the 1990s, technological optimism was fueled by advertisements that reinforced the idea that new technological inventions would make life more convenient, comfortable, and practical, creating an aesthetic vision based on the expectation of continuous progress, as portrayed in AT&T's "You Will" campaign³⁴. The creation of the internet at the beginning of the decade was one of the most important and defining events in modern history, and, as Alvin Toffler predicted in 1993, "we are now in the process of transforming the way we create wealth, from the industrial to the informational."³⁵

Generation Z is growing up in a world marked by the rapid spread and democratization of internet access: from approximately 16% of the world's population in 2005 to 74% in 2025³⁶. At the same time, the emergence and subsequent spread of social media have transformed the way people communicate, stay informed, and construct their identities. The creation of various social media platforms also reflects the changing nature of communication over time.

³¹ Luke Mintz, "Why More Young People Are Turning to the Far Right," BBC News, December 18, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0kz1wpmq5o>

³² Ariel Frajerman, Federico Cevoli, and Marion Leboyer, "Youth's Mental Health in France after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results from the Repeated CASSANDRE Surveys," *Psychiatry Research* 355 (2026): 116848, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2025.116848>

³³ National Institute of Mental Health, "Major Depression," National Institute of Mental Health, accessed March 12, 2026, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression>

³⁴ AT&T – 1993 'You Will' Ad Campaign".

³⁵ Peter Schwartz, "Shock Wave (Anti) Warrior," *Wired*, May 1, 1993, <https://www.wired.com/1993/05/toffler/>

³⁶ International Telecommunication Union, "Facts and Figures 2025: Internet Use," *ITU*, October 15, 2025, <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/reports/statistics/2025/10/15/ff25-internet-use/>

Facebook, a pioneer in social media, was originally designed primarily for written communication and fulfills the initial vision of replicating real-world relationships within a digital space, rather than creating a parallel environment. A few years later, Instagram shifted its focus and began promoting images as the primary tool for interaction, and the platform's constantly evolving approach has fundamentally reformed the way social media is used.

The addictive stimuli generated online have given rise to terms that reflect the effects of social media exposure, such as FOMO (acronym for “fear of missing out”), brain rot (the cognitive decline caused by the overconsumption of low-quality content), touch grass (referring to the need to return to the real world), doomscrolling (the compulsive want to keep consuming negative and distressful content than will eventually lead to exhaustion and anxiety), and others. Essentially, the creation of this new language highlights the need to describe the psychological consequences of today's digital experience, which seems to be increasingly merging with the offline world. As Jonathan Haidt pointed out in *The Anxious Generation*, “Gen Z became the 1st generation in history to go through puberty with a portal in their pockets that called them away from the people nearby and into an alternative universe that was exciting, addictive, unstable, and unsuitable for children and adolescents [...] The members of Gen Z are, therefore, the test subjects for a radical new way of growing up, far from the real-world interactions of small communities in which humans evolved.”³⁷

Haidt argues that starting in the 1980s, a shift began from a “play-based childhood” to a “phone-based childhood, and in the 2010s such transition was completed. The main problem with this situation, in the author's view (aside from the online environment, which can lead to exposure to violent, sexual, or age-inappropriate content in general), is that development is incomplete when childhood and adolescent experiences are dominated by the digital world. The result is a lack of skills considered basic for real life interaction, which people try to make up for through "maturing" online. Common effects among young people who grow up immersed in social media and the internet are sleep and social deprivation, attention fragmentation and addiction. Evidence shows that, especially among girls, being chronically online is a contributing factor to the development of mental health disorders³⁸.

³⁷ Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation* (London: Penguin Books, 2024), 6.

³⁸ Haidt, *The Anxious Generation*, 16-22.

Some of the potential consequences of this reality are reflected in Generation Z's attempts to enter a job market that is no longer as vibrant as it once was. At least 27% of the managers surveyed in an American study said that they avoid hiring Gen Zers because of their lack of soft skills (like communication, teamwork, and management) ³⁹. This real-life "amateurism" gives rise to the so-called "Gen Z stare", which refers to a blank, unresponsive gaze that many young people display in social interactions, when one would expect a verbal response or, at the very least, a facial expression⁴⁰.

It is therefore to be expected that young people's political behavior will also change compared to past generations, as a result of a broader and more profound transformation.

In the United States, there is a divide even among Zoomers themselves. Voters aged 22 to 29 showed a preference for Democratic candidates in the 2026 congressional elections, while voters aged 18 to 21 preferred Republicans by a bigger margin. The director of the poll commented on the results: "Young people are traditionally thought of as the more liberal age group. And it's true that voters who are 18 to 29 years old are more progressive than those over 30. But we are also now seeing how those within this group who went through high school during the COVID-19 pandemic are significantly more conservative."⁴¹ The overall picture, however, reveals the main trend among young Americans: non-partisan affiliation. In an analysis of all generations since the Silent Generation, Gen Zers are becoming progressively less likely to identify as Republicans, maintaining the average Democratic identification, while the percentage of independent voters has increased significantly, with 56% identifying as such⁴². This majority of young people is described as "cynical and frustrated"; they have less confidence in the political system and, in some cases, are more open to the use of violence in the political arena⁴³.

³⁹"1 in 5 Managers Have Considered Quitting Due to Stress of Overseeing Gen Z Employees," *Intelligent.com*, November 5, 2024, <https://www.intelligent.com/1-in-5-managers-have-considered-quitting-due-to-stress-of-overseeing-gen-z-employees/>

⁴⁰ Desirée Peñalba, "O que é o 'olhar da Geração Z' e por que ele preocupa os especialistas," *Gazeta do Povo*, September 18, 2025, <https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/ideias/que-olhar-geracao-z-como-ele-preocupa-especialistas/>

⁴¹ Rick Harrison, "Yale Youth Poll Finds Split in Gen Z Political Views," *Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS)*, June 11, 2025, <https://isps.yale.edu/news/blog/2025/06/yale-youth-poll-finds-split-in-gen-z-political-views>

⁴² Jeffrey M. Jones, "New High in U.S. Adults Identifying as Political Independents," *Gallup News*, January 12, 2026, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/700499/new-high-identify-political-independents.aspx>.

⁴³ Andrew Lentini, "Political Divides between Generations Are Growing, New Survey Finds," Johns Hopkins University Hub, February 10, 2026.

In the United Kingdom, the sense of despair is striking. The most notable shift among young Britons is their growing preference for more authoritarian systems and their desire to break with the current democratic model. For 33% of Zoomers aged 13 to 27, the country would be in better shape if it were under military rule, and 52% stated that “the UK would be a better place if a strong leader was in charge who does not have to bother with parliament and elections”. As for the social bias, 45% of the population aged 18 to 27 support the death penalty, while 67% support chemical castration for sex offenders—what goes against the centrality of human rights in the contemporary liberal model in the United Kingdom. Finally, 40% of generation Z in the UK believes the political system needs a “major reform” and 15% believe it is completely broken⁴⁴.

In France, even though the strongest call is for more direct participation in politics—which also reflects a lack of trust in institutions—support for the democratic model is waning. In 2024, among people under 35 years of age, 42% agreed with the idea that other political systems are just as good as democracy, compared with 29% ten years before. On the other hand, older generations make up the opposite trend. Sciences Po analyzed this phenomenon: “For democracy to survive, it will find its strongest supporters among the elderly rather than among the younger generation.” The fact is that the left remains the dominant ideology among those under 35, but its strength and intensity are in decrease; in contrast, identification with the right among young people increased significantly between 2020 and 2025 (from 28% to 38%)⁴⁵. If we narrow down the age group even further, another distinction emerges. Among Zoomers aged 15 to 17, there is a significant ideological gap between men and women, with 64% of boys identifying as right-wing and 53% of girls as left-wing. Among the general public, moral values tend to be more conservative and influenced by religious morality⁴⁶.

In the three countries analyzed, the main message we were able to glean from Generation Z is not necessarily their clear ideological identification with a political group, but rather their broader rejection of the current system. It is therefore plausible that some Gen Zers could be inclined to support parties that position themselves as “anti-establishment,” or, alternatively, to

⁴⁴ David Batty, “Gen Z More Likely to Support Authoritarianism and Populism, UK Study Finds,” *The Guardian*, February 6, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/06/gen-z-authoritarianism-populism-democracy-uk-research>

⁴⁵ Anne Muxel, “Les jeunes veulent-ils encore la démocratie ?,” *Sciences Po CEVIPOF*, December 11, 2025, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipof/fr/actualites/les-jeunes-veulent-ils-encore-la-democratie/>.

⁴⁶ François Kraus, Mathilde Tchounikine, and Noé Fridman, *La « Bof génération » ? Radioscopie politique des adolescents de 15 à 17 ans* (Paris: Ifop pour *Elle*, February 3, 2026), 6–17.

adopt broader forms of rejection of institutional politics, ranging from protest voting to abstention—directed both at the traditional or dissident parties themselves. It is somewhat surprising that some young people in Britain, the United States, and France might be willing to vote for parties that place such a strong emphasis on the narrative of national identity, and that also prioritize narratives centered on order—which generally runs counter to the spirit of freedom typically associated with youth⁴⁷.

