Generations in Estonia: Contemporary Perspectives on Turbulent Times

APPROACHES TO CULTURE THEORY 5

**Generations in Estonia:
Contemporary Perspectives on Turbulent Times**

Approaches to Culture Theory
Volume 5

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Generations in Estonia: Contemporary Perspectives on Turbulent Times

Edited by

Raili Nugin, Anu Kannike, Maaris Raudsepp

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This book has been inspired by the work of Estonian cultural theorist Aili Aarelaid-Tart (1947–2014), who studied the problems of time, memory, and cultural change extensively for more than four decades, gaining an international reputation in this field. In the last years of her life she focused on issues of human time and generational consciousness, leading a research project in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural studies, Tallinn University, on the transmission of common memories and cognitive and behavioural patterns between several successive generations. In 2012, the preliminary results of this project were published in Estonian in the book *Nullindate kultuur II: Põlvkondlikud pihtimused* (*Culture of the 2000s II: Generational Confessions*). This book mapped the main problems of constructing and representing Estonian generations from the viewpoints of sociology and cultural studies and opened up discussions in this field.

Generations in Estonia: Contemporary Perspectives on Turbulent Times grew out of the wish to continue and develop Aili Aarelaid-Tart's work. It took shape within the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory (CECT), thanks to close interdisciplinary co-operation between the University of Tartu and Tallinn University, especially the research groups of contemporary cultural studies, ethnology, cultural communication studies, and religious studies. Various people have contributed to this volume. We would like to thank all the reviewers for providing valuable comments and contributing to the discussions on generations from a variety of perspectives. Finally, our special thanks go to the team responsible for producing the series.

Introduction.
Mapping generations in the Estonian context

Raili Nugin, Anu Kannike, Maaris Raudsepp

Generation is a widespread concept in contemporary Estonian public discourse and academic discussion. Several studies have been published over the last decades that tackle specific aspects of generation from the viewpoint of sociology, social policy, demography, or cultural studies (Tulva & Murs 2004; Katus & Tellmann 2006; Laidmäe 2007; Hinrikus 2008; Kalmus et al 2009; Lindemann & Vöörmann 2010; Kurg 2010; Tiit 2011; Kasearu 2011; Hatšaturjan 2012; Piirits 2014). However, we have lacked a more comprehensive publication that would highlight the generational patterns in a longer historical perspective with an interdisciplinary approach. This volume has grown out of collaboration between several research groups in the humanities and social sciences looking for novel approaches to intergenerational relations and formation of generational consciousness.

The contributions to this book study generations of 20th- and 21st-century Estonia, yet, this is not an encyclopaedic survey of statistical or cultural characteristics of all generations over the past hundred years. Several authors take an interest in generational dynamics, i.e. how and by whom have the generations been constructed, and how generational identity has been perceived and reshaped over time. Others use generation as a concept or an analytical tool to analyse different social processes. Methodologically, some of the chapters rely on qualitative analyses of biographical, thematic and focus-group interviews, and life stories, or the broader cultural context (including cultural texts), while others interpret representative population survey data combined with sociological analyses. Hence, different approaches to generations are applied. We can find both etic descriptions of particular birth cohorts, as well as emic self-descriptions (life narratives) of members of different age groups. Estonia has become a multinational country over the past 70 years, and this is also reflected in the contributions to this volume that study both major ethnolinguistic groups, Estonian and Russian, and their demographic characteristics, values, and worldviews, as well as their conceptions of history.

The book opens with analyses that give a general picture of the complicated generational patterns across several decades, followed by a closer insight into issues of memory and identity through the lenses of different social and age groups, and attempts to map the profiles of specific generations. This collection not only suggests new viewpoints on different age cohorts of Estonia, but also offers different approaches to generational theory, thus providing grounds to open several theoretical discussions on the topic.

Construction and perception of generations

While the term generation dates back to Antiquity (Misztal 2003, 83), the most influential theorist contributing to defining generations in contemporary social sciences is Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), who was inspired in his theory building by social movements initiated by young people since the 18th century (Lovell 2007, 2). Sometimes the terms generation and youth have been used as synonyms, indicating that each socioeconomic period is identified via the young who lived during that era (Lovell 2007, 7; López 2002, 111). Generation construction is thus one mode of social differentiation, classifying people according to their location in historical time or relative location to each other. Unlike an age-based classification (for example young or old), a generational typology focuses on external influences on human development – the social changes and specific socio-cultural, technological, and political circumstances that influence the socialisation of a birth cohort. Such influences are supposed to persist and differentiate generations throughout the successive passing of life stages and are reflected in generational self-consciousness, as well as in the perception of other generations in society.

Speaking of generations in the social sciences, a distinction between two meanings of the word should be kept in mind – on the one hand generation is a birth cohort, comprising everyone born in a certain historical period, and on the other, generation in a narrower sense comprises only the active elites who have significant societal impact. This distinction was first made by Mannheim (1952 [1927/1928]), who differentiated between naturalist ("generations as potentialities"), and romantic-historical ("generation as actuality" or "social generations") approaches to generations (op cit, 276).

The 'naturalist' definition of a generation relies on demographic, sociological, or psychological comparisons between different birth cohorts. According to Mannheim "the unity of generations is constituted essentially by a similarity of location of a number of individuals in a social whole" (op cit, 290). Their common location in historical time is an objective fact, irrespective of its

acknowledgement. So, according to Mannheim, such similar location forms the potentiality of a generation. Aggregate differences can be detected between any arbitrarily chosen birth cohorts who, during their primary socialisation, met similar specific environmental opportunities and barriers as a consequence of developing technology, economic circumstances, and political or cultural change. Such a naturalist and comprehensive approach is used in psychology and sociology (generational cohort theory, for example Edmunds & Turner 2005 or intergenerational value change theory, Inglehart 1977), and history (for example the theory of generational cycles by Howe & Strauss 1991).

In a narrower sense, Mannheim's conception of social (or historical) generation (generation as actuality), defines a generation through reflexivity (generational self-consciousness) and the capacity to generate new identities and meanings, new modes of thought and action in society (specific generational culture, distinct generational style). Thus, a generation as actuality emerges during severe social changes, or, in Mannheim's words "only when a concrete bond is created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic destabilization" (1998, 183), when "similarly 'located' contemporaries participate in a common destiny and the ideas and concepts which are in some way bound up with its unfolding" (op cit, 186). During severe social changes, the young are the first to experience and negotiate the new social conditions during their socialisation years (Corsten 1999, 250; Chauvel 2006, 2). Young people, who are establishing their places in society, must do so in this new context. This aspect limits them "to a specific range of potential experience, predisposing them to a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action" (Mannheim 1997, 36) and "participation in a common destiny" (op cit, 46). Instead of being only an object of socialisation, such generations become agents of transformation, of social change. This theoretical approach to generations does not presuppose that all those born in the same time frame belong to the generation as actuality. Such social generations are defined by the groups of elites within the birth cohorts who are the initiators and carriers of social change. Thus, a generation is not homogeneous because different generational units, based on distinct life experiences, political views, social status, etc., can always be distinguished within a generation. These are different "forms of the intellectual and social response to an historical stimulus experienced by all in common" (Mannheim 1998, 183). Actual generations are constituted of differentiated and antagonistic generational units (op cit, 187); dominant generational units are the most clearly visible.

Mannheim's theory has inspired many others to contribute ideas to complement his framework. One such theorist is Bryan S. Turner (2002, 14), who has

distinguished between active and passive generations, arguing that social change is brought forth when birth cohorts with strategic advantages in social structures gain moral or hegemonic leadership. In his approach, the strategic generations are the ones that have both structural advantages and moral hegemonic leadership and are reluctant to give up their privileged position. Thus, subsequent age cohorts face a "lag in social opportunities" and can be henceforth defined as passive (Turner 2002, 14; see also Chauvel 2006). In his constructing of generations, Turner pays attention to both structural conditions and certain shared values, or potential mutual worldview, trying to consolidate generation as location as well as actuality. In his view, class consciousness has increasingly been sidelined or replaced by gender or generational consciousness. Using the parallel of Marx's class theory, Turner with his colleague June Edmunds calls active generations "generations for itself" (i.e. those who are conscious of their strategic position and exploit this position) and passive generations "generations in itself" (i.e. unconscious of their position) (Edmunds & Turner 2005, 562). 'Strategic' (Turner 2002) or 'significant' (Levada 2005) generations with self-reflective generational consciousness are exceptional, coming of age during social changes and under economic growth (Chauvel 2006).

However, apart from the Mannheimian definition of a generation, there are other possible ways to construct generations. One option is the relative definition of generations according to successiveness in certain socialisation spheres (for example the second generation of immigrants, the third generation of Soviet people, etc.). In parallel to analytical conceptions of generations, common sense representations of generations exist in the collective discursive field (generations as discursive constructions). Both the social and demographic understanding of generations can co-exist in public discourses; they do not exclude each other. The discursive construction of generations depends largely on the public periodisation of history (for example based on the succession of Tsars (in Russia), chief secretaries of the Politbureau (in the Soviet Union), or on outstanding historical events (for example the "sputnik generation" and Soviet baby boomers)) (for example, Raleigh 2006). The discursive construction of generations is also related to intergenerational relations, for instance, who won and how.

The pragmatic value of using an easy classification based on only one dimension – the year of birth – has made the concept of generation popular and widespread in marketing practice and research (for example, Williams & Page 2011), where a naturalistic and simplified conception of generations is generally applied. Generations are here understood as 'natural' categories, disregarding their origin through the processes of social construction and symbolic battles. Ascribing certain tendencies and characteristics to representatives of such 'natural' categories

leads to homogenisation and essentialisation of people on the basis of their location in historical time. According to this approach, all members of a generation, irrespective of their social, ethnic, gender and other societal differentiations, are supposed to possess distinct generational characteristics. This generational approach has proved to be useful in various applied fields such as marketing and institutional management.

While going through a biological life cycle, every generation has some freedom to choose how to use the past to interpret the present. Thus the term 'generational time' has been coined as a "cluster of opportunities or life chances" (Edmunds & Turner 2002, 5). Within every cohort there is a continuous and age-dependent social acknowledgment of the past–present–future axis, which is dynamic, i.e. permanently changing together with identity (Aarelaid-Tart 2006, 27). In addition, in the course of an individual life, generational consciousness formed in youth may disappear later or be fundamentally reconstructed due to social upheavals, and a traumatic event can substantially change the way a person constructs his or her life trajectory with respect to the inner order of time (Aarelaid-Tart 2006; 2009; 2011a; 2011b; 2014). In biographical narrating, the past is recreated and reformulated "into different pasts from the point of view of the emerging present, which in its turn is framed by the social agreement of a right and usable past" (Aarelaid-Tart 2006, 32). Thus, the told life is a kind of 'time within time' as the narrators create their own version of what they have lived through. Consequently, a lived life is "like a reservoir for a told life, from where one can repeatedly draw new memories to adapt them to the needs of the next self-clarification in a permanently changing social reality" (op cit, 34).

Western, Soviet, and Estonian generations: the sociohistorical context

Generations are dynamic constructions and in constant interrelations with each other. The self-perception of a generation, as well as its construction, depends on how an age-cohort looks in regard to other age groups or generations because there is always an imagined other generation upon which self-perception is dependent. Stereotypical schemes about generation-specific modes of thought and action can function as informal social norms in relation to which a person may take a position (to adopt, to reject, to modify, etc.). In similar vein, generational constructions depend on the perception of past generations, or the generations across the borders. Different national generations are shaped not only by national developments, but are also inspired by the generational constructions in other countries. In fact, Edmunds and Turner (2005) call for use of the concept of global generations to mark the influence of global events and processes that

shape generations with similar social characteristics. Therefore, in the following, we attempt to outline some of the social developments that have initiated the construction of different birth cohorts as generations. These sketches indicate that these constructions are dynamic and flexible in time as the events or social processes are re-evaluated, but also that similar social conditions do not necessarily result in similar generational constructions, just as common generational labels may entail different content.

Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (1988, 96) has argued that the simpler a society is, the more important a person's age is in allocating social roles. However, when these roles change, and when those changed circumstances are acknowledged, awareness of new generations arises. In other words, noticing that contemporary youth is different from previous youth helps to articulate the characteristics of the elder cohorts as well. Generational consciousness is often formed *ex-post* (Weisbrod 2007, 23), i.e., subsequent to realising their shared experiences differ from those of contemporary younger and older age cohorts. However, not every social change generates awareness of a particularity of certain cohorts. Tommi Hoikkala, Semi Purhonen, and J. P. Roos (2002) have hypothesised that the negative events and times of crises do not give rise to generational consciousness, as these do not provide an opportunity of positive self-identification. Hence, only what have been called strategic generations (Turner 2002) may form generational consciousness – those age groups who have been lucky in terms of high upward social mobility, secure employment, and economic prosperity. The cohorts who become socialised during times of economic growth tend to secure their positions in society, while those age groups who come of age during times of economic crises tend to remain in weaker positions even if the situation in the economy gets better: a 'scarring effect' emerges (Chauvel 2006, 7).

In different societies distinct discursive generations emerge, depending on the age groups that manage to identify with the changes and distinguish themselves either from the younger or older (or both) age groups. However, contrary to the thesis of Hoikkala et al (2002), not all generations that have been crystallised in cultural memory discourse can be characterised as winners of the change. For example, Ernest Hemingway, in his book *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), popularised the term lost generation to mark those young people who came of age during World War I. The lost generation was characterised as lacking their parents' patriotism and idealism because they were disillusioned and had to deal with several economic crises in Europe. As Hemingway's notion was used in a broader European context, it is a good example of how a generation can be constructed cross-nationally. The concept is still used retrospectively as a cultural tool to explain certain phenomena in history or culture.

In Estonia, those who came of age during World War I were also those who witnessed and fought in the War of Independence, securing the state of independence for Estonia. Thus, in Estonian cultural texts, this generation is hardly if ever depicted as a lost generation in the sense that Hemingway had in mind. This does not necessarily mean that in 1926, when Hemingway's book depicting the lost generation was published, there were no disillusioned people in Estonia in the age group Hemingway was writing about. However, despite the economic hardships and political struggles of the 1920s, retrospective studies of this period in Estonia reflect the contemporary enthusiasm for building the first nation-state in local history; a similar trend can be found in the retrospective histories of other newly independent East and Central European countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland). Especially in the 1990s, the interwar period became a sort of national ideal in Estonia, and the generation who fought for independence and built the Republic of Estonia was often depicted as heroic, not disillusioned.

This suggests that the shared events of the past, such as World War I or II, which affect several states influence societies differently depending on the nature of their involvement in the event (and, in the case of war, perhaps also on whether they participated on the winning or losing side). In the 20th and 21st centuries, Estonians have intensely and immediately experienced several abrupt socio-political changes. People who have lived throughout the 20th century have been subjected to numerous traumatic turns and the subsequent need for regular re-orientation. Voldemar Miller (Estonian historian and archivist, 1911–2006), in a biographical interview, illustrates this point well:

> There have been seventeen great turns in Estonian history, and my generation has survived eight of them. Hence, if we count Estonian history from the year 1200, people like us are by far older than four hundred years, considering our life experiences, of course. We have repeatedly seen how an absolute truth becomes an absolute lie (Miller in Aarelaid 1998, 85).

During the first decades of the 20th century, Estonia was shaped by the Russian Revolution of 1905, World War I, and the War of Independence (1918–1920) against Soviet Russia and the Baltic Germans. In 1918 this former province of the Russian Empire established itself as an independent democratic nation-state. The brief period of parliamentary democracy and rapid modernisation came to an end with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, leaving Estonia in the Soviet zone of influence after the breakout of World War II.

The interwar period was followed by the Soviet occupation, which in hegemonic Estonian collective memory signifies a period of broken dreams and ruptured lives (Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2013). The generation who had made a career in the 1920s and 1930s suffered the most from political repressions. At the same time the young people (especially men) who had just reached adulthood by 1940, when Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union, could no longer freely choose their political preferences or careers: in most cases they were conscripted into the Soviet or German armies with dire consequences not only during the war years but for many decades to follow.

By contrast, Julianne Fürst (2010, 4) has described Russian post-war youth (a cohort who was young during the post-war period, born around 1920s and 1930s) as the first generation who valued consumerism and individualism and "the first to understand Sovietness not as a utopian dream but as a description of the complexities of daily life". In her definition, the members of this generation were born during the interwar period and turned their priorities from ideology to consumption in the 1950s. In other words, these were people who had already come to terms with political change. According to Fürst, it was important for this generation to have been born within the Soviet state. For ethnic Estonians, the Soviet regime that was newly established after the war was contrasted with the independent statehood before the war. Thus, although the social conditions were similar throughout the Soviet Union in this period, the perception of these conditions differed, and hence generational consciousness differed accordingly. However, it is probable that the generational consciousness of some of the Estonian Russian-speakers was formed under the influence of the aforementioned developments in the Soviet Union, depending on their birth year and migration to Estonia (for some insights, see Lember in this volume). Regarding ethnic Estonians, a generation with similar traits appeared after a ten-year interval, in the second half of the 1960s, when those born under the Soviet regime came of age. Therefore, not only do the overall socio-political conditions at a certain point in time matter, but also how these conditions were created and what preceded them.

