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Bringing Work to Life

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Contact Us

Elsdon Organizational
Renewal (EOR)

www.elsdon.com

renewal@elsdon.com

Tel. 925 586 9039

Welcome

Welcome to our latest quarterly issue of Bringing Work to Life.

Our recent book: *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path: Embracing Economic Disruption*, (Praeger, 2014), describes why, when, and how to create an inspiring and practical nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path from more than one source of income: <http://www.abc-clio.com/product.aspx?isbn=9781440831584>

This complements our three previous books:

Business Behaving Well: Social Responsibility, from Learning to Doing, (Potomac Books, Inc., 2013), which provides a rationale and roadmap for organizations to incorporate socially responsible practices, building on principles of social justice:

<http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Business-Behaving-Well,676586.aspx>

Building Workforce Strength: Creating Value through Workforce and Career Development (Praeger, 2010), which describes the application of workforce and career development principles and practices to strengthen organizations:

<http://www.abc-clio.com/ABC-CLIOCorporate/product.aspx?pc=C3236C>

Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization (Praeger, 2003), which describes leadership approaches to integrate individual needs with organizational needs for the benefit of both:

<http://www.abc-clio.com/product.aspx?isbn=9781567204360>

This newsletter contains two articles: *Belonging*, and *Taking the Pulse of Our Society*.

Belonging

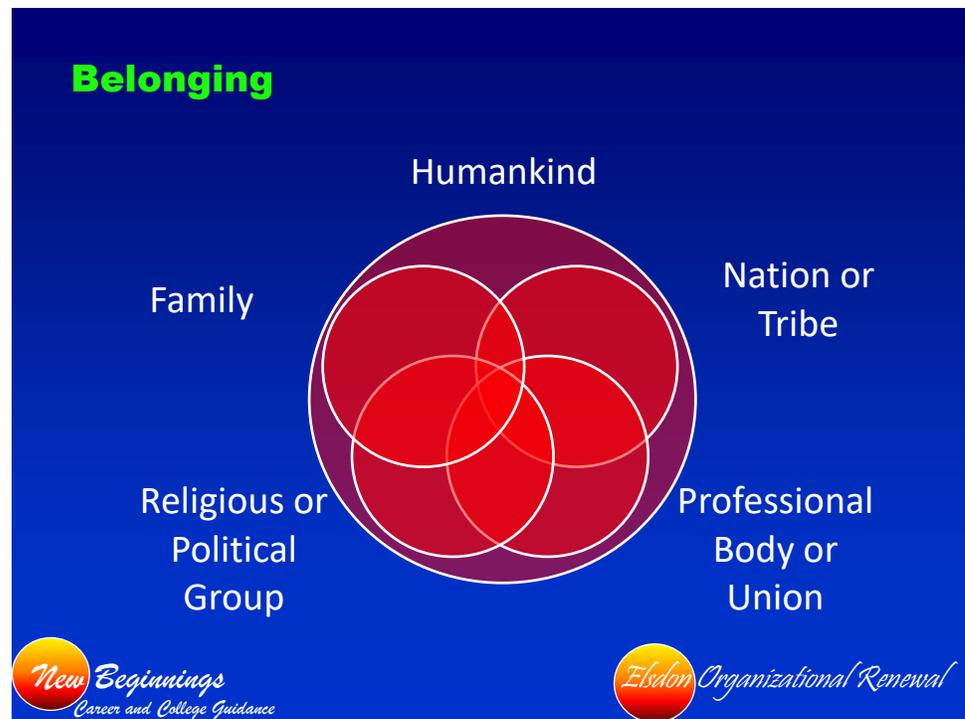
A sense of belonging is individually affirming and important for organizations



Ron Elsdon, Ph.D., is founder of *Elsdon Organizational Renewal*, which focuses on supporting organizations enhance effectiveness through revitalized workforce relationships and leadership practices. Prior to establishing his practice, Ron held senior leadership positions at diverse organizations. Ron is also co-founder of *New Beginnings Career and College Guidance*, which provides caring and personalized support to individuals in career guidance and coaching.