Below are some key findings regarding the profile of Generation Z in the three countries analyzed:

United Kingdom ⁴⁸	· 49% of Gen Z disagree that the law should always be obeyed, even if the law is wrong, compared to 26% of Baby Boomers. This can be interpreted as a decline in the legitimacy of laws and institutional authority. · Gen Z is far more likely to support the liberalizing drug laws, but also far less likely to do drugs compared to Generation X. This might indicate the normalization of “cultural transgression” but also a decline in social engagement in the spaces where these practices take place. · Gen Z are much more supportive of social welfare than older generations, but simultaneously do not agree with rising taxes to fund social services. Here, we can see a desire for institutional security and support, even as there is mistrust in the institutional management of resources.
United States ⁴⁹	· Members of Gen Z is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation so far. It indicates greater diversity in the collective identity. · Zoomers are less likely to work than previous generations as teens and young adults. 18% of Gen Z teens (ages 15 to 17) were employed in 2018, compared with 27% of Millennial teens in 2002 and 41% of Gen Xers in 1986. This data may indicate both changes in the labor market and a prolonged adolescence, as well as less practical independence. · 66% of Gen Zers live with two married parents, a steady decline when compared to other generations: 69% of Millennials, 72% of Gen X and 86% of baby boomers. Changes in family structure could alter perceptions of continuity and stability.
France	France, through its official research institutes, does not provide an in-depth analysis of Generation Z’s profile. Therefore, we will use data on political alignment released by Sciences Po (previously mentioned) as a reference.

⁴⁷ Eric Kaufmann, *Whiteshift* (New York: Abrams Press, 2019), 7.

⁴⁸ Olivia Lucas, Lovisa Moller Vallgarda, and Bernard Steen, eds., *Society Watch 2024: Understanding the New Generation of Voters* (London: National Centre for Social Research, 2024), 12-26.

⁴⁹ Kim Parker, Nikki Graf, and Ruth Igielnik, “On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far,” Pew Research Center, May 14, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>.

It's the demography, stupid!

This section aims to illustrate the demographic changes that have taken place in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. The purpose of this overview is to provide a more in-depth context for the next chapter, which addresses the issue of belonging. Demographic change should not be viewed merely one more of the elements that make up society, but rather as the very social environment in which the identities are formed. It is important to note that, in order to conduct a fair and accurate analysis of actual demographic changes, it is not enough to rely solely on the number of foreigners, as a significant portion of the immigrant population has already acquired the nationality of their country of residence. Moreover, due to the long history of continuous migration flows over the past few decades, there is now a considerable number of second and third-generation individuals who, although formally considered citizens, might maintain cultural, religious, or identity-based ties to their country of ethnic origin and also be perceived as “the other” by part of the native population. Therefore, since statistics by nationality capture only the legal status of the population, to analyze demographic changes we can also use other markers of identity and social perception, such as religion and ethnicity.

Between the 2001 and 2021 censuses, the white population of British origin fell by 13 percentage points, while the Black, Asian, mixed-race and non-British whites' populations nearly doubled in the UK⁵⁰. Within this shift, the most significant change concerns the Muslim population in the country, whose average age is 29, compared to 44 for other groups. The proportion of the population under the age of 24 also points to a major shift: 46% of all Muslims fall within this group, compared to 29% overall. In addition, 32% of the UK's total population growth between 2001 and 2021 was accounted for by Muslims⁵¹. For a more general scenario, we use the total fertility rate among women born in the United Kingdom and abroad, aged 25 to 29, in 2021, and the results show 78.8 births per 1,000 women and 113.9 births per 1,000 women, respectively. Of these pregnant women, the largest number of births were among women from four main regions: Pakistan, North Africa, Bangladesh, and the Middle East⁵².

⁵⁰ UK Government, “Population of England and Wales,” *Ethnicity Facts and Figures*, December 22, 2022, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest/>.

⁵¹ Muslim Council of Britain, *British Muslims in Numbers: Census Report Summary* (London: Muslim Council of Britain, 2025), 2-4.

⁵² The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, “Children of Migrants in the UK,” November 7, 2025, <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/children-of-migrants-in-the-uk/>.

In France, where the collection and computerization of racial data has been banned since 1978⁵³, mapping the ethnic origins of the population is a challenge. However, the Centre d'Observation de la Société released a survey conducted in 2025 on the French population's self-perceived ethnicity. Three specific figures stand out: only 65% of the sample self-identified as white, while 13% did not answer (a different category from those of mixed race, who accounted for 3.3% of respondents) and 7.1% identified as Maghrebi⁵⁴. According to data from 2024, of the 7.7 million people born outside France who were residing in the country, 2.6 million had already become naturalized citizens. Therefore, this group does not qualify as “foreigners.” It is important to note that these figures also do not include second or third-generation French citizens.⁵⁵

Although immigration is not a modern phenomenon, globalization has deeply altered its scale, speed, and direction. Between 1820 and 1920, more than 55 million Europeans left their countries for the United States, South America, and Australia, which represented one of the largest migration waves in modern history and that was primarily driven by demographic expansion and economic opportunities⁵⁶. Now, a new dynamic imposes itself. In 2020 alone, around 84 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, nearly 55 millions of whom came from just five countries: Afghanistan, Syria, Venezuela, Burma, and South Sudan⁵⁷.

The European Union has never adopted an unrestricted policy of welcoming immigrants or asylum seekers over the years—as evidenced by the 2006 Schengen Borders Code⁵⁸, which aimed to tighten migration controls at the EU's external borders—; however, fact remains that the number of immigrants from countries outside the bloc has increased significantly in recent decades⁵⁹. However, it is possible to draw a clear path which, while the United Kingdom and France remained imperial powers, has led to initial changes in demographic composition.

⁵³ *Loi n° 78-17 du 6 janvier 1978.*

⁵⁴ “La répartition de la population française selon la couleur de peau,” *Centre d'observation de la société*, April 13, 2026, <https://www.observationsociete.fr/modes-de-vie/mdv-valeurs/la-repartition-de-la-population-francaise-selon-la-couleur-de-peau/>.

⁵⁵ INSEE, *L'essentiel sur... les immigrés et les étrangers* (Paris: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2025), <https://www.insee.fr/>.

⁵⁶ Joseph P. Ferrie and Timothy J. Hatton, *Two Centuries of International Migration*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 7866 (Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor [IZA], 2013), 4, <https://docs.iza.org/dp7866.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Mustapha Harzoune, “Is Globalisation Accelerating Migrations?,” Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, 2022.

⁵⁸ Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006.

⁵⁹ Eurostat, *Migration and Asylum in Europe – 2025 Edition*, accessed May 26, 2026, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2025>.

In the UK, the British Nationality Act of 1948 opened the country to immigration based on an imperial rather than a multicultural rationale, allowing colonial citizens to enter legally to live and work. One of the central components of the law was the creation of a new status known as “Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies”, a primary category that included individuals born in the UK or any British colony, as well as those who acquired citizenship through naturalization or registration. Under the British Nationality Act, all CUKC individuals were not only exempt from visa and residence permit requirements but were also entitled to participate in civic life, including voting and accessing public services⁶⁰. In response to the significant increase in the influx of new citizens, the British government decided to restrict free access through the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, when the requirement to provide proof of skills or a job offer was introduced⁶¹.

The French case is distinguished by the specific role played by a major immigrant group—Algerians—who were instrumental as a key component of the postwar labor market⁶². Algeria was not a conventional colony, as it was legally integrated into France, and this facilitated mobility for many people. After independence in 1962, agreements were signed between France and Algeria to establish quotas for workers. The National Museum of the History of Immigration reports that in 1968 a deal was signed between both countries to set a quota of 35,000 entries of Algerians per year, which was subsequently reduced to 25,000 in 1972. Nevertheless, illegal entries occurred during that period⁶³. In the first agreement, France also established special immigration conditions for Algerian citizens, creating a specific visa for this group and facilitating family reunification. Although the text has been revised several times since 1968, its fundamental provisions remain the same. According to the French Ministry of the Interior, 613,923 “residence permits for Algerians” were issued in 2024 alone⁶⁴. The right to French citizenship under the principle of *jus soli* has also contributed to the demographic phenomenon, as the French Civil Code stipulates that “any child born in France to foreign parents acquires French nationality upon reaching the age of majority if, on that date, the child

⁶⁰ *British Nationality Act 1948*, c. 56 (UK)

⁶³ “Algerian Immigration into France,” in *Lives in Exile – 1954–1962: Algerians in France during the Algerian War*, Musée de l’histoire de l’immigration, accessed May 26, 2026.

⁶⁴ Grégoire Sauvage, “Que contient l’accord franco-algérien de 1968 que le RN veut remettre en cause ?,” *France 24*, October 31, 2025, <https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20251030-que-contient-accord-franco-alg%C3%A9rien-1968-rn-veut-remettre-en-cause>

is residing in France and has had their habitual residence in France for a continuous or non-continuous period of at least five years since the age of eleven.”⁶⁵

The analysis of immigration’s impact on American society is unique because the United States was, in fact, built on the foundation of immigration. To speak of American society is, therefore, to speak of a society of immigrants. Why, then, is this phenomenon such a central issue in U.S.’ political discourse today? Samuel Huntington explains that American society was formed by a very specific group of immigrants who shared an Anglo-Saxon culture, the English language, liberal values, and were predominantly Protestant⁶⁶—though the Italians and Irish buck this trend. While Europeans used to make up the largest group among people moving to the United States, they now account for only 10% of all foreigners. A 2023 report shows that residents born outside the country are distributed as follows: 52% from Latin America (22% from Mexico alone), 27% from Asia, 10% from Europe, 5% from Sub-Saharan Africa, 4% from the Middle East, and 2% from Canada and other North American territories⁶⁷.

