



Generations of Change in Lithuania:

A Societal Value Perspective

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Summary

This monograph seeks to examine the value orientations characteristic of different social generations of the Lithuanian population (hereafter referred to as *generations*) and to analyse how these orientations have changed over the three decades since the restoration of Lithuania's independence. The study presents a theoretically grounded and methodologically coherent empirical analysis of the dynamics of societal values in Lithuania through generational change, revealing how historical, socio-economic, and political contexts shape values and collective identity. We compare the value orientations and their dynamics across six generations that constitute contemporary Lithuanian society (the Interwar Generation, the First Soviet Generation, the Second Soviet Generation, the Last Soviet Generation, the Transitional Generation, and the First Independence Generation) and provide a systematic analysis of their similarities and differences. The birth years of these generations span an 82-year period (from 1918 to 2000), meaning that the members of each generation grew up and entered independent adult life under markedly different political, economic, and social conditions.

This monograph is situated within contemporary sociological and anthropological research on the development of Lithuanian society. It contributes to the analysis of the impact of critical historical ruptures on social structure and cultural mentality, and demonstrates how transformative societal moments have shaped the worldviews and value priorities of different generations. The study examines value change in the domains of family, work, religion, civic engagement, and other spheres of everyday life, showing how intergenerational differences influence daily practices and social norms. The analysis presented in this monograph enables an empirically grounded reconstruction of processes of social change, interpreted from the perspective of mentality and everyday life. Through a comparative cross-cultural approach, it also highlights similarities and differences in value change in Lithuanian society within the broader European context.

Studies of Long-Term Societal Value Change

In this study, values are understood as culturally and socially embedded motivational orientations that purposively shape human behaviour, are transmitted from generation to generation, and remain relatively abstracted from specific situational contexts. They reflect shared conceptions of desirability—what is considered “good,” “right,” or “desirable” in a given society. In this way, values shape individuals’ relationships with themselves, with others, and with society, and motivate choices and patterns of behaviour. This conceptualisation of values draws on Talcott Parsons’ view of values as moral orientations underpinning social order (Parsons, 1939, 1951), Radhakamal Mukerjee’s emphasis on their capacity to transcend specific times and places (Mukerjee, 1946), Clyde Kluckhohn’s focus on their motivational nature (Kluckhohn, 1951), and Peter Ester and colleagues’ understanding of values as internalised desires and aspirations guiding desirable behaviour in everyday life (Ester et al., 1993).

Numerous attempts have been made to develop universal theories capable of explaining value change in societies. While many of these approaches have gained recognition within the academic community, they have also been accompanied by reflexive acknowledgements of their limitations by their proponents, as well as by substantial external criticism—particularly when such theories have been applied not to cross-national or global comparisons, but to the analysis of value dynamics within a single country. It is therefore necessary to briefly outline several of the most influential theories of value change, whose applicability to single-country analyses is often assessed as “partially explanatory, but largely insufficient,” and which are closely linked to the use of data from major comparative research infrastructures such as the *European Values Study* and the *World Values Survey* (EVS/WVS).

The most sustained and influential body of work in this field has been developed by Ronald Inglehart and his collaborators (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Welzel et al., 2003; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Their modernisation theory posits that modernisation processes unfolding across different world regions give rise to two universal shifts in value orientations. The first is associated with industrialisation, urbanisation, and other processes characteristic of “solid modernity,” which foster a transition from traditional values to secular-rational values. The second shift is linked to economic development and rising material prosperity: As societies attain higher levels of existential security,

value orientations gradually move from survival values towards self-expression values, which emphasise individual choice, creativity, and the pursuit of quality of life. Subsequently, Inglehart's modernisation theory was extended into a theory of human development, highlighting the relationship between value change and individuals' capacity for autonomous action and control over their life circumstances (Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann, 2003). In later work, this framework evolved into an emancipation theory which conceptualises value change as a process of expanding human empowerment—the growing ability of individuals to choose, act, and express themselves across multiple domains of life (Welzel, 2013, 2021). Considerable international attention has been devoted to studies demonstrating how the universal patterns described by emancipation theory relate to value dimensions proposed by other prominent scholars, such as Geert Hofstede's collectivism-individualism dimension or Shalom H. Schwartz's autonomy-embeddedness axis (Minkov, 2017; Minkov & Hofstede, 2014; Minkov & Kaasa, 2022). Comparative analyses across different world regions show that these value dimensions and their shifts along particular axes are closely associated with levels of economic development, democratic consolidation, institutional transparency, and the maturity of civil society.

Researchers united by the EVS initially worked extensively within the framework of modernisation theory (Ester et al., 1993), but over time increasingly emphasised its limitations rather than its explanatory strengths (Arts et al., 2003; Arts, 2011; Arts & Halman, 2013). They argue that understanding value change requires more than reference to standard modernisation indicators alone; it is essential to take into account each country's specific historical context, the trajectories of its socio-economic development, and the configuration and transformation of its social institutions—factors that may differ substantially even within similar cultural or regional settings (Arts et al., 2003; Arts, 2011; Arts & Halman, 2013). From the perspective of generational value dynamics in Lithuanian society, the relevance of institutional theories can be succinctly illustrated by Lithuania's accession to the European Union and subsequent membership. The intensive, multi-sectoral preparation for EU accession and the actual process of joining required the rapid transposition and implementation of EU legislation, which not only reshaped everyday practices but also became a significant driver of change in value orientations and behavioural norms. At the same time, modernisation theory and its extension into emancipation theory have also been applied to the analysis of cultural convergence between the

populations of Lithuania and other post-accession EU member states and those of longer-standing EU countries (Akaliyski, 2019; Akaliyski et al., 2022; Akaliyski & Welzel, 2020).

When examining long-term value change, it is insufficient to limit analysis to comparisons of values, attitudes, opinions, or behaviours across different age groups at distinct points in time. Although such an approach allows for the identification of age-specific or period-specific differences, it does not provide an adequate basis for understanding the long-term development of value orientations, their deeper transformations, or their underlying causes. To achieve more profound analytical insight, it is necessary to systematically consider the historical contexts in which individuals experience key life stages—particularly early socialisation and the formative period of personality development. These stages are the most sensitive to external influences and often establish enduring foundations for worldviews and value orientations. Accordingly, within the long-standing tradition of comparative values research based on EVS/WVS data, societal value change is commonly linked, among other factors, to generational replacement—that is, to the succession of generations that have grown up under different political, economic, and social conditions (Abramson & Inglehart, 1992, 1995; Arts et al., 2003; Campbell et al., 2015; Ester et al., 1993; Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Welzel, 2013).

The experience of significant external events during a generation's formative years shapes the values, attitudes, and preferences of individuals belonging to that generation, which tend to remain relatively stable throughout the course of life, thereby producing a distinct "generational effect" that allows one generation to be distinguished from another. For this reason, analyses of value change require the identification of generations whose members matured and were socialised within the same socio-cultural and political contexts, experienced similar societal ruptures, crises, or collective experiences, and can therefore be situated within meaningful chronological boundaries. Such a generational approach makes it possible to reveal not only the influence of historical periods, but also the impact of structurally embedded factors on the formation and transformation of values over time.

Generational Replacement as a Mechanism of Societal Value Change

Generations are formed under unique historical circumstances shaped by socially significant economic, political, cultural, and technological events that influence their value orientations. Accelerating social change and radical transformations of social structures over the past century help explain the growing prominence of the concept of generation in both public and academic discourse (White, 2013). Material components of society, such as the economy and technology, tend to change more rapidly than cultural patterns. For changes in material conditions to be reflected in prevailing value orientations, generational replacement is required: Younger generations raised under qualitatively different conditions develop value priorities distinct from those of older generations, whose life chances were structured and constrained differently. From the perspective of generational theory, individuals who mature and reach adulthood in similar historical contexts and share experiences of major societal events tend to exhibit similar core value orientations, despite diverse individual socialisation trajectories. Generation thus becomes an important element of individual identity, linking individuals to broader social groups alongside other markers such as gender, social origin, or ethnicity (Corsten, 1999; Misztal, 2003).

Scholars of generational change emphasise that differences in value orientations and behavioural patterns across generations cannot be explained solely by political, economic, social, or technological transformations. Rather, these differences are fundamentally rooted in the specific historical and cultural experiences that each generation encounters during its formative socialisation period. In other words, individuals who come of age in a particular historical moment develop shared collective experiences—such as living through periods of political rupture, mass migration, or cultural liberalisation—that leave a lasting imprint on their worldviews, values, and social choices. Generational differences are therefore neither accidental nor merely the product of structural conditions; instead, they emerge from shared historical experiences that become a foundational element of generational identity. Within this conceptual framework, three core criteria are central to defining a generation: shared experience of formative historical events; generational identity as an awareness of belonging to a particular cohort combined with a shared collective memory; and a set of common beliefs and value orientations shared by members of the generation.

Newly emerging generations, characterised by distinct value orientations, subsequently become active agents of historical development, shaping the direction of societal change. This implies that generations are not only products of material, cultural, and social transformations, but also their driving force. The concept of social generations thus provides a powerful analytical lens for understanding patterns of attitudes, perceptions, and behaviour that prevail within particular social groups and stem from shared historical, cultural, and social experiences. It also enables deeper insights into how the historical and social context of an individual's life course—especially the period of maturation—shapes individual orientations, explains how and why dominant cultural values and norms change over time, and allows for informed projections of future societal development. Empirical research consistently confirms the significance of generations as a social and cultural phenomenon: What matters is not merely the year of birth of those assigned to a given generation, but the collective experiences associated with the formative stage of personality development, which shape generational self-understanding, prevailing value orientations, and distinctive modes of interpreting and acting in the world. The value shifts that occur through generational replacement are therefore broad in scope, encompassing multiple domains of social life and reflecting the ongoing transformation of society.