In Estonia, the life of the children of the 1940s was overshadowed by fear as repressions and partisan resistance, or the 'war in the woods', continued. Until the late 1940s, hope for the 'white ship', i.e. the liberation of Estonia by Western countries, was still high. According to Aili Aarelaid-Tart, "vivid childhood memories full of existential fear are emblematic of this age cohort" (2006, 132). They acquired their education and started their careers in the Soviet system. Adaptation of their families to the new reality resulted in a split between public and domestic life and double mental standards: the official Soviet perspective, and

the private so-called Estonian-minded attitudes (opposition to the regime). Yet, largely due to poverty, the everyday material environment did not change much compared to the pre-war era; books, magazines, and photos at home silently kept the memories and ideals of the previous decades alive. In addition, despite the repressions, many schoolteachers carried on Estonian-period standards of education and patterns of behaviour. Upon reaching adulthood, members of this generation adopted several different strategies for dealing with contradictory values in their career choices ranging from total collaboration to total resistance, dissidents who refused to accept the legitimacy of the Soviet regime.

On both sides of the Iron Curtain, World War II was followed by economic stabilisation and a significant rise in birth rate. However, these processes are not evaluated or discussed in the same key. On the Western side of the Curtain these developments generated the discourse of a successful age cohort, the baby boomers. This generational construct is perhaps most widely used in the context of the USA, but also outside its borders (Turner 2002; Hoikkala et al 2002; Wyn & Woodman 2006). This is the generation who managed to be upwardly mobile and enjoy the welfare regimes from the late 1950s. The birth frame of this generation is often depicted as 1946–1965 (Wyn & Woodman 2006).

Despite similar processes in the Soviet Union, the term baby boomers is not common in the Estonian context (and not in the Eastern European context in general). The differences lie perhaps not only in lifestyle and welfare, but also in how this period is politically evaluated. In the Estonian contemporary political context, the aftermath of World War II is mainly interpreted in terms of loss of statehood and political repression (Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2013). Thus, the economic and demographic similarities are not sufficient to absorb similar labels cross-culturally because the socio-political context of the age cohort has an effect (usually retrospectively). Drawing on Hoikkala et al (2002), one could speculate that the lack of similar generational consciousness among the coevals of Western baby boomers behind the Berlin Wall is because they are not considered 'winners'.

A common time frame around which the generations are constructed within the Soviet Union is the relative thaw of the repressive and restrictive political atmosphere under the reign of Nikita Khrushchev (1953–1964). Juri Levada (2005) characterises the cohort coming of age at that time as the "thaw generation", who not only enjoyed the fruits of post-war economic development and political de-Stalinisation, but also initiated cultural change in the 1960s. Donald Raleigh (2006), designating Soviet post-war baby boomers as the "sputnik generation", has noticed their social optimism. In Estonia, the term 'the golden sixties' is sometimes applied to describe this cohort, referring to a political and countercultural movement among the intellectuals in Tartu and Tallinn. Similar

developments and intellectual groups also arose in other larger cities of the Soviet Union (Voronkov 2005). In culture, the 1960s witnessed a thaw in the strict regulation of artists' creations, thus, in creative culture (art, literature, films), modern trends emerged and writers, artists, and composers sensed their distinction from the older, often more cautious (frightened) and conformist generation. Another aspect of this era was a widespread adaptation to Soviet reality, a pragmatic understanding that the system will not collapse in the near future. While material conditions improved, mental Sovietisation deepened. A large part of the population became estranged from the (Lutheran) church, and joining the Communist Party became half-acceptable if this step was taken to promote Estonian interests, rather than to pursue a party career (see also Fürst 2010). Aili Aarelaid-Tart has considered this "thaw generation" as the most homogeneous compared to other age groups in Estonia (2006, 135).

As indicated, the generational constructions frequently stem from political events and (ideological) evaluations. In post-socialist states, these events tend to have (from a contemporary perspective) the political character of fighting against communist regimes. The most important landmarks in this respect were the years of 1956, 1968, and 1980. While the first (1956) and the last (1980) are largely connected to specific countries (Hungary and Poland), 1968 has a much broader resonance in post-socialist states as well as in Western democracies. In particular, in what is now France, Germany, and the Czech Republic, the processes that led to the events of 1968 triggered the discourses of the 1968 generation (see Marada 2004; Weisbrod 2007; Gloger 2012; López 2002). In general, these constructions concentrate on youth protests against the political establishment. Whereas in the Soviet bloc these protests were suppressed, the developments that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall put the active protesters of this period in the spotlight, later heroising their strength and courage. Again, not only have these events and the respective role of a generation played a part here, but the subsequent incidents, and the evaluation of these historical events in the subsequent hegemonic discourse, also have become relevant.

Depending on these evaluations and the extent of the events of 1968, the definitions of generations in different countries can vary. While for example in USA this generation is largely conceptualised in the framework of protests against the Vietnam War, hippies, and the sexual revolution, in the Czech Republic it is the anti-Soviet struggle that defines this generation. It is worthwhile noticing that in the USA this generational construct overlaps with that of the baby boomers. Yet, while hippies can be considered both part of the baby boomers and the 1968 generation, not all baby boomers can be labelled as the rebellious 1968ers. For example, Hoikkala et al (2008) have differentiated four generational units

among Finnish baby boomers, only one among them – the so-called political elite – has a distinct generational consciousness and can be considered a social generation in the Mannheimian sense. In the Estonian context, the generation of 1968 is not a very powerful narrative construct, although it is sometimes mentioned. The reason for this probably lies in the meaning of the year in collective memory: in Estonia, it is far less symbolically significant than in other countries, and is chiefly associated with the suppression of the Czech events and the loss of hope in the possibility of socialism with a human face.

The 1970s and 1980s in Estonia were characterised by stagnation, followed by the spread of social conformism and scepticism as a reaction to the shortage economy, increasing centralised control, and Russification. The silenced dissatisfaction alongside the crisis in the economy led to the need to reform the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev, secretary general of the Party since 1985, started a number of changes in the Soviet Union that ultimately resulted in the collapse of the Soviet bloc. This was one of the most ground-breaking social changes of the last decades in the area. The processes leading to and following the disintegration of the communist empire were not only an inspiration to novel approaches to generational identity, but also redefined the previous ones and contributed to the construction of the generations to come. Again, the extent to which the developments at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s are used in generational construction varies from country to country. For instance, according to some authors (Weisbrod 2007; Gloger 2012), in Germany the fall of the Berlin Wall was not a strong trigger of generational construction. To be sure, the reasons why the 1968ers are more prevalent in discursive fields than the 1989 generation (Gloger 2012) are probably complex. One of the reasons, though, may be the particularity of developments in Germany after the dissolution of the Soviet bloc – many Germans from the former East did not feel like participants of the change but rather that Western Germany imposed the change on them (Vogt 2005). In other words, the age cohorts who were young at the time of transformation could not find ways to positively identify with this change. This is another example of ex-post experience: the generations are defined via conceptualisation of who won and how (Weisbrod 2007).

In other post-socialist countries, and especially in Estonia, the change of the 1990s is generally depicted in collective memory as a positive development, as a victory over the 'long night' (Jõesalu 2005). In fact, the term "winners' generation" (Titma et al 1999; for discussion see also Saar & Kazulja in this volume) emerged against the backdrop of this turn, signifying those who gained influential positions in the economy and politics after the change. However, in Estonia,

the change has affected several age groups differently and one can even talk about generations of change in plural (Nugin 2015).

The dissolution of the Iron Curtain may be the last cross-national political change to date in Europe that has had an impact on generational construction.[1] This change, however, has mainly affected Eastern European countries. In Western democracies, generational construction has been based on lifestyle choices and economic welfare for quite a while now, starting from the defining features of the baby boomers' generation. After the baby boomers, the generational lines and consensus about cross-cultural generations have become more blurred, and sometimes generations with similar features overlap. Such examples are perhaps "Generation X" and "Generation Golf". The first label was coined by a (German-born) Canadian writer Douglas Coupland in his novel *Generation X: Tales for Accelerated Culture*, 1991, and the second by Florian Illies's book *Generation Golf*, 2000. Both labels signify generations that can be distinguished from the baby boomers. Their characteristics vary in different studies, but generally they are defined as born between 1970 and the 1980s. While "Generation X" has been a popular label mainly in the Anglo-American world, "Generation Golf" is well known in German cultural fields. It would be simplistic to claim that both labels signify the same generation with the same generational characteristics. Yet, there are certain similarities, the main being the birth frame (although the birth years do not coincide in every study), the concentration on consumer life styles and materialism, and sometimes the lack of idealistic goals in life.

For those born in the later years (the 1990s), no powerful cross-cultural label has emerged. Instead, there has been a "shift from corporal experiences to lifestyle subculture and fashion as the markers of a generation" (Giesen 2004, 38). In other words, the more complicated the development of change is, the more generations emerge as discursive constructs, often overlapping in time or in the features that are used to characterise them. First experiences of political change gave way to (still corporal) experiences of economic welfare (the baby boomers generation); now these experiences are shattered and focused on lifestyles and (sub)culture. Although these experiences are more global than before, they are also more fragmented and apply to particular groups rather than entire age cohorts. "Generation Me", "Generation Y", the "digital generation", and "Generation C" are some of the examples of labels used to describe contemporary youth (Giesen 2004, 37–38; Bruns 2006; Wyn & Woodman 2006, 496; Siibak 2009, 10; Twenge 2006). These labels mark either the character of contemporary youth (indulging in extreme individualism, such as "Generation Me", see Twenge 2006) or their literacy in the digital world (the "digital generation", "Generation C", see Siibak 2009). There are also labels that mark contemporary youth's shaky

economic position in the labour market (the "700-euro-generation"). Yet, none of the labels have gained such an overwhelming popularity as the labels used to signify those born earlier in the 20th century (such as baby boomers).

Thus, as the preceding overview has demonstrated, generational constructions are very dynamic and depend mainly on the past rather than the present: how the previous and subsequent generations are defined, how the events of the past are retrospectively evaluated, and what has preceded the change. In Estonian discursive fields, the most commonly spread generational constructions are 'children of the Republic', which signifies those who were young during the time of the interwar republic (Aarelaid-Tart 2006; Kõresaar 2005), the 1960s generation (born in the 1940s, see Aarelaid in this volume), and the "winners' generation", which indicates those who were born around 1965 (Titma et al 1999) and who managed to gain either higher social positions or economic capital after the transition in the 1990s. There have been some attempts to accommodate Western labels in Estonian generational construction (baby boomers, "Generation X"), but none of them have been widely used or commonly accepted. Consequently, while generational constructions can exist at a cross-national level, each society dynamically constructs its own generations depending on the course of local history and the evaluations of its outcomes.

Contributing essays

The discussion above emphasised the idea that generations are dynamic, their borders are blurred and changing in time, and their construction is interdependent. However, sharing this common understanding, the authors of this volume have all chosen a specific perspective on and framework for generations, based on their discipline or a particular discourse. Not all the generations described above are examined in detail, but the different studies merge into a wider picture of the generational landscape in 20th-century Estonia. All the authors contributing to this volume proceed from their own visions related to global discourses and concepts of generation, but focusing on the specific traits of those processes in Estonia. The chronological scope of the chapters is different, in some cases covering almost all birth cohorts of the 20th century (Lilleoja & Raudsepp; Sakkeus, Puur & Klesment; Kalmus; Kõresaar & Jõesalu), in others cases confined to some decades (the cohort born in the 1920s in Raudsepp; in the 1940s in Aarelaid-Tart; in the 1960s in Saar & Kazjulja; and in the 1970s in Nugin). Two authors (Lember and Paert) construct generations proceeding not from chronological, but from other, more subjective and thematic principles.

Broadly, our authors' approach to generations can be divided in two: those who rely on the naturalistic perspective, including all individuals born in a certain period of time under the concept of one generation (Lilleoja & Raudsepp; Sakkeus, Klesment & Puur; Kalmus), and others who follow more intangible principles. Self-reflexive social generations in the Mannheimian sense, whose actions have become socially, culturally or politically significant, have been analysed in the chapters by Kazjulja & Saar, Nugin, Aarelaid-Tart, Jõesalu & Kõresaar, and Raudsepp, which concern respectively birth cohorts born in the 1970s, 1960s, 1940s, and 1920s. These cohorts can be considered generations as actuality in the Estonian context because their initial socialisation was marked by deep and abrupt societal transformations critical to Estonian history. These generations were actively involved in the elaboration of new meanings and practices as a consequence of these transformations.

In this volume a total of four chapters are based on quantitative survey or statistical data, although each of them from a slightly different angle, varying in the chronological scope of age cohorts as well as in thematic and methodological approach. For instance, while Lilleoja & Raudsepp and Sakkeus, Klesment & Puur give an overview of most of the living generations born in the 20th century (1910–1995 and 1924–1983, respectively), Kalmus and Nugin concentrate on specific age groups (Kalmus on people born in 1978–1996 and Nugin those born in the 1970s) while providing data about other age cohorts as the backdrop of their analysis to give a perspective for comparison. Whereas Lilleoja & Raudsepp and Nugin try to encompass more general descriptions of the age groups (the former concentrating on values and the latter on general demographic and socio-economic characteristics), the articles by Sakkeus, Klesment & Puur and Kalmus focus on particular aspects of the age cohorts. The first analyses the trends in the demographic and sociological characteristics of the parental home and its impact on the life course of children, while the other concentrates on media usage patterns among the age cohorts.

The opening chapter, by Laur Lilleoja and Maaris Raudsepp, compares value patterns of birth cohorts born from 1910 to 1995, giving separate attention to Estonian and Russian native language speakers. Analysing the value preferences of nearly all of the living adult population of contemporary Estonia, it offers a good foundation for the entire book as it demonstrates that age cohorts living through similar changes or times of crisis tend to share value profiles. However, according to Lilleoja and Raudsepp, the social generations in Estonia should be defined according to wider chronological periods than a decade as only thus do different structures of meaning (value profiles) differentiate generational groups. Based on the profile of different cohorts, the authors divide Estonian inhabitants into

three distinct groups: (a) those born in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s; (b) those born in the 1960s and 1970s; and (c) those born in the 1980s and 1990s.

Similarly to the first chapter, contributions by demographers Luule Sakkeus, Martin Klesment & Allan Puur, and by media researcher Veronika Kalmus, use a quantitative survey base to show the impact of socioeconomic and political changes to life course events (parenting or marriage patterns in the former) or everyday practices (media usage in the latter). Sakkeus, Klesment & Puur suggest that there are far-reaching transformations in most dimensions of the parental home and childhood environment throughout the cohorts included in the study. According to their evidence, both continuity and discontinuity of trends introduced by historical events are traceable. While the demographers tend to avoid drawing clear borders between generational groups while analysing the generational trends and intergenerational transmission of certain demographic patterns, Kalmus shows certain turning points in generational media consumption patterns, thus suggesting the possible lines between different generations. Her chapter reveals how Estonian youth, according to their media use characteristics, is positioned in the socio-cultural field vis-à-vis older generational groups, arguing for the discursive construction of the young as a "digital generation". Kalmus also elaborates on how perception of inter-generational differences is related to media use preferences and attitudes towards new media technologies. She shows how digital differentiation creates and reproduces social stratification, while social inequalities also shape digital socialisation practices.

Although she also applies quantitative data to describe the formation patterns of a generation, the approach of Raili Nugin's chapter differs from those described above. Here, the author provides statistical data to illustrate the socioeconomic conditions at a time when a specific birth cohort (born in the 1970s) came of age. While the general trends of this cohort are described rather thoroughly, the statistical data serves to contextualise the qualitative data upon which the author bases her argument. She uncovers how and when qualitative and quantitative approaches complement each other, and when they contradict each other. Thus, this chapter, along with others that use a quantitative approach, provides material for a theoretical and methodological debate on how to construct a generation based on statistical analysis.

The focus on specific generational profiles connects Nugin's contribution with those of Maaris Raudsepp, and of Ellu Saar & Margarita Kazjulja, which all use biographical sources for their analyses. These chapters focus on personal destinies and demonstrate how they are linked to societal transformations. The elderly people born in the 1920s, and the 'winners' born in the mid-1960s and 1970s, all had to adapt to the new conditions in the changing society of the 1990s. The

analysis of the biographical narratives discloses the strategies that respondents use to cope with social challenges as well as discontinuities and disruptions. Tracing the life courses of older and middle-aged Estonians, Saar & Kazjulja's inquiry, as well as Raudsepp's, demonstrate the importance of previous social and cultural resources, especially education, when coping with radical changes. Nugin's target group was at the same time negotiating their transition to adulthood. Her complementary analysis of socio-demographic aspects as well as the formation of the generational consciousness of the 1970s cohort enables us to conclude that their subjective time perspective and political memory (remembering the Soviet period) seems to be more important in self-reflexive generational consciousness than the structural conditions of their socialisation. Saar & Kazjulja deconstruct the rather simplistic collective categorisation that has been created about their informants' age cohort, arguing that the differentiation within the "generation of winners" is remarkable. Their study also uncovers clear cumulative advantage and disadvantage patterns in the life course of this generation. Similarly, Raudsepp shows that the older generation is not homogenous, revealing a multitude of different intergenerational voices and perspectives, and some controversial interpretations of the past from the representatives of different generational units.