The major turning point in migration patterns occurred in 1965, when the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished the old nationality-based quota system—which favored Northern Europeans—and began evaluating all applicants through a “neutral” lens. In addition, family reunification gave rise to what is known as “chain migration,” whereby the entry of a single person into the country creates a domino effect that calls for their relatives, who then become eligible for residency⁶⁸. The results are clear: between 1840 and 1919, 90% of immigrants to the United States came from Europe. Starting in 1965, about half of U.S. immigrants have come from Latin America⁶⁹. Looking at the largest metropolitan areas in the United States, the relative ethnic composition reflects a rapid shift in the population profile. Between 1980 and 2020, the proportion of whites dropped from 67% to 41%, while the percentage of Blacks remained relatively stable (18% to 17%). The most significant trend is the increase in the presence of Asians (from 3% to 10%) and Hispanics (from 12% to 28%)⁷⁰. In all other categories (large suburbs, small metropolitan areas, and rural areas), although to varying

⁶⁵ Mustapha Harzoune, “Qu’est-ce que le droit du sol ?,” Musée de l’histoire de l’immigration, December 2023.

⁶⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 16.

⁶⁷ Stephanie Kramer and Jeffrey S. Passel, “Key Findings About U.S. Immigrants,” Pew Research Center, August 21, 2025.

⁶⁸ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 249.

⁶⁹ Kramer and Passel, “Key Findings About U.S. Immigrants.”

⁷⁰ Harrison Lavelle and Max McCall, “America’s Demographic Revolution,” Split Ticket, February 8, 2025.

degrees, the trend was the same: a sharp decline in the white population and a significant increase in the percentage of Hispanics, at least 300% higher than in the initial period⁷¹.

The demographic and cultural changes matter because they are happening at rapid rates precisely when the dominant liberal system celebrates a multicultural vision of increased diversity and, most importantly, other forms of continuity are also eroding.⁷²

Who Belongs? Identity in Late-Liberal societies

The purpose of this chapter is to encourage reflection on the social consequences of the loss of cultural homogeneity, particularly among those who are in the process of forming their identity. In this section, the focus is on moving away from the normative value of multiculturalism and toward its effects on social experience.

Starting in the 1960s, with the civil rights movement in the United States and the process of decolonization in Europe, new elements of liberal democracies began to be incorporated into their political structures. "The long march toward institutions" led to an expansion of the state's responsibilities, which now included protecting minority rights, promoting gender equality, and allowing migration⁷³. In the long run, multiculturalism has ceased to be merely an ideological movement and has permeated institutions, becoming the dominant narrative and evolving into just another of the defining elements of liberal democracies. Over the past few decades, diversity has gone from being simply tolerated to being actively promoted, which has led, according to authors like Erik Kaufmann, to a stifling to debate. He affirms: "the deviantization of these issues in the name of anti-racism introduced a blockage in the democratic process, preventing the normal adjustment of political supply to political demand. Instead of reasonable tradeoffs between those who, for example, wanted higher or lower levels of immigration, the subject was forced underground, building up pressure from those whose grievances were ignored by the main parties. This created a market opportunity which populist right entrepreneurs rushed in to fill"⁷⁴.

⁷¹ Lavelle and McCall, "America's Demographic Revolution."

⁷² Kaufmann, *Whiteshift*, 8.

⁷³ Hallonsten, O.. 2025. "The Long March Through the Institutions and the Fifth Wave of Juridification." *Constellations* 32, no. 3: 484–492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12791>

⁷⁴ Kaufmann, *Whiteshift*, 8.

While the promotion of diversity has been able to advance the inclusion of historically marginalized minorities, it is, too, important to consider its effects on the perceptions of the majorities that make up the countries implementing these policies. The nuances necessary to understand what truly constitutes a society can be found in the 2006 *The Wall Street Journal* article by Mark Steyn: “There'll probably still be a geographical area on the map marked as Italy or the Netherlands—probably—just as in Istanbul there's still a building called St. Sophia's Cathedral”.⁷⁵ According to Kauffmann, beyond formal structures—such as institutions, borders, and names—societies are characterized by their history, culture, and, above all, continuity. Other authors, such as Charles Taylor, propose a more sociological view of social construction and argues that identity is formed based on recognition, meaning that identity is shaped not only by self-understanding but also by social recognition from one's environment. Whether from Kauffmann's or Taylor's perspective, the increase of ethnic diversity in the social body will transform its reality.

One of the requirements for obtaining British citizenship is passing the "Life in the UK" test, an exam that assesses the applicant's knowledge of basic aspects of the country's culture, history, and political institutions. In the official syllabus published by the government⁷⁶, under the section titled "Customs and Traditions," in addition to major Christian holidays, religious festivals such as Diwali and Vaisakhi (both of Indian origin), as well as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (the latter two for Muslims), are officially included in the scope of knowledge expected for the exam. This fact leads to two subsequent conclusions: first, the existence of a shared set of cultural references that define what it means to be British—or at least the experience of being British; second, that this experience is currently linked to a diversity of religions and traditions.

In a different model, the French civic integration offers a color-blind approach. Based on the *Livret du citoyen*⁷⁷, the main expectation for candidates is a full understanding of the values of the Republic, including secularism. Although the process requires a basic knowledge of French history and language, the key message of the citizenship test is that the republican national

⁷⁵ Mark Steyn, “It's the Demography, Stupid,” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2006, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB122531242161281449>.

⁷⁶ Home Office, *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents*, 3rd ed. (London: The Stationery Office, 2013), 51–53, section “Customs and Traditions.”

⁷⁷ Ministère de l'Intérieur, *Livret du citoyen* (Paris: Direction générale des étrangers en France, février 2022), 5–8.

identity takes precedence over individual cultural identity. To be French, therefore, means that the universal values of republicanism come first over other forms of identity.

An analysis of the British and French approaches, though distinct, leads to a shared perspective on contemporary national identities—or their redefinition. The multiculturalist perspective emphasizes that different religions and groups can form a single, functional, and cohesive social body through the recognition and validation of pluralism. Universalism holds that, regardless of individual differences, a society is founded on a shared commitment to higher values. In both cases, however, those values are not directly tied to a specific historical or cultural background, neither common shared tradition; it becomes potentially accessible to any individual. Paradoxically, data indicates that the result of this fast broadening of the spectrum of identities might not be characterized by a greater sense of belonging, but rather could lead to social fragmentation.

In the United Kingdom, a survey conducted by King's College London in 2025 found that 64% of respondents believe that the culture in the UK is changing too fast, compared with 35% in 2020. In addition, perceived tension between immigrants and people born in the UK rose from 74% in 2023 to 86% today. Finally, 64% of the public agrees that culture wars are a serious problem for UK society and politics—a 20 percentage points increase from 2025⁷⁸. In France, the French Institute of Opinion Polls reported in 2025 a significant rise of radical Islamism between French Muslims. In 1998, 19% of the Muslim population in France endorsed Islamism, compared to 30% today. Results are particularly impressive among generation Z, in which 57% of Muslims prefer the Shariah Law over French secular laws. The study finds that “Muslims in France are distinguished by a more intensive relationship to religious obligations”. Most young Muslims pray five times a day (67%) compared to 26% in 1989, while 40% of Muslims under the age of 25 attend the mosque on Fridays, compared to 7% in 1989⁷⁹.

In the United States, between 2015 and 2022, the Public Religion Research Institute conducted a survey that measured the importance of four markers of American identity, and the changes in responses through the years could reflect a transformation in the sense of belonging. The

⁷⁸ Bobby Duffy and Gideon Skinner, *The UK's Changing "Culture Wars": Division, Tension and Common Ground* (London: King's College London Policy Institute and Ipsos UK, 2025), 15–17.

⁷⁹ Jules Gomes, “As France's Muslim Population Grows, So Does Its Support for Islamism,” *Middle East Forum*, December 4, 2025, <https://www.meforum.org/fwi/fwi-news/as-frances-muslim-population-grows-so-does-its-support-for-islamism>

results regarding the "prerequisites" for being "truly American" are as follows: in the first year, 66% of respondents said that speaking English is "very important", and by 2022 that number had dropped to 45%. Being born in the United States was considered very important by 33% of respondents in 2015, falling to 19% seven years later⁸⁰. This last piece of data can be interpreted in two different ways. The first is that U.S. citizenship is independent of an individual's geographical origin, with adherence to shared principles and values being more important. The second is that, besides the place of birth, a person's background does matter, and that being American is not exclusively tied to soil.

Long before anti-immigration rhetoric gained political acceptance, as early as 2007, *The New York Times* discussed the research conducted by Harvard Political Science professor Robert Putnam in the article "The Downside of Diversity." The results showed that "the greater the diversity in a community, the fewer people vote and the less they volunteer, the less they give to charity and work on community projects. In the most diverse communities, neighbors trust one another about half as much as they do in the most homogeneous settings". The main finding of the study—until then the largest on civic engagement in the United States—was that nearly all measures of civic health are lower in more diverse communities⁸¹. This trend can be currently found in France, where concerns about an increasingly diverse school environment and new challenges are presenting themselves to educators. A study conducted by the Observatory on Immigration and Demography revealed that "only 8% of French teachers say they feel adequately prepared by their training to work in multicultural environments", and the main reason cited for the growing difficulties in the academic environment is that "France receives migrant flows that are more non-European, less skilled, and in more precarious situations than the OECD average"⁸².