At the same time, the comparative tradition of value research also analyses value change occurring within generations. Not only one or several generations, but all generations within a society may be influenced by changing life conditions in a broader sense. Consequently, when describing generational value orientations, it is essential to attend not only to intergenerational differences, but also to changes that occur within each generation over the period under analysis. The analytical distinction between generational replacement and intra-generational value change as mechanisms of societal value transformation is crucial for understanding trajectories of social change and for developing effective public policy responses. Generational replacement implies a gradual and relatively predictable process whereby younger generations with different value orientations naturally replace older ones. In contrast, value change within generations reflects individuals' capacity to modify their value orientations over the life course in response to changing socio-economic conditions, technological development, and institutional, political, or cultural transformations. This distinction has important methodological and practical implications: Changes

driven by generational replacement suggest that significant societal value shifts may take decades, whereas intra-generational change indicates the potential for more rapid transformations, for example in response to shifts in the social environment, social shocks, or targeted interventions. Moreover, when certain value orientations remain stable within generations and societal change occurs primarily through generational replacement, pronounced intergenerational value divides may emerge, potentially giving rise to social tensions.

Understanding the relative contribution of each mechanism of value change across different domains of social life can help determine both the temporal horizon and the nature of potential interventions, particularly in areas such as environmental policy, social justice initiatives, or technological adaptation, where the pace of value change may be critical in addressing urgent societal challenges. In static, slow-moving societies, younger generations tend to adapt more readily to the social norms, value orientations, and behavioural patterns of older generations, thereby sustaining social continuity and stability, since values function as guiding principles that help define worthwhile goals and motivate their pursuit in specific ways (Schwartz, 1994). In such contexts, intergenerational differences in value orientations reflect a relatively smooth and coherent trajectory of societal development, shaped by long-term processes of modernisation, democratisation, individualisation, and expansion of education (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). In contrast, societies undergoing rapid change require individuals to adapt to newly emerging conditions of social action. Robert K. Merton identified five modes of adaptation that tend to surface during periods of radical social change: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion (Merton, 1968). Members of different generations may adopt distinct strategies for adapting to changing social, economic, or cultural conditions, depending on the stage of socialisation at which these changes occur, accumulated life experience, available resources, and prevailing value orientations. Younger generations, socialised in contexts characterised by new technologies, dynamic labour markets, and global interconnectedness, are more likely to adopt strategies of innovation or even rebellion; they tend to experiment, challenge established norms, critically reassess traditions, and more readily embrace new patterns of behaviour. Older generations, by contrast, often face greater difficulties in adapting to radical changes—including institutional reconfigurations, globalisation, and technological progress—and, in seeking to preserve familiar ways of life and value systems, may be more inclined towards conformity,

ritualism, or even retreat. However, in striving to remain active participants in social life, they may also develop re-adaptive strategies by rethinking and reconstructing their previous social roles and modes of action. Differences in adaptation strategies should therefore not be interpreted as indicators of passivity or resistance on the part of older generations; their pathways of adjustment may involve slower, more reflective processes of adaptation that, in some cases, require additional support or institutional assistance. This dynamic shapes intergenerational relations during periods of transformation: Some generations act as catalysts of change, others as anchors of stability, and their interaction determines society's overall capacity to adapt to newly emerging social conditions. At the same time, in contexts of rapid political, social, and economic transformation, technological innovation, and cultural rupture, pronounced generational differentiation becomes unavoidable. The roots of this differentiation lie in the formative experiences of younger generations growing up in rapidly changing worlds (Rosa, 2013), where values and norms transmitted through socialisation no longer correspond to new structural conditions and thus lose their effectiveness as behavioural guides (Edmunds & Turner, 2002). This mismatch between transmitted and practically functioning norms generates cultural dissonance, which becomes a source of intergenerational value tension and may even alter the logic of cultural development itself: Under such conditions, it is often older generations that experience pressure to adapt to new worldviews, behavioural practices, and value priorities shaped by younger cohorts.

In contemporary societies, particularly pronounced value differences between younger and older generations emerge in domains related to technology use, forms of communication, understandings of work and leisure, and expressions of personal identity. Among the key drivers of this intergenerational differentiation are rising material prosperity, which has created fundamentally different socialisation environments for successive generations, and technological transformations that have reshaped social interaction—most notably digitalisation, smart technologies, and the integration of artificial intelligence into everyday life. Increased material prosperity has provided younger generations with qualitatively new life opportunities, fostering stronger orientations towards self-realisation, personal autonomy, self-expression, and psychological well-being, which contrast sharply with older generations' emphasis on security, duty, material stability, and collective

obligations. This shift alters generational relationships to work, leisure, consumption, and notions of quality of life. Younger cohorts are less likely to link personal worth to occupational status or asset accumulation, instead valuing flexibility, work-life balance, mobility, and diversity of experiences. Older generations, shaped by experiences of scarcity or social instability, are more inclined to draw on logics of caution rooted in deficit economies, prioritising accumulation and institutional loyalty. Digital transformation further intensifies these differences by reshaping access to information, communication practices, and forms of work, while also redefining core notions of social identity and agency (Rainie & Wellman, 2012). As younger generations are socialised within already digitalised environments, their experiences, perceptions of the world, and value orientations differ fundamentally from those formed within earlier media landscapes, often resulting not only in value-based differences but also in deeper intergenerational misunderstandings rooted in divergent modes of world interpretation (Prensky, 2001a).

Intergenerational differences are even more pronounced in post-socialist societies, whose populations have experienced not only transitions related to industrialisation and digitalisation, but also profound systemic disruption (Surzhko-Harned & Turkina, 2018). Younger generations socialised under democratic conditions tend to exhibit more realistic expectations about the future and a stronger orientation towards individualism than preceding cohorts. They are more likely to prioritise values such as personal freedom, tolerance, emancipation, achievement, scepticism towards authority, and open communication with both peers and older generations (Macek et al., 2013). These orientations translate into particularly pronounced generational differences in perceived control over life circumstances, self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and conceptions of happiness.

Contexts of Generational Formation in Lithuanian Society

Do the value changes unfolding in Lithuanian society—arising both from generational replacement and from shifts in attitudes within generations—correspond to universal regularities observable on a global scale, or are they primarily shaped by factors specific to the country's historical and cultural context? To address these questions and empirically examine intergenerational

differences in value orientations, the point of departure must be the issue of generational classification.

Establishing chronological boundaries between different societal generations is a complex task marked by substantial theoretical and empirical uncertainty. Such boundaries are neither static nor clearly delineated; rather, they are flexible, porous, and sensitive to the research context and to the temporal vantage point from which the assessment is made. Generational junctures are shaped not only by birth years, but also by historical experiences, political ruptures, technological change, and cultural trajectories—factors that acquire different meanings and intensities across societies. Yet identifying such turning points “objectively” is difficult, and no universal methodological solution has been found. On the one hand, generations take shape and are named only after some time has passed since the formative events that retrospectively confer meaning upon them (Lovell, 2007). On the other hand, generations are not stable entities persisting unchanged through history: their boundaries can shift as societies encounter and respond to new consequential events (Fulbrook, 2011). It is therefore unsurprising that scholars’ proposed birth-year ranges for particular generations are often provisional and partially inconsistent. This is due, in part, to differences in regional or temporal perspective, the selection and interpretation of historical circumstances, the substantive focus of the study, and methodological approach; but above all, to the fact that periodisation typically relies more on expert judgement than on the direct analysis of empirical data, making some degree of subjectivity difficult to avoid when specifying where one generation begins and another ends. Moreover, generations do not replace one another in a single moment but through a more or less gradual transition, which inevitably renders the boundary between them indistinct.

A considerable number of authors argue that generations are global in nature, driven by worldwide structural changes and major events (economic crises, geopolitical developments, technological innovations) and—particularly in the case of younger generations—by the rise of global communication flows and virtual cultural communities (Edmunds & Turner, 2005; Meredith et al., 2002). This global paradigm foregrounds trans-cultural tendencies in generational formation, emphasising similarities across world regions. The most widely used scheme to date is the periodisation proposed by Neil Howe and William Strauss (Howe, 2023; Howe & Strauss, 1991, 1997, 2000, 2007), which proceeds in roughly twenty-year periods and identifies five generations currently present

in the population: Silent, Baby Boom, Generation X, Millennial, and Homeland (with Howe's latest monograph adding a future generation, the "New Prophets," projected to be born in 2030–2052). This framework links generational labels to distinctive experiences during socialisation, said to produce characteristic value orientations and behavioural patterns within each generation. Other scholars, however, urge closer attention to the specificity of regional historical experience and its potential consequences for generational consolidation. This local narrative emphasises that generations are products of national or regional contexts—political regimes, economic orders, historical traumas, and watershed transformations—and that different generations emerge in different national settings (Caballero & Baigorri, 2019; Díez-Nicolás, 2008; Egri & Ralston, 2004; Fernández-Durán, 2016; Levada, 2001; Miroshkina, 2017; Nugin et al., 2016; Schewe et al., 2013; Schewe & Meredith, 2004; Scholz, 2019; Semenova, 2003; Šūpulis & Zellis, 2019; Ting et al., 2018; Tung & Comeau, 2014). These debates indicate that defining generational boundaries requires more than mechanically listing dates; it calls for conceptual sensitivity to the specificity of historical periods, collective experiences, and the dynamics of value orientations. For this reason, generational definitions should be treated as constructs that depend on the criteria selected and the analytical perspective adopted. To elucidate how objective social processes interact with the distinctive experiences of particular generations in shaping long-term value orientations, one must attend to the chronology of events and historical ruptures that are consequential for generational formation in Lithuania, as well as to the social and demographic structural changes induced by these events.