In the chapters by Aili Aarelaid-Tart and by Ene Kõresaar & Kirsti Jõesalu, generations are understood as communities of experience and carriers of memory, as groups for whom sharing memories is the basis of constructing generational identity. Such groups create models for the recollection of the past that enable acceptable or usable public concepts of the past to be constructed. Both chapters focus on the dynamics of remembering the socialist past during the last decades in Estonia, exploring the generational differences in memory by identifying what earlier experiences are carried forward. Aarelaid-Tart proceeds from the personal perspective of a child born in the 1940s to analysing autobiographical books published in the 21st century, mainly by those whose active lives fell into the 1960s–1980s period, underlining the diversification of viewpoints on the Soviet past. She demonstrates how the discourse of disruption was gradually replaced by stories about competence in orientating oneself in the corridors of power, self-realisation, and successful coping with the economy of scarcity. Whereas both chapters underline the diversity of conceptions of history emerging at the turn of the century, Kõresaar & Jõesalu take the analysis of tensions between private and public interpretations of the past further. They compare the textual and visual articulations of late socialism by generational groups whose defining years of socialisation acuminate on three periods – World War II and its aftermath, the second half of the 1950s–1960s, and the 1990s. While those born in the 1920s tend to remember the Soviet era in terms of rupture, the children

of the 1940s bring forward everyday experiences through the lens of nostalgia, and those of the 1970s regard remembering the late Soviet era as a basis of their distinctive generational identity. The authors also provide a more extensive view on memory processes, showing how the meaning of an event develops simultaneously in several different arenas of remembering – apart from autobiographical writing, also in theatre, literary fiction, museums, history books, etc.

While Estonian generational constructions have received academic attention, often in those accounts the Estonian Russian-speaking population was left out. Although far from filling this gap conclusively, two chapters, by Uku Lember and by Irina Paert, address this under-researched field from two rather different angles. Lember employs the notion of generation in order to bring together temporally vertical and horizontal relations between age cohorts in Estonian multi-ethnic families (Russian and Estonian intermarriages), aiming to study the formation of historical consciousness and the passing of communicative memories from parents (born in the 1920s and 1930s) to children (born in the 1950s and 1960s) over several decades. He demonstrates how inter-cultural positionality has exposed children to divergent cultural memories and enabled them to adapt to new sociocultural conditions. Paert explores, through the lens of generation, the tension between religion understood as tradition, and social change, demonstrating both intergenerational differences as well as transgenerational continuities within the Russian Orthodox community in Estonia. Both articles argue that the trajectories and life paths of the two ethnolinguistic communities, though intertwined, have differed, creating different patterns of generational self-constructions. Despite the fact that both Lember and Paert treat the Mannheimian concept of generation rather flexibly – the former approaching it from the angle of demographic reproduction and the latter in the context of the Orthodox Church – their chapters illustrate the cultural context of minority, which is in constant negotiation with hegemonic culture. Thereby they both also show the heterogeneity of the Russian-speaking cultural community and talk about generational units rather than the broad generational labels embracing the entire ethnolinguistic minority in Estonia. Although specific characteristics of Russian-speaking cohorts in Estonia can be found in the analyses by Sakkeus, Klesment & Puur and Lilleoja & Raudsepp, clearly the generational consciousness of Russian-speaking population living in Estonia requires more thorough and comprehensive research in the future.

Thus far there are no comprehensive studies on the generational structure of the Estonian population, leaving a number of fundamental questions unanswered. Which social generations are differentiated? On what basis are they differentiated? Which characteristics are ascribed to different generations? What is the

relative status of different generations? Which generations are considered strategic? What characterises the relationship between different generations? What are the modes and channels of communication between different generations? Which functions are performed by different generations in the social field?

Social scientists have sought to examine these problems since the creation of Mannheim's theory without being able to provide unanimous answers. Neither are the single chapters of this book capable of drawing exhaustive conclusions, yet, in sum they reveal new aspects of such issues and offer tools for revising classical concepts. This book intends to provoke discussions leading to new insights into generations. The analyses in this volume support the idea that a generation may be formed both as a result of collective traumatic experiences (like war or repression) as well as a consequence of 'victory' in intergenerational competition. Objective circumstances that promote the emergence of a distinct generation require discursive support in order to stabilise a generation as actuality. A birth cohort as a potential generation becomes an actual social generation in the process of interaction between an objective social and cultural context, and its discursive elaboration. Thus, the construction of generations has an important impact on generational consciousness as people want to identify with or position themselves in opposition to certain concepts or stereotypes spreading through discursive fields. *Generations in Estonia: Contemporary Perspectives on Turbulent Times* may add to this processes of creating, recreating, and contesting.

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Notes

1 For some authors, there are other political developments, such as 9/11, that have triggered the cross-national global generations (for example, Edmunds & Turner 2005). We believe, however, that other political events which have happened since the collapse of the 1990s political change have not fostered such enormous social and economic turmoil and change, or at least not in so many regions.
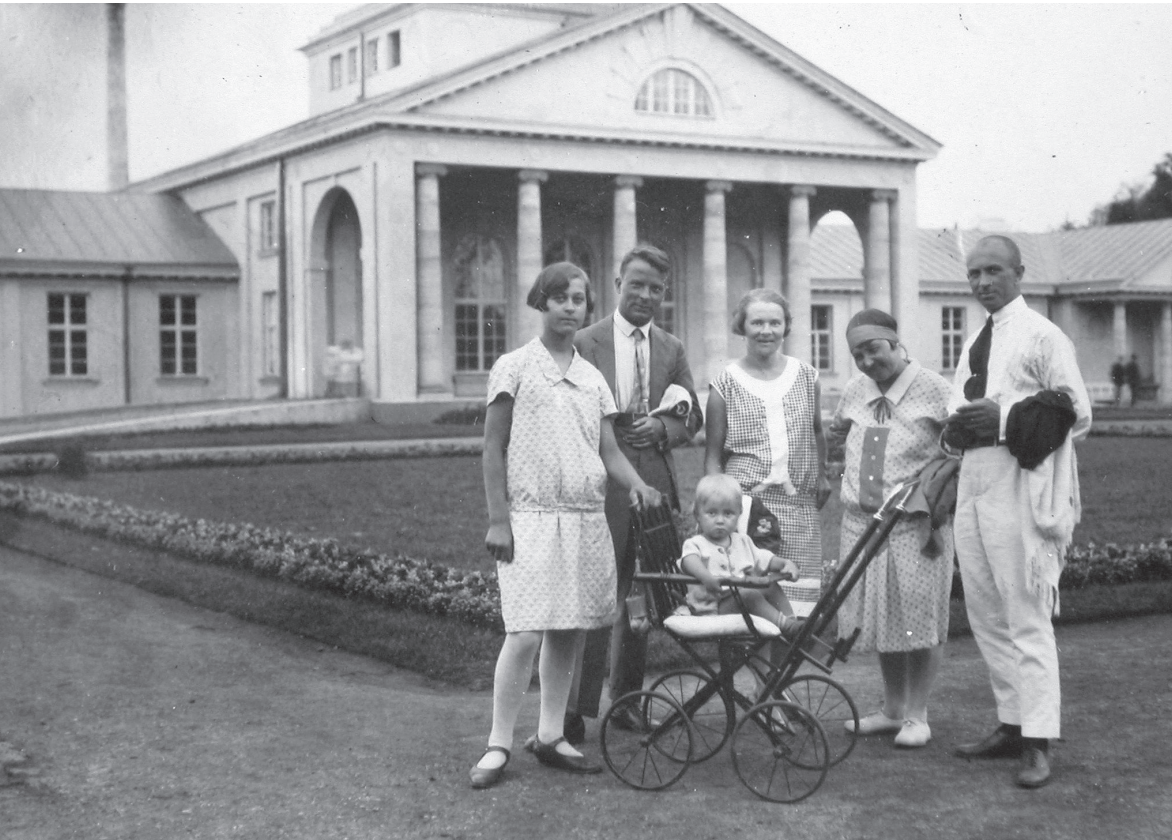
The generational kaleidoscope

Cohort-specific value patterns in the new millennium

Laur Lilleoja, Maaris Raudsepp

Abstract. This chapter attempts to explore the cultural changes in Estonia through the eyes of different cohorts and their value structures by applying a quantitative approach. We use the basic human values theory of Shalom H. Schwartz and data from the European Social Survey (ESS) to conceptualise and compare the value structures of Estonian people born in different times.

While most value studies have confirmed age differences in value preferences, few studies concentrating on generation differences and, based on our knowledge, no studies deliberately focus on narrower birth cohorts. This is the first attempt to compare the value patterns of different generation cohorts in Estonia.

We found that the binding values of Estonian society are caring for the wellbeing of others, loyalty to friends and family, and equality and tolerance, whereas for other values there is both cross-generational and cross-cultural differentiation. As expected, the younger generations tend to appreciate self-enhancement and openness as ways of changing value dimensions, while older generations are more altruistic and conservative. This difference is not only related to age but is also cohort-specific.

The value structures in Estonia include a clear cross-generational ethnic distinction: compared with Russian-speakers of the same age, Estonian-speakers have value perceptions that are slightly more altruistic and open to change. Based on the rank-ordered value preferences of different cohorts, inhabitants of Estonia can be divided into three larger cohort groups – those born in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s; those born in the 1960s and 1970s; and those born in the 1980s and 1990s. Our analysis revealed more similarities than differences between cohort groups divided by decade, and supported theories with wider temporal boundaries and specific generation markers for the definition of a generation. Strong support was found for value heterogeneity within cohorts with respect to ethno-cultural background.

Introduction

This chapter analyses the cultural change in Estonia during the first decade of the new millennium using the perspective of different cohorts and their value structures. We characterise and compare Estonian generation cohorts through the prism of basic values, which are measured with the help of the Schwartz value questionnaire (Schwartz 1992). Our research shows both similarities and differences between the cohort generations in terms of their general value priorities.

This study is based on the understanding that people create culture, while this same culture shapes their cognitive and behavioural systems, including basic human values (Schwartz 1992; Tart 2011). Therefore basic values can be dealt with as a psychosocial link between individuals and society, being an aspect of both cultural and personality systems (Schwartz 2009) and functioning as generalised regulators both at the personal life-world, and at the societal/cultural or institutional levels. They orient individuals and groups towards meaningful goals and to socially acceptable means of attaining these goals. Thus, as value preferences reflect societal reality, they allow us to study interactions at both individual and group levels, at the same time allowing us to describe social change.

Despite the fact that the population of Estonia (1.3 million) is smaller than that of hundreds of world metropolises, its society is rather diverse, with very different social groups living side by side. During the 20th century Estonia experienced many social disruptions, meaning that the attitudes and perceptions of distinctive birth-cohorts can be quite different due to different socialisation circumstances. The 'generational markers' are events in recent Estonian history that impacted all members of a generation in a similar way; these include societal ruptures like World War II, changes of political regime, and population displacements, as well as rapid cultural and technological change.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the changed social reality of Estonia from the perspective of basic human values, thereby distinguishing differences in perceptions that are based on birth-cohort affiliation. We can suppose that differences are to be expected in the value systems of those cohorts whose youth experiences differ the most. Major political, economical, technological, and social changes also affect people in each period of their development. In addition, the impact of life stage at the moment of data gathering – for example the settling-down period, middle adulthood, late middle adulthood or late adulthood, each one with different developmental challenges and opportunities (Levinson et al 1978; Levinson 1996) – should also be taken into account. Therefore, when trying to explain the peculiarity of value structures of certain cohorts, we concurrently need to take into account (1) the characteristics of society during their youth,

(2) all major social events that have taken place during their lifetime, (3) and also the possible age effects at the time of the survey.

First we discuss some theoretical models useful in studying the relations of values and generations, and then introduce Shalom H. Schwartz's basic human values theory. Thereafter we apply the theory in an empirical analysis of generation value profiles in Estonia, comparing the different birth cohorts of ethnic Estonians and Russians living in Estonia.

Generations and values

Karl Mannheim (1952 [1927/1928]) defined the notion of the 'social generation' as a group of individuals of similar ages whose members have experienced noteworthy historical events within a set period of time. They are united not only by age and life stage but also by experienced events and change of conditions at similar ages. The major social events experienced by all members of a generation cohort also work as generational markers. It is supposed that similar experiences in formative years lead to a similar mentality and worldview (generational consciousness). According to Mannheim, a generation is a 'social location' that has the potential to affect an individual's consciousness in much the same way as other social categories. Generational consciousness involves the development of collective mentalities that mirror a dominant view of the world, reflecting similar attitudes and values and providing a basis for shared action. These mentalities lead to 'continuing practice', meaning that the defining values formed collectively by a generational group will continue to influence the behaviour of individuals throughout their lives.

At the same time, Mannheim stressed that not every chronological contemporaneity will develop an original and distinctive generational consciousness. Whether a generation succeeds in developing a distinctive consciousness is significantly dependent on the tempo of social change: in periods of rapid social change a generation would be much more likely to develop a cohesive mentality (Pilcher 1994).

However, differentiation also takes place within a generation. People who are in direct contact with each other, with experiences, life trajectories, subsistence strategies, and/or values that differ from the generational norm, form generational units (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928]; Corsten 1999). As a result, members of the same cohort are internally stratified (by their class, culture, etc.) and may be differently positioned within their generation, thus they may view different events from different angles.

The theory of intergenerational value change was developed by Roland Inglehart (1977; 1997) and is based on notions of scarcity and socialisation. According to Inglehart's theory, major historical events bring about changes in the foundation of the existing social order and societal value systems, and consequently give birth to new generation cohorts. According to the Inglehart's scarcity hypothesis, the greatest subjective value is placed on the socioeconomic resources that are in short supply during the cohort's youth. According to his socialisation hypothesis, the socioeconomic conditions of their childhood and adolescence are reflected in the cohort's basic values. These value orientations are supposed to remain relatively stable throughout one's lifetime.

Strauss & Howe (1991) point to the tension arising from value differences between generations that define and separate them. They differentiate two basic types of era – crises and awakenings, both of which form radically different social environments. Crises are characterised by societal restructuring (reorganisation of the outer world of institutions and public behaviour); awakenings are periods marked by cultural or religious renewal when society focuses on changing its internal world values and private behaviour. An example of a crisis period is WWII, and the consciousness revolution of the 1960s and 1970s is an example of awakening period in the USA. During crises, strong institutional order, societal consensus, and values of personal sacrifice are promoted, whereas awakening periods promote individualistic values together with new social and spiritual ideals.

Mannheim did not specify how to study generational consciousness, he only referred to the importance of the interpretation of word meanings as a central task of the sociology of knowledge (Pilcher 1994). We attempt to approach the phenomenon of generation consciousness through the empirical study of value preferences.

Values

Values are general regulators of social relations and human activities, indicating both the relevant goals (orientations) and the socially accepted ways of attaining these goals. In this respect, they function both as shared meanings (promoted by official ideology, dominant representations, and discourses) and as individual regulators in personal life worlds. Value priorities are formed in the course of primary socialisation and during adaptations to changing societal contexts. Empirical research into human values has proceeded along several streams.

In studies based on Inglehart's conceptualisation of values and the revised version of his modernisation theory (Inglehart & Baker 2000), values are grouped

along two relevant dimensions that characterise polarisation: (1) traditionalism versus rationalism/secularism and (2) materialism (survival values) versus post-materialism (self-expression values). The first dimension is related to the process of modernisation, the other to the transition from an industrial society to a post-industrial society – which brings a polarisation between the weight accorded to survival and that given to self-expression. Self-expression values give high priority to freedom of speech, environmental protection, tolerance of diversity, trust, social participation, hedonism, self-realisation, and quality of life; these values reflect a cultural shift that is emerging among generations who grew up in welfare societies, who take survival for granted. The main determinant of post-materialistic value change is the subjective sense of security, which depends on material wellbeing, societal stability, political stability, high life expectancy and other macro-societal factors.

Western societies turned toward post-materialist values in the 1970s after they achieved a considerable welfare level following World War II. In Eastern Europe the development was more ambiguous. On the one hand, economic development was not so rapid, while on the other, certain post-materialist values, for example social solidarity and general self-development, were propagated as part of the hegemonic ideological system (Inglehart & Baker 2000). The sense of security as the basis for non-materialist values was supported by the system of social guarantees during socialism (a minimal income, free education, and medical services were available to everyone). According to sociological surveys, the dominant value pattern of late socialism has been characterised as 'pseudo-post-materialistic'. The majority of people were oriented towards social and altruistic values instead of pragmatic and individualistic values (Saarniit 1995).

Data from World Value Surveys 1981–2007 (Estonia has participated in the survey since 1990) enables us to compare the Estonian position with other countries. Similarly to Protestant Western European countries and countries with experience of communist rule, Estonia is high on the rationalism/secularism scale (as opposed to traditionalist values) and, similarly to other Eastern European former socialist countries, low on the post-materialism scale, with a relatively high rating of scarcity values (Inglehart & Welzel 2005). Inglehart (2006) explains it as the ideological effect of socialist anticlericalism and the experience of material scarcity during socialism. During the first period of transition (1990–1996), the position of Estonia shifted even more in the direction of materialism, most remarkably among the middle-aged generation (Toomere 2001). Such a shift backwards to survival values reflects the growing sense of insecurity caused by the collapse of the previous political and economic system and growing economic hardships (Inglehart & Baker 2000). Widening consumption

opportunities occupied people's attention and supported the development of a materialist orientation.