The rapid transformations taking place in French, American, and British societies—driven not only by demographic change itself but also by shifting perceptions of belonging—may contribute to an identity crisis within the broader context of economic hardship and

⁸⁰ Evan Stewart, Nazita Lajevardi, Roy Whitaker, and Tarah Williams, "What Does American Identity Mean? A Cultural Legacy of Pluralism and Exclusion," *PRRI*, July 15, 2022, <https://prri.org/spotlight/what-does-american-identity-mean-a-cultural-legacy-of-pluralism-and-exclusion/>

⁸¹ Michael Jonas, "The Downside of Diversity," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 5, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/world/americas/05iht-diversity.1.6986248.html>

⁸² Observatoire de l'Immigration et de la Démographie, "L'impact de l'immigration sur le système éducatif français," accessed April 25, 2026, <https://observatoire-immigration.fr/limpact-de-limmigration-sur-le-systeme-educatif-francais/>

technological revolutions. In the absence of a broader sense of belonging (such as the nation), young people might try to find ways to identify with other groups based on their personal identities—an expected reaction given the drive for individualization of Liberal capitalist societies⁸³ The apparent weakening of social cohesion can give rise to an overemphasis on the “self”, and the consolidation of more segmented communities wouldn’t be a surprise as this is already happening in the online world.

The "primary bonds" of the individual—religion, community, tradition, and stronger family structures—, while they may partially limit individuality, also offer security, continuity, and a sense of belonging. The human need to belong remains deeply ingrained even in highly individualistic societies, which is why religion, nationalism, and micro-identities can also serve as refuges from isolation. But how is that an increasing number of modern, educated young people born in developed countries are turning against the current democratic systems? One answer is that freedom alone is not enough⁸⁴.

In the last two decades in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom, it has been observed that different institutional spheres have contributed to a greater centrality emphasis on identity as a fundamental axis of social and political expression. In the European context, legal frameworks such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union—which established diversity as a constitutional value—and the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy point to a clear direction for the new obligations of states. In this latter proposal, the European Commission states: “The Commission will promote the use of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) to improve the socio-economic position of the most marginalized LGBTIQ people and develop initiatives focusing on specific groups, such as the gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex subgroups”⁸⁵. Even after leaving the EU, the United Kingdom has continued to follow the same policy of protecting and promoting diversity. The controversial Online Safety Act of 2023 ushered in an era of content moderation on social media, requiring platforms to remove posts that could be considered harmful (including supposed hate speech)⁸⁶. Affirmative Action in the U.S., though ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2023, sought to privilege

⁸³ Kaufmann, *Whiteshift*, 20-22

⁸⁴ Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 15–21.

⁸⁵ European Commission, *Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025*, COM(2020) 698 final (Brussels: European Commission, 2020), 10

⁸⁶ Sky News, “How the Online Safety Act Triggered a Political Row about Freedom of Speech,” YouTube video, accessed April 29, 2026, <https://youtu.be/MrM05kWNHUM?si=gJnKzZ83BYRerO05>

minorities in college admissions and considered individuals' color, race, sex, religion, and/or national origin to promote social justice and more diversity in campus⁸⁷.

Another example of the search for identity is the very expansion of categories of identification. An example could be the terminology used to refer to people who do not conform to the heterosexual norm, which began with terms like “gay” and “lesbian” and now encompasses many other categories. San Diego State University has compiled a “2SLGBTQIA+ glossary” through its identity department, dedicated to explaining over 100 terms related to the topic. Besides the great variety of categories, the university still specifies: “Many of the terms on The Pride Center’s glossary are defined and experienced differently by each individual. The Pride Center welcomes and encourages nuance in how people interpret, understand, and live these terms”⁸⁸. Other examples of communities formed in more recent times include identities shaped by mental health experiences (such as anxiety, ADHD, and neurodivergences) and lifestyle (like vegans or gym culture).

In this context, for Generation Z, identity is no longer something necessarily inherited but rather something that is chosen⁸⁹. Once again, all the factors mentioned above are amplified by a generation that is chronically online, where “tribalization” is an automatic process driven by the very logic of the algorithm. Back in 2000, long before social media, it was estimated that at least 25% of the decline in civic engagement was linked to the rise of “electronic entertainment.”⁹⁰ It is no coincidence that the proliferation of tightly defined communities, ranging from movements mentioned before or others associated with the so-called “manosphere” or “tradwives”, express themselves through elaborate performances because they follow the same symbolic stimuli in the offline world as they do in the online world.

Once again, the question arises: who belongs—and to what, exactly? Are micro-identities enough to provide solid and meaningful purpose in life? Many young people have chosen to

⁸⁷ Terry H. Anderson, *The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1–4.

⁸⁸ San Diego State University Pride Center, “2SLGBTQIA+ Glossary,” accessed May 5, 2026, https://sacd.sdsu.edu/pride/2slgbtqia_glossary

⁸⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 35.

⁹⁰ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 283.

look back and cling to something that almost all past generations have used as a source of enduring meaning: religion.

Religion, Catholicism and moral re-anchoring

Robert P. George, an American intellectual and professor at Princeton University, posted a reflection on his X account in April 2025 that introduces the debate on the resurgence of Catholicism in Western Europe and the United States. He stated: “Something’s happening. It’s happening in France. It’s happening in England. It’s happening in the U.S. I only began noticing it a few weeks ago, on Ash Wednesday. It seems awfully sudden, so perhaps it’s just a blip. If so, though, it’s a widespread blip.” The statement stemmed from an atypical and unexpected trend in the countries mentioned, especially considering the gradual replacement of religious life with a life guided by modern values in such places. The fact is that the Catholic Church has been recording record numbers of new converts and Mass attendance, with significant participation from Generation Z youth⁹¹.

In France, the birthplace of secularism and the Enlightenment, more than 10,000 people were baptized at Easter 2025, 42% of whom were young people between the ages of 18 and 25. Figures released by the French Church show a 160% increase in baptisms compared to 2015⁹². In the United Kingdom, where the monarchy broke with the Pope five centuries ago, Catholicism is now more popular than Anglicanism among churchgoers aged 18 to 34, with 41% identifying as Catholic, a significant increase from 22% in 2018, and compared to the 20% who identify as Anglicans, a drop from 30%⁹³. Even in the United States there are reports of conversions in numbers unprecedented until now⁹⁴, a counterintuitive resurgence given its historical association with Protestantism⁹⁵.

⁹¹ Emma Ayers, “France Sees Record Surge in Conversions to Catholicism,” *The Washington Times*, April 14, 2025, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2025/apr/14/france-sees-record-surge-conversions-catholicism/>

⁹² Ayers, “France Sees Record Surge in Conversions to Catholicism.”

⁹³ Muvija M and Sarah Young, “Catholicism Spreads amongst Young Britons Longing for Something Deeper,” *Reuters*, May 7, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/catholicism-spreads-amongst-young-britons-longing-something-deeper-2025-05-07/>

⁹⁴ Rikki Schlott, “Why Young People Are Converting to Catholicism en Masse,” *New York Post*, April 17, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2025/04/17/lifestyle/why-young-people-are-converting-to-catholicism-en-masse/>

⁹⁵ Cline, Timon. “American History Is Protestant.” *The American Mind*. December 8, 2023. <https://americanmind.org/features/what-is-christian-nationalism/american-history-is-protestant/>

Even though religion is nothing new in human civilization, the resurgence of Catholicism is particularly surprising given the long process of secularization in French, American, and British societies. Historical records of the oldest civilizations and human communities reveal a common thread among these groups. Regardless of the era or geographical location, humankind has always sought the divine⁹⁶. The term “homo religiosus,” coined by anthropologist Mircea Eliade, explains that human beings possess a cognitive predisposition toward faith, which complements the 16th-century Calvinist concept of *sensus divinitatis*: “the awareness of God is natural, widespread, and not easy to forget, ignore, or destroy.”⁹⁷ When embedded in the collective environment, faith ceases to be an exclusively individual experience and becomes an organizing element of social life and, consequently, of politics.

In Europe, Christianity served as a foundational element in the formation of national identities. With symbolism as powerful as the Reconquista for the Spanish, the baptism of Clovis I is, for France, part of the set of founding myths of French identity. By converting to Catholicism, Clovis, the Frankish king, gained the legitimacy of the local population and elite who were already Catholic, which contributed to the construction of a more cohesive, integrated society that would later come to constitute France. Similarly, the very bureaucratic and institutional formation of European states was based on the already consolidated structure of the Catholic Church, which served as a model for emerging political entities. Not only did administrative practices, territorial division, and the established hierarchy influence institutional mechanisms, but it was also this religious structure that shaped the educated elites responsible for the administration of the states⁹⁸.

In the United States, however, the Catholic Church never occupied a central position in political or civic life. American identity was primarily shaped by Protestant traditions, which led to a social structure quite distinct from that of Europe. Catholicism was viewed as a foreign, hierarchical force tied to the Pope, a distant authority with no real connection to American society⁹⁹. Until the election of John F. Kennedy, there was a certain fear of electing a president

⁹⁶ Peoples, Hervey C., Pavel Duda, and Frank W. Marlowe. “Hunter-Gatherers and the Origins of Religion.” *Human Nature* 27, no. 3 (2016): 261–282. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-016-9260-0>

⁹⁷ Sztajer, Sławomir. “The Concept of *Homo Religiosus* and Its Philosophical Interpretations.” *Anglojęzyczny Suplement Przeglądu Religioznawczego*, no. 1 (2013): 17–27.