The value orientations and identities of Lithuania's contemporary generations have been shaped by such historical events as the proclamation of the First Republic of Lithuania in 1918 and the process of state-building; the pre-war occupation by the Soviet Army in 1940; the Second World War and the Nazi occupation regime; the massive losses of population and economic resources caused by occupations and war; Lithuania's incorporation into the Soviet Union and a five-decade occupation regime (first marked by mass deportations, the suppression of post-war resistance, and rapid Sovietisation policies, later passing through periods commonly described as the "thaw," "stagnation," and "perestroika"); the national revival movement and the restoration of independence in 1990; the subsequent radical political, economic, and social transformations; accession to NATO and the European Union in 2004; and later trends and fluctuations in social and economic development.

In the period following the Second World War, Lithuania underwent an accelerated Soviet modernisation and, within a short time, moved from an agrarian state to an urbanised industrial society. On the one hand, Soviet modernisation promoted economic growth, technological development, rising educational attainment, and improvements in healthcare—changes that reshaped the living conditions and social mobility opportunities of those who began independent adult life under Soviet rule. On the other hand, centrally administered modernisation ensured the population’s economic well-being only partially. The planned economy was a shortage economy characterised by persistent deficits of quality goods and services. Economic restructuring progressed far more rapidly than cultural and social change. The tension between state-led (pseudo)emancipatory policies and patriarchal relations that persisted in everyday life affected actual practices of combining family and work. Soviet-style modernisation was also tied to a state-controlled ideological vision of social development and to restrictions on civil and political rights aimed at reshaping collective identity. Together, these factors shaped the value orientations of Lithuania’s Soviet-era generations in domains such as family, work, leisure, religion, and beyond.

After the restoration of independence, as Lithuania shifted to liberal democracy and a neoliberal market economy, a society shaped by five decades of Soviet modernisation effectively “fell” directly into the stage of late modernity, governed by different principles of social life and strongly influenced by rapid (and accelerating) processes of globalisation (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). All contemporary Lithuanian generations were affected by the transition from the standardised life course characteristic of Soviet modernity—where education, career start and prospects, family formation, childbirth, and retirement were broadly predictable—to less predictable life-course scenarios (Kraniauskienė, 2011, 2014). In Zygmunt Bauman’s terms, “solid modernity” gave way to “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2000). Within a relatively short period, everyday living conditions and life trajectories became destabilised and permeated by diverse risks stemming from global economic crises, technogenic catastrophes, and other transnational shocks. The capacity of democratic nation-states to set and implement public agendas autonomously had visibly diminished, while social structure had been affected by the expansion of consumer culture and the diffusion of consumerist relations to others. At the individual level, these developments manifested as growing social and economic insecurity—

heightened risks of unemployment, migration, and unstable life trajectories—as well as changing expectations in intimate relationships and family life, where personal choice and self-realisation were increasingly emphasised. The opening of borders and the information environment enabled both migration and the intensified global circulation of cultural symbols, lifestyle styles, and value orientations, fostering processes such as the strengthening of individualism and the heightened emphasis on personal freedoms and self-expression. Digital breakthroughs fundamentally transformed the dissemination and accessibility of information, forms of mass and interpersonal communication, and the social dynamics of society, thereby further accelerating ongoing cultural change.

From the perspective of generational theory, these developments could not but affect subsequent societal evolution through the emergence of new cohorts with distinctive value orientations and patterns of behaviour. In societies experiencing radical developmental ruptures, intergenerational differences become particularly pronounced, as changing social structures demand flexibility and the capacity to revise established action patterns and normative standards. The discontinuous character of Lithuania's twentieth/twenty-first-century trajectory, in a sense, simplifies generational analysis and allows generational boundaries to be identified more precisely at the conceptual level. Major historical rupture points—occupations, regime changes, the restoration of independence, or the transition to a market economy—create clear breaks in social experience and collective memory that serve as salient reference points for generational formation. Unlike contexts of gradual social development, where value transmission across generations proceeds incrementally, periods of rupture require younger generations to reassess the experiences of older cohorts and to form a distinctive worldview grounded in new sociocultural experiences. Consequently, generational differentiation becomes more visible and theoretically more straightforward to articulate.

These processes are evident in Lithuania, where fundamental changes occurred within a short time: the establishment of democratic governance, the consolidation of a market economy, and rapid technological progress. While certain value transformations—such as the strengthening of individualism, shifts in religiosity, or broader effects of modernisation—affect all generations and operate as long-term cultural trends, other domains reveal much sharper divides between the youngest and the oldest cohorts. The basis of this divide lies in the specific socialisation environment of younger generations, which

differed fundamentally from the experiences of earlier cohorts. Lithuania's youngest generations were formed in a period when the state regained independence, rapidly integrated into the Western political and economic space, and underwent radical changes in everyday life associated with the diffusion of information technologies. These factors profoundly shaped their social expectations, worldviews, and lifestyle models—often difficult for older generations to accommodate. As a result, relations between these generations are no longer based solely on value continuity; they are also marked by cultural tensions rooted in divergent experiences, orientations, and ways of perceiving the world.

Classification of Lithuanian Generations

In the Lithuanian context, research on generations in the broad sense has received substantial attention. Most Lithuanian scholarship addressing generational issues relies on comparisons of birth cohorts (Leonavičius & Žilys, 2021; Savicka, 2016; Žiliukaitė, 2007, 2014, 2016). Considerable attention to questions of collective memory, life-course specificities, and shared everyday experiences has also been developed in qualitative studies by Lithuanian researchers (Corning et al., 2013; Gailienė, 2015; Kraniauskienė, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2016; Leinartė et al., 2014; Maslauskaitė, 2020; Zilinskiene & Ilic, 2021; Žilinskiene et al., 2016, 2025). Generational differences have likewise been analysed from the perspective of cultural trauma generated by social transformations (Gailienė, 2015). Taken together, these works propose a range of classifications of Lithuanian generations, indicating that demarcating generational boundaries is not firmly standardised and depends on the focal research problem, the questions posed, and the paradigms applied. At the same time, this body of research provides important foundations for the methodological preparation of an analysis of Lithuanian generations, particularly by foregrounding collective life experiences, identity formation, and historical memory.

For the purposes of this monograph, we adopt what is arguably the most comprehensive classification of Lithuanian generations proposed by Laima Žilinskiene and Melanie Ilic with colleagues, grounded in the specificities of Lithuania's political, economic, and social development (Zilinskiene & Ilic, 2021). We extend and supplement this typology by adding the youngest cohort that has already reached adulthood (i.e., the "First Independence Generation"):

- Interwar Generation (born 1918–1940)¹
- First Soviet Generation (born 1941–1959)
- Second Soviet Generation (born 1960–1969)
- Last Soviet Generation (born 1970–1979)
- Transitional Generation (born 1980–1989)
- First Independence Generation (born 1990–2000)²

It is important to emphasise that this classification is based less on the self-identification of members of different generations and more on an expert grouping grounded in assessments of political, economic, social, and cultural phenomena that constituted formative experiences, in a synthesis of earlier empirical findings, and in their theoretical interpretation. To make the logic of the generational typology used in this study more transparent, the following paragraphs briefly outline distinctive features and collective experiences that significantly shaped these generations' value orientations and identities.

The Interwar Generation (born 1918–1940) received special attention in Violeta Davoliūtė's monograph, which described it as marked in early youth by the traumas of war, armed resistance, forced emigration, deportation, and mass collectivisation, yet—because of its age—most often avoided direct participation in these conflicts and experienced considerable social mobility as rural residents migrated to cities (Davoliūtė, 2014). Nevertheless, traumatic experiences in youth shaped how later life events were interpreted and remembered, while adaptation to the new order produced a split between “public” and “private” consciousness, with different behavioural standards applied to these two spheres of life (Žilinskienė & Ilic, 2020). Among the best-known members of this generation who remained in Lithuania, many were, in their youth, ideologues of Soviet modernisation; yet by the late 1970s, national liberation leaders also emerged from within their ranks. In

¹ Despite the fact that the older members of this generation experienced their socialisation during the period of the First Republic, while the younger ones came of age during the formation of the Soviet system, they are bound by a shared historical memory and the common experience of coercive rule and adaptation to a new social reality. Unlike younger generations, this one is shaped less by ideological experiences than by existential boundary experiences—war, deportation, and repression— which function as key factors consolidating generational identity. For this reason, researchers treat this group as a single generation characterised by a distinct value profile.

² Although in the most recent monograph by L. Žilinskienė and colleagues (Žilinskienė et al., 2025) the two youngest generations distinguished in this classification are conceptualised as a single Transformation Generation, the autobiographical narrative data presented in that study, together with the authors' conclusions regarding generational identity narratives, value orientations, and actual patterns of behaviour, substantiate the analytical rationale for distinguishing two separate generations within the cohort born between 1980 and 2000. In this framework, the boundary of the youngest generation is drawn at 1990.

Davoliūtė's interpretation, this generation thus became a unique link connecting the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods.

The First Soviet Generation (born 1941–1959), which stands at the centre of biographical research by Žilinskienė, Sigita Kraniauskienė, and Irena Šutinienė (Žilinskienė et al., 2016), underwent primary socialisation during the period of the political “thaw.” Those in this generation largely avoided direct experience of major international conflicts and matured in Lithuania under conditions of post-war deprivation, totalitarianism, accelerated Soviet modernisation, and political indoctrination. They had no personal memories of life in pre-Soviet Lithuania, yet still heard vivid accounts of war and the post-war period within their families; consequently, their life trajectories were strongly shaped by the attitudes of parents and other close relatives toward the Soviet system (Žilinskienė & Ilic, 2020). During the major transformations of the late twentieth century, this generation was already relatively established in its professional fields, which for some provided better opportunities than those available to younger cohorts to increase influence or accumulate economic capital by mobilising social status and creative potential. For others, however, these transformations meant the loss of accumulated life achievements and savings due to the collapse of the previous economic system and industrial production, forcing them to search for alternative life scenarios that are not always easy to realise in midlife. These processes contributed to a divide between the so-called winners and losers of political, economic, and social transformation.