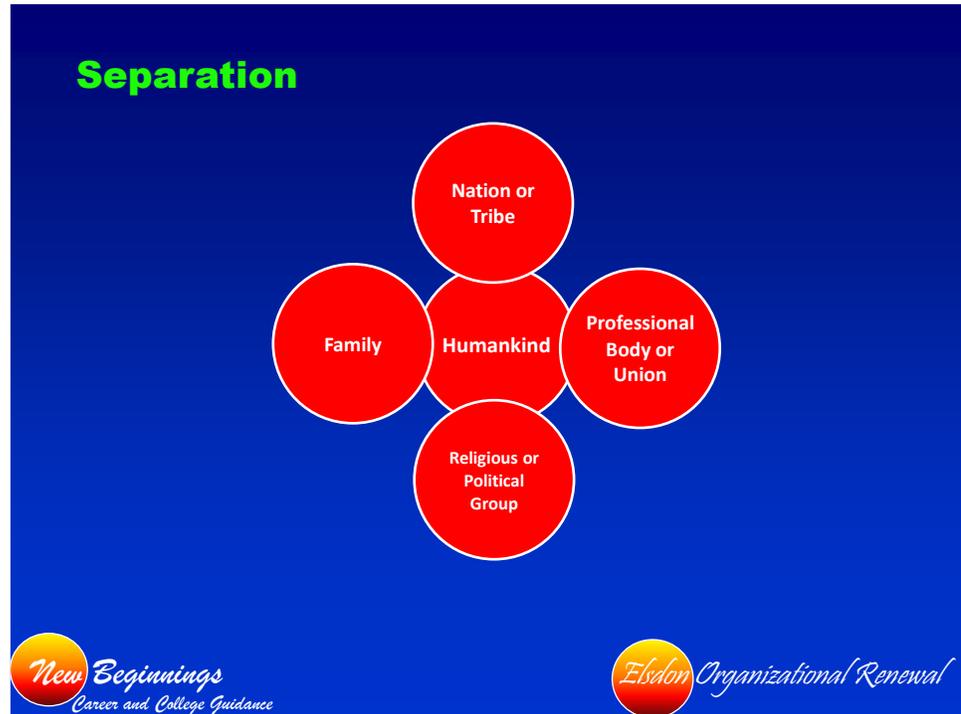
Ron is author of *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path: Embracing Economic Disruption*, which describes why, when and how to create an inspiring and practical nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path from more than one source of income; editor of *Business Behaving Well: Social Responsibility, from Learning to Doing*, which provides a rationale and roadmap for organizations

exploring how to strengthen affiliation. We examine both aspects here. A recent New York Times article (*A Question About Friends Reveals a Lot About Class Divides* by Damon Darlin, September 1, 2016) points out, not surprisingly, that we affiliate in groups with others having similar educational backgrounds, incomes, ethnicities, or political views. It is one way we affirm our sense of belonging. It's easier to be with those like us. These various groups each have particular characteristics, and associated expectations of members. For example, at the broadest level we are part of humankind and can trace our ancestry back to those first intrepid travelers from Africa some 50,000 years ago. At the closest level, we are part of families that live, love, and share together. And there are many groups in between, for example nation or tribe, political group, religious group, organization, professional body, union, trade association, alumni group, or sport or recreational group. Belonging can ennoble us and bring us nearer to others and to our communities. For example, those brave doctors who journey with *Doctors Without Borders*. We can represent examples of belonging by overlapping circles as follows:



Unfortunately, groups can also exclude others, leading to separation and sometimes physical or psychological violence. For example, war that imposes one group's values on another, or enslaves another. This sometimes masquerades under the euphemism of patriotism. We can represent examples of separation by isolated circles as follows:

to incorporate socially responsible practices, building on real-world examples from contributing authors, and principles of social justice; editor of *Building Workforce Strength: Creating Value through Workforce and Career Development*, a book that describes the application of workforce and career development principles and practices to strengthen organizations; and author of *Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization*, a book describing leadership approaches to integrate the needs of the individual with the needs of the organization for the benefit of both. Ron holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in chemical engineering, an M.A. from John F. Kennedy University in career development and a first class honors degree from Leeds University in chemical engineering. With his co-author he was awarded the Walker Prize by the Human Resource Planning Society for the paper that best advances state-of-the-art thinking or practices in human resources.