Another widely used theoretical model of basic human values, as well as instrument of measurement, was elaborated by Schwartz. We are going to apply this theory exclusively as our empirical material from the European Social Survey is based on it. According to this approach, values are special kinds of belief – those that organise other beliefs. Milton Rokeach (1973) defined values as the guiding principles in the life of an individual or a group. He distinguished the following characteristic features of values: (1) values represent significant goals or generalised inner standards; (2) values are ordered according to their relative importance, forming a relatively stable system; (3) the system of values serves as a standard for forming and expressing attitudes, selecting and rationalising actions. Thus values form a meta-system with a regulative impact on more specific attitudes and behaviours. Schwartz presented a classification of values based on their presumable motivational goals. He also differentiated between individual or societal perspectives for purposes of creating that classification.

On the level of individual values, Schwartz (1992) distinguishes between ten (motivational) value types – hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, security, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition, power and achievement. The core motivational goal of each value type can be found in Figure 1.

According to Schwartz, there is also a universal structure of dynamic relations among the basic values, which are organised with the help of two (presumably) orthogonal dimensions: from self-transcendence/altruism (embracing the welfare of others) to self-enhancement/egoism (emphasising one's own interests), and from openness to change (accepting change, risk and unpredictability) to conservatism (preservation of the status quo) (Schwartz 1992).

Based on relationships of these kinds, basic values form a circular structure as seen in Figure 2, where more similar value types (like stimulation and hedonism) are close to each other and conflicting value types (like power and benevolence) appear on opposite sides. Pursuing one type of value will always conflict with other types on the opposite side of the circle.

For data collection, Schwartz (1992) first used a 57-item questionnaire (Schwartz Value Survey – SVS) with abstract value labels in which respondents had to evaluate the importance of each value on a 9-point scale. Later, a new 40-item Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) was developed (Schwartz 2003), in which respondents had to evaluate their similarity with people described using a 6-point scale, from "not like me at all" to "very much like me". The PVQ was less abstract than the SVS and therefore usable for a wider population. A shortened version of this questionnaire (PVQ-21) is also included in the ESS and used in the

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Figure 1. Definitions of the motivational types of values in terms of their core goal

Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
Achievement	Personal success through demonstration of competence according to social standards.
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, challenge in life.
Self-direction	Independent thought and action choice, creating, exploring.
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.

Source: Davidov et al 2008, 424

Figure 2. Circular structure of the basic value theory of Schwartz
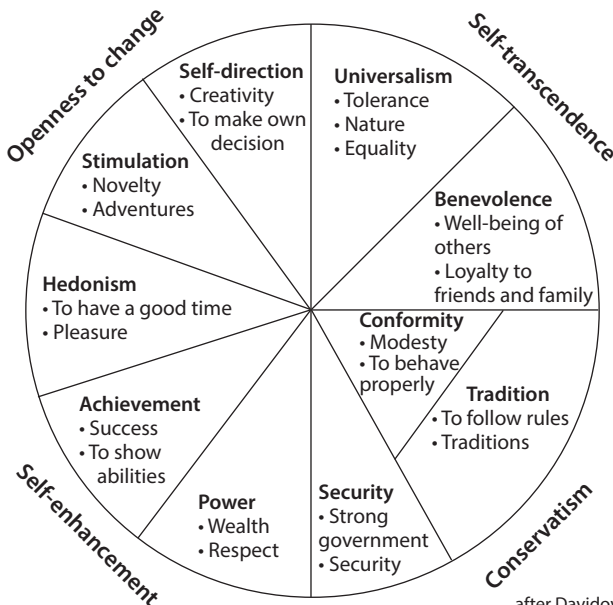
Source:
after Davidov et al 2008, 425

**Figure 3. Question formulations for the PVQ-21 value scale,
with abbreviations and value type affiliations**

Here we briefly describe some people. How much is each person like or not like you?

Question formulation	Abbreviation	Value type
1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.	Creativity	Self-direction
2. It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.	Wealth	Power
3. He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.	Equality	Universalism
4. It's important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.	To show abilities	Achievement
5. It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.	Security	Security
6. He likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.	Novelty	Stimulation
7. He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.	To follow rules	Conformity
8. It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.	Tolerance	Universalism
9. It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself.	Modesty	Tradition
10. Having a good time is important to him. He likes to 'spoil' himself.	To have a good time	Hedonism
11. It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and not depend on others.	To make own decisions	Self-direction
12. It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.	Well-being of others	Benevolence
13. Being very successful is important to him. He hopes people will recognise his achievements.	Success	Achievement
14. It is important to him that the government ensures his safety against all threats. He wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.	Strong Government	Security
15. He looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He wants to have an exciting life.	Adventures	Stimulation
16. It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	To behave properly	Conformity
17. It is important to him to get respect from others. He wants people to do what he says.	Respect	Power

CONTINUATION: Figure 3. Question formulations...

Question formulation	Abbreviation	Value type
18. It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.	Loyalty to friends and family	Benevolence
19. He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.	Nature	Universalism
20. Tradition is important to him. He tries to follow the customs handed down by his religion or his family.	Traditions	Tradition
21. He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.	Pleasure	Hedonism

Source: after Schwartz 2003, 284

current analysis. Each of these 21 questions is an indicator of a certain value type, as described on Figure 2 (for example wealth and respect are power-related values). In this chapter, the indicators are mainly viewed independently; the exact description of each value question can be found in Figure 3.

As values function as cultural devices aimed at control and social regulation – at the same time providing a framework for making sense of individual lives – they form distinct patterns in certain macro-social contexts (Raudsepp et al 2013). For example, highly competitive liberal capitalism is characterised by a value pattern high in the individual mastery and group embeddedness, and low in the harmony, intellectual autonomy, and egalitarianism orientations among the culture level values. On the individual level, competitive liberal capitalism promotes a high level of achievement, conformity, and power value types combined with a low importance for universalism and self-direction value types (Schwartz 2007). The stability of one's value structure is relative: extreme changes in societal conditions promote changes in the aggregate value priorities of individuals. Therefore, the transition from a Soviet to a post-Soviet frame of reference involves a shift in the normative hierarchy of values. Abstract and universalistic notions of universal solidarity, cooperation, collective interests, and other social values were replaced by the priority of individualistic values like individual interest, individual effectiveness, success, competition, and particular group interests. Value socialisation occurs not only during the formative years in these cases, but over an individual life span, as recent empirical studies on value changes among migrants in Europe demonstrate (Rudnev 2014).

Changes in the Estonian value structure in the post-socialist period

The earliest studies with the Schwartz value instrument in Estonia were conducted during the decline of socialism in the 1990s (e.g. Schwartz & Bardi 1997). Cross-national comparisons of Estonian teacher and student samples demonstrated similarities to other Eastern European matched samples, and differences from Western European samples in terms of the low priority of mastery and affective autonomy values, and the high importance of conservative values. As these studies include only teacher and student samples, their results cannot be generalised for the whole population, but they still give a good comparison with other countries and describe well the value preferences of young people and their teachers, who have an important role in shaping youth values. People socialised under socialism put less emphasis on getting ahead through active self-assertion by changing and mastering the natural and social environments. They placed a lower priority on an individual's independent pursuit of affectively positive experience (enjoying life, an exciting life, pleasure, a varied life). On the other hand, compared to people socialised in Western democracies, they put more emphasis on the status quo, propriety, and restraint of actions or inclinations that might disrupt the solidarity of the group or the traditional order (cleanliness, devotion, family, security, forgiveness, honouring of parents, national security, obedience, politeness, reciprocation of favours, respect of tradition, self-discipline, social order). People in Eastern European countries were high on utilitarian involvement, conservatism, and the acceptance of a paternalistic hierarchical system of ascribed roles, as opposed to an emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities. Basic value priorities prevalent in Eastern Europe were conservatism and hierarchy. Least important were egalitarian, mastery, and autonomy values. The results of several empirical studies (Verkasalo et al 1994; Spini 1997; Sagiv & Schwartz 2000; Niit 2002) indicate that in the 1990s people faced with a post-socialist reality devalued former socialist (rhetorical) ideals (fraternity, solidarity, equality, etc.) and adopted a more individualistic value pattern that better suited adaptation to the harsh reality of early capitalism.

A comparison of value patterns in Estonia and Sweden in 1991–1995 (Lauristin et al 1997) showed a systematic decline in the importance of universalistic values and an increasing hedonistic and individualistic orientation among Estonians. More changes were observed among the Estonian Russian-speakers, with values changing in different directions among older and younger Russian respondents in contrast to other more similar changes among different generations of Estonians. Kalmus and Vihalemm (2004, 34) remarked on the general value change in the 1991–2003 period, stating that more importance had been given to values

related to hedonism, close interpersonal relations and self-assertion, or indicators of individual emancipation from previous normative pressures. Individualistic-emancipatory values dominated over collectivistic and universalistic values among young and affluent groups (the 'winners' of the transition), while older respondents emphasise more highly collectivistic and universalistic values. Thus the transition from the Soviet world to the Western world has entailed a fundamental shift in value structures of people living in Estonia, although the change is not identical for all social groups – people who have different ethno-linguistic backgrounds or who were socialised under different circumstances adapt to the changes differently.

In addition to differences in the value structures of Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers in Estonia (Masso & Vihalemm 2003; Rudnev 2009; Lilleoja & Tart 2011; Tulviste et al 2013), there also seems to be a clear differentiation based on gender (Rämmer 2006; Kalmus 2010) and education (Lilleoja & Tart 2011). Furthermore, in Estonia and in the world, the most significant factor predicting value preferences is age (Schwartz 1994; Niit 2002; Kalmus & Vihalemm 2004; Schwartz & Rubel 2005), which is expressed through the universal trend of the young being more individualistic and the old more collectivistic.

Age group differences in value priorities

Tart (2011) notes that the relationship between value priorities and age is relatively linear. The generally accepted trend is that an increase in age results in a higher appreciation of altruism and the preservation of the status quo, whereas younger respondents appreciate values expressing individualism more highly.

Age group differences in life values reflect different underlying processes related to socialisation and life cycle. Birth cohorts (generations) as units of socialisation are important factors of value change in society (Inglehart 1990). Hypothetically, value priorities that are formed during early socialisation are most stable; generational collective memory retains these value patterns during later changes, forming the basis of generational collective identity. The most sensitive period for stabilisation of personal value hierarchies is the primary socialisation of the first decades of life. Societal and family context during this period has greatest influence on individual value systems. Generations growing up in stability and affluence have different value priorities compared to generations who grow during wars and social upheavals, which promote feelings of existential insecurity (de Graaf & Evans 1996). Therefore, the resulting value patterns reflect a relatively stable component of early socialisation and changing components of continuous adaptation to the changing societal context.

A general cultural shift occurs through the mechanism of generation replacement. World Value Survey results indicate that

> throughout central and eastern Europe, the younger generations place markedly greater emphasis on self-expression values than do the older generations. In the long run, the process of intergenerational population replacement is working to make these values more widespread. Their progress will be greatly enhanced insofar as economic recovery and political stability are attained (Inglehart 2006, 84).

In Estonia, the individual and intra-cohort stability of value hierarchies has been recorded in longitudinal studies (e.g. Titma et al 1990; Titma 1999; 2001). A notable inter-cohort value change in the direction of pragmatism and individualism was recorded in the 1980s (Saarniit 1995). Studies using Schwartz's value survey data have noted an intergenerational gap because of the increasing individualism of younger people (a hedonistic, consumeristic, and self-assertive orientation) and the increasing collectivism of older people (Kalmus & Vihalemm 2004). Lilleoja (2012), analysing inter-cohort value differences based on European Value Survey 2004–2010, recorded a value shift towards greater individualism (greater importance of self-direction, hedonism, stimulation, achievement) in the cohort born of the 1980s, which was socialised during the sharp societal system change.

While most value studies have confirmed the age differences mentioned through value preferences, there are not many studies concentrating on generational differences and, based on our knowledge, there are no studies that deliberately focus on narrower birth cohorts. Yet it is known that age differences in value orientations are not purely the effect of life circle; there are also significant cohort effects (Hellevik 2002; Hitlin & Piliavin 2004).

As all studies using Estonian data and comparing broader age groups have identified clear distinctions between young and old respondents (Vihalemm & Kalmus 2009; Lilleoja & Tart 2011), it is reasonable to expect generation or cohort-based differences.

The main difference between the age group and the cohort is that age groups are formed according to respondents' ages during the survey, while generations and birth cohorts integrate people born at the same time and living under the same historical circumstances. Generations and birth cohorts therefore form more meaningful bases for comparisons.

Another challenge is defining the boundaries of the cohort as that there is no one common practice. For example, Inglehart has used birth cohorts as follows: before 1905, 1905–1915, 1916–1925, etc. (Inglehart 1997, 136; Inglehart & Welzel

**Figure 4. Sample distribution of different age cohorts,
for Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers**

Birth years	1907–1939	1940–1949	1950–1959	1960–1969	1970–1979	1980–1989	1990–1995	Total
Estonian-speakers								
No. of respondents	1,168	974	1,057	1,013	988	1,039	425	**6,664**
Percentage	17.5	14.6	15.9	15.2	14.8	15.6	6.4	**100**
Russian-speakers								
No. of respondents	485	344	497	414	337	429	114	**2,620**
Percentage	18.5	13.1	19.0	15.8	12.9	16.4	4.4	**100**

2005, 101). Considering the particularly turbulent history of Estonia, we suppose that ten years is long enough to provide the birth cohorts sufficiently different historical and social context, and because many significant changes coincided with the change of decades, full decades seem to be in this case the most suitable units to define cohorts. This classification is also largely in line with Aili Aarelaid-Tart's (2012) arguments.

Data

This study is based on Estonian data from the European Social Survey, including 6664 Estonian-speakers and 2620 (28.2%) Russian-speakers (28.2% of all respondents; their proportion in the population was 29.6%, in 2011 (Statistics Estonia)). The data was collected in the years 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012. The samples are representative of the Estonian population from age 15. Figure 4 includes the total number and relative proportion of different age cohorts among Estonian- and Russian-speaking respondents.

Results: cohort-specific value patterns during the new millennium

The following analysis describes different birth cohorts through patterns of basic human values. There are different ways to compare the value patterns. On the one hand, we could concentrate on values, which are most important for society as a whole, and then use a cohort-based comparison. On the other hand, we could focus on discrepancies in order to see which values hold the most distinctive importance for different cohorts. The third alternative would be to analyse each cohort's value structures independently – and this fits best with our research theme – while focusing on each group's peculiarities. Doing so enables

us to capture societal diversity and to look for the general patterns at the same time.

Based on numerous previous studies (for example Laitin 1998; Masso 2009; Lilleoja & Tart 2011; Lilleoja 2012), we will differentiate value patterns of Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers, who can be seen as separate cultural groups.

Figures 5 and 6 give an overview of cohort-specific value patterns for Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers. They include a comparison of centred mean estimates for 21 value indicators (see Figure 3 for a full overview) for 7 the different cohorts described earlier (people born before 1939, people born in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s).

The figures are organised according to the theoretical model of basic values, where motivationally similar values (for example equality and well-being of others) are side-by-side, and conflicting values (for example modesty and pleasure) are on the opposite side of the circle (Figure 2). The more important a certain value is for a given cohort on average, the further the line is from the centre (for example security and strong government are more important, while wealth is less important).

According to Figures 5 and 6, different cohorts perceive some values very similarly, like freedom to make one's own decisions or loyalty to friends and family, while there are clear distinctions for most of the other values.

Based on the assumption that societal developments are more influenced by values that are central for its members, in the first decade of the new millennium the core values for Estonian society are caring for the well-being of others, loyalty to family and friends, equality, tolerance (which all are essentially altruistic), and freedom to make one's own decisions. These values are equally important for all the cohorts and also for both ethnic groups, and therefore they act as a foundation for social coherence and as mediators for the sense of togetherness.

Other central values for Estonian society are also nature and security, but they are not equally important for all the cohorts. Several earlier value studies, including Estonian ones (for example Verkasalo et al 1994; Niit 2002; Kalmus & Vihalemm 2004), have revealed a linear relationship between age and those two values, as they tend to become more important with increasing age. There is support for the identification of this tendency in the given data.

Other value types, like power (wealth), stimulation, hedonism, achievement, conformity, and tradition, hold different importance for different birth cohorts, but in general, they are less relevant for Estonian inhabitants.