The life course of *the Second Soviet Generation* (born 1960–1969) was highly standardised and institutionalised from birth (Kraniauskienė & Damaševičiūtė, 2025), implying lower risks but also more limited life choices. They were born, grew up, and reached adulthood in the so-called “society of boredom” (Vaiseta, 2014), characterised by pervasive control over everyday life, strict rules, suppression of personal initiative, censorship, restricted cultural horizons, aesthetic unification, economic shortages, social deprivation, and high predictability. Despite early institutionalisation through the organisations of the so-called Little Octobrists, Pioneers, and the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), the unattractive forms of participation offered by these organisations in Lithuania did not have the capacity to cultivate collective identity and community spirit among young people (Naudžiūnienė, 2021). With no tangible prospects of serious political change, members of this generation had to adapt pragmatically to Soviet realities in their youth, mastering creative and resourceful techniques of everyday accommodation.

This adaptation did not necessarily entail unconditional acceptance of ideology: more often it involved effective navigation of the opportunities and constraints defined by the system, which structured life prospects. During the major political upheavals of the late twentieth century, this generation was mature enough to grasp the significance of ongoing processes, yet still young enough to adjust life scenarios accordingly; the spectrum of newly available choices was relatively broad (which is why Estonian researchers refer to an analogous cohort as the “Winners’ Generation”; see Lilleoja & Raudsepp, 2016).

The Last Soviet Generation (born 1970–1979) is distinctive in that most within this cohort were socialised in childhood through Russian animated films and experienced institutional preschool care, with both parents working full time. Growing up in an era of a planned economy and pervasive shortages, this generation encountered an atmosphere of political change while maturing, and reached adulthood at the height of the Lithuanian national liberation movement and the onset of social transformation. It may therefore be seen as a breakthrough generation which, in a sense, experienced a “double socialisation” as society abruptly shifted to a new political, economic, and social system requiring a different worldview (Levada, 2001). Although this generation was still too young to fully capitalise on the moment of rapid accumulation associated with social change and mass privatisation, the fall of the Iron Curtain opened horizons previously inaccessible to earlier generations (particularly in education and entrepreneurship) hence the label “strategic generation”. This generation has another distinctive feature: On the one hand, it is the last generation to reach adulthood under Soviet rule and thus shares experience with older cohorts; on the other hand, this generation engaged in practices which initiated new social trends, later adopted by subsequent generations (for example, the normalisation of cohabitation and the postponement of marriage and childbearing) (Maslauskaitė, 2023c; Nugin, 2015).

The Transitional Generation (born 1980–1989) may be conceptualised as a postmemory generation (Hirsch, 2012),³ as its members effectively lack direct

³ The concept of *postmemory*, initially introduced to describe the relationship of Holocaust survivors’ descendants to traumatic events they did not directly experience, and later extended to encompass descendants of individuals affected by other traumatic events, refers to a deep emotional connection to past experiences transmitted across generations. Although these events were not personally lived through, memories of them are conveyed intergenerationally, shaping subsequent generations’ perceptions and identities. This relationship emerges through a complex interaction between narratives transmitted by close relatives who were direct witnesses of past events and the subjective interpretations of those narratives by listeners, shaped by their personal experiences, value

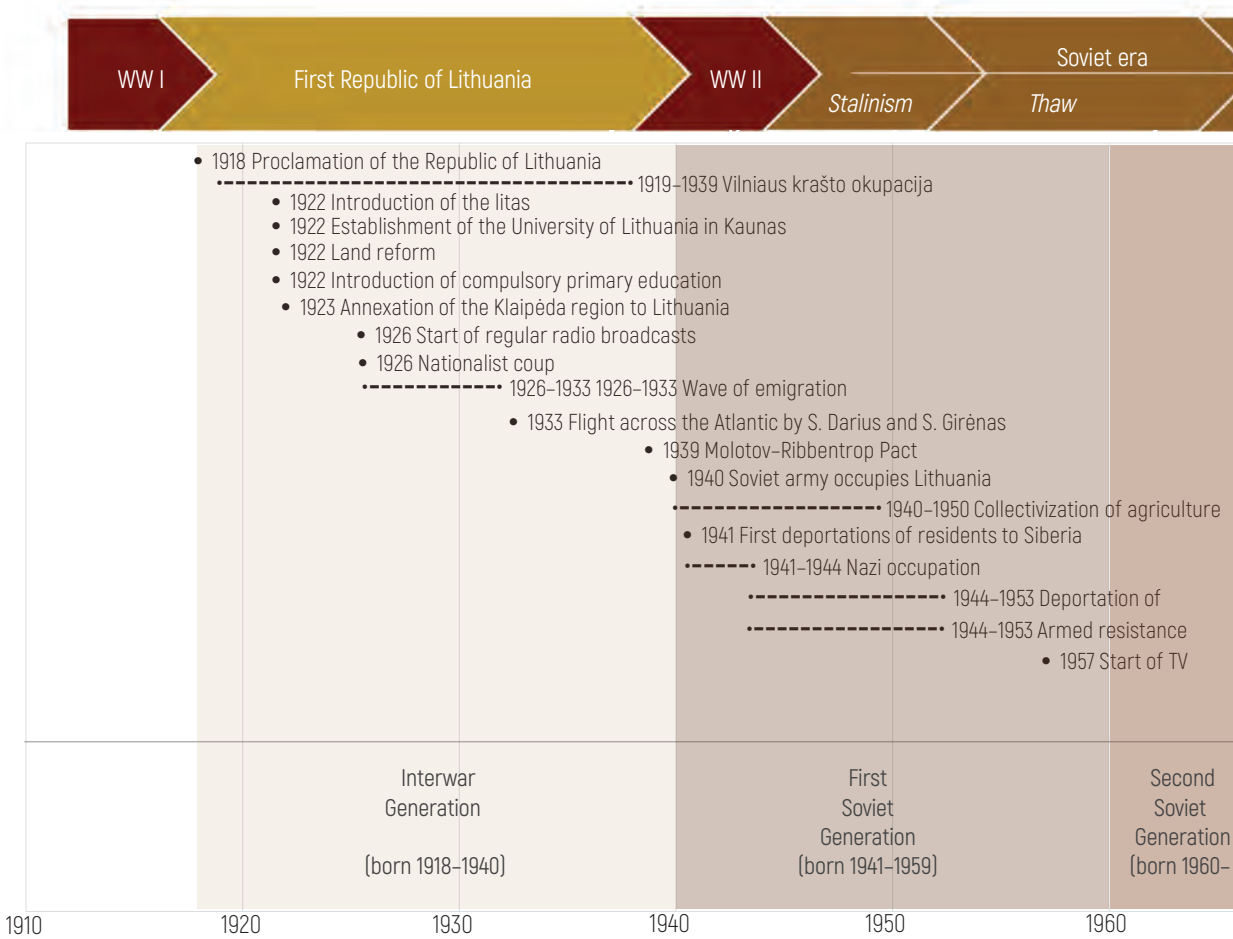
personal memories of the Soviet period. They grew up and matured amidst profound societal transformation, rapid economic growth, and the normative uncertainty generated by these changes, yet with greater self-confidence and a stronger sense of personal self-efficacy; accordingly, they have also been described as a generation that “raised itself” (Žilinskienė, 2025). Moreover, the digital breakthrough significantly shaped this cohort’s formation and life trajectories, enabling new forms of communication and self-expression and conferring advantages in professional domains where digital competencies are particularly valued.

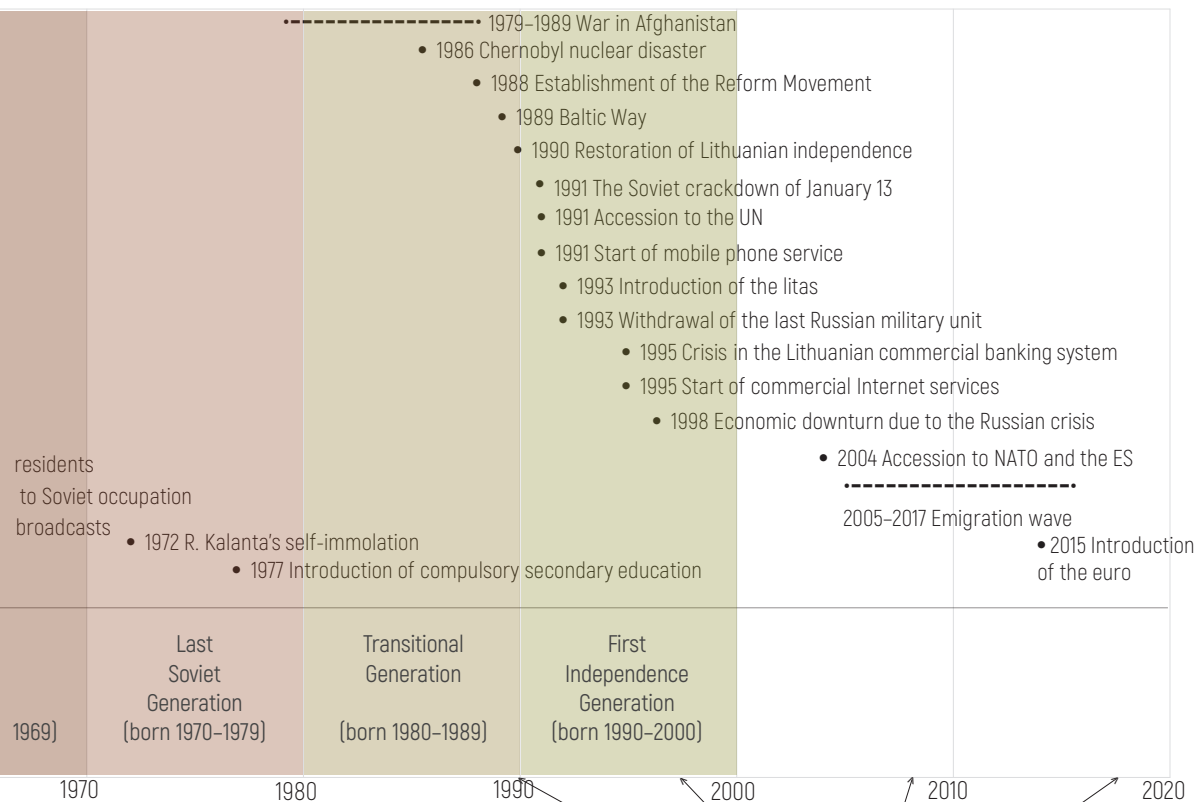
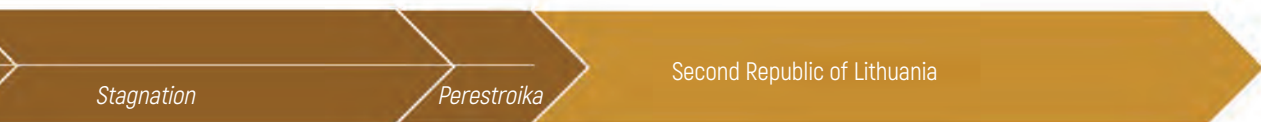
The *First Independence Generation* (born 1990–2000) can be considered the first “genuine” generation of “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b), as it was born and grew up from early childhood in an environment saturated with digital technologies and smart devices. It tends to identify with global generations shaped by worldwide events and information flows (Žilinskienė & Kraniauskienė, 2025). This generation, raised within the milieu of a global therapeutic culture, is also characterised by greater attention to emotional and psychological issues (Žilinskienė & Kraniauskienė, 2025).