Distinguishing among groups where belonging is affirming and inclusive from those that are exclusionary is important and challenging. I recall giving a presentation some years ago to a group in Orange County, California, about my first book *Affiliation in the Workplace*. I had given similar presentations many times before, speaking to the importance of leaders creating a sense of inspiring purpose for those in their organizations. Participants in previous presentations embraced such a sense of inspiring purpose, acknowledging a connection to a common good. For the first time, in this Orange County session, one participant identified greed as providing a sense of personal purpose. It is hard to imagine greed unifying others, though easy to see it dividing and excluding.

How does this relate to organizations? The decision to affiliate with an organization is, at its core, an emotional decision. It is complex, intimately connected to finding fulfillment, and unique for each of us, building on a fundamental human need for belonging, despite difficulties, tensions and ambiguities. Organizations engage in conversion processes that generate a combination of economic, social, and community value. In times past conversion processes were largely physical, for example iron ore into steel, or natural fibers into yarn, fabric and garments. Today information and service delivery dominate in developed economies, for example in the creation of software, visual images, textile designs or leadership development processes. This usually requires an extensive and growing body of knowledge, and frequently involves complex relationships both within and outside organizations. People gain in effectiveness with time and experience, in turn generating more organizational value. Continuing to secure this productivity gain also means re-energizing the relationship over time through growth and development. Economic value is enhanced through extended rather than transient relationships. Extended affiliation both enhances individual fulfillment and organizational value creation and it is built on a sense of belonging.

Affiliation at its core is a two-way relationship, supported by both individuals and

organizations. In the emerging work world both parties have an equal say. Such a two-way relationship is strong when both parties willingly participate without one being coerced by the other. The emerging approach contains the following elements:

- Understanding individual needs
- Providing options and choices
- Fostering learning
- Supporting breadth in development
- Engaging individuals as if they were volunteers

Strong relationships of individuals to organizations reflect each person's individual needs rather than a “take it or leave it” proposition rolled off an organizational assembly line. Strong relationships are one-to-one not one-to-many. They require enhanced interpersonal skills from those in the organization. They also require deep knowledge of organizational direction and opportunities, as the relationships build and grow around the provision of options and choices. These choices include practical aspects such as time flexibility, structural aspects such as the nature of management relationships, and content aspects such as project areas of interest. However, when employment relationships are tenuous and transitory, as they are increasingly becoming, internal connections create limited value for the organization, and they are not portable, which is a problem for individuals, given frequently limited tenure with an organization.

These concerns are addressed by a nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path, which is tailored by each person to his or her individual needs, while addressing societal and market needs and opportunities. A nontraditional career path often contains more than one source of income and is strengthened by long-term relationships that are not dependent on a single employment connection. Such relationships include giving and receiving, personal development, and connection with others who affirm a sense of belonging. These relationships include family and people close to us, a broad work and social community, team members, partners and investors, customers and clients. A nontraditional career path is an opportunity to engage others as employees or contractors creating a shared sense of meaning and being, a shared sense of belonging. This leads to strong affiliation, excellent service to customers and differentiation from large organizations where employee engagement levels are typically much lower. A nontraditional career path is also an opportunity to partner with others, building on cultural alignment, alignment of objectives, mutual respect, and mutual benefit, all leading to a shared sense of belonging.