Figure 5. Comparison of Estonian-speaking cohort value hierarchies

Lower number shows less relevance

Cohorts by birth year

— 1907–39
— 1940–49
— 1950–59
— 1960–69
— 1970–79
— 1980–89
— 1990–95
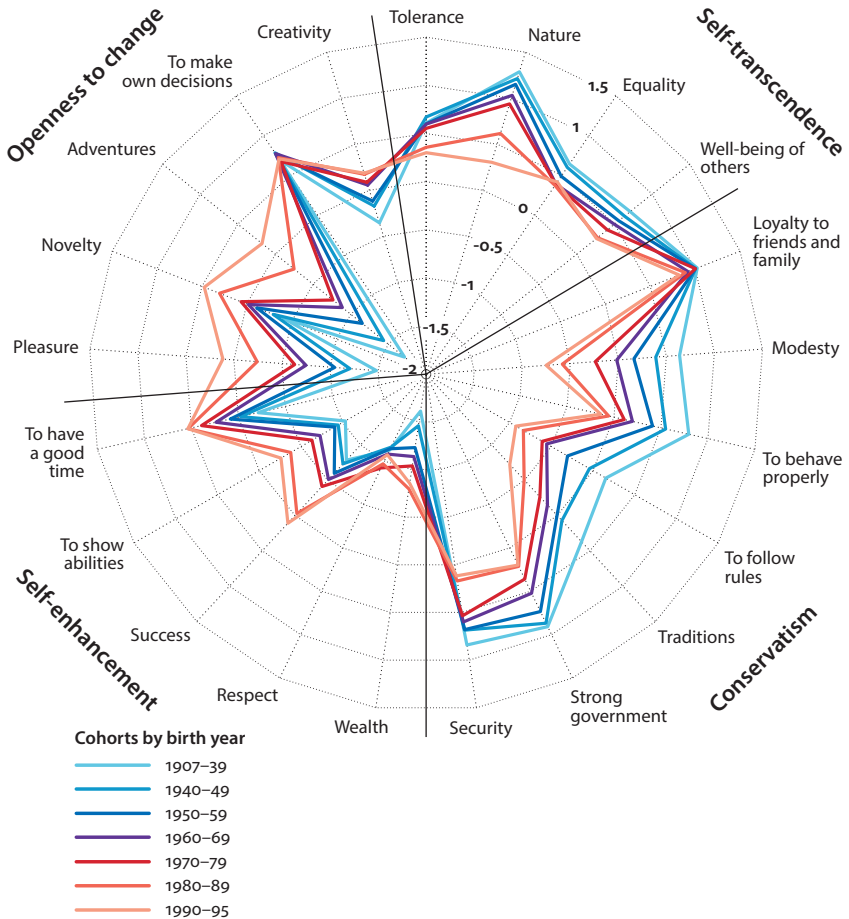
Cohort effect versus age effect

As mentioned earlier, it is possible that the differences seen in Figures 5 and 6 are caused by age differences rather than cohort effects.

Based on a cross-section of data from the ESS, the easiest way to distinguish the age and cohort effects on value preferences is to compare group means of

Figure 6. Comparison of Russian-speaking cohort value hierarchies

Lower number shows less relevance
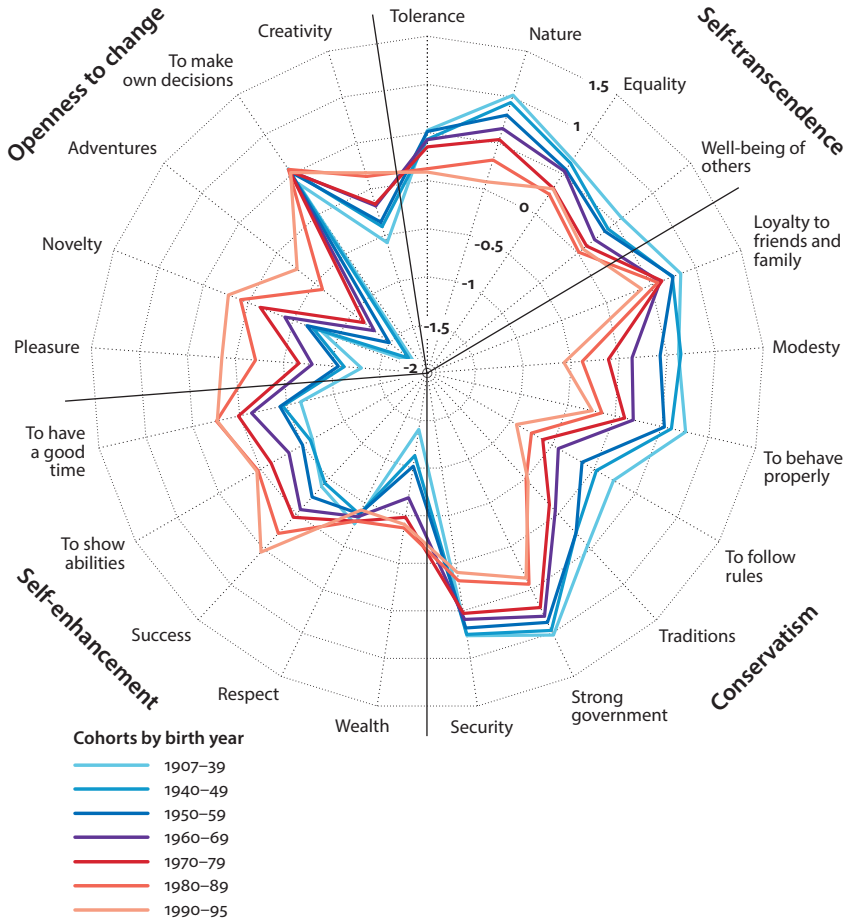
respondents from the same cohort who appear in different age groups (Realo & Dobewall 2011). As there is data for an 8-year period, the respondents from most cohorts appear in three (members of first and last cohort in two) age groups, as seen in Figures 7 and 8. Figure 7 compares average scores for Estonian- and Russian-speakers on bipolar axes of conservatism versus openness, and Figure 8

Figure 7. Intra-cohort trajectories of conservatism versus openness to change across lifespan
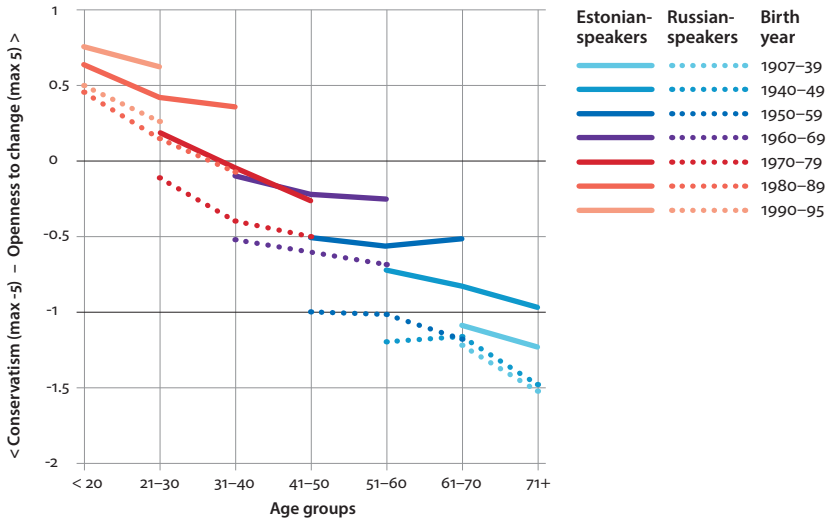
Figure 8. Intra-cohort trajectories of self-enhancement versus self-transcendence across lifespan
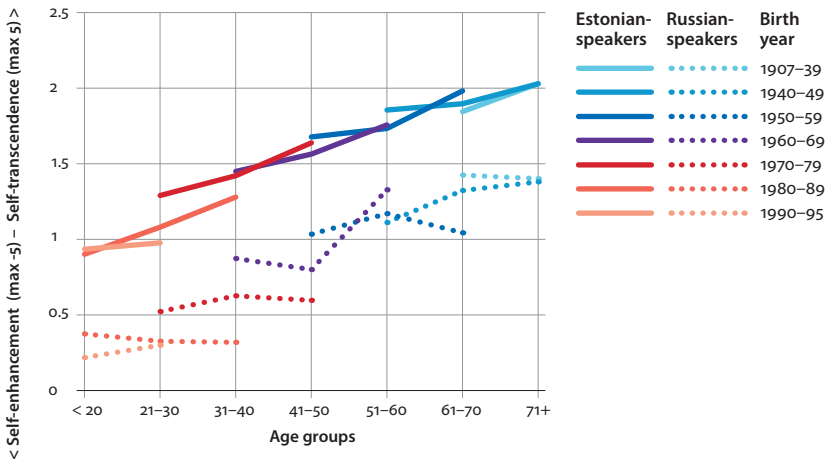
on bipolar axes of self-transcendence (altruism) versus self-enhancement (egoism).

Both figures confirm that at least in the case of Estonia there is indeed a cohort-based difference in value preferences. Although for some of the cohorts the differences are rather small (like the cohorts born in 1960s and 1970s), mainly they are significant and confirm the differences seen in Figures 5 and 6.

When comparing the scores of respondents of the same age, those belonging to the younger cohort tend to show they are systematically more open to change, irrespective of ethnicity. On the self-enhancement versus self-transcendence axis, the cohort effect is less uniform: while for Estonian-speakers, the inter-cohort differentiation is rather small, for Russian-speakers it is much more significant, although it varies across lifespan. For both ethno-linguistic groups, respondents born in the 1970s are clearly directed more to self-transcendence than those born in the 1980s. For Russian-speakers the same trend holds for a comparison of the 1960s and 1970s cohorts. It also becomes apparent that value preferences of same-aged Estonian- and Russian-speakers differ much more on the self-transcendence versus self-enhancement scale (Estonian-speakers being more directed to self-transcendence), than on the conservatism versus openness to change scale (where Estonian-speakers are slightly more inclined towards openness to change).

Birth cohorts and value patterns

The structure of basic values for each birth cohort will be analysed next, starting from people born in the Republic of Estonia before World War II and ending with the youngest generation, born after the re-independence of Estonia in 1991. Those born in the Soviet period are divided into cohort groups based on their birth decade.

The pre-war cohort

The oldest cohort was born in the 1920s and 1930s – the childhood of Estonian-speakers occurred during interwar independent Estonia, a young nation state oriented towards Europe, while the majority of the immigrant Russian-speakers spent their childhood under very different ideology and social conditions in the emerging Soviet Union. Regardless of ethnicity, members of this cohort all share the memories of World War II.

For Estonians born in the pre-war Republic of Estonia, the most important value is predominantly nature, which is followed by loyalty and devotion to close people, and then both personal and societal security (strong government;

Figure 5). A caring attitude towards nature is certainly related to a person's age, but for those who have had to suffer greatly over their long life course and have had to adapt to constant changes in society, nature can also be the single stable element that frames their whole existence. It is also important to recall that before World War II, most Estonians were rural people, and that urbanisation took place during the Soviet period. Loyalty to friends is universally important for all age groups, but for the given cohort, broad life experience has probably added extra dimensions. High scores for security, but also for the importance of traditions and customs can, in addition to age, be directly related with discordant societal turns influencing their lives.

Other more significant values for the cohort born in the 1920s and 1930s are the well-being of others, equality, and modesty. These express self-transcendent perspectives while at the same time highlighting a person's freedom to make their own decisions, which is probably amplified by historical circumstances. This is a cohort for whom the active part of life is over, leaving their personal ambitions in the background; and – which is particularly noteworthy – material values (wealth) are also relatively unimportant for them. This cohort also stands out with a relatively high score on tolerance, which in addition to age disparities can also be related to the concept of "tolerant nationalism", which has been pointed out by interviewed respondents born in the 1920s (Raudsepp 2012).

Therefore, the older cohort of Estonian-speakers can be described through altruistic and traditional values. They also value the freedom to make their own decisions, although for them such freedom is a societal benefit, rather than individualistic self-expression, which is the meaning that differs from the younger cohorts "I'll do what I want" understanding of freedom.

The oldest generation included in the current analyses was mainly born in the 1920s and 1930s. This group shares the "Republic period" values shaped by the constant societal changes throughout the 20th century (cf Raudsepp 2012; Kõresaar 2005).

While analysing the basic values of Russian-speakers born in the same period (before 1939), a more or less similar structure can be identified (Figure 6), which illustrates the universality of basic values. As 90% of Russian-speakers 65 or older living in Estonia were born outside Estonia, in addition to cultural-linguistic distinctions, they were also socialised in a different kind of society, which surely has an effect on their value structures. For example, they value relatively more societal security, which holds the same importance as nature, and probably reflects their larger insecurity in the current social reality, and for many of them can also be related to harsher war experiences (the Siege of Leningrad, etc.). This assumption is also supported by higher scores for power and achievement. However, the

importance of wealth is perceived similarly to same-aged Estonians, placing it on the lowest position in their value hierarchy.

In comparing all the cohorts, the results expectedly demonstrated that in the case of Estonian-speakers as well as Russian-speakers, the oldest cohort contrast most with the youngest, who place much more importance on hedonistic (adventure, novelty, pleasure, good times) and achievement values (show abilities, achieve success, and respect) and much less importance on modesty, following the rules, traditions, and proper behaviour (conformity value type). Although the importance of security is perceived similarly by the oldest and youngest cohorts, the freedom to make one's own decisions is fundamentally essential for all cohorts.

The 1940s cohort

The 1940s cohort spent their childhood in the post-war Stalinist era. The years of becoming young adults (in the 1960s) were characterised for this cohort by cultural upheaval and social optimism in the Soviet Union, as well as some reflection on the radical youth movements and cultural changes in the West. This cohort has been characterised in several interview-based studies as the "generation of the sixties" (for example Aarelaid-Tart 2006; 2012; see also Aarelaid-Tart in this volume).

Our analysis shows that the most important values of those born during or just after the war (in the years 1940–1949) are the same as for those born before the war: nature, loyalty, and societal security (strong government). At the same time they place relatively more importance on the freedom to make one's own decisions and less importance on personal security. The centrality of the ideals of freedom seems to be easily explained as opposition to totalitarian regimes, like that established by Stalin, and probably reflects the influence of the 'rebellious 60s' as an important formative factor for this generation.

In the first decade of the new millennium members of this cohort were mainly in their 60s. Most of them had become grandparents, and a few who were still working were looking forward to retiring soon. Although their formal careers were ending, they had vitality, and the new social position of retiree gave many of them new routes to self-realisation that were not accessible during their work lives. However, their attitudes are not individualistic (Lilleoja & Tart 2011); rather, they try to adapt to the conditions set by society.

For the 1940s cohort of Russian-speakers (of whom around one-fifth were born in Estonia) the most important values are same as those of the previous cohort, and similarly to their Estonian peers they place relatively more

importance on freedom, which seems to indicate that experiences under totalitarian regimes affect value priorities regardless of ethnic background. At the same time, compared with the older cohort, Russian-speakers born in the 1940s value more hedonistic values, which illustrates the importance of their personal well-being and follows the universal trend of every younger cohort being more hedonistic than the last.

The 1950s cohort

The 1950s cohort was born into a more stable world compared to the older cohorts. The youth of this cohort extended through the optimistic 1960s into the mature socialism of the 1970s. There are hardly any studies focussed on this birth cohort in Estonia, although it has been characterised among others in some interview-based studies (for example Aarelaid-Tart 2006).

Although the role of formal institutions was to shape each child into a real Soviet citizen, many homes still secretly maintained the 'old values'. This might be one reason why the value structure of the 1950s cohort does not differ much from that of the 1940s cohort (Figure 5). The value hierarchy of the 1950s cohort is again exemplified by nature and loyalty to friends and family, followed by societal security, the freedom to make one's own decisions, and conformity (modesty and behaving properly).

While during the time of the survey members of the 1940s cohort were mainly retired, members of 1950s cohort were in their 50s. Therefore, the first decade of the new millennium was for them still a socially active period, and as the children were already grown up, they had more time for both themselves and their careers. The latter relates to the higher score given for achievement values. Around one-third of the Russian-speakers of the 1950s cohort were born in Estonia. Our analysis reveals that they are again rather similar to the cohort born a decade earlier (Figure 6), valuing security and nature most highly. However, interestingly, they also emphasise tradition (especially when taking into account the age effect), which usually relates strongly to lifespan and therefore should be less important for every younger cohort. Irina Paert (2013, see also in this volume) has written about a specific group within Estonian society, members of the Russian Orthodox Church, the majority of whom were born in the 1950s and 1960s. For many of them, the shift of regime brought much insecurity, which in turn became a stimulus for joining the church. This fact could therefore also be one explanation for the higher valuation of tradition in this cohort. Compared with the older cohort they also value more tolerance and success slightly more, and modesty less.

When comparing Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers in the 1950s cohort (Figures 7 and 8), the latter group tends to be more conservative and less altruistic.

The 1960s cohort

The 1960s cohort was socialised in a more stable Soviet society. Over decades, contact with the world behind the Iron Curtain increased, which influenced Estonian culture; in a way, such contact also related to larger social developments, leading in Czechoslovakia to the events of the Prague Spring in 1968. Stable decades of mature socialism were replaced by turbulent years of perestroika at the end of 1980s, marking the young adult period of this cohort.

This cohort belongs to the "generation of winners" (Titma 1999) (for details see Saar & Kazjulja in this volume). For Estonians born in the 1960s, the most important values are again nature and loyalty to friends and family (Figure 5). However, equally important for them is the freedom to make their own decisions. Other core values for them are personal and societal security, tolerance, the well-being of others, and equality. Similarly to older cohorts, they consider respect and wealth unimportant, which indicates that their relatively dominant societal position offers more possibilities to focus on personal relationships and requires less concern for material circumstances. Higher scores for the hedonistic values support this assumption too. This group also attaches less importance to following the rules, which is expected as it conflicts with the freedom to make one's own decisions. Their individualistic image in society is associated with higher scores in the importance of ability and being successful values.