To summarise this brief account of Lithuania’s societal and economic development, the key events and complex processes (a list which is neither exhaustive nor final) likely to have been most consequential for the formation of worldviews, the setting of life goals and aspirations, interpersonal relations, feelings of security and mutual trust, and typical life trajectories are presented in a timeline in Figure 14.1. Together, these constitute the interpretive context for research on generational differentiation and periodisation in Lithuanian society aimed at identifying the distinctive features of value orientations prevailing within different generations.

orientations, and imaginative reconstructions. Accordingly, the notion of a *postmemory generation* captures the ways in which newly emerging generations in society relate to traumatic experiences that occurred before their birth but are often transmitted so profoundly that they are experienced as if they were personal memories.

Figure 14.1. Chronological timeline: major societal events and processes in Lithuania and the dates of the EVS survey waves





Methodology

Although generational diversity and its consequences for social life are widely acknowledged, research in this field still lacks theoretical and methodological coherence. Studies conducted by Lithuanian scholars draw on different understandings of “generation” and different research paradigms (genealogical kinship, birth cohorts, the life-course perspective, or social generations). Scholarly attention has most often focused on the mentality, value orientations, and identities of particular generations, or on narrow domains of social life where generational change is most visible; by contrast, large-scale empirical research grounded in generational theory and based on quantitative evidence about the value orientations of different generations—their similarities and differences—has not yet been carried out. This monograph seeks to address that gap.

Analysing value differences between societal generations requires long-term comparative data on the value orientations of members of particular generations across the course of their lives (in youth, midlife, and older age). Ideally, such data would cover as long a period as possible—at least fifty years. In Lithuania, however, such surveys were not conducted during the Soviet period, and repeating those surveys that did exist would not yield scientific value after the restoration of independence, given the ideologised environment of the social sciences at that time. At present, the longest-running survey in Lithuania providing the data needed for an analysis of generational value orientations is the EVS.⁴ Four of its waves have been implemented in Lithuania, spanning twenty-seven years: 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017. The value of EVS data for the purposes of this monograph lies not only in the time span it covers, but also in the breadth of domains included: the survey captures value orientations related to multiple spheres of life (family, work, leisure, religion, morality, politics, and others). Equally important, EVS enables comparisons between Lithuania and other countries, allowing an assessment of the extent to which value changes associated with generational replacement (or with change

⁴ Detailed information about the study is available at <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>. The data files used in this study are publicly available in the GESIS Data Archive: EVS (2022). European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017). GESIS, Cologne. ZA7500 Data file Version 5.0.0, <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13897>; and EVS (2022). EVS Trend File 1981–2017. GESIS, Cologne. ZA7503 Data file Version 3.0.0, <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.14021>. The GESIS archive also provides detailed methodological documentation for each country, including sampling descriptions, survey metadata, country-specific variable definitions (e.g., political parties, income deciles, educational scales), and questionnaires in their original languages.

within generations) are local and Lithuania-specific, and to what extent they reflect broader, more global processes.

The analytic logic of this study is organised across three levels. First, a dynamic level: Each chapter analyses changes in Lithuanian residents' value orientations in a given life domain over the period 1990–2017. Second, a comparative level: The 2017 Lithuanian results are compared with those of other European countries, making it possible to interpret national changes empirically within a wider European context. Third, a generational level: Value change is examined in a period–age–generation perspective to address the central research aim of this monograph—whether, and how, Lithuania's social generations differ in their value orientations.

Research on generational value orientations inevitably confronts a major methodological challenge: disentangling the effects of age, period, and cohort/generation on value change (the age–period–cohort, or APC, problem). This is among the most complex methodological issues in social research because the three components are inextricably interrelated, and each may exert an independent influence on different value orientations. To unpack the interactions between age, period, and generation, each value dimension included in our study was analysed through three lenses:

- Period-by-age interaction analysis, which helps (1) identify periods that affect people of different ages similarly or differently; and (2) compare trajectories of value change across age groups in particular historical periods. When interpreting these results, it is important to recognise that a potential generation effect remains unobserved at this stage, because respondents of the same age in different survey waves belong to different generations.
- Period-by-generation interaction analysis, which identifies periods that influence the value orientations of different generations similarly or differently. Here, we must bear in mind that period effects are intertwined with age effects that are not captured at this stage and may nonetheless be substantial.
- Age-by-generation interaction analysis, which allows assessment of (1) change within the same generation as its members move from one age group to another; and (2) differences between generations among respondents of the same age. Comparing the magnitude of variation along these two axes provides grounds for judging which has the stronger influence on the dynamics of value orientations: moving from one age stage to another,

or generational replacement. At this stage, however, it is essential not to lose sight of the period effect examined in earlier steps, because the same period affects different generations at different ages.

To assess the influence of age, period, and social generation on domain-specific value orientations, we employed descriptive statistics, spatial (mapping) and visual analytic techniques, and non-parametric tests for comparing means (the Kruskal-Wallis test and the Mann-Whitney U test).

Following these analyses, we evaluated which change is relatively larger: change attributable to generational replacement, or change attributable to shifts within generations. The first mechanism captures value transformation linked to distinct socialisation contexts, as new generations enter society with value orientations that differ from those of earlier cohorts. The second mechanism — intragenerational shift—reflects change in value orientations over the life cycle, or in response to society-wide socio-economic, technological, institutional, political, and cultural transformations. A linear regression model including the survey year and the respondent's year of birth as regressors makes it possible to quantify the direction and relative intensity of these two processes (Reid & Allum, 2019). In such a model, the B coefficients indicate the expected change in the dependent variable associated with a one-unit increase in the corresponding independent variable, holding the other predictor constant. To estimate the relative contribution of each process, its corresponding coefficient B is multiplied by the operating interval of that process (i.e., the difference between the first and last survey years; and the difference between mean birth years of respondents in the first and last survey waves), yielding an interpretable indicator of relative change.

In this regression analysis, not only is the size of the B coefficients informative, but also their direction (i.e., whether the sign is positive or negative). When analysing the evolution of societal values from a generational perspective, several developmental scenarios can be anticipated, reflecting the character of generational replacement effects on value dynamics. One scenario is that value orientations shift in the same direction across all generations, so that value change takes on a more general, consistent, society-wide character of cultural transformation. In such cases, generational replacement effects tend to be less pronounced at the macro level: Value change is relatively smooth and not marked by strong intergenerational conflicts or sharp value oppositions. In this scenario, regression coefficients are similar in magnitude and point in the same direction. Another scenario is that older generations' value orientations remain relatively stable while change is

concentrated among younger generations, which introduce new orientations and priorities into society; here, the *B* coefficients would differ in magnitude. There are also cases in which generations move in opposite directions: for example, older generations becoming more conservative due to ageing effects, while younger generations display more open, modern, or individualistic orientations. In the latter two scenarios, contrasting generational differentiation emerges and becomes a major driver of value transformation; in the regression model, the *B* coefficients would differ in direction.

Our analysis deliberately limits the regression specification to two regressors, because the aim is not to model the full spectrum of potential determinants, but to isolate and compare the relative contribution of two fundamental processes: generational replacement and intragenerational shifts in value orientations.⁵ This reduced, yet theoretically motivated, specification makes it possible to identify the principal vector of value dynamics and provides a basis for subsequent, more extensive analyses that might incorporate additional socio-demographic or structural explanatory variables. At the same time, the regression results alone do not answer whether observed intragenerational change (if present) is driven by ageing or by a broader period effect produced by gradual, society-wide cultural transformation; this can be assessed by drawing on results from the preceding analytic stages.

To ensure comparability across results for different value orientations and to obtain an aggregated picture of societal change, the dependent variables—measured on different scales—were standardised⁶ prior to inclusion in the regression models.