We can create belonging through the individual paths we take and the bonds of affiliation we foster. This may be a result of an employment relationship or a nontraditional career path. Belonging brings personal affirmation. And it carries with it understanding and honoring of community well-being, supporting the needs and growth of others, and reaching out to those who may otherwise be excluded. The form this belonging takes will evolve as we mature from dependency as children to interdependency as adults. This is reflected in our work lives whether, in

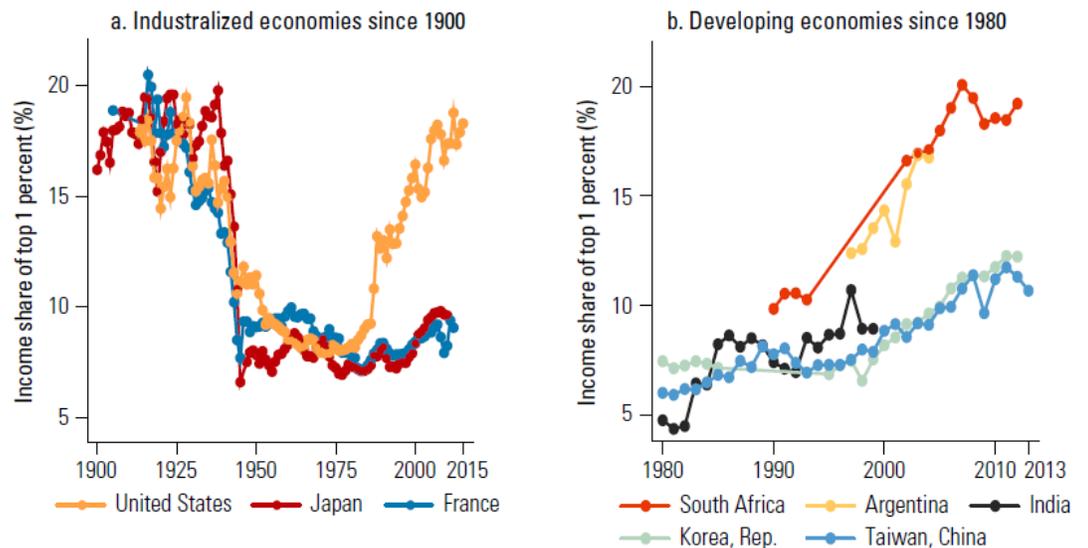
a nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path, as described in *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path*, in our relationship with organizations as described in *Affiliation in the Workplace* and *Building Workforce Strength*, or in our relationship with our communities as described in *Business Behaving Well*. Indeed, this sense of belonging speaks to our core humanity and our sense of purpose in our work lives and in ourselves.

Parts of this article are extracted from, or based on concepts from, *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path* (Praeger, 2014), *Business Behaving Well* (Potomac Books, Inc., 2013), *Building Workforce Strength* (Praeger, 2010), and *Affiliation in the Workplace* (Praeger, 2003).

Taking the Pulse of Our Society

Let us look at some attributes of our society, let us take its pulse. It is deeply concerning to know that likely policy changes due to the recent election will magnify difficulties for many people who are already disadvantaged. The disturbing trend of increased inequality in the United States since about 1980 stands in stark contrast to many other countries, though it is similar to South Africa and Argentina:

FIGURE 0.13 The National Income Share of the Richest 1 Percent, Selected Economies



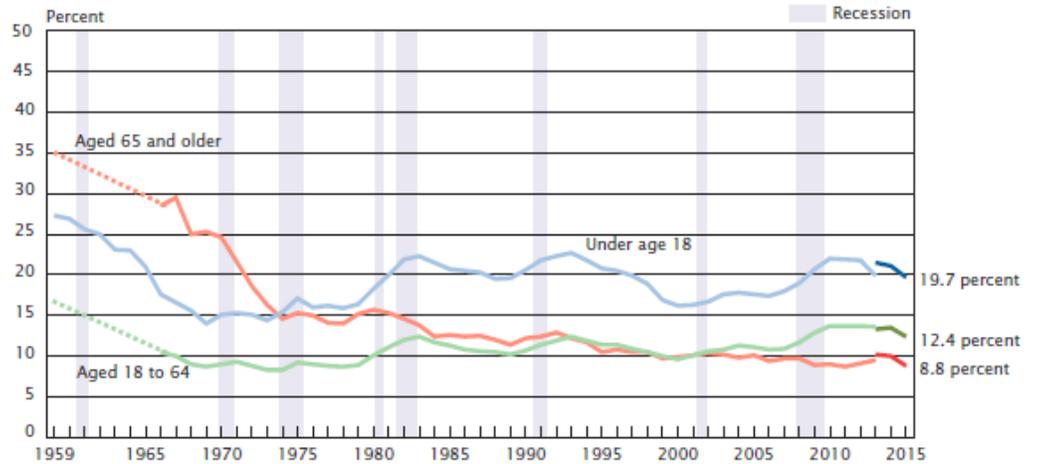
Source: Calculations based on data of WID (World Wealth and Income Database), Paris School of Economics, Paris, <http://www.parisschoolofeconomics.eu/en/research/the-world-wealth-income-database/>.