The value hierarchy of Russian-speakers born in the 1960s (of whom more than half were born in Estonia) is led again by the value of strong government, which is an indicator for societal security. This confirms the hypothesis about the larger societal insecurity among Russian-speakers compared with Estonian-speakers. Higher scores for achievement and power value types seem in this case to refer more specifically to insecure labour market positioning as well. Lower scores for stimulation values, which contrast with security values, support these assumptions. Compared with older Russian-speaking cohorts, Russian-speakers born in the 1960s are much less conservative (Figure 7), and value hedonism and wealth more highly.

The 1970s cohort

The 1970s cohort was born during the 'glory days' of so-called real socialism. After the developments in 1968, the state strengthened its grip. The youth years of this

cohort are marked by the national liberation movement of the 1980s, the end of the Cold War, and regime change at the beginning of 1990s.

Estonians belonging to the 1970s cohort also considered the freedom to make their own decisions, and nature, to be very important, but unlike older cohorts, for them the most important value is loyalty to friends and family. In general, they are very similar to the 1960s cohort, placing slightly more importance on hedonistic and stimulation values, and less on personal and societal security, which on the one hand fits with the general age-based trend in which every younger age group is more individualistic, and on the other hand with their life experiences. This cohort is a generation whose childhood passed with limited opportunities, followed by a sudden disappearance of borders and uncertain social circumstances; they had to manage without clear guidelines, improvise, and take risks. Raili Nugin (2011) has described this cohort as people who are used to constantly confronting new challenges and who put trust in themselves rather than in formal institutions.

The Russian-speakers living in Estonia of the 1970s cohort, of whom four-fifths were born in Estonia, consider strong government and loyalty to friends and family to be the most important values, and pleasure and adventures the least important (Figure 6). Based on their value scores, they put much more emphasis on self-advancement values (stressing achievement and power value types) than Estonian-speakers from the same cohort (Figure 8). These structural differences refer again, as with the 1960s cohort, to societal instability and institutional dissatisfaction. These tendencies can be related to integration issues – the social distance between Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers has remained large over the years (Lilleoja & Tart 2011), which is usually explained with the claim that the majority of Russian-speakers living in Estonia are still strongly influenced by Russian media (Vihalemm 2008). Consequently, the less educated part of this group, who do not speak Estonian, frequently experiences social exclusion, reflected in poorer labour market positioning (Leping & Toomet 2008).

The 1980s cohort

The childhood of those born in the 1980s fell within the era of perestroika; societal optimism was accompanied by increased birth rates. Despite lower access to resources in their early years, the active period of their lives started in a completely new Estonia.

While the 1980s cohort spent their childhood in the final period of the Soviet Union, their active lives started in conditions of emerging democracy. In addition to this categorisation, this cohort can also be described as a digital generation

(Buckingham & Willett 2006; see also Kalmus et al 2013 and Kalmus in this volume).

The importance of the freedom to decide for themselves is for the 1980s cohort even more important than nature and is outweighed only by loyalty to friends and family (Figure 5). They also consider equality and tolerance among fundamental values for them, reflecting their accordance with the values of a liberal and open society. As hedonism and stimulation are almost as important as security for them, it can be argued that the 1980s cohort feels comfortable in the present social environment. Compared with the 1970s cohort, they value achievement more, which can be related with the structural particularities of the Estonian labour market; education is often outweighed by work experience and therefore career opportunities for labour market entrants are frequently limited. Like all the other Estonian cohorts, wealth and respect are considered unimportant. These tendencies match with their own conclusions (Nugin 2011) – their career ambitions do not indicate a thirst for power and a hefty wallet, but can also be seen as a striving towards self-realisation or as a way to find one's self. It is interesting that the respondents born in the 1970s have seen the next generation as more dependent on external regulations (op cit), while in our study, the 1980s cohort itself considers following the rules not at all important.

When comparing the value structure of Russian-speakers from the 1980s cohort (of whom nine-tenths were born in Estonia) with Estonian-speakers, we can see a much larger similarity than in the case of the older cohorts. They both consider loyalty and the freedom to make one's own decisions the most important values, while following the rules is not at all important. Larger differences appear again in achievement and power value types, which are much more important for Russian-speakers than Estonians of the same cohort.

The 1990s cohort

The youngest cohort was born in re-independent Estonia; their socialisation has taken place in the context of emerging liberal capitalism within Estonia and increasing openness to the globalising world.

For this cohort, who have lived all their lives in a democratic society, the most important values are loyalty to friends and family, and freedom. Novelty and equality are more important for them than nature and tolerance, while the least important values are wealth, following the rules, and respect. Thus the 1990s cohort is clearly more individualistic than the older cohorts, although it respects self-transcendence values as well.

For the 1990s cohort Russian-speakers, of whom almost everyone was born in Estonia, the most important values are success, freedom to make one's own decisions, and loyalty to friends and family. Taking into account the high score for wealth and respect, a large value gap on self-enhancement between ethnic groups among the youngest cohort is revealed. One explanation may be that Russian-speakers stress the values they strive for in the context of a perceived lack of opportunities in Estonian society, which is alarming in the context of societal coherence.

Comparing the two younger cohorts of Russian-speakers with each other, the differences are not as clear as one would expect. The 1990s cohort attaches more value to adventures, pleasure and success, while nature is much less important for them; this said, all the other perceptions are rather similar, so that these two cohorts seem to be the most similar of all the cohorts. One factor that increases the homogeneity of their value perceptions is probably the fact that the majority of Russian-speakers of the 1980s and 1990s cohorts were born in Estonia and therefore were socialised in a similar cultural environment.

Comparison of different cohorts in Estonia

The following analysis finds similarities between different cohorts based on their rank-ordered values (for each cohort, 21 value indicators are ordered based on their centred mean scores) using hierarchical cluster analysis. Based on similarity of value ranks in sequential fashion, hierarchical cluster analysis produces a decreasing number of nested arrangements of objects (cohort categories). We used the Ward method for clustering and squared Eucleidian distances as a similarity measure. Value structures of Estonian-speaker and Russian-speaker cohorts were analysed separately.

The results of a hierarchical clustering procedure are presented as a dendrogram in Figure 9, which shows the similarity or dissimilarity of the value rankings of the analysed cohorts. Cohorts that are more similar have linkage in the lower part of the scale; with each scale point, the difference increases.

Based on their rank-ordered value preferences or value profiles, Estonian inhabitants can be divided into 3 larger cohort groups: (1) Estonians born in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s; Estonians born in the 1960s and 1970s; and Russian-speakers born in the 1960s and 1970s, (2) Russian-speakers born in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, (3) and finally Russian-speakers born in the 1980s and 1990s, additionally differentiated by ethnic background (Figure 4). When looking at Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers separately, the cohorts converge similarly within both ethnic groups, as follows: (1) respondents born in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s,

Figure 9. Dendrogram of hierarchical cluster analysis of the value profiles of cohort groups

x-axis indicates avarage distance between clusters

EE – Estonian-speakers   RU – Russian-speakers
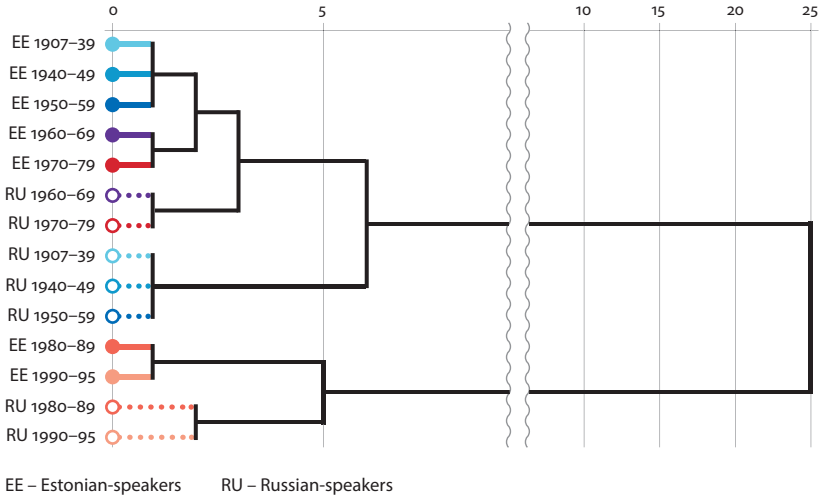
(2) respondents born in the 1960s and 1970s, and (3) respondents born in the 1980s and 1990s.

Another comparative analysis highlights the positions of different birth cohorts on higher-order value dimensions (self-enhancement versus self-transcendence, and conservatism versus openness to change – see the description of Schwartz's value system in the introduction).

In Figure 10 we can see roughly the same macro-division of generations as was produced by multiple correspondence analysis, but we can now characterise them in terms of value dimensions: (1) the oldest cohorts and the Russian-speaking cohort born in the 1940s form a separate generation group, being relatively conservative and quite strongly altruistic, (2) the Estonian-speaking cohort born in the 1940s and those born in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s are similar in being low in openness to change and intermediate in self-transcendence, (3) people born in the 1980s and 1990s differ from other cohorts by being relatively high in openness to change and intermediate in self-enhancement.

When trying to characterise these larger groups, which probably can also be seen as 'true' generations, we should go back to their formative years. Those born in the 1930s, 1940s, or 1950s spent their childhoods between 1930 and 1970,

Figure 10. Cohorts and higher-level value dimension response category similarities, based on multiple correspondence analyses

■ Conservatism (max -5) – Openness to change (max 5)
▲ Self-enhancement (max -5) – Self-transcendence (max 5)

Cohort							
Birth year	1907–39	1940–49	1950–59	1960–69	1970–79	1980–89	1990–95
Estonian-speakers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Russian-speakers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
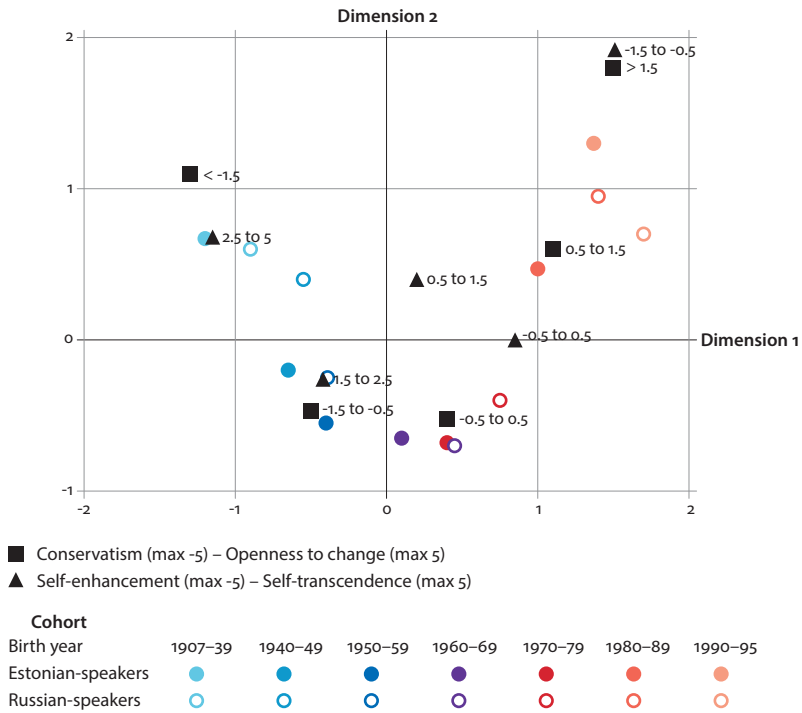
which covered the full range of divergent historical events. Therefore, despite the fact that these people were born in very different circumstances, they share similar Soviet life experiences and similar challenges in adapting to the new capitalist way of life, a shared history that has shaped their value structures to be relatively similar. Those born in the 1960s and 1970s spent all their formative years in the Soviet Union and were therefore socialised within the socialist ideology and norms. These years were characterised by relative economic stability, a rise in the level of education, perestroika, and the struggle for freedom in the 1980s, resulting in the collapse of the Soviet Union. They were in their most active years at the beginning of the transformation and therefore became the 'generation of winners', gaining most from this shift. The ethnic differences in values are a little

smaller among the cohorts of the 1960s and 1970s, which is partly related to the larger proportion of Russian-speakers who were born in Estonia.

Older Russian-speaking cohorts form a separate value cluster, which may be explained by their specific socialisation circumstances: most Russian-speakers belonging to the cohorts of 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were not born in Estonia and hence have very different socialisation experiences, although the differentiation continued after their relocation to Estonia. All newcomers were concentrated in industrial cities where they became workers in new factories; equally they inhabited new neighbourhoods with a low or non-existent Estonian presence. Therefore, they continued to live in their own cultural communities without becoming familiar with Estonians or Estonian culture.

The youngest cohorts, born during the 1980s and 1990s, have been socialised into liberal norms and practices and mainly lack or devalue Soviet experiences, while at the same time experienced the instability of the transition period. They embody cultural rupture, being the only generation that exclusively has the new worldview. Sharp differentiations of the value priorities of the youngest age groups from those of the older groups after 2003 were observed in a study using different empirical data (Raudsepp et al 2013). Such convergent results point to the dividing line between generations. Although the Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers born in the 1980s and 1990s have socialised in the same kind of society, they still have different value preferences, which in addition to other aspects, can also reflect different positioning in relation to similar external circumstances, calling the success of the integration process into question.

Discussion

According to modernisation theory, economic development, cultural change, and political change go together in a coherent and predictable manner (Inglehart 1997). Changes in value priorities accompany and reflect major socio-cultural changes; therefore, individual values can be used as markers of macro-social trends and ruptures. However, there is also inertia of values. Some aspects of values are stable over time, while others change more rapidly.

We have analysed the characteristics of value preferences in generation groups. Based on the profile of value preferences of different cohorts, Estonian inhabitants can be divided into three distinct groups: (a) those born in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, (b) those born in the 1960s and 1970s, and (c) those born in the 1980s and 1990s. On the basis of our empirical analysis we can therefore conclude that in terms of value preferences, social generations in Estonia should be defined according to wider chronological periods rather than a single decade

as only on this level different structures of meaning (value profiles) differentiate the generation groups.

On the most general level, the empirical division of generations confirms the model of crisis and awakening eras presented by Strauss & Howe (1991): those born in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s have experienced crisis periods (war and totalitarianism, austerity), those born in the 1960s and 1970s have grown up in a period of relative liberalisation and economic stability, and those born in the 1980s and 1990s have experienced both crisis (political and economic instability due to system change) and awakening (new beginnings). According to Strauss and Howe's theory, a crisis period with cataclysmic historical events promotes loyalty, conformism, respect for authorities, and a readiness to sacrifice oneself for the greater good, placing duty before pleasure. Or, to use Schwartz's terminology, promoting conservative and self-enhancement values. An awakening period, with its relative security, supports post-materialist values, or in Inglehart's terms idealism, hope, optimism, personal growth, and equality. But the influence of the specificity of Soviet socialisation should also be taken into account. The youngest generations may be different from all other cohorts simply because they are the only ones who do not have direct experience of Soviet socio-cultural reality and its socialisation influences.

On the whole, the value profiles of Estonian birth cohorts were not radically different and there is great overlapping of basic values among people of different ages. This latter fact indicates societal coherence and also that certain stereotypes of generation gaps are unsubstantiated. Of course, our study has its limitations, which is largely due to its quantitative approach: we established similarities and differences between generation cohorts on the aggregate level and not on the level of reflective generation consciousness. Generation markers are presented here as a generalised historical context, and not as perceived by members of particular cohorts.

Schwartz has compared his value system to the colour circle:

> According to my individual-level theory, value items are arrayed on a motivational continuum. That is, the motivations that values express form a circular structure like the colour circle. Like the colours in this circle, the motivations blend into one another. Just as one can partition the shades of the colour circle into red, green, blue, and so forth, one can partition the motivational circle into 10 values (2011, 310).

Following this analogy, we can imagine each generation as covering the whole spectrum, but still having its own specific shade of colour.

Summary

This chapter analysed the value structures of different Estonian birth cohorts, which enables a systematic comparison of the groups that have socialised under different conditions. While many previous studies have analysed the effect of age on values (Lilleoja & Tart 2011), our approach has shown the effect of birth cohort.

The binding values of Estonian society are caring for the well-being of others, loyalty to friends and family, equality, and tolerance, which are important for all the people in Estonia, irrespective of age or ethnicity. While in the national context freedom has always played an important role for Estonians, the decades of restrictive conditions has on the individual level raised the importance of the freedom to make one's own decisions. For other more central values, like nature, security, proper behaviour, and modesty, the scores differ based on birth decade. In general, the trend that younger generations tend to value self-enhancement and openness to change, and older generations the altruistic (self-transcendence) and conservative value dimensions, finds confirmation in Estonia, although the youngest cohort is still not entirely individualistic and the oldest cohort places importance on the freedom to make one's own decisions.

The value structures of Estonia include a clear cross-generational ethnic distinction: compared with Russian-speakers of the same age, the value perceptions of Estonian-speakers are slightly more altruistic and open to change. A similar differentiation also appears regarding the value change: during the first decade of the new millennium, the value-rating averages of Russian-speakers fluctuated much more than those among the Estonian-speakers. Russian-speakers born in the 1940s comprise the most unstable birth cohort in terms of value perceptions, in 2004 they were most similar to the Russian-speakers born before the war, in 2006 and 2008 to Russian-speakers born in the 1950s, and in 2010 to the oldest cohort of Estonians. The most similar cohorts are Estonians born in the 1960 and 1970s, who differ significantly from those born in the 1980s.

