

A SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVOLUTION OF VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR

In the significant number of countries where they were held, studies on “The Cultural Creatives” have shown that the number of people engaged in forming a “new society” is now significant : between 25 and 35 per cent of the adult population. What do these people have in common? They are turning together towards a set of four core values : two well established ones, **solidarity** and **ecology**, and two which are not, values known as “**the feminine side**” and **the dimension of “being”**.

Nevertheless, with so many women and men looking in the same direction, one cannot help but note that this socio-cultural strata has yet to deliver its potential in terms of the evolution of society.

Our Belgian survey aimed not only to improve the understanding of the weaknesses within the Cultural Creative population but also to identify the potential paths to take so as to overcome them. For a period of two months, a questionnaire was made available on the Web. It invited participants to respond to some 150 questions relating to their values and behaviour.

Thanks to the participation of **nearly 3,000 respondents**, our research was able to study an important sample of people who relate to the **same set of values** and to the **same vision** of an ideal society.

We observed our respondents’ anxiety relating to the fact that “If we continue like this, we’re heading straight into a brick wall!”. We noted that the principal threat identified was the predominance of the economic and financial system. On the question of values, we saw a consensus of replies covering ecological issues, the challenges of solidarity, the importance of giving a sense and meaning to life, the need for a feminine/masculine balance of self and in society... The survey also showed that although this group has a strong desire to get involved in society, it also felt that it has a poor grasp of an effective control over society. Participants’ replies described how they are distancing themselves from politics, identified where they stand in relation to growth, and showed how they feel isolated in society and yet how they are surrounded by close human relationships. The respondents also expressed to what extent they are involved in “an alternative way of living daily life”.

The resulting published report describes in detail (pages 13-43) how the respondents of our sample group position themselves against dozens of questions relating to their ideals and their everyday lives.

Consequently, we gathered an important amount of descriptive information on this specific sector of the population interested in society’s evolution. **Numerous convergences** were found and showed how a huge majority of respondents are forming groups around the same set of values. At the same time, the survey also pointed out **several serious divergences**. Indeed, these are probably the points which have delivered the most precious information within the sphere of our research.

The main diverging factor relates to the distance and lack of cohesion within the sample group despite the fact that it is looking in the same direction. Many find it **difficult to interact** because a certain number do not consider “others” as adequate in the drive towards a “new society”.

So we observed the emergence of different sub-groups within the survey sample. Profile types are described in detail on pages 46-52 of the report. We were able to note that these profile types polarize towards two positions: those who choose “to act” or those who choose “to exist”. “To act” was defined by the different means by which the respondents “make a change in society”. “To exist” was defined by the different means used by our respondents to “make a personal, inner change”. In essence, certain participants of the survey are more focused on political or associative

activism while others are more concentrated on their path to personal development. Within the study we called the first group the “militants” and the second group the “mutants” -the latter being individuals seeking a personal “mutation”. **Same roots, same vision, different means...**

The fact that the survey found these differences is not astonishing: it would have been surprising to find a uniform group. The revelation of contrasting groups would not even have posed a problem of principle if we had not observed **points of tension between these two sub-groups**.

During the discussion groups which followed the survey, aimed at delving deeper into certain questions (“Focus groups”, pages 55-58), we were able to identify an important number of factors which divided the militants from the mutants.

Nevertheless, pages 43 and 44 of the report explain how certain common presuppositions were contradicted by the survey’s data.

Why does the survey concentrate so much on the distances created between the sub-groups? One must not forget that at the heart of this survey’s make-up lies the question of why Cultural Creatives, despite their potential, are such ineffective “change agents” in society. Given that there was an underlying feeling that there was a missing link, we were looking for the potential for forming a single and large group. Considering our remit, weaknesses blocking this possibility of cohesion were of just as much interest as strengths contributing to its fruition.

So the question was how to instigate a mood of mutual acceptance -as “alter egos”-with the view to forming a large group. In the focus group discussions (pages 59-65), we also identified many factors which had the potential of creating a bridge between the militants and the mutants.

The logical next step to this survey: a course of action aiming to **redefine the “change agents”**. This route would lead, slowly but surely, to individuals being able to better perceive how each Cultural Creative, within his own sphere and limits, could both advance society and act as a change agent, whether militant or mutant. Pages 66-74 clarify this vision.

In the end, our research led to one big question: Is it possible to sensitize these two groups with one sole proposal? A proposal to entice the mutants into the militants’ realm of social activism...A proposal where militants could be introduced to self development... Can we identify a mutually attractive approach?

Another strong result of our survey hints to the path to follow: the proportion of female respondents was high. **69% of respondents were women**. Does this mean that we can identify women - above all - as being unhappy with the way society is run? If so, why?

To advocate the proposal, we hooked on to the consensus we found in the answers to two questions. More than nine out of ten respondents agree with the following phrase: “Men and women all have a feminine and masculine side”. Nearly nine out of ten consider that “society needs to hold feminine values in a much higher regard”. The proposal therefore takes a hold by observing the way “the masculine principle” and “the feminine principle” are present in society and each individual, woman or man. This observation leads us to the conclusion that the masculine principle is currently leading the world. We have slowly been swallowed up by masculine values: competition, short-term material gain, more and more, continually at a faster pace...The masculine principle rules all domains of our collective lives: the economy, finance, politics, medicine, education... And this predominance has even touched our inner selves. Women who wish to succeed in society have to dress up like men and thereby lose part of their own essence...

This is why we have called our proposal: **“The re-honouring of the feminine side to one’s inner self and in society”**. It

will not only address the external challenges (our social problems) but also the internal challenges of each human being. How does one indeed promote the female side in society without addressing it in one's self? Through this proposal, militants as much as mutants will find a way to renew their natural tendencies AND to break through into other people's worlds. Women and men will find the opportunity to evolve. And our interviews showed that women have a very strong and immediate perception of how they, men, their children and the world could benefit from this repositioning of the feminine side.

The report ends with a brief explanation of the ins and outs of this proposal (pages 77-80).