Note: The income share excludes capital gains. These measures are typically derived from tax record data. For South Africa, the income share refers to adults.

Source: World Bank Group, *Taking on Inequality, Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016*.

While poverty rates declined slightly in the United States last year, poverty remains unacceptably high, particularly for children where one in five live in poverty, as shown in the next figure:

**Figure 5.
Poverty Rates by Age: 1959 to 2015**

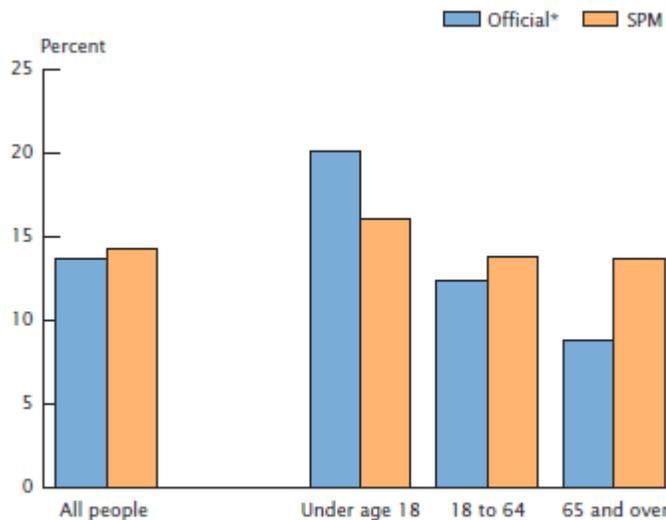


Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years. Data for people aged 18 to 64 and aged 65 and older are not available from 1960 to 1965. For information on recessions, see Appendix A. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar16.pdf>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1960 to 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

Source: Bernadette D. Proctor, Jessica L. Semega, and Melissa A. Kollar, United States Census Bureau, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015*, September 2016.

We have made much progress in reducing poverty for those 65 and older due to the success of Social Security and Medicare. However, this progress is less evident when we use the supplemental poverty measure (SPM) a shown in the next figure. The SPM takes into account costs of goods, services and housing costs (including geographic differences), and government programs that assist low income families.