Almost all the decades of the 20th century evolved distinctively for Estonia, providing peculiar conditions for new society members and thereby shaping individual value structures in the spirit of each specific era. It is known that values change over time, but based on the given analysis, it has also become apparent that these changes are different for different cohorts. Fortunately, the value structures of different cohorts partly overlap, which ensures societal coherence and binds all these different groups.

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Notes

Parental home characteristics of the 1924–1983 birth cohorts in Estonia

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Abstract. This chapter investigates the characteristics of the parental home among the 1924–1983 birth cohorts in Estonia. From the macro-social perspective, these generations were born in the periods of pre-war independence, World War II, Hitler's and Stalin's rule, and the eras of Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev. The aim of the study is to examine the trends in demographic, spatial, educational, ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics of the parental family through the contrasting societal regimes that have prevailed in Estonia in the course of the 20th century. The study applies the 'life course' approach as the main conceptual framework. The empirical analysis draws on pooled data from three nationally representative demographic surveys. The trends in the characteristics of the parental home are observed by five-year birth cohorts separately for the native and foreign-origin populations. The results reveal far-reaching transformations in most dimensions of the parental home and childhood environment for the cohorts included in the study. Evidence both for the continuity of particular trends and for the discontinuity of other trends due to historical events emerge from the data. Accounting for transformations in the childhood environment of a broad range of generations is expected to shed light on some important but often hidden factors affecting contemporary society in Estonia.

Introduction

The parental home is a central context for the early development and socialisation of individuals. It is usually the parents who prepare their children for adult life, and for that reason the parental home functions as a carrier of knowledge from one generation to the next. This pivotal role makes it difficult to understate the importance of the parental home in maintaining the continuity of society and culture.

Social science strives to unravel causal relationships. The link between the parental home and the behaviour of successive generations offers an excellent

opportunity to investigate how such mechanisms operate. Against that background, Estonia offers an interesting case for the study of change in the parental home and its implications. This is mainly due to repeated large-scale discontinuities in the 20th century, from the abrupt change in the political and socio-economic system after World War II to the transition to a democratic and market-based society in the 1990s. Furthermore, a sizeable population of foreign origin settled in Estonia in the post-war decades. As socialisation to norms, attitudes, and values occurs in childhood, differences between native and migrant populations currently observed in Estonia may to an important extent be related to variation in the characteristics of the parental home.

As regards sociological research in Estonia, the characteristics of the parental home and its influences on adult life course have been analysed by Mikk Titma and Paul Kenkmann (1982) and Titma (1999). A major comparative study that allows us to investigate how the changes in the societal context modulate the characteristics of the parental home is the Paths of a Generation longitudinal study. The study focused on final-grade secondary school pupils between 1983 and 1985 in fifteen countries of the Soviet Union, including Estonia. Following the societal transformation of the 1990s, the study revealed an increasing importance of the role of family background on personal achievement (Titma & Tuma 1995).

With regard to demographic studies, the Family and Fertility Surveys (FFS) programme collected retrospective life history information (family formation, fertility, education and employment, residential mobility) of men and women currently in reproductive and post-reproductive age groups; the survey programme also included a module on parental home (Cliquet 2002). Between 1988 and 2000, FFS programme surveys were conducted in more than 20 European countries, including Estonia. Results describing the change in the characteristics of parental home for the cohorts covered by the programme are available in Katus et al (2000a; 2002a). Characteristics of the parental home have also been addressed in demographic analyses of ethnic minorities in Estonia, in Katus et al (2000b).

This chapter investigates changes in the characteristics of the parental home for cohorts born in the 1924–1983 period. Given the significant differences between native and foreign-origin populations that were revealed by earlier research (Katus et al 2000a; Sakkeus 2007), the results are presented separately for these two sub-groups of the contemporary Estonian population. The study is based on pooled data from three surveys that collected comparable information on the parental home: the Estonian Generations and Gender Survey (GGP 2014), the Estonian Family and Fertility Survey (FFS 2014) and the Estonian Health Interview Survey (Leinsalu et al 1998). The pooling of data was motivated by the

need to increase the number of respondents, particularly in older birth cohorts. The reliability of the results are ensured by the broad range of birth cohorts, covering most of the 20th century, as well as the systematic comparison between the native and foreign origin populations, and the large dataset pooled from several surveys, all of which extend the findings of the previous studies mentioned above.

Theoretical considerations

This study focuses on cohorts[1] born between the mid-1920s and the early 1980s. We apply the 'life course' approach as the main conceptual framework. As stated by Elder et al (2003), one of the main principles of the life course approach is to acknowledge time and space. The life course of individuals is embedded in the historical times and places they encounter over their lifetimes. From this point of view, the childhood of older cohorts in our analysis bears the strong impact of World War II and the post-war change in societal regime in Estonia (Sovietisation). The time and space principle of the life course approach also stipulates that the parental homes of the foreign-origin population should be given special consideration as migrants – particularly in the first generation born outside Estonia – spent their formative years in a context different from that of their native peers.

Another key principle of the life course approach relates to timing (Elder et al 2003). According to this principle, the influence of historical events differs significantly depending on which point in one's life course they occurred. For instance, events that occurred in early childhood might have a different impact to those that occurred during adolescence. As regards Estonia, the principle of timing may introduce even more complex patterns, as some generations have experienced major societal transformation at multiple points in their lives.

Finally, the 'linked lives' principle of the life course approach draws attention to the fact that interpersonal relationships, embedded in micro-level settings, often interact with larger social changes (Elder & Conger 2000). By way of example, social networks often help to cushion the negative effects of macro-social forces. Likewise, changes in one person's life might trigger transitions in a related person's life. The principle of linked lives is particularly relevant for parents and children, whose lives are intertwined for remarkably long periods stretching over 40–50 years, from the birth of the children until the death of the parents. According to the linked lives principle, major transitions in the parents' lives (for example divorce, unemployment, becoming dependent in old age) tend to exert an influence on the children. Similarly, pivotal changes in the children's lives may affect the parents.

The aforementioned principles of the life course approach underscore the role of the parental home in shaping the life courses of individuals. The contexts in which individuals are embedded in childhood have far-reaching and lasting effects on their adult lives (Cook et al 2002; Call & Mortimer 2001). Profound societal transformations that have occurred during the 20th century render the characteristics of the parental home a worthy subject of sociological research that casts light on important but often hidden drivers of contemporary society.

Data and analytical approach

The empirical analysis of this chapter draws on three national surveys, the Estonian Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), the Estonian FFS, and the Estonian Health Interview Survey (HIS). The surveys were carried out in the 1994–2005 period and applied similar methodology. All surveys collected life history data on partnership formation and dissolution, childbearing, education, employment, and residential mobility. Each survey included a parental home module that collected a variety of information on the respondent's mother and father (date and place of birth, ethnicity, education level, social status, occupation, religious affiliation, date of marriage and divorce, date of death, etc.). In addition, the presence of step-parents, number of siblings, exposure to political repression, and other characteristics of the parental home were recorded in all surveys.

The target population of the surveys comprised permanent residents of Estonia in adult age groups; the coverage of birth cohorts varied slightly across surveys (1924–1983 in the GGS, 1924–1973 in the FFS, and 1916–1980 in the HIS). For each survey, a large probability sample was drawn from the most recent census (1989 for the FFS and the HIS, 2000 for the GGS); the selection of cases was performed using a single-stage random procedure. The combined number of respondents totals 20,098; the overall response rate was 70% in the GGS, 85% in the FFS, and 78% in the HIS. Detailed information on each survey is available from the methodological reports and related publications (Katus et al 1995a; 1995b; 1999; 2008a; Leinsalu et al 1998; Puur et al 2009). In the present study, we discarded a few older birth cohorts (1916–1923) covered only in the HIS. Our working sample comprises cohorts born between 1924 and 1983; the number of respondents belonging to these birth cohorts amounts to 19,471.

Analytically this chapter applies the cohort approach (Glenn 2005). To portray changes in the parental home, we employ a set of characteristics that includes the proportion of respondents raised in intact (two-parent) parental families, the number of children born to the respondent's mother, the highest education level attained by parents, the urban/rural location of the parental home, ethnic

affiliation, religious atmosphere, etc. We examine the trends in these characteristics by five-year cohorts starting with the respondents born in the 1924–1928 period, and ending with those born in the 1979–1983 period. The evidence presented systematically distinguishes between the native and foreign-origin population. This distinction was motivated by findings from previous research that reveal distinct demographic patterns among the native and foreign-origin population (Katus et al 2000b; 2002a; 2002b). In such circumstances, the relative size of the two groups would have rendered the results for the total population a mechanical aggregate of two rather divergent elements. The population of foreign origin comprises first generation migrants born abroad, and the descendants of migrants who were themselves born in Estonia but whose parents moved to the country.[2] A small number of ethnic Estonians who were born abroad are considered 'return migrants' and included among the native population.

Results

Demographic characteristics of the parental home

Integrity of the parental home. Over the long term, the trends in the endurance of the parental family have been shaped by the interplay of different demographic developments. In the first stage, life expectancy increased considerably during the mortality transition, which accelerated in Europe in the second half of the 19th century. This implied a marked extension in the joint survival of parents; in the 20th century, parents typically lived beyond the age at which children typically leave the parental home. Later, after the middle of the 20th century, increasing divorce rates began to have an influence in the opposite direction. The time lag between these two developments allowed a period during which the extension in life expectancy had taken its effect but the divorce rates had not yet reached high levels. During that period, the probability of an intact parental home throughout childhood and adolescence reaches a peak; the subsequent period shows a decrease due to increasing divorce rates. We expected our study to reveal the succession of these stages; however, the evidence presented in Figure 1 tells a more nuanced story.

Among the native population, the very high levels (close to 90%) of intact parental homes with two biological parents are limited to the oldest birth cohort, born in the late 1920s. In subsequent generations, the proportion of respondents raised by two parents sharply decreases; in the 1939–1944 birth cohort, less than 70% of native respondents reported having both parents in the family. The sharp decrease in the incidence of intact parental families is mainly driven by

Figure 1. Respondents from intact parental homes, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983

%
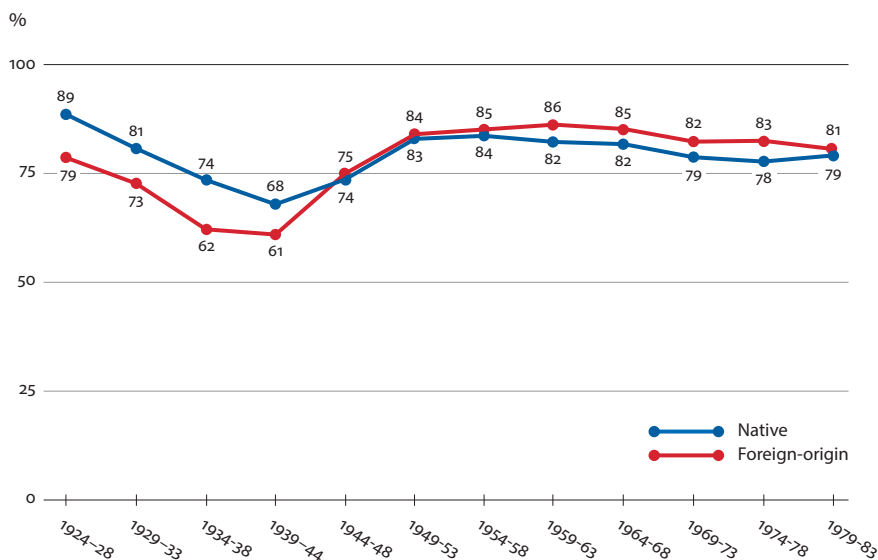
Source: Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

an upsurge in death rates among parents (primarily fathers) due to war and political repressions. The observed increase may partially reflect the outcome of an extensive exodus from Estonia in 1944.

Among migrants and their descendants, respondents in the cohort born in the late 1920s display a lower proportion of intact parental homes (less than 80%) than their native counterparts. The difference partly reflects a later onset of demographic transition in Russia and other Slavic republics of the former Soviet Union, from which the bulk of post-war migrants to Estonia originated (Vishnevsky 2006). Similar to the native population, the incidence of intact parental homes sharply decreased in the following cohorts, surging to levels close to 60% among the foreign-origin respondents born in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Another factor contributing to such a low level is evidently the impact of Stalin's repressions of the 1930s and the huge human losses of World War II. Finally, it has to be mentioned that in the 1920s and early 1930s, in the Soviet Union the traditional family was declared obsolete as a remnant of bourgeois society, with, consequently, divorce rates reaching very high levels (Zakharov 2008). Thus,

older generations of the foreign-origin population covered in this study might also have been influenced by the early introduction of divorce.
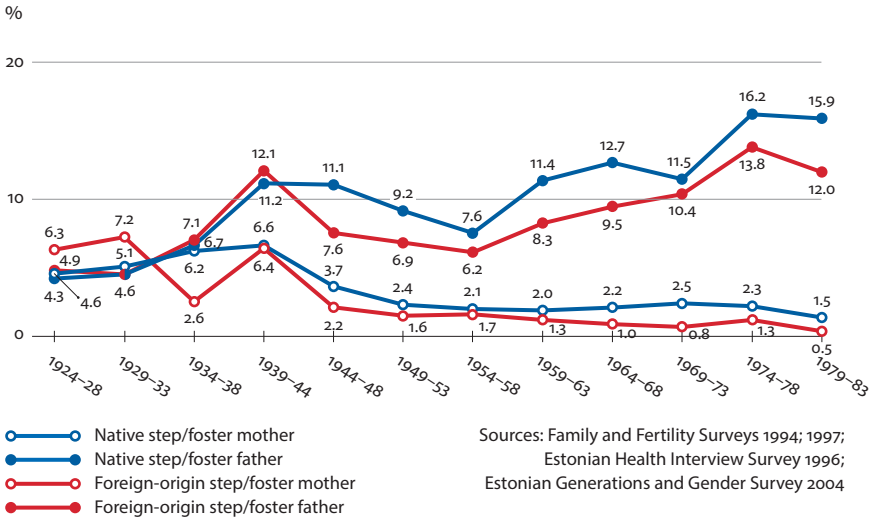
In cohorts born in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the proportion of respondents raised by two biological parents sharply increases as the influence of World War II fades away. The recovery is particularly pronounced among the foreign-origin population, with the proportion of intact parental home exceeding the levels reported for the cohorts born in the 1920s. In generations born in the 1960s and 1970s, the shift towards a lower prevalence of intact parental homes with two biological parents starts to gain importance again. This trend is often framed as part of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT), a global shift away from traditional family values and behaviour in advanced countries, coupled with increasing secularisation and individualisation (Lesthaeghe 1983; Van de Kaa 1987). Theorists have regarded the rise in divorce one of the earliest and most prominent manifestations of the SDT, which came to the fore in Europe in the post-war decades (e.g. Lesthaeghe 2010).

In this context, Estonia emerges as one the forerunners, with a rise in divorce rates dating already to the interwar period (Vikat 1994). Supported by the liberalisation of legal procedures, divorce rates surged to new heights in Estonia in the 1960s, more than cancelling the effect of increasing life expectancy on the parental family. At the same time, however, the effect of frequent parental divorce in younger generations is no match for the effects of World War II and Stalin's repressions observed in older generations, those born in the late 1930s and 1940s.

Step-parents. Following the dissolution of parental union due to divorce or widowhood, parent(s) may start a new partnership. From the children's perspective, re-partnering of a parent has, without doubt, far-reaching implications on the family environment in which children are raised. In particular, a new parental partnership brings a step-parent into a child's life and entails a greater complexity in the relationship between the child and the parents' generation. Figure 2 presents the cohort trend in having a step-father or step-mother in the respondents' parental family.

The evidence reveals an interesting transformation in the presence of step-parents, both among the native and foreign-origin populations. In older generations, born before the late 1930s, it was equally common in both groups to have a step-mother or step-father in the parental family. On the one hand, this reflects a still relatively high mortality among women of childbearing age. On the other hand, it mirrors a more traditional family behaviour with relatively infrequent divorce in the generations who were born in the late 19th or early 20th century.

Figure 2. Respondents with step-parents, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983

%

- Native step/foster mother
- Native step/foster father
- Foreign-origin step/foster mother
- Foreign-origin step/foster father

Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997;
Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996;
Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

Moving towards younger generations, the pattern quickly changes. The prevalence of step-mothers sharply decreases and stabilises at very low levels. In contrast, the prevalence of step-fathers rapidly increases and reaches levels with no precedent in older generations included in the study. As a result of these trends, in the cohorts born towards the end of the 1950s and later, it becomes rather unusual to have a step-mother while having a step-father appears relatively common. The divergent outcomes result from a combination of increasing survival of parents and increasing incidence of divorce, on the one hand, and the practice according to which children stay with the mother in the case of marital dissolution. In the youngest cohort, born in the 1970s and early 1980s, almost one out of six respondents was raised in a step-parent family, typically consisting of a biological mother and a step-father.