⁹⁸ Jørgen Møller and Jonathan Stavnskær Doucette, *The Catholic Church and European State Formation, AD 1000–1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192857118.001.0001>

⁹⁹ Martin E. Marty, *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire* (New York: Macmillan USA, 1986), 37–60.

controlled by Rome, a concern that the Democrat directly addressed in a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960: “I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute—where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be Catholic) how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote — where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference — and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.”¹⁰⁰

The distinctive feature of the secularization phenomenon in contemporary Western societies lies in the fact that faith ceases to be a social or institutional imposition and comes to play an individual role. In the United States, a society where religious pluralism has existed since the beginning of British colonization, the logic of faith as an individual choice proved to be a key element in ensuring the continuity of Christianity as a civil religion. The persistence of American religiosity, even though the country has become secularized in many respects, is the result of an adaptation that predates modernity¹⁰¹.

As for Europe, religion gradually lost its central role throughout the Modern Age. This process was triggered by a series of historical events and changes, beginning with the initial challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church, followed by the consolidation of the bureaucracy of modern states (when the government took over the Church’s functions, it became entirely possible to live without God) and, finally, sealed by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. This initial weakening of the Catholic Church’s institutional power evolved into a progressive disengagement of the individual from religious practice¹⁰². In France, for example, in 1872, 98% of the population identified as Catholic¹⁰³; by 2020, that number had fallen to 29%.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ John F. Kennedy, “JFK on the Separation of Church and State,” speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Houston, Texas, September 12, 1960, <https://www.npr.org/2007/12/05/16920600/transcript-jfks-speech-on-his-religion>

¹⁰¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 508.

¹⁰² Jörg Stolz, Nan Dirk de Graaf, Conrad Hackett, and Jean-Paul Antonietti, “The Three Stages of Religious Decline Around the World,” *Nature Communications* 16, no. 1 (2025): 7202, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-62452-z>

¹⁰³ John Pepino, “Anatomist of the Catholic Collapse in France and Beyond,” *Catholic World Report*, September 13, 2022, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2022/09/13/anatomist-of-the-catholic-collapse-in-france-and-beyond/>

¹⁰⁴ Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (Insee), *Immigrés et descendants d’immigrés en France*, Insee Références, édition 2023 (Montrouge: Insee, 2023), 40.

Being young has meant, to a large extent, breaking with religious tradition¹⁰⁵. The Catholic Church is often seen as an outdated institution, tied to rigid social norms, out of touch with modern concerns, and has repeatedly been at the center of sex scandals involving religious leaders¹⁰⁶. During the 1980s and the 1990s, the aesthetics of the era reflected this break: Madonna, with “Like a Prayer,” provoked by mixing Christian symbols with sensuality and personal and sexual freedom, while figures like Sinéad O’Connor took the criticism even further, tearing up a picture of Pope Saint John Paul II in public protest. Religion was often associated with censorship and the repression of individual desires. The spirit of youth sought freedom of expression, a break with conventions, and an identity shaped far from traditional structures¹⁰⁷.

The 21st century has made the idea that science would eventually and definitively replace religious thought seem completely plausible¹⁰⁸. In 1972, when the General Social Survey conducted a poll in the United States asking “What is your religious affiliation?”, 90% of respondents said they were Christian, while only 5% identified as “religiously unaffiliated.” Non-affiliation began to accelerate significantly starting in 1997: the percentage of Americans without a religion jumped to 12% and, two years later, to 14%. This growth continued in the following decades, and in 2021, 29% of Americans told the GSS they had no religion¹⁰⁹. For the first time in history, less than 50% of the population of England and Wales identified as Christian, while the group of those with no religious affiliation grew by 12 percentage points between 2011 and 2021¹¹⁰. In 2007, 59% of French people reported having one or more Christians involved in church life within their family and social circles, compared with 47% in 2025¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁵ Pew Research Center, *The Age Gap in Religion Around the World* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2018), 5–10.

¹⁰⁶ Damon Linker, “The Unbearable Ugliness of the Catholic Church,” *The Week*, August 29, 2018, <https://theweek.com/articles/792775/unbearable-ugliness-catholic-church>

¹⁰⁷ Christopher S. Smith, “Taught to be Ashamed: Sexual Shame, Faith, and Moral Incongruence in Men’s Psychosexual Development,” *Sexuality & Culture* (2025): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-025-10503-4>

¹⁰⁸ Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 129–156.

¹⁰⁹ Pew Research Center, *Modeling the Future of Religion in America: If Recent Trends in Religious Switching Continue, Christians Could Make Up Less than Half of the U.S. Population within a Few Decades* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2022), 6–10.

¹¹⁰ Office for National Statistics, *Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2022), 3–4

¹¹¹ Laurence Faure, “Le catholicisme reste minoritaire en France mais se réaffirme, selon un sondage Ifop,” *La Vie*, June 3, 2025, <https://www.lavie.fr/actualite/societe/le-catholicisme-reste-minoritaire-en-france-mais-se-reaffirme-selon-un-sondage-ifop-99793.php>

However, current data on youth mental health in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom—previously discussed on this paper—reveals that a world with fewer social constraints alone has not necessarily been able to find solid answers to human afflictions; moreover, the very tradition that was once rejected began, for many, to reveal itself as a source of more enduring meaning. But why Catholicism?

New converts to the Catholic Church in the United States cite a variety of reasons. The first of them is dissatisfaction with the performative nature of the Protestant experience, which is taken to the extreme in so-called “megachurches.” The prioritization of spectacle over ritual and the focus on entertaining the audience reflect the very logic of consumer culture, pointing to the commodification of faith. Second, Catholic aesthetics hold great appeal for young people accustomed to contemporary overstimulation, whether it comes from social media or the urban environment itself. Catholic rituals and liturgy are perceived as solemn, structured, austere, and transcendent of the material world — a sort of antithesis to the modern experience¹¹². For Generation Z, classical beauty matters, and as Bishop Robert Barron has stated: “the best way to evangelize is to start with what’s beautiful about Catholicism. Then you move to what’s good, then to what’s true. In other words, for many people, it is more effective to begin by appealing to their eyes or their ears than their hearts or minds”¹¹³.

For young people in the United Kingdom, the factors leading to conversion to Catholicism are also linked to a search for stability. A representative of Generation Z told the news outlet Reuters: “It is grounded in this thing which is so much bigger than ourselves. We’re probably the first generation to try and live without God, and I think we’re slowly just saying that doesn’t work.”¹¹⁴ Furthermore, specifically in the case of the UK, this resurgence has been led by young men, which raises questions about the role of religion in the contemporary notion of masculinity.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Schlott, “Why Young People Are Converting to Catholicism.”

¹¹³ Madeleine Kearns, “How Catholicism Got Cool,” *The Free Press*, June 4, 2025, <https://www.thefp.com/p/meet-americas-newest-catholics>

¹¹⁴ Muvija and Young, “Catholicism Spreads amongst Young Britons.”

¹¹⁵ DRM News, “UK Youth Flock to Catholicism: Seeking ‘Something Deeper’ in Modern Britain,” YouTube video, accessed April 15, 2026, <https://youtu.be/So6OHfx6gpQ>

In France, young Catholics are keen to show their faith in public¹¹⁶. According to the director of the National Catechesis Service, the profile of recent converts follows a pattern: young people who are going through difficult personal times and young people from bicultural families¹¹⁷. Archbishop Olivier de Germainy of Lyon reflected on the 400% increase in the number of Easter baptisms over the past decade, highlighting the participation of young people: “It is as if technological progress has failed to live up to its promises. This creates an inner void and leads to a great deal of dissatisfaction. [...] The Church seems comforting to them. It is seen as a solid institution with deep roots, one that can be trusted.”¹¹⁸

There are countless reasons that could explain this resurgence. From a broader European perspective, there is growing concerns about the Islamic faith gaining ground in historically Christian countries. Religion has become a fundamental distinguishing feature and not just a spiritual practice, as evidenced by the invocation of the Christian culture by nationalist movements¹¹⁹. In 2025, a march organized and led by Tommy Robinson, founder of the English Defence League, drew more than 100,000 people to London amid chants of “send them home”, “unite the kingdom”, and “Christ is King”¹²⁰. In France, Génération Identitaire was already active in its anti-Islam campaign as early as 2009. In 2012, dozens of activists climbed onto the roof of the Poitiers Mosque to denounce the “Islamization of France.” They unfurled a banner reading “732, Génération Identitaire,” a reference to the year Charles Martel halted the advance of Muslim troops in the city¹²¹. By this logic, rejecting the religion of “the other” is a step toward affirming and rescuing your own faith and culture, as in Europe Christianity is an essential part of the “sense of belonging” and of the historical building of national identities.

Another reason for the growth of Catholicism may, ironically, be the rebelliousness of young people. In secular countries where religious belief is on the decline, traditionalism could

¹¹⁶ Sarah Belouezzane, “L’essor des baptêmes d’adultes à Pâques, signe d’une mutation du catholicisme en France plutôt que d’un retour,” *Le Monde*, April 5, 2026, https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2026/04/05/l-essor-des-baptemes-d-adultes-a-paques-signes-d-une-mutation-du-catholicisme-en-france-plutot-que-d-un-retour_6676892_3224.html

¹¹⁷ Bernadette Sauvaget, “Le catholicisme à l’épreuve des chiffres,” *Témoignage Chrétien*, April 11, 2024, <https://www.temoignagechretien.fr/le-catholicisme-a-lepreuve-des-chiffres/>

¹¹⁸ Jean-Marie Guénois, “Les demandes de baptêmes catholiques d’adultes franchissent la barre des 20 000,” *Le Figaro*, March 25, 2026, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/les-demandes-de-baptemes-catholiques-d-adultes-franchissent-la-barre-des-20-000-20260325>

¹¹⁹ Mattes et al., “Religion and Politics of Belonging in Digital Times.”