**Figure 1.
Poverty Rates Using Two Measures for Total Population and by Age Group: 2015**

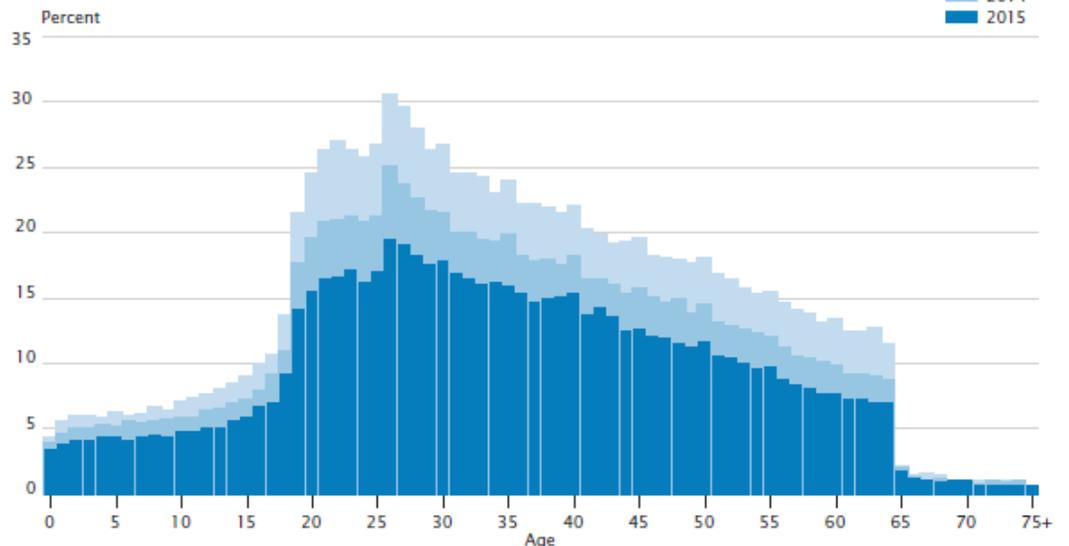


* Includes unrelated individuals under the age of 15. Note: For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar16.pdf>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Source: Trudi Renwick, and Liana Fox, United States Census Bureau, *The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015*, September 2016.

The success of Medicare is evident in the next figure, along with the success of the Affordable Care Act, in reducing the number of people who do not have health insurance coverage. Not surprisingly, in the absence of a single payer, Medicare-for-All approach, we still see egregious increases in the cost of health care and health insurance. Factors leading to this, the benefits of the Affordable Care Act, and steps we need to take in the future are reviewed in Deborah LeVeen's chapter "Healthcare as Social Responsibility: Implications for Business" in *Business Behaving Well*. We still have far to go to approach the breadth and effectiveness of health care in other developed countries. Achieving this will mean moving to a single payer, Medicare-for-All approach, and away from the bureaucratic, ineffective, for-profit approach that has been so detrimental to our society. Unfortunately the new administration appears to be moving in the opposite direction to that needed.

Figure 4.
Uninsured Rate by Single Year of Age: 2013 to 2015
 (Civilian noninstitutionalized population)



For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions in the American Community Survey, see www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2015.pdf.

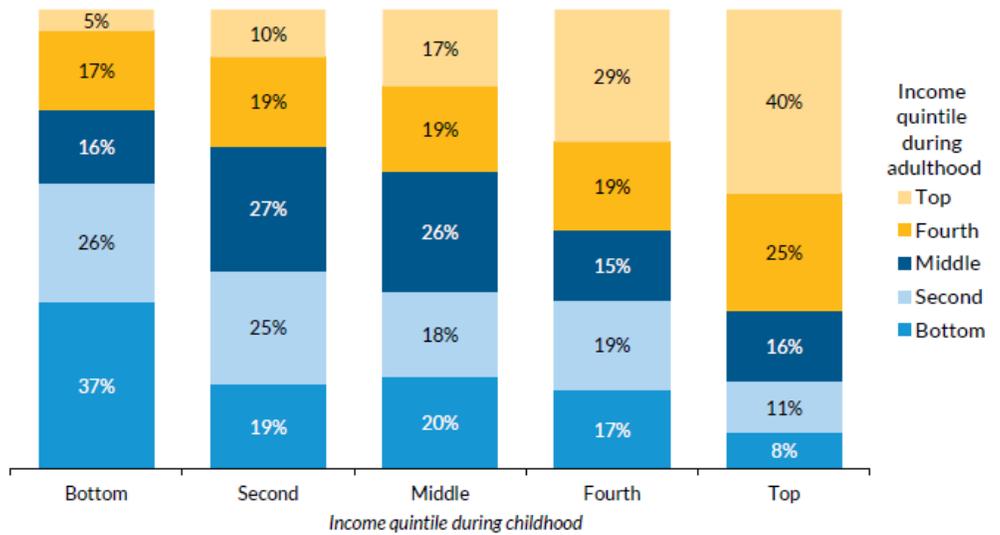
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, 2014, and 2015 1-Year American Community Surveys.