⁵ This linear regression approach has limitations that must be taken into account when conducting APC analysis. Because the model includes only year of birth and survey year as predictors, the age variable is treated as less salient, which is directly related to the APC identification problem. Consequently, the interpretation of the model's results requires particular caution, and the insights derived from this stage must be complemented by conclusions obtained in earlier analytical steps. It is also important to note that the application of this method rests on the assumption of linearity—namely, that long-term value change in society unfolds in a consistent, gradual, and directional manner (even if the pace of change varies across periods), rather than oscillating cyclically between opposing orientations. This assumption poses certain challenges when comparing different dimensions of long-term value change whose dynamics may not necessarily follow the same logic. For this reason, prior to applying this method, it is essential to carefully assess the long-term dynamics of the attitudes under investigation. In our analyses, this preliminary assessment demonstrated that for the majority of the examined value orientations (with the exception of volunteering), such a pattern is indeed observable—namely, relatively monotonic change accompanied by short-term fluctuations. Accordingly, the chosen method is suitable for identifying long-term processes of value change in Lithuanian society and provides a robust foundation for interpreting the results within a broader sociocultural context.

⁶ The values of the dependent variables were standardised into z-scores. In this way, differences in the original measurement units and scales of the variables were eliminated, ensuring their comparability.

The resulting estimates make it possible to assess whether overall change in a given value orientation is driven more strongly by generational replacement (that is, change in the generational composition of society as older cohorts—whose value orientations remain relatively stable after being formed in youth and during socialisation—are gradually replaced by younger cohorts shaped by distinct formative experiences), or by transformation within generations over time (in which case change at the societal level would be interpreted as the cumulative outcome of similar shifts occurring within each generation). In real life, change is typically driven by both mechanisms; thus, research generally seeks to estimate their relative importance (Firebaugh, 1997), while a precise separation of their effects is practically unattainable. Nonetheless, certain inferences can be drawn when statistical analysis is grounded in clearly articulated theoretical assumptions and informed by findings from prior studies conducted from different perspectives on the relationships between the factors under examination.

Results

Value change is not a homogeneous process; it may unfold differently depending on the specific domain of life under consideration. Transformations related to work, family, civic engagement, or leisure may proceed at different paces and in different directions, reflecting the varying sensitivity of these spheres to social, economic, and cultural change. Consequently, analyses of value change must take into account that distinct areas of social life follow their own internal logics and dynamics, and that value shifts within them may correspond to different developmental scenarios – ranging from gradual evolution to more pronounced ruptures, or even opposing intergenerational trends.

These processes are clearly observable in Lithuanian society, which has undergone profound transformations within a relatively short period: the transition to a democratic political system, the consolidation of a market economy, and rapid technological advancement. While certain value transformations—such as the strengthening of individualism, changes in religiosity, or the effects of modernization—affect all generations and operate as long-term, continuous

Such standardisation of dependent variables guarantees that the regression coefficients B reflect the number of standard deviations by which the dependent variable changes when the year of the survey or the respondent's year of birth increases by one unit. This makes it possible to directly compare results across different regression models in which the dependent variables are measured on different scales, as the magnitude of effects is expressed in a common metric.

cultural trends, other domains exhibit much sharper divides between younger and older generations. These divides are rooted in the distinct socialization environments of younger cohorts, which differ fundamentally from the experiences of earlier generations. The youngest generations in Lithuania came of age during a period marked by the restoration of independence, rapid integration into Western political and economic structures, and radical changes in everyday life driven by the diffusion of information technologies. These conditions have profoundly shaped their social expectations, worldviews, and lifestyle models, which are often difficult for older generations to accept. As a result, intergenerational relations are no longer based solely on value continuity, but are also characterized by cultural tensions arising from divergent experiences, orientations, and ways of interpreting the social world.

The individual chapters of this monograph present a detailed analysis of intergenerational value differences, outlining both the similarities and the distinctions among Lithuanian generations. In preparing these conclusions, we summarized the identified intergenerational value similarities and differences in a series of tables presenting “value profiles” of the generations (see Tables 14.1–14.6 at the end of the chapter). For instance, the Interwar Generation differs from others by exhibiting a below-average level of perceived control over life, the strongest religious identity, conservative attitudes toward family, marriage, and sexual morality, and high level of solidarity with socially vulnerable groups. It is characterized by relatively weak emancipatory values, such as autonomy, equality, freedom of choice, and voice (political participation). In child socialization, this generation places greater emphasis on authority rather than autonomy, strongly prioritizes work while assigning comparatively low importance to leisure, shows low participation in voluntary leisure and self-expression organizations, yet is more active in religious organizations. This generation actively participated in protests during the revolutionary uprising for Lithuanian independence. The First Soviet Generation resembles the Interwar Generation in many value dimensions, but displays a weaker religious identity, less conservative attitudes toward personal and sexual morality, and places slightly greater emphasis on autonomy. The Second and Last Soviet Generations are marked by an even weaker religious identity, less conservative views on marital and sexual behaviour, a higher valuation of leisure, and a stronger emphasis on autonomy in child-rearing compared to the two oldest generations. These two generations are characterized by lower levels of solidarity with socially vulnerable groups compared to older cohorts. At the

same time, their pro-democratic value orientations strengthened over the period under analysis. The Transitional Generation fully corresponds to its designation. In certain respects—such as the intrinsic valuation of work and leisure, the cultural valuation of children, and selected aspects of marriage and family—it remains closer to the generations that experienced the Soviet era. However, in a larger number of dimensions it resembles the First Independence Generation, which is characterized by highly perceived control over life, a strong sense of happiness, the largest share of non-religious individuals, the most liberal attitudes toward family, marriage, and sexual morality, a strong intrinsic valuation of leisure, the weakest emphasis on *hard work* and *obedience* in child socialization in favour of *imagination*, the highest participation in leisure and self-expression organizations, the strongest emancipatory values, rising political activism and a more favourable orientation toward protest politics, slightly lower levels of intolerance toward ethnic or religious minorities than those observed among older cohorts, and, at the same time, substantially weaker solidarity with socially vulnerable groups compared to previous generations. The summaries presented in these tables also clearly demonstrate that value orientations related to different domains of life change at uneven rates and differentiate generations in distinct ways. For this reason, researchers focusing on different value dimensions may identify differing generational boundaries, reflecting the specific logic and social dynamics of change within particular spheres.

The findings presented in this monograph reveal a complex dynamic of cultural values, in which changes driven by different mechanisms combine into a unified process shaping the long-term direction of societal transformation. The synthesis of results from individual chapters—assessing the relative magnitude of changes attributable to generational replacement and to intra-generational value shifts—as presented in Table 14.7 allows for a broader perspective on these processes. It enables the identification not only of general directions of change, but also of the domains in which value orientations have shifted consistently across all generations, without pronounced intergenerational divergence, and those in which value dynamics have been fragmented, leading to visible generational divides. This analysis provides a basis for assessing and anticipating the pace of change across different value domains. Where intergenerational value continuity prevails, cultural orientations tend to exhibit long-term stability or slow change at the societal level. Where unidirectional change occurs across all generations, value transformation at the societal level may be relatively rapid without triggering

intergenerational conflict. Conversely, when change is observed only in specific generations—or, as seen in some cases, when older and younger generations move in opposite directions—value dynamics inevitably lead toward intergenerational conflict.

First and foremost, we can conclude that the most stable value orientation in Lithuanian society is the high intrinsic importance attributed to family life. Over the past three decades, this orientation has remained largely unchanged both within generations and across generational replacement. This attests to the exceptional resilience of family as a value amidst social, cultural, and economic change. Nevertheless, the meanings associated with family and the normative foundations underpinning it have evolved, becoming more flexible and individualized. Despite these transformations, the intrinsic priority of family remains a shared value axis linking different generations and enabling intergenerational value cohesion.

As shown by the data presented in the Table 14.7, some long-term value changes at the societal level are associated with deep cultural transformations **affecting all generations** and altering their attitudes, evaluations, and behavioural norms at a relatively similar pace. These changes thus reflect not isolated trends or short-lived fashions, but broader cultural transformation processes that transcend generational boundaries and signal a general shift in cultural orientation without producing intergenerational value distancing. In both the work and family domains, value reorientations driven by broader cultural change processes are observable at the level of society as a whole, rather than being confined to specific generations. For example, in the sphere of professional activity, both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated aspects of work have become increasingly emphasized across all generations, with change occurring at a particularly rapid pace. This indicates that work is increasingly perceived not only as a means of subsistence, but also as a source of self-realization, meaning, and social recognition. A similar, though more gradual, dynamic characterizes the evaluation of factors contributing to a successful marriage or partnership (with the exception of children). Across generations, increasing emphasis is placed on fidelity, the sharing of household responsibilities, and a stable material foundation. This shift suggests rising qualitative expectations toward marriage and partnership, which are increasingly understood not as institutional obligations or social duties, but as forms of mutual emotional and psychological commitment. The value shifts observed across generations include a gradual strengthening of pro-democratic orientations. At the same time, generations may also be united by relatively high levels of intolerance

toward ethnic and religious minorities, as well as value orientations favourable to authoritarian populism.

Many of the value changes examined in this study are significantly shaped—though not always to the same extent—by **both generational replacement and intra-generational change**. Across all generations, and with each successive younger generation, values such as *hard work* and *obedience* in child socialization have weakened, while orientations toward individual expression, creativity, emancipatory values, perceived control over life, and subjective happiness have strengthened. The gap between the perceived importance of work and leisure has also narrowed, with both spheres increasingly associated with needs extending beyond mere survival. Further indicators of value change include growing moral permissiveness regarding marital and sexual behaviour, declining emphasis on children as a necessary condition for women's fulfilment, and increasing acceptance of women's participation in the labour market even when they have young children. In the domain of religious identity, the growth of "cultural believers"—individuals who view religion primarily as cultural and symbolic heritage rather than as a system of institutional obligations—has become particularly evident.