¹²⁰ Sky News, “Why Tommy Robinson Rally Was Different to Any Other,” YouTube video, accessed April 18, 2026, <https://youtu.be/oV92B4oR6FM>

¹²¹ Ilias Psarianos, “Qui sont les membres de Génération identitaire ?,” *ici* (France Bleu), October 13, 2013, <https://www.ici.fr/infos/societe/qui-sont-les-membres-de-generation-identitaire-1382083443>

become a counterculture. If order is embodied by secularism, revolution can be religious. The results of a study conducted in 2025 by the Research Centre for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society reflects this perception and contradict common understanding of religious minorities in Europe. Among the young people interviewed, Catholics in particular expressed a sense of marginalization. While Muslims and Jews attributed their experiences of religious intolerance to opposition to specific traditions (such as the use of the hijab or the practice of circumcision), Catholics attributed attacks to secularism. In other words, young Catholics feel they are being targeted because of their belief in God, not because of practices specific to the Catholic faith. One of the interviewees stated: “I experience that at university [referring to the marginalization experience]. (Here) I often had to justify why I am a believer, why I am religious and above all, why I am Catholic.”¹²²

In the United States, given the apparent friendship between Protestantism and Zionism at a time when unconditional support for Israel is being questioned, choosing Catholicism also seems to be a political statement. Christian Zionism is a Protestant ideology that was first theorized within English Puritanism¹²³. The American pioneer of this movement was the evangelical William E. Blackstone in the late 19th century, and since then the idea that Jews should return to the land corresponding to biblical Israel has gained popularity in Protestant churches.

In 2017, Netanyahu told the audience at the annual conference of Christians United for Israel: “When I say we have no greater friends than Christian supporters of Israel, I know you’ve always stood with us”¹²⁴. This organization, led by Pastor John Hagee and that today counts with more than 10 million affiliates, started in 2006 as a grassroots movement with 400 pastors and ministry leaders who were committed to unifying Christian denominations in support for Israel¹²⁵. In February 2026, Show Faith by Works, a California-based organization funded by the Israeli government, launched a Bible study program in partnership with Israeli soldiers, West Bank settlers, and a pastor of Messianic Judaism in an effort to promote the narrative—

¹²² Alexander Mattes, Markus Haselbacher, Katharina Limacher, and Christian Novak, “Religion and Politics of Belonging in Digital Times: Youth Religiosity in Focus,” *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (2025): 1476762, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1476762>

¹²³ Cornelis P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), 219–229.

¹²⁴ Rebecca Shimon Stoll, “Netanyahu: Evangelical Christians Are Israel’s Best Friends,” *The Times of Israel*, July 18, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-evangelical-christians-are-israels-best-friends/>

¹²⁵ Christians United for Israel, “Mission,” accessed April 15, 2026, <https://cufi.org/about/mission/>

supposedly grounded in biblical interpretation—of the importance of modern Israel. This initiative is part of a series of measures aimed at changing young people’s public opinion about the country. According to Marquette University Law School, only 29% of young American evangelicals aged 18 to 29 support Israel, compared with over 70% support among evangelicals over the age of 60¹²⁶.

The fact is that young Americans, including Protestants, are gradually moving away from supporting Israel¹²⁷, even as certain churches maintain and/or reinforce this alignment through institutional stances and political engagement. The result is a disconnect between the individual perceptions of faith and morality and the values promoted by their congregations. In this context, Catholicism may appear to some young people not only as a religious alternative but also as an anti-establishment stance. An example of this is the anti-war and universalist message promoted by the current Pope¹²⁸, contrary to the Christian Zionist support to Israel’s military actions in Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. The morning after Israel and the United States began bombing Iran, Pastor Hagee addressed the congregation at Cornerstone Church in Texas, praising the “brilliant execution of Operation Epic Fury.”¹²⁹ Therefore, in the current U.S. context under Trump, rejecting Christian Zionism may also imply a critique of the alliance between evangelicalism, Republican conservatism, and pro-Israel foreign policy.

In any case scenario, however, an identity crisis plays a central role in young people’s search for Catholicism. Although the gradual weakening of tradition in and of itself is one of the reasons for its subsequent revival, it is essential to consider the transformation of social structures and dynamics brought about by the presence of foreign cultures as a driving force behind historical identity.

¹²⁶ Nick Cleveland-Stout and Connor Echols, “Evangelicals and Israel,” Responsible Statecraft, February 28, 2026, <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/evangelicals-and-israel/>

¹²⁷ Laura Silver, “Younger Americans Stand Out in Their Views of the Israel-Hamas War,” Pew Research Center, April 2, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹²⁸ Tom McArthur, “Why Gen Z Men Are Shifting Politically to the Right,” BBC News, April 16, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg0z3n5e5jo>

¹²⁹ Freddy Brewster, “The Christian Zionists Fueling Trump’s Iran War,” The Lever, March 19, 2026, <https://www.levernews.com/the-christian-zionists-fueling-trumps-iran-war/>

Conclusion

Any discussion of the political, economic, and social crisis currently affecting the United Kingdom, France, and the United States must necessarily address a deeper and more complex structural crisis, one that transcends the simplistic division between right and left. The material crisis is perhaps the easiest dimension to understand, as the prevailing liberal logic already presupposes that consumption, purchasing power, and financial success are not only part of a stable society but also constitute central pillars of its functioning. In the postwar context, material security became deeply integrated into American, British, and French imaginaries, shaping collective expectations. It is only natural, therefore, that the decline of this vital component of liberal capitalist democracies should signal a crisis in the system.

What bureaucracies and traditional parties—those associated with the functioning and founding of the liberal system—may not have fully grasped, given their general support decline, is that factors that transcend strictly material logic also play a fundamental role in the stability of societies, especially when they are gradually eroded in the realm of identity. When we talk about the "culprits" behind today's crises—such as globalization, technology, or hyper-individualization—we cannot separate them from liberalism, as if they were external accidents to the system.

I would venture to say that there is a consensus among all political forces that the younger generation faces economic challenges, such as access to housing and stable jobs. The disagreement lies in how to address these challenges. What is not a consensus, however, is that there are other factors that fall outside the scope of liberal social thought and that might have also shaped the perceptions and lived experiences of this same group. It would be rash to claim that national belonging, historical continuity, tradition, religion, and collective identity disappeared after 1945; however, they ceased to play a central role in shaping collective policy and personal identity.

The traditional focus of analysis on Generation Z's shift away from traditional political parties continues to be on individual rights and material prosperity. While this aspect is part of the discussion, it is insufficient. To some extent, it has been the "anti-establishment" parties that have treated these "outdated" concepts and have politically exploited these symbolic

dimensions of belonging and collective identity. In this context, one of the most important observations made in this study was that Generation Z is not necessarily more conservative, but rather less trusting of the political system inherited from previous generations.

By stating in the introduction to this paper that the challenge of understanding the dissident Generation Z requires setting aside certain liberal lenses paradigms, it was already anticipated that phenomena such as anxiety about demographic changes, the crisis of belonging, and the growth of Catholicism among part of this group cannot be reduced to irrational expressions of political extremism. This movement reflects an attempt to respond to rapid and profound social and cultural changes, which can be perceived as just as destabilizing as the economic crisis. For many young people, anti-establishment or right-wing populist parties may serve not as coherent ideological destination but as vehicles for expressing discontent with institutions perceived as incapable of responding to deeper crises—or even as the very causes of those crises.

What Generation Z is experiencing today is the triumph of individual freedom, but, in the long run, this "liberation", in many ways, led to their subordination to the market, technology, consumerism, and the algorithm. Gen Zers are the first generation to have been born and raised entirely within the context of the post-2008 institutional and economic crisis, advanced globalization, technological advances, and the fragmentation of social ties and collective identities. In the face of the weakening of more solid and long-standing structures of belonging, such as the nation and religion, the key lesson is that human beings have not ceased to seek a collective identity, and that the weakening of these traditional pillars has not necessarily led to the complete liberation of the individual, but rather to the construction of new pillars and new social dynamics.

The most paradoxical observation is that liberalism has not failed; it has triumphed, and its crisis stems from its success. The victory of the market and of personal freedom have profoundly altered traditional forms of social cohesion. The liberation from traditional social structures and the expansion of individual autonomy—as evidenced by the consolidation of more participatory, inclusive political systems focused on expanding rights—have led to unprecedented advances in individual freedoms, social rights, and material prosperity since 1945. On the other hand, today this ideological framework is being challenged by a growing group of young people who are seeking order and meaning. Beyond nostalgia or a return to a

glorious past—which might be the most obvious and simplistic interpretation—this movement is a reaction to fluidity and a call for stability and a moral reorientation.

Understanding Generation Z in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, therefore, means understanding the prevailing system of beliefs and values that shape both the personal and public experiences of these young people, as well as the effects that this same system has on both spheres. Although the three countries have their own historical, social, political, cultural, and economic characteristics, they all build their foundations on a liberal capitalist system which, while having promoted unheard-of advancements, has—through its deepening and evolution—contributed to processes of identity fragmentation, the weakening of collective cohesion and, especially among Gen Z, to the growing difficulty in fostering a sense of belonging and symbolic continuity.

The quest for order, therefore, is not strictly defined by the pursuit of authoritarian systems, but rather of that of stability, continuity, and moral clarity. I even believe that some young people may be drawn to authoritarian historical references because the liberal paradigm also seems to have limited our ability to imagine alternative forms of social and political organizations. In other words: some of the radicalization observed among young people might not necessarily be driven by ideological conviction or a conscious desire to establish an anti-democratic regime, but rather by the lack of a political language capable of addressing their need for a sense of belonging and grounding.