Source: Jessica C. Barnett, and Marina S. Vornovitsky, United States Census Bureau, Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2015, September 2016.

We see the difficulty of escaping from poverty in the next figure where parental income is a major determinant of children's financial well-being in adulthood in the United States:

FIGURE 8

Relative Intergenerational Mobility: Adults' Income Quintile by Childhood Income Quintile, 1967–2009



Source: Urban Institute analysis of Panel Study of Income Dynamics data.

Notes: All adult children were ages 0–5 and were the child of the head of household in 1968. These adult children were in their 30s from 1993 through the 2009 survey. Their parents' income information is based upon an average of all reported years of income from 1967 onward, when their parents were also in their 30s.

Source: Gregory Acs, Diana Elliott, and Emma Kalish, Urban Institute, US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, What Would Substantially Increased Mobility from Poverty Look Like?, July 2016.

We continue to struggle to care for our children when compared with other countries as shown in the next figure:

CHILD PROSPERITY INDEX

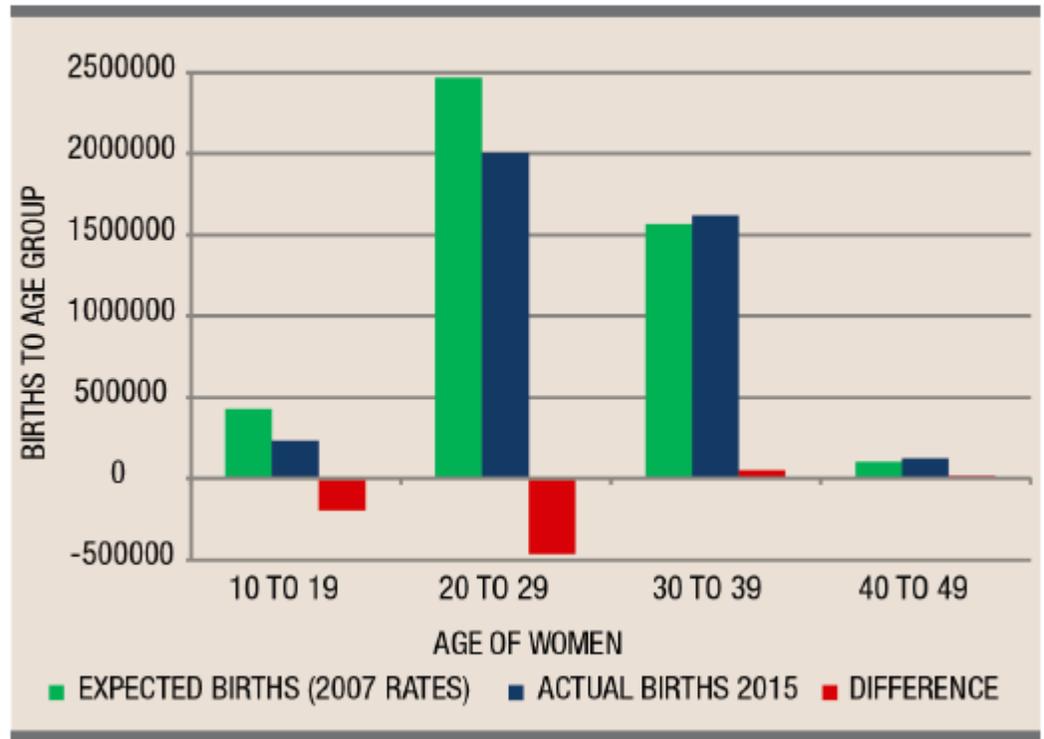
COUNTRY	RANK	GDP PER CAPITA	HDI RANK
Germany	1	\$47,033	6
France	2	\$41,221	22
Japan	3	\$38,211	20
Australia	4 (equal)	\$47,318	2
Canada	4 (equal)	\$45,489	9
United Kingdom	6	\$40,958	14
Republic of Korea	7	\$36,528	17
Italy	8	\$35,665	27
United States	9	\$55,904	8
Turkey	10	\$20,277	72
China	11	\$14,190	90
Russia	12	\$23,744	50
Argentina	13	\$22,375	40
Mexico	14	\$18,335	74
Saudi Arabia	15	\$53,565	39
Indonesia	16	\$11,112	110
Brazil	17	\$15,690	75
South Africa	18	\$13,197	116
India	19	\$6,209	130