By contrast, some changes occur primarily as a **result of generational replacement**. In these cases, cultural change unfolds as older generations, characterized by relatively stable value orientations formed during their socialization, are gradually replaced by younger generations who bring distinct attitudes, aspirations, and evaluative frameworks shaped by their formative experiences. Examples of such transformations include shifts from obedience to authority toward ideals of personal autonomy, the devaluation of marriage as an institution, increasing tolerance toward consciously chosen single motherhood. In addition, generational replacement is accompanied by a growing emphasis on the intrinsic importance of leisure in people's lives, alongside a declining level of solidarity with socially vulnerable groups. This pattern of value change, in which older generations remain largely faithful to their orientations despite large-scale societal transformations reflected primarily by younger cohorts, deepens intergenerational value divides and may become a source of cultural tension and mutual misunderstanding.

In some instances, however, intra-generational value change proceeds in the **opposite direction** to that produced by generational replacement. This means that certain values shift in one direction as individuals age, while generational replacement drives change in the opposite direction. For example, within older generations in Lithuania, increasing emphasis is placed over time on the importance

of children for marital or partnership success, intrinsic valuation of work declines, thriftiness as a child-rearing value strengthens, and the share of devout individuals increases, while the proportions of religiously indifferent, non-believing, or institutionally unaffiliated believers decrease. In contrast, the effect of generational replacement on these phenomena operates in the opposite direction. These intra-generational changes are largely attributable to aging effects—that is, to life-course processes that prompt individuals to reassess values as they grow older. Reliable assessment of the driving forces behind such changes requires longer-term data capable of capturing the full life-course trajectories of today’s younger generations.

Table 14.7. Relative changes in value orientations related to different life domains due to generational replacement and intra-generational value change⁷

Values	Relative change due to generational replacement	Relative change due to intragenerational change
Sense of happiness	0.30	0.22
Perceived control over life	0.13	0.24
Types of individual religiosity		
Traditionally devout	-0.44	0.31
Individually devout	-0.28	0.12
Cultural believers	0.12	0.06
Independent believers	0.14	-0.19
Indifferent to religion	0.23	-0.11
Non-believers	0.18	-0.22
Importance of work and leisure time		
Intrinsic importance of work	0.15	-0.32
Intrinsic importance of leisure time	0.32	
Difference between assessments of the importance of work and leisure time	-0.09	-0.19
Work motivation		
Good pay	0.06	0.57
Good hours	0.06	0.70
Generous holidays	0.04	0.68
Opportunity to use initiative	0.07	0.78
A job in which you feel you can achieve something	0.04	0.65
Responsible job		0.97

⁷ For the purpose of ensuring comparability of results, the values of variables measured on different scales were standardised. Only statistically significant values ($p < 0.05$) are reported in the table; empty cells indicate the absence of a statistically significant change.

Values	Relative change due to generational replacement	Relative change due to intragenerational change
Importance of family and marriage		
Intrinsic importance of family		
Marriage is considered outdated	0.22	
Factors contributing to a successful marriage		
Faithfulness		0.24
An adequate income	0.06	0.46
Good housing	0.04	0.51
Sharing household chores		0.43
Children	-0.07	0.19
Permissiveness in the domain of marital and sexual behaviour		
Divorce	0.19	0.57
Abortions	0.22	0.24
Homosexuality	0.26	0.35
Prostitution	0.16	
Cultural value of the child		
Importance of children for the fulfilment of women's lives	-0.06	-0.11
The importance of children for the success of marriage or partnership	-0.07	0.19
Authority-autonomy dimension of socialisation values	0.26	
Culture of motherhood		
Work is important, but most women want to have a family and children	-0.04	-0.19
Children of working mothers suffer	-0.09	-0.51
A working mother can create the same warm and strong relationship with her child as a non-working mother	0.02	0.29
Justification for consciously choosing single motherhood	0.09	
Socialisation values		
Hard work	-0.17	-0.27
Obedience	-0.09	-0.14
Religiousness	-0.26	
Thrift, saving money and things	-0.09	0.11
Good manners	0.15	
Imagination	0.13	0.22
Independence	0.09	-0.22
Determination, perseverance	0.11	
Feeling of responsibility.		0.11

Values	Relative change due to generational replacement	Relative change due to intragenerational change
Tolerance and respect for others		
Unselfishness		-0.11
Membership in voluntary organisations		
Religious organizations	-0.16	0.43
Leisure and self-expression organizations	0.18	-0.14
Emancipation culture, democracy and benign individualism		
Emancipation index	0.21	0.46
Democracy-autocracy orientation*	0.03	0.09
Protest index	0.07	-0.39
Trust in public institutions (national defence, police, justice, education, health, social security systems)*	-0.03	0.78
Intolerance towards ethnic/religious minorities	-0.07	0.53
General solidarity index*	-0.07	0.34
Index of solidarity with socially vulnerable groups*	-0.17	-0.38

* Data covers only the period 1999–2027.

Note: In the colour scale, greenish shades indicate a strengthening of attitudes, brownish shades indicate a weakening, and colour intensity reflects the relative magnitude of change.

In summary, rapid and multidimensional changes in the social, economic, and political environment of Lithuanian society continuously reconfigure the value orientations that underpin the socialisation of new members and the formation of their worldviews. These changes are particularly pronounced among younger generations, whose formative experiences have been shaped by a new civilisational logic, global normative contexts, and a transforming technological environment. The value landscape into which they enter as social actors increasingly diverges from that in which their parents or grandparents were socialised; consequently, generational differences cannot be reduced to age-related characteristics alone but point to deeper cultural ruptures. Such intergenerational differences are not isolated phenomena but structural symptoms of civilisational change, making their analysis a crucial instrument for understanding not only the dynamics of the contemporary social world but also broader transformations of modernity that reshape lifestyles, identities, and configurations of social relations.

Taking into account the value change trends identified in Lithuanian society over recent decades, and paying particular attention to the growing weight and symbolic power of the worldviews, attitudes, and behavioural patterns established by younger

generations, one may anticipate a further consolidation of perceived self-efficacy, alongside the continued strengthening of values related to emancipation, personal autonomy, and self-expression. This process is likely to be driven not only by moral or ideological convictions but also by a pragmatic, instrumentally individualistic understanding of freedom and responsibility, in which values are linked to personal effectiveness and the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. With regard to the potential for civic mobilisation under such conditions, it is plausible that it will not diminish but rather transform: Civic engagement is increasingly likely to assume a project-based form, with individuals mobilising around specific goals rather than long-term loyalty to voluntary organisations. Once these goals are achieved, such initiatives tend to dissolve, giving way to newly emerging forms of cooperation. It can also be anticipated that trends towards secularisation or growing religious diversity will intensify over time, manifesting less in outright rejection of religion than in a gradual shift towards individualised, symbolic forms of religiosity or increasing religious indifference. At the same time, an opposing reaction among parts of society is also possible (and already observable) in the form of a conservative response to the value uncertainty generated by these processes, expressed through the defence of traditional cultural identities, symbols, and authorities, driven by a demand for normative clarity. Thus, the trajectory of value change in Lithuanian society is likely to unfold as a dynamic and tension-laden process, in which the inertia of traditional cultural norms intersects with newly emerging expectations reflecting broader vectors of cultural, political, and economic transformation.

Limitations

When assessing the findings of the empirical studies presented in this monograph, it is essential to reflect on the conceptual premises underlying the understanding of social generations and on the limitations inherent in such an analytical approach. The concept of generation, although widely used in both academic and public discourse, presupposes a certain homogeneity of birth cohorts and relatively clear boundaries between them. Such an assumption may insufficiently capture both the continuity and discontinuity of cultural and social processes, as well as the overlapping life experiences that often transcend generational borders. Closely related is the issue of intra-generational differentiation. Even within the same generation, individuals encounter diverse social, cultural, and economic conditions that shape distinct value orientations and expectations. These internal differences may be associated with place of residence (urban/rural), social class, education, gender, ethnic

background, or other factors. Therefore, empirical analysis requires not only reliance on conceptual categories but also openness to the complexity of social reality, acknowledging the permeability of generational boundaries and internal generational variation, in order to avoid overly generalised or reductive conclusions.

It must also be acknowledged that, given the breadth of the topic and the volume of empirical material, certain important aspects of generational research necessarily fall outside the scope of this monograph. Although, in order to contextualise the analysed data, dominant value orientations in Lithuanian society are compared with those observed in other European countries, this comparison does not include a generational dimension because of the scale such an analysis would require, despite its clear analytical value. As the findings of the authors' own research suggest, value change analysed from a generational perspective may follow distinct internal logic and manifest in different developmental trajectories across societies. While such cross-national generational comparisons would substantially deepen understanding of value change processes—allowing clearer assessment of which trends observed in Lithuania are unique and which reflect broader European sociocultural transformations—they exceed the analytical limits of the present monograph.

More broadly, the analysis of social generations represents only one of several possible perspectives for studying societal change. It does not negate the importance of other key variables—such as social class, ethnicity, gender, religiosity, or territorial context—but rather invites consideration of their interrelations. From a sociological standpoint, an important question is whether generations, as social units, constitute an analytical tool for interpreting empirical reality or whether they reflect lived experience. In this respect, the entrenchment of generational language in public discourse suggests that generations are not merely theoretical constructs but also cultural frames through which individuals interpret their identities, socialisation experiences, and belonging to particular historical periods. Nevertheless, research on cultural change from a generational perspective—especially when it foregrounds collective memory and socialisation processes—cannot encompass all relevant determinants. Interpreting data on intergenerational differences also requires attention to structural factors, such as unequal educational opportunities across generations, levels of urbanisation, and other socioeconomic conditions that shape both material living conditions and the broader cultural field. The exclusion of these dimensions from the present analysis does not imply their conceptual devaluation but reflects a deliberate methodological decision aimed at delimiting the scope of the study and sharpening its analytical focus.