The choice to study Generation Z was made because we were the first generation to grow up in a world already deeply shaped by digitalization, demographically transformed, and amid the most advanced forms of contemporary individualization. Unlike previous generations, who had the chance to gradually adapt to these changes, Generation Z was raised entirely within this environment. In this regard, the older generations—who currently hold most positions of power—must understand who we are through everything we have and everything we lack. I conclude this work without claiming to offer a definitive answer to a phenomenon that may only be the consolidation of a new social, cultural, and historical reality still in the making. Rather than drawing categorical conclusions, this work has sought to understand how deep and complex economic, technological, and identity-related transformations are shaping and impacting young people.

Bibliography:

“1 in 5 Managers Have Considered Quitting Due to Stress of Overseeing Gen Z Employees,” *Intelligent.com*, November 5, 2024, <https://www.intelligent.com/1-in-5-managers-have-considered-quitting-due-to-stress-of-overseeing-gen-z-employees/>

“La répartition de la population française selon la couleur de peau.” *Centre d’observation de la société*. April 13, 2026. <https://www.observationsociete.fr/modes-de-vie/mdv-valeurs/la-repartition-de-la-population-francaise-selon-la-couleur-de-peau/>.

Anderson, Terry H. *The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Barker-Singh, Serena. “Something Remarkable Is Happening with Gen Z – Is Reform UK Winning the ‘Bro Vote’?” *Sky News*. December 3, 2024. <https://news.sky.com/story/something-remarkable-is-happening-with-gen-z-is-reform-uk-winning-the-bro-vote-13265490>

Bärthlein, Thomas. “1919: Chineses Protestam contra Tratado de Versalhes.” *DW Brasil*. n.d. <https://www.dw.com/pt-br/1919-chineses-protestam-contra-tratado-de-versalhes/a-312530>

Batty, David. “Gen Z More Likely to Support Authoritarianism and Populism, UK Study Finds.” *The Guardian*, February 6, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/06/gen-z-authoritarianism-populism-democracy-uk-research>.

Bell, David N. F., and David G. Blanchflower. *Young People and the Great Recession*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 5674. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), 2011. <https://docs.iza.org/dp5674.pdf>

Belouezzane, Sarah. “L’essor des baptêmes d’adultes à Pâques, signe d’une mutation du catholicisme en France plutôt que d’un retour.” *Le Monde*, April 5, 2026. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2026/04/05/l-essor-des-baptemes-d-adultes-a-paques-signes-d-une-mutation-du-catholicisme-en-france-plutot-que-d-un-retour_6676892_3224.html.

Benjamin Siegel, “Charlie Kirk’s Influence on Younger Voters Helped Donald Trump,” *ABC News*, September 13, 2025, <https://abcnews.com/Politics/charlie-kirks-influence-younger-voters-helped-donald-trump/story?id=125518800>

Brewster, Freddy. “The Christian Zionists Fueling Trump’s Iran War.” *The Lever*. March 19, 2026. <https://www.levernews.com/the-christian-zionists-fueling-trumps-iran-war/>

Brigden, Susan. “Youth and the English Reformation.” *Past & Present*, no. 95 (1982): 37–67. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/650732>

Christians United for Israel. “Mission.” Accessed April 15, 2026. <https://cufi.org/about/mission/>

Cleveland-Stout, Nick, and Connor Echols. “Evangelicals and Israel.” *Responsible Statecraft*, February 28, 2026. <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/evangelicals-and-israel/>.

Cline, Timon. "American History Is Protestant." *The American Mind*, December 8, 2023. <https://americanmind.org/features/what-is-christian-nationalism/american-history-is-protestant/>.

Coleman, Stephen. "English Local Elections 2026: A Story of a New Kind of Politics." *The Conversation*, May 8, 2026. <https://theconversation.com/english-local-elections-2026-a-story-of-a-new-kind-of-politics-282409>.

Condorcet, Nicolas de. *Sketch for an Historical Picture of the Advances of the Human Mind*. Translated by Jonathan Bennett. 1795. Reprint, 2017.

Dai, Meixing. "La grande crise systémique de 2008 : Causes, conséquences et mesures de politique." *Bulletin de l'Observatoire des politiques économiques en Europe* 19, no. 2 (2008): 3–13. <https://hal.science/hal-04080462>.

Davis, Maxine. *The Lost Generation: A Portrait of American Youth Today*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. *Assessment of AI Capabilities and the Impact on the UK Labour Market*. London: UK Government, 2026.

Desirée Peñalba, "O que é o 'olhar da Geração Z' e por que ele preocupa os especialistas," *Gazeta do Povo*, September 18, 2025, <https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/ideias/que-olhar-geracao-z-como-ele-preocupa-especialistas/>

DRM News. "UK Youth Flock to Catholicism: Seeking 'Something Deeper' in Modern Britain." YouTube video. Accessed April 15, 2026. <https://youtu.be/So6OHfx6gpQ>

Duffy, Bobby and Gideon Skinner. *The UK's Changing "Culture Wars": Division, Tension and Common Ground*. London: King's College London Policy Institute and Ipsos UK, 2025.

Emma Ayers, "France Sees Record Surge in Conversions to Catholicism," *The Washington Times*, April 14, 2025, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2025/apr/14/france-sees-record-surge-conversions-catholicism/>

European Commission. *Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025*. COM(2020) 698 final. Brussels: European Commission, 2020.

Eurostat. "Asylum Decisions – Annual Statistics." *Statistics Explained*. April 17, 2026. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_decisions_-_annual_statistics.

Faure, Laurence. "Le catholicisme reste minoritaire en France mais se réaffirme, selon un sondage Ifop." *La Vie*. June 3, 2025. <https://www.lavie.fr/actualite/societe/le-catholicisme-reste-minoritaire-en-france-mais-se-reaffirme-selon-un-sondage-ifop-99793.php>

Fawcett, Edmund. *Liberalism: The Life of an Idea*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Ferrie, Joseph P., and Timothy J. Hatton. *Two Centuries of International Migration*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 7866. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), 2013. <https://docs.iza.org/dp7866.pdf>.

Frajerman, Ariel, Federico Cevoli, and Marion Leboyer. "Youth's Mental Health in France after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results from the Repeated CASSANDRE Surveys." *Psychiatry Research* 355 (2026): 116848. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2025.116848>

Fromm, Erich. *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.

Garberg, Gail. "The Eruption of Youth Culture in America." *History@LMU*. Loyola Marymount University, 2020. <https://promotionofjustice.eadrummondhistory.lmu.build/the-eruption-of-youth-culture-in-america/>

Gomes, Jules. "As France's Muslim Population Grows, So Does Its Support for Islamism." *Middle East Forum*. December 4, 2025. <https://www.meforum.org/fwi/fwi-news/as-frances-muslim-population-grows-so-does-its-support-for-islamism>.

Greenstone, Michael, and Adam Looney. "The Long-term Effects of the Great Recession for America's Youth." *Brookings Institution (The Hamilton Project)*, September 3, 2010. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-long-term-effects-of-the-great-recession-for-americas-youth/>.

Guénois, Jean-Marie. "Les demandes de baptêmes catholiques d'adultes franchissent la barre des 20 000." *Le Figaro*. March 25, 2026. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/les-demandes-de-baptemes-catholiques-d-adultes-franchissent-la-barre-des-20-000-20260325>

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Anxious Generation*. London: Penguin Books, 2024.

Hallonsten, O. "The Long March Through the Institutions and the Fifth Wave of Juridification." *Constellations* 32, no. 3 (2025): 484–492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12791>.

Harrison, Rick. "Yale Youth Poll Finds Split in Gen Z Political Views." *Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS)*. June 11, 2025. <https://isps.yale.edu/news/blog/2025/06/yale-youth-poll-finds-split-in-gen-z-political-views>.

Harzoune, Mustapha. "Is Globalisation Accelerating Migrations?" [Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration](#). 2022.

Harzoune, Mustapha. "Qu'est-ce que le droit du sol ?" [Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration](#). Décembre 2023.

Home Office. *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents*. 3rd ed. London: The Stationery Office, 2013.

Huntington, Samuel P. *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Hussey, Andrew. "How the Far Right Seduced France's Gen Z." *The New Statesman*. June 20, 2024. <https://www.newstatesman.com/international-content/2024/06/how-the-far-right-seduced-frances-gen-z>

INSEE, *L'essentiel sur... les immigrés et les étrangers* (Paris: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2025), <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3633212>.

Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (ISEE). *Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France*. Insee Références. Montrouge: Insee, 2023.

International Telecommunication Union, "Facts and Figures 2025: Internet Use," *ITU*, October 15, 2025, <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/reports/statistics/2025/10/15/ff25-internet-use/>

John F. Kennedy, "JFK on the Separation of Church and State," speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Houston, Texas, September 12, 1960, <https://www.npr.org/2007/12/05/16920600/transcript-jfks-speech-on-his-religion>

Jones, Jeffrey M. "New High in U.S. Adults Identifying as Political Independents." *Gallup News*, January 12, 2026. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/700499/new-high-identify-political-independents.aspx>.

Kaufmann, Eric. *Whiteshift*. New York: Abrams Press, 2019.

Kearns, Madeleine. "How Catholicism Got Cool." *The Free Press*. June 4, 2025. <https://www.thefp.com/p/meet-americas-newest-catholics>

Kramer, Stephanie, and Jeffrey S. Passel. "Key Findings About U.S. Immigrants." Pew Research Center. August 21, 2025.