Note that the G20 is comprised of 19 countries plus the European Union. Only the 19 countries are included in this analysis.¹⁸

Source: Save the Children, Economic Playgrounds 2016: Comparing the Lives of Children in G20 Countries. (All data accessed in March 2016. Most data are for the year 2014 (otherwise, latest available)).

We see fewer than expected births as shown in the following figure:

FIGURE 2. MANY FEWER BIRTHS THAN EXPECTED FOR YOUNG WOMEN AND SLIGHTLY MORE BIRTHS FOR OLDER WOMEN, 2015



Analysis: K.M. Johnson, Carsey School, University of New Hampshire
Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Source: Kenneth M. Johnson, Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire, Carsey Research, National Fact Sheet #34, U.S. Births Remain Low as the Great Recession Wanes: More Than Three Million Fewer Births and Still Counting, Summer 2016.

It is encouraging to see the continued growth of nontraditional career paths, which free people from dependency on large organizations and open up fulfilling and practical opportunities, as shown in the next figure:

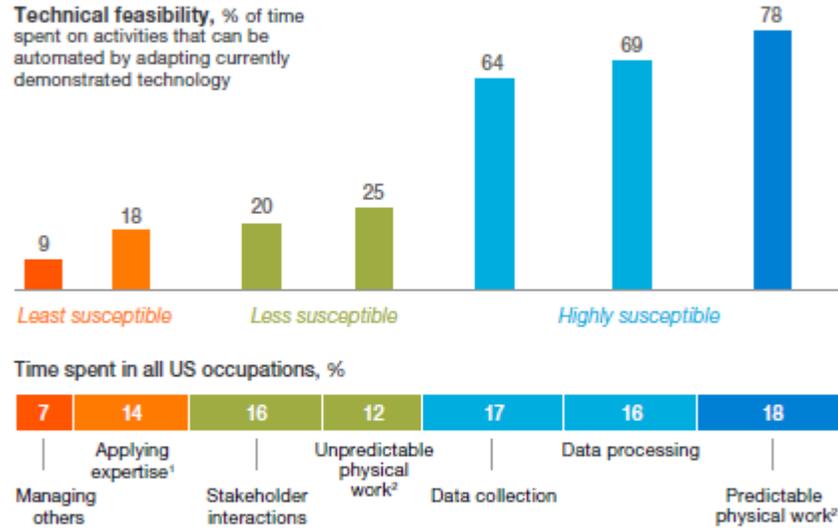


Source: McKinsey&Company, McKinsey Global Institute, Independent Work: Choice, Necessity, and the Gig Economy, October 2016.

Flexibility in determining and adjusting career paths will be particularly important given the on-going march of automation as shown in the next figure:

Exhibit 1

Analyzing work activities rather than occupations is the most accurate way to examine the technical feasibility of automation.



In practice, automation will depend on more than just technical feasibility. Five factors are involved: technical feasibility; costs to automate; the relative scarcity, skills, and cost of workers who might otherwise do the activity; benefits (eg, superior performance) of automation beyond labor-cost substitution; and regulatory and social-acceptance considerations.

¹Applying expertise to decision making, planning, and creative tasks.

²Unpredictable physical work (physical activities and the operation of machinery) is performed in unpredictable environments, while in predictable physical work, the environments are predictable.

Source: Michael Chui, James Manyika, and Mehdi Miremadi, McKinsey Quarterly, Where machines could replace humans – and where they can’t (yet), July 2016.

These trends, taken together, underline the importance of seeking a just society that values all. This will be particularly challenging in the next four years.

Quote

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten we belong to each other.”

Mother Teresa.