Call for Applications

The Generation Z in Europe

The background: The exciting Generation Z on the rise

For several years, millennials, digital natives, and several other names for the “Generation Y” are in the focus of academic research (e.g. business administration, behavioural management, sociology, psychology, ...) and even more on the front page of the discussions of practitioners in companies, politicians, teachers, parents, and of course the media in general.

However, since a few years, a new generation slowly moves into focus. Even though it got with “Generation Z” a name not too exciting, this group of young people born after 1990 is about to become a real game changer: As the New York Times phrased “Move Over, Millennials, Here Comes Generation Z”.¹

And this Generation Z is totally different from other generations before, for instance: more realistic, with mistrust of politicians, companies or media and furthermore prefers a very strict separation of work and private life. In this regard companies should start to get ready for them: „Traumatized by millennials, employers are already desperate to make Generation Z happy”². Companies know: “Generation Z will ruin businesses that fail to adopt new ways of working“³.

At Saarland University we are engaged for a long time in the complicated process of both understanding the members of the young generation and creating concepts for companies as well as the society as a whole to deal with them: The book “Spieler ohne Stammplatzgarantie” (2003)⁴ described the logic

of Generation Y as a rather opportunistic behaviour in a darwinistic society; the book “Generation Z” (2014)\(^5\) deciphers the patterns of thought and of behaviour of this “next” Generation by discussing in particular differences between Generation Y and Generation Z.

**Research: Still open questions**

Even though the phenomena “Generation Z” exists all over the world, most of the research has been done in a corridor connecting Australia, USA, France, Germany and the UK. There is some literature dealing with countries outside of that corridor, for instance, “How ‘Generation Z’ is Shaping Ukraine’s Media Landscape”\(^6\). Or “7 Interesting Findings about Vietnamese” as well as “Generation Z” – Brazil”\(^7\).

This leaves open questions: How does the Generation Z, for instance, in Europe or South America look like? Are there specific patterns? Unique questions? Creative answers?

A new research published by Ford\(^8\) tells us: “With considerable pressure on them at an early age, there’s a greater complexity than ever before in being a young person—and they share these pressures with their peers across the world, making them the first truly global generation.” Well: Global yes, but identical?

Considering the fact that “generations” are shaped by technology, society, or environment it is to believe, that Africa for instance with all its differentiations will display a different picture than Asia.

In particular we would like to analyse, if the Generation Z is a global phenomenon and if country/continent specific “mutations” of Generation Z population exist. If yes, it would be also interesting and important to know, which drivers can explain these developments.

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\(^5\) Scholz, Christian, Generation Z. Wie sie tickt, was sie verändert und warum sie uns alle ansteckt, Wiley (Weinheim) 2014.

\(^6\) [http://www.internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/how-generation-z-shaping-ukraine-media-landscape#sthash.UCvyYT3h.dpuf](http://www.internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/how-generation-z-shaping-ukraine-media-landscape#sthash.UCvyYT3h.dpuf)

\(^7\) [http://www.hrinasia.com/general/7-interesting-findings-about-vietnamese-generation-z/](http://www.hrinasia.com/general/7-interesting-findings-about-vietnamese-generation-z/)

\(^8\) [https://www.jwtintelligence.com/trend-reports/generation-z-brazil/](https://www.jwtintelligence.com/trend-reports/generation-z-brazil/)

Workshop: “Generation Z in Europe” – Call for applications

The workshop about *Generation Z in Europe* will take place on November 28 and 29, 2016 with around 15 researchers from 15 countries. It will be a cooperation with the Collegium Europaeum Universitatis Saraviensis (CEUS), centre of excellence coordinating research on Europe at Saarland University, as well as with the European Institute for Advanced Behavioural Management (EIABM). The workshop language is English.

**If you are interested in participating, please send us your application until October 7, 2016. Please let us know what is your specialization and if you can give a short presentation about the Generation Z (value system, formative characteristics, etc.) in your country.**

**We will assume the participants’ main travel and accommodation costs.**

**Positioning within academia**

**Which departments / specializations are addressed?**


**On which cognitive interest is this project based on? How can the findings be used?**

Comparative analysis of similarities and differences of the “Gen Z” based on the following indicators: Attitude towards education, working life, work-life balance; levels of interaction and communication (digital / analog). The findings could be matched with: Geographical / social / cultural / educational environment and the fit to value systems.

**Are there convergent or divergent developments?**

Here we talk about the analysis of reasons / impacts / special factors (e.g. geographical – North to South characteristics; religious imprinting etc.). We also look into chances and risks resulting from these developments.
Examples for specific questions?

- How do factors like social, economical and political environment or the family influence the development of special (same or different) value systems in Gen Z members?
- Which challenges does the working world face as the “Gen Z” enters professional life? How can diversified companies benefit from these country-specific differences between generations?
- What do companies need in order to respond effectively to the generational change in working life?
- Which consequences can be seen for politics, the educational system to deal with Generation Z?

All this leads to a large variety of interesting research questions we will jointly think about together.

Next steps

Next steps after the workshop could include a presentation (e.g. symposium) at the Academy of Management Meeting in Atlanta 2017, articles and – at least – one book which includes all four regional workshops. And of course, all this should lead to an interesting and enriching network of researchers around the globe and long lasting cooperation.

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