Krastev, Ivan. *After Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

Kraus, François, Mathilde Tchounikine, and Noé Fridman. *La « Bof génération » ? Radioscopie politique des adolescents de 15 à 17 ans*. Paris: Ifop pour Elle, February 3, 2026.

Lavelle, Harrison, and Max McCall. "America's Demographic Revolution." [Split Ticket](#). February 8, 2025.

Lentini, Andrew. "Political Divides between Generations Are Growing, New Survey Finds." [Johns Hopkins University Hub](#). February 10, 2026

Linker, Damon. "The Unbearable Ugliness of the Catholic Church." *The Week*. August 29, 2018. <https://theweek.com/articles/792775/unbearable-ugliness-catholic-church>

Lucas, Olivia, Lovisa Moller Vallgarda, and Bernard Steen, eds. *Society Watch 2024: Understanding the New Generation of Voters*. London: National Centre for Social Research, 2024.

Mannheim, Karl. "The Problem of Generations" (1928). In *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, edited by Paul Kecskemeti, 276–322. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952.

Marglin, Stephen A., and Juliet B. Schor, eds. *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Marty, Martin E. *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire*. New York: Macmillan USA, 1986.

Mattes, Alexander, Markus Haselbacher, Katharina Limacher, and Christian Novak. "Religion and Politics of Belonging in Digital Times: Youth Religiosity in Focus." *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (2025): 1476762. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1476762>

McArthur, Tom. "Why Gen Z Men Are Shifting Politically to the Right." *BBC News*. April 16, 2026. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg0z3n5e5jo>

Métais, Thibaud. "La France face à l'explosion des CDD ou des missions d'intérim courtes." *Le Monde*. March 27, 2026. https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2026/03/27/emploi-la-france-face-a-l-explosion-des-contrats-de-tres-courte-duree_6674459_823448.html

Michael Jonas, "The Downside of Diversity," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 5, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/world/americas/05iht-diversity.1.6986248.html>

Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, The. "Children of Migrants in the UK." November 7, 2025. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/children-of-migrants-in-the-uk/>.

Ministère de l'Intérieur. *Livret du citoyen*. Paris: Direction générale des étrangers en France, février 2022.

Mintz, Luke. "Why More Young People Are Turning to the Far Right." *BBC News*. December 18, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0kz1wpnq5o>

Miriam Ronzoni, "How Social Democrats May Become Reluctant Radicals: Thomas Piketty's *Capital* and Wolfgang Streeck's *Buying Time*," *European Journal of Political Theory* (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115601602>

Møller, Jørgen, and Jonathan Stavnskær Doucette. *The Catholic Church and European State Formation, AD 1000–1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192857118.001.0001>

Moon, Grace. "The Young Koreans Pushing Back on a Culture of Endurance." *BBC Worklife*. January 9, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200108-the-young-koreans-pushing-back-on-a-culture-of-endurance>

Murray, Douglas. *The Strange Death of Europe*. London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2017.

Muslim Council of Britain. *British Muslims in Numbers: Census Report Summary*. London: Muslim Council of Britain, 2025.

Muvija M and Sarah Young, “Catholicism Spreads amongst Young Britons Longing for Something Deeper,” *Reuters*, May 7, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/catholicism-spreads-amongst-young-britons-longing-something-deeper-2025-05-07/>

Muxel, Anne. “Les jeunes veulent-ils encore la démocratie ?” *Sciences Po CEVIPOF*. December 11, 2025. <https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipof/fr/actualites/les-jeunes-veulent-ils-encore-la-democratie/>.

National Institute of Mental Health. “Major Depression.” *National Institute of Mental Health*. Accessed March 12, 2026. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression>

Observatoire de l’Immigration et de la Démographie. “L’impact de l’immigration sur le système éducatif français.” Accessed April 25, 2026. <https://observatoire-immigration.fr/limpact-de-limmigration-sur-le-systeme-educatif-francais/>

Office for National Statistics. *Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021*. London: Office for National Statistics, 2022.

Peoples, Hervey C., Pavel Duda, and Frank W. Marlowe. “Hunter-Gatherers and the Origins of Religion.” *Human Nature* 27, no. 3 (2016): 261–282. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-016-9260-0>

Pepino, John. “Anatomist of the Catholic Collapse in France and Beyond.” *Catholic World Report*. September 13, 2022. <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2022/09/13/anatomist-of-the-catholic-collapse-in-france-and-beyond/>

Peter Schwartz, “Shock Wave (Anti) Warrior,” *Wired*, May 1, 1993, <https://www.wired.com/1993/05/toffler/>

Pew Research Center. *Modeling the Future of Religion in America: If Recent Trends in Religious Switching Continue, Christians Could Make Up Less than Half of the U.S. Population within a Few Decades*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2022.

Pew Research Center. *The Age Gap in Religion Around the World*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2018.

Pringle, Eleanor. “In Just 15 Years, the Average U.S. Homebuyer Went from 39 to 59 Years Old: Top Analyst Reveals How the Housing Market Has Warped in One Generation.” *Fortune*, November 13, 2025. <https://fortune.com/2025/11/13/average-homebuyer-59-years-old-senior-citizen-housing-market-affordability/>.

Psarianos, Ilias. “Qui sont les membres de Génération identitaire ?” *ici* (France Bleu). October 13, 2013. <https://www.ici.fr/infos/societe/qui-sont-les-membres-de-generation-identitaire-1382083443>.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Reimer, B. “No Values—New Values? Youth and Postmaterialism.” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 11 (1988): 347–360. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.1988.tb00376.x>

Rikki Schlott, "Why Young People Are Converting to Catholicism en Masse," *New York Post*, April 17, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2025/04/17/lifestyle/why-young-people-are-converting-to-catholicism-en-masse/>

Ronzoni, Miriam. "How Social Democrats May Become Reluctant Radicals: Thomas Piketty's Capital and Wolfgang Streeck's Buying Time." *European Journal of Political Theory* (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115601602>.

Rose, Beth. "Over 700,000 Graduates out of Work and Claiming Benefits, Analysis Suggests." *BBC News*. January 26, 2026. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1klry2rjm0o>

San Diego State University Pride Center. "2SLGBTQIA+ Glossary." Accessed May 5, 2026. https://sacd.sdsu.edu/pride/2slgbtqia_glossary.

Sauvage, Grégoire. "Que contient l'accord franco-algérien de 1968 que le RN veut remettre en cause ?" *France 24*. October 31, 2025. <https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20251030-que-contient-accord-franco-alg%C3%A9rien-1968-rn-veut-remettre-en-cause>.

Sauvaget, Bernadette. "Le catholicisme à l'épreuve des chiffres." *Témoignage Chrétien*. April 11, 2024. <https://www.temoignagechretien.fr/le-catholicisme-a-lepreuve-des-chiffres/>

Schwartz, Peter. "Shock Wave (Anti) Warrior." *Wired*, May 1, 1993. <https://www.wired.com/1993/05/toffler/>.

Shimoni Stoil, Rebecca. "Netanyahu: Evangelical Christians Are Israel's Best Friends." *The Times of Israel*. July 18, 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-evangelical-christians-are-israels-best-friends/>

Silver, Laura. "Younger Americans Stand Out in Their Views of the Israel-Hamas War." *Pew Research Center*. April 2, 2024. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

Sky News. "How the Online Safety Act Triggered a Political Row about Freedom of Speech." YouTube video. Accessed April 29, 2026. <https://youtu.be/MrM05kWNHUM?si=LMedL4V-nYJ0k-C8>.

Sky News. "Why Tommy Robinson Rally Was Different to Any Other." YouTube video. Accessed May 18, 2026. <https://youtu.be/oV92B4oR6FM>

Smith, Christopher S. "Taught to be Ashamed: Sexual Shame, Faith, and Moral Incongruence in Men's Psychosexual Development." *Sexuality & Culture* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-025-10503-4>

Stewart, Evan, Nazita Lajevardi, Roy Whitaker, and Tarah Williams. "What Does American Identity Mean? A Cultural Legacy of Pluralism and Exclusion." *PRRI*. July 15, 2022. <https://prri.org/spotlight/what-does-american-identity-mean-a-cultural-legacy-of-pluralism-and-exclusion/>

Steyn, Mark. "It's the Demography, Stupid." *The Wall Street Journal*. January 4, 2006. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB122531242161281449>.

Stolz, Jörg, Nan Dirk de Graaf, Conrad Hackett, and Jean-Paul Antonietti. "The Three Stages of Religious Decline Around the World." *Nature Communications* 16, no. 1 (2025): 7202. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-62452-z>

Sztajer, Sławomir. "The Concept of *Homo Religiosus* and Its Philosophical Interpretations." *Anglojęzyczny Suplement Przeglądu Religioznawczego*, no. 1 (2013).

T. Wilkinson, "The Undisciplined Youth and a Moral Panic in Independent India, Circa 1947–1964," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35, no. 4 (2022): 507–526, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12387>

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.

The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford. "Children of Migrants in the UK." November 7, 2025. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/children-of-migrants-in-the-uk/>.

UK Government. "Population of England and Wales." *Ethnicity Facts and Figures*. December 22, 2022. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest/>.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary". Published May 5th 2025.

Venema, Cornelis P. *The Promise of the Future*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000.

Weber, Max. "Science as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 129–156. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

Zentner, Manfred. "Austria." In *History Teaching and Education for Democratic Citizenship*, 75–81. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, n.d.

Zygmunt Bauman. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.