The monograph also does not address factors of internal diversity within Lithuanian social generations related to social differentiation, regional, ethnic, or gender differences, which could provide deeper insight into the complex interrelations between social structure and generational experience, the unevenness of social change, and differing generational adaptation patterns. Although such an analysis would undoubtedly yield valuable insights into how structural inequalities shape generational experiences and value orientations, its implementation would require a separate, more extensive study.

Despite these analytical limitations, the studies presented in this monograph offer insights into the interconnections between historical context, social experience, and generational formation, thereby deepening understanding of the dynamics of value orientations and their intergenerational differences. These insights complement structurally oriented approaches by offering an interpretative perspective focused on the formation of meanings and identities. In this way, the monograph contributes to a broader conceptualisation of intergenerational change in Lithuanian society, emphasising that generational belonging is not merely a demographic fact but a culturally constructed and historically embedded phenomenon.

Table 14.1. Happiness, perceived life control, and religiosity

Value orientations	Trend of change	Interwar Generation	First Soviet Generation	Second Soviet Generation	Last Soviet Generation	Transitional Generation	First Independence Generation
Sense of happiness	The feeling of happiness grew stronger in all generations. The change due to generational replacement was greater than intragenerational shifts.	Those who feel happy prevail			Those who feel very happy prevail		
Perceived control over life	Perceived control increased due to both generational replacement and intragenerational change, but the latter was stronger. In the first three generations, the change was inconsistent, while in the others, it followed a consistently positive trajectory.	Lower than average level of perceived control over life		Average level of perceived control		Higher than average level of perceived control	
Religiosity	Strong change due to generational replacement: the proportion of religious people is decreasing, the proportion of culturally independent believers is increasing, and the proportion of people who are indifferent to religion and non-religious is increasing slightly. Significant changes have also taken place within generations, but they are in the opposite direction.	Traditional or individualized devout believers prevail	Cultural believers prevail, but there is a relatively large proportion of devout believers		Cultural believers predominate, with a relatively small proportion of devout believers	Cultural believers predominate, with a very small proportion of devout believers and a larger proportion of non-religious people than in other generations	

Table 14.2. Civic and political values

Value orientations	Trend of change	Interwar Generation	First Soviet Generation	Second Soviet Generation	Last Soviet Generation	Transitional Generation	First Independence Generation
Volunteering	Membership in religious organizations increased among older generations, but decreased among the entire population due to generational replacement. Membership in self-expression and leisure organizations showed the opposite trend.	Extremely low level of membership in self-expression and leisure organizations. Higher level of membership in religious organizations than in other generations		Average level of membership in self-expression and leisure organizations, but very low in religious organizations		Membership in self-expression organizations is higher than in other generations, but very low in religious organizations	
Emancipation index	Emancipation values strengthened due to generational replacement and intragenerational change, but the latter change was more significant.	Weak		Moderately prevalent, but significantly strengthening		Predominant	
Democracy-autocracy orientation	Pro-democratic attitudes are gradually strengthening both as a result of generational replacement and through changes occurring within generations.	A pro-democratic orientation predominates, yet value orientations favourable to authoritarian populism also remain strong.		A pro-democratic orientation predominates and continues to strengthen, while value orientations favourable to authoritarian populism remain strong.			
Protest culture	Activity in protest politics increased as a result of generational replacement; however, due to changes occurring within generations—most strongly affecting those cohorts that had been most active during periods of revolutionary mobilisation—its overall level declined.	A high level of participation and support for protest actions in 1990, followed by a steady decline in subsequent decades (an ageing effect).			Relatively high and increasing participation in protests / a strengthening positive attitude toward participation in them.		
Intolerance towards ethnic/religious minorities	Intolerance toward ethnic and religious minorities increased markedly within generations. The increase in tolerance attributable to generational replacement was modest.	Among all generations that experienced the Soviet period, the relatively low level of intolerance observed in 1990 increased sharply.		Among all generations that experienced the Soviet period, the relatively low level of intolerance observed in 1990 increased.		According to data from the most recent survey wave, a lower level of intolerance than that observed in other generations is evident.	
General solidarity	General solidarity declined slightly as a result of generational replacement, while it increased due to changes occurring within generations.	A higher level of general solidarity than among younger generations, which increased steadily.		The level of general solidarity does not differentiate these generations. It is lower than that of the Interwar and First Soviet generations, yet it is also increasing.			
Solidarity with socially vulnerable groups	Solidarity with socially vulnerable groups is declining within society as a result of intragenerational change; however, the effect of generational replacement on this weakening is considerably stronger.	The highest level among all generations.		A lower level than that observed among the oldest generations.		The lowest level when compared with older generations.	

Table 14.3. Work and leisure values

Value orientations	Trend of change	Interwar Generation	First Soviet Generation	Second Soviet Generation	Last Soviet Generation	Transitional Generation	First Independence Generation
Intrinsic importance of work	Due to the effects of the period and age, the direction of change in the importance of work was uneven across generations: it decreased in the two oldest generations and increased in the others.	High					
Work motivation	The emphasis on the importance of both internal and external aspects of work motivation has increased in all generations, and this effect is more significant for society as a whole than the change due to generational replacement.	Both internal and external aspects of work motivation are emphasized somewhat more in each subsequent generation.					
The importance of leisure	The change has occurred due to generational replacement: each younger generation values leisure time more than the previous one. Changes within generations are insignificant.	Low	Lower than average	Average	Higher than average	High	

Table 14.4. Family and marriage values and moral justification in the area of marital and sexual behavior

Value orientations	Trend of change	Interwar Generation	First Soviet Generation	Second Soviet Generation	Last Soviet Generation	Transitional Generation	First Independence Generation
Intrinsic importance of family	No significant changes occurred during the period under review.	The generations do not differ significantly in their assessment of the importance of the family – the family is very important to all of them.					
Perceptions of marriage as outdated	Attitudes are changing due to generational replacement.	Very high level of disagreement with the statement	High level of disagreement with the statement		Average level of disagreement with the statement		
Factors contributing to a successful marriage							
Faithfulness	Generational replacement has no influence on the importance of faithfulness. All generations show an increasing emphasis on it.	Faithfulness in marriage is considered very important.					
An adequate income	Generational replacement has very little influence – changes within generations are more pronounced.	Important		Very important			
Good housing and sharing household chores		Important			Very important		
Moral permissiveness							
Divorce	Changes are taking place due to generational replacement and intra-generational change, but the latter change is relatively more important. Except for the two oldest generations, permissiveness has increased.	More unjustifiable than justifiable	More unjustifiable than justifiable		Justifiable		
Abortion		Unjustifiable	Justifiable to some extent		More justifiable than not justified		
Homosexuality		Completely unjustifiable	Unjustifiable				
Prostitution	The change is due to generational replacement. All generations do not justify it, but younger generations do so less.	Completely unjustifiable			Not justifiable		

Table 14.5. Cultural value of the child and culture of motherhood

Value orientations	Trend of change	Interwar Generation	First Soviet Generation	Second Soviet Generation	Last Soviet Generation	Transitional Generation	First Independence Generation
Cultural value of the child							
Importance of children for the fulfilment of women's lives	The attitude weakened due to both generational replacement and intragenerational change, but the latter change was relatively more important. There were strong period and age effects.	The vast majority agree			The majority agree		More than half agree
Importance of children for the success of marriage or partnership	The attitude weakened due to generational replacement, but strengthened due to intragenerational changes (especially the Second Soviet, the Last Soviet and the Transitional). There were strong period and age effects.	Very important					Less important than for other generations
Authority-autonomy dimension of socialization values	A shift from authority to autonomy values was observed due to generational replacement. Intragenerational changes are not significant.	Authority values are emphasized more	The values of autonomy are emphasized a little more		Greater emphasis on the values of autonomy		
Culture of motherhood							
Work is important, but most women want to have a family and children	This attitude has gradually weakened due to both generational replacement and intragenerational change.	The majority in all generations agree with this statement.					
Children of working mothers suffer	This attitude has been rapidly weakening, mainly due to intragenerational change.	In 1990, the majority agreed, but later the proportion of those who agreed decreased significantly.	More than half agree, but the proportion of those who agree is decreasing.			The proportions of those who agree and disagree are similar.	
A working mother can develop the same warm relationship with her child as a non-working mother	Intragenerational change was more important for the increasing support of working mothers than generational replacement.	The majority of all generations agree with this statement.					
Justification of conscious single motherhood	Justification at the societal level grew slowly only due to generational replacement.	Does not justify		Justifies			

Table 14.6. Socialization values (qualities that are considered important to instil in children)

Value orientations	Trend of change	Interwar Generation	First Soviet Generation	Second Soviet Generation	Last Soviet Generation	Transitional Generation	First Independence Generation
Hard work	Decreased importance both due to generational replacement and intragenerational change.	Very important		Important			Important, but less than for other generations
Obedience		Not very important, but more important than for other generations	Less important than for the previous generation	Not important			Not important at all
Religiosity	Decreased importance due to generational replacement.	Not very important, but more important than for other generations	Less important than for the previous generation	Not important	Doesn't matter at all		
Good manners	Increased importance due to generational replacement.	Moderately important			More than moderately important		
Imagination	Increased importance both due to generational replacement and intragenerational change.	Very little importance		Not very important		Much more important than for previous generations	
Independence	Increased importance due to generational replacement, but decreased due to intragenerational change.	Important		Very important			
Thrift	Moderately important. Decreased importance at the societal level due to generational replacement, but within some generations it has increased. A period effect is observed.	The assessments of the importance of these characteristics show little differentiation between generations.					
Responsibility	Important. Minor changes have occurred only due to intragenerational change.						
Tolerance and respect for others	Moderately important. The attitude is fairly stable.						
Unselfishness	Not very important, and its importance has decreased due to slow intragenerational change.						

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