The evidence presented in Figure 2 also reveals a discontinuity introduced by World War II. The consequences of war can be seen in the temporary peak in the prevalence of step-fathers in the generations born in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This peak is particularly pronounced among the foreign-origin population, suggesting an extensive loss of men in the war. In the subsequent generations, the foreign-origin population seems to incur a somewhat lower incidence of step-parent families. This corroborates findings from a recent study on family dynamics according to which the native and migrant populations in Estonia
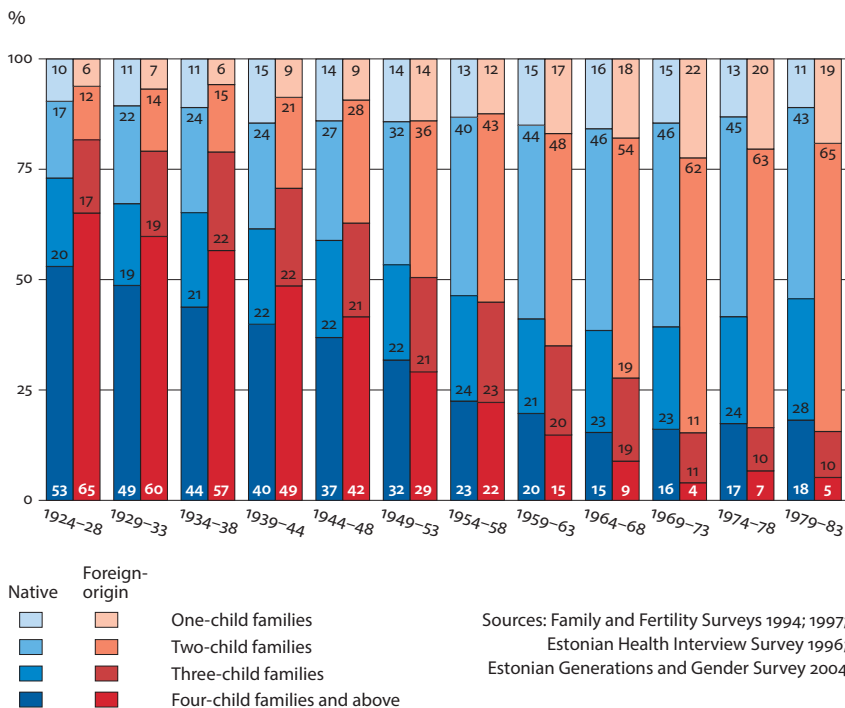
feature equally high rates of partnership dissolution, although the latter group lags behind in the propensity to start higher-order partnerships (Rahnu et al 2014). In a comparative study of 19 nations, Prskawetz et al (2003) found that (native) Estonians rank second only to Swedes in the proportion of women who had experienced a second partnership. These results underscore the high importance of step-parenting in contemporary Estonia.

Siblings. Demographers have long since noted that the parity distribution[3] of families is rather different from the parents' and children's viewpoint (Preston 1976; Lutz 1989). Compared to the parents' perspective, larger families are over-represented in children's perspectives as proportionately more children originate from such families. Moreover, individuals in the parental generation who remain childless are not represented at all in the children's generation. A sharp decline in the proportion of childless women that occurred in Estonia among the cohorts born during the first half of the 20th century further strengthens the difference between the two viewpoints.[4]

The results presented in Figure 3 show that from the children's perspective the largest change across cohorts relates to parental families with four or more children. While more than half of native respondents born in the late 1920s are from such families, the proportion drops below one-fifth in the generations born in the 1960s and 1970s. The largest increase, on the other hand, is characteristic of two-child parental families the proportion of which is more than double in the cohorts covered by the study. In the younger generations, the two-child family is the most common type of parental family. At the same time, the proportion of respondents from one-child and three-child parental family has undergone only a minor change. The proportion of respondents coming from one-child families has fluctuated between 10–15%, while one out of five respondents was raised in a three-child family (one out of four in the birth cohorts of the 1960s and 1970s). The main driving force behind these shifts is a strengthening of the two-child norm and homogenisation of fertility outcomes.

In accord with the later onset of fertility transition in the areas from which migrants to Estonia originate, for the cohorts before 1940 more than half of the respondents are from families with at least four children. The decline in the share of offspring from large families appears longer and sharper than among the native population. Notwithstanding the higher proportion of foreign-origin respondents who were born to large families in older cohorts, relatively few (4–7%) of the respondents in the birth cohorts of the 1970s and early 1980s were born to large families. The foreign-origin population also features a marked decrease in the proportion of respondents born to parental families with three

Figure 3. Respondents by number of children in the parental home, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983

%

Native / Foreign-origin

One-child families
Two-child families
Three-child families
Four-child families and above

Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997;
Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996;
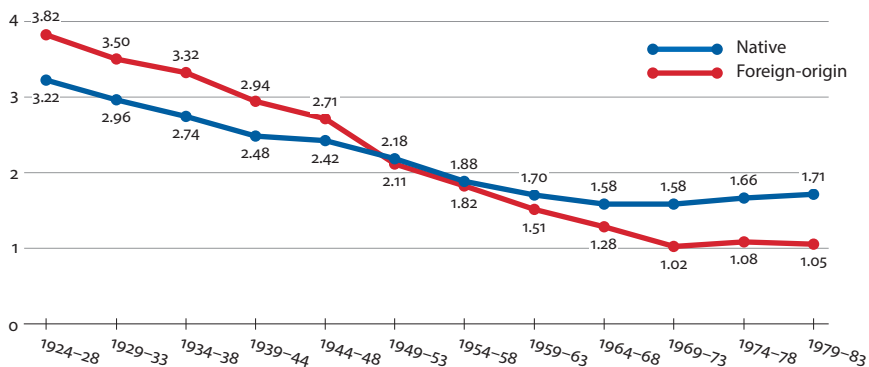Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

children. In contrast, migrants and their descendants born in the 1970s and 1980s exhibit a noticeably higher proportion (84–85%) of those coming from small parental families with one or two children. Among the native population, the offspring of small families accounts for 62–67% in the youngest cohorts.

Figure 4 offers a complementary view on these trends, presenting the mean number of siblings that respondents had in their parental homes. For both sub-groups of the population, the data reveal marked decrease in the number of siblings across cohorts. Among the native population, respondents in our oldest birth cohorts reported having more than three siblings on average. The down-ward trend persisted until the generations born in the early 1960s, which are at the level of 1.6–1.7 siblings. Among the foreign origin population, the decrease started from higher levels (close to four siblings) and persisted until birth cohorts of the late 1960s, where the stabilisation occurred at a lower level (around one

Figure 4. Mean number of siblings in the parental home, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983

sibling on average) compared to the native population. The difference in sibling group size between the younger generations of native and foreign-origin population, observed in Figure 4, results from a divergence in the level of cohort fertility (Katus et al 2002a; Klesment 2010).

Age gap between generations. The age gap between parent and child generation is commonly measured by the average time between the birth of mothers and their daughters.[5] The size of the age gap is influenced by two factors pertaining to the fertility behaviours of the maternal generation – the timing of childbearing and the parity distribution. The older mothers are when they give birth, the larger is the age gap between family generations. Similarly, having a larger number of children extends the age gap, since more of the higher parity children tend to be born later in the mother's life.

The size of the age gap deserves attention for its link to intergenerational family constellations in which individuals are embedded during their life course. For that reason, changes in the age gap may have implications for the well-being of individuals in both the parent's and the child's generations. For instance, Murphy et al (2006) projected for Britain, France, and Finland that the increasing age gap between successive family generations, driven by delayed childbearing, will curtail the upward trend in the availability of ascending kin and result in a decline beginning with the generations born in the 1970s. In another study focusing on

Figure 5. Mean age gap between mother's and daughter's generation, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983
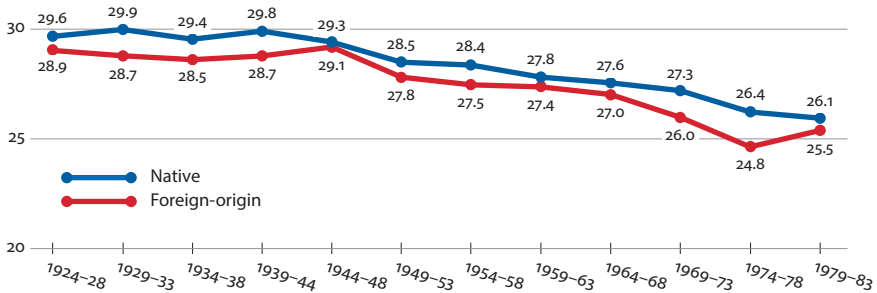
Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997; Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996;
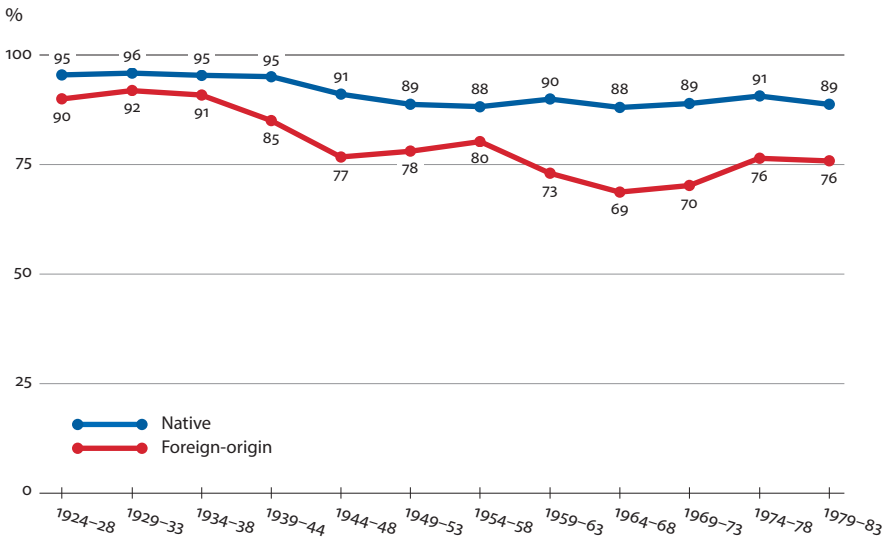Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

the United States, Matthews and Sun (2006) reported that the contemporary increase in four-generation family lineages and the verticalisation of family constellations is due to a smaller age gap between generations rather than increased longevity (Bengtson et al 1990).

Figure 5 shows the trend has been from relatively large age gaps towards smaller age gaps between generations in the cohorts covered in this study. The shift towards a smaller age gap gained momentum from cohorts born in the late 1940s; in the subsequent generations, it diminished by 3–4 years. There is no significant difference in the trend between the native and foreign-origin populations, but the age gap appears systematically larger among the native population.

Ethnic characteristics

In Estonia, the ethnic characteristics of the parental home deserve attention because of the large-scale immigration in the 20th century (Sakkeus 1996; 2007). This began shortly after the country was incorporated into the Soviet Union and remained high until the late 1980s; immigration entailed a major transformation in the ethnic composition of the population. The proportion of the majority population (ethnic Estonians) decreased from an estimated 97% in 1945 to 75% in 1959 (the first post-war census), and further to 62% in 1989 (the last census shortly before the restoration of independence). At the end of the immigration era, the foreign-born population comprised 26% of the total population and the

Figure 6. Respondents from ethnically homogeneous parental homes, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983

second generation was estimated at nearly 10%, giving Estonia one of the highest shares of migrant population in Europe (Katus et al 2002b).

The emergence of a foreign-origin population generally facilitates the formation of mixed marriages in the receiving country. Studies focusing on the dynamics of ethnically mixed marriages have reported a U-shaped pattern (Kane & Stephen 1988; Kalmijn 1998; Klein 2001). In the early phases of immigration, the scarcity of co-ethnic partners along with the selection of migrants tends to result in relatively frequent ethnic intermarriage between the native and immigrant populations. Later, as the stock of migrants in the receiving country grows larger and the migrants' chances to find a co-ethnic partner increase, the incidence of mixed marriages tends to decrease. Finally, the incidence of ethnic intermarriage is expected to increase again over the longer run, reflecting the integration of migrants and their descendants into the host society. Figure 6 presents evidence as to what extent the dynamics of ethnic intermarriage among the parents of our respondents followed this pattern.

The results show limited change in the prevalence of ethnic intermarriage among the native population. In cohorts born in the 1920s and 1930s, about 95% of respondents were raised in families in which both parents had the same ethnic affiliation. In the cohorts born in the 1940s, the proportion slightly decreased, stabilising at the level of 88–90%. The relatively small increase in ethnic intermarriage among the native population may seem surprising given the large number of migrants who settled in Estonia in the post-war decades. This pattern can be explained by the segregation of migrants and native Estonians. For instance, there were separate schools for Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking children; geographically the foreign-origin population was concentrated in urban settlements in north and north-east of the country, etc. Perhaps no less importantly, until the 1990s, immigrants lacked serious motivation to become integrated in the host society and culture.

Among the foreign-origin population, the prevalence of ethnic intermarriage is noticeably higher, reaching 25–30% in generations born in the 1960s and 1970s. The majority of ethnically mixed parental families in that group involve migrants and their descendants of different ethnic affiliation. Although comprising about four-fifths ethnic Russians, the foreign origin population in Estonia is ethnically quite diverse.[6] This suggests that a considerable proportion of the foreign-origin population in Estonia is exposed to mixed linguistic and cultural influences in the parental home.

Location of the parental home

The location of the parental home – in urban or rural areas – shapes the broader socialisation environment of children. Growing up in an urban setting usually implies easier access to educational institutions and culture. However, at the same time, the urban environment may involve weaker social control and more exposure to deviant behaviour. In contrast, social control beyond the parental family tends to be stronger in rural areas. From the demographic point of view, a childhood in rural areas means a greater number of siblings and less frequent breaks in the parental family due to divorce (Kulu 2006; Katus et al 2008b; Zakharov & Surkov 2009).

The trends concerning the location of the parental home in our study reflect urbanisation processes that occurred in the wake of the demographic transition (Zelinsky 1971). Among the native population, about 70% of the respondents born in the 1920s and 1930s grew up in rural areas and 30% in urban areas (Figure 7). In the subsequent generations these proportions started to change and reflect the new wave of urbanisation that occurred in Estonia in the post-war decades

Figure 7. Respondents from urban parental homes, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983
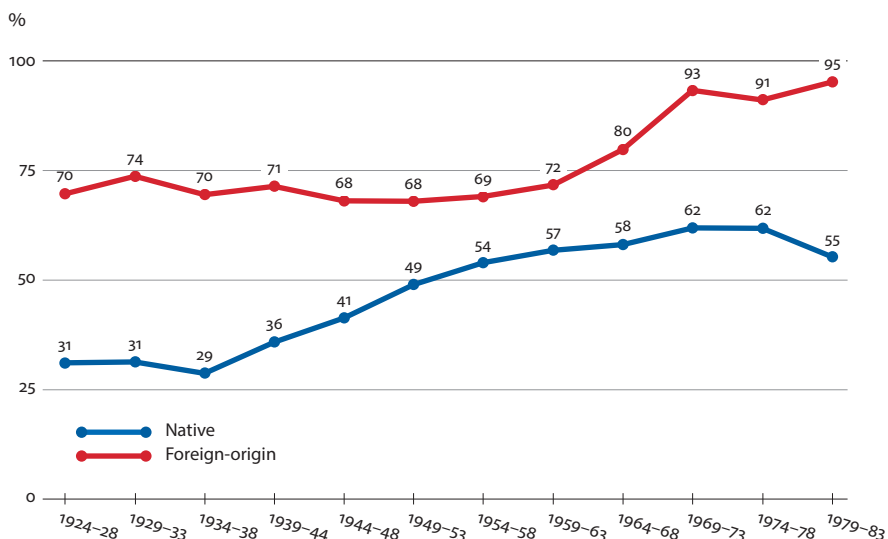
%

(Sakkeus 1991); urban settlements became the dominant environment to those born in the late 1950s. The proportion of respondents born and raised in urban areas peaked in the birth cohorts of the 1970s, at levels slightly above 60%. This was followed by a slight decline in the youngest generations included in the study, which mirrors the turnaround of the rural-to-urban migration patterns and the first manifestations of suburbanisation in Estonia in the 1970s and 1980s. The shortage of dwellings in urban areas, the growing demand for labour in the agricultural sector, and the relatively favourable conditions offered by agricultural enterprises attracted young Estonians living in the cities to move to rural areas (Marksoo 2005).

Owing to the later onset of demographic modernisation, one could expect an even greater proportion of respondents to come from rural areas in the older generations of foreign-origin population. However, for several reasons this is not the case. First, the post-war migration flows to Estonia were to an important extent driven by the labour needs of large industrial enterprises that were overwhelmingly located in urban settlements, mainly in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country (Puur 2000a). Because of the skills and qualifications

required, it seems that urban residents were over-represented among post-war migrants to Estonia. Second, the selectivity may have been further strengthened by the fact that up to 1956 in Russia, rural residents did not have identification documents issued, which severely limited their possibility to migrate (Sakkeus 1996). As a result, in the cohorts born between the 1920s and 1950s, around 70% of migrants and their descendants grew up in urban settlements. Among younger generations of foreign origin born in the 1970s and 1980s, the proportion of respondents with an urban background exceeds 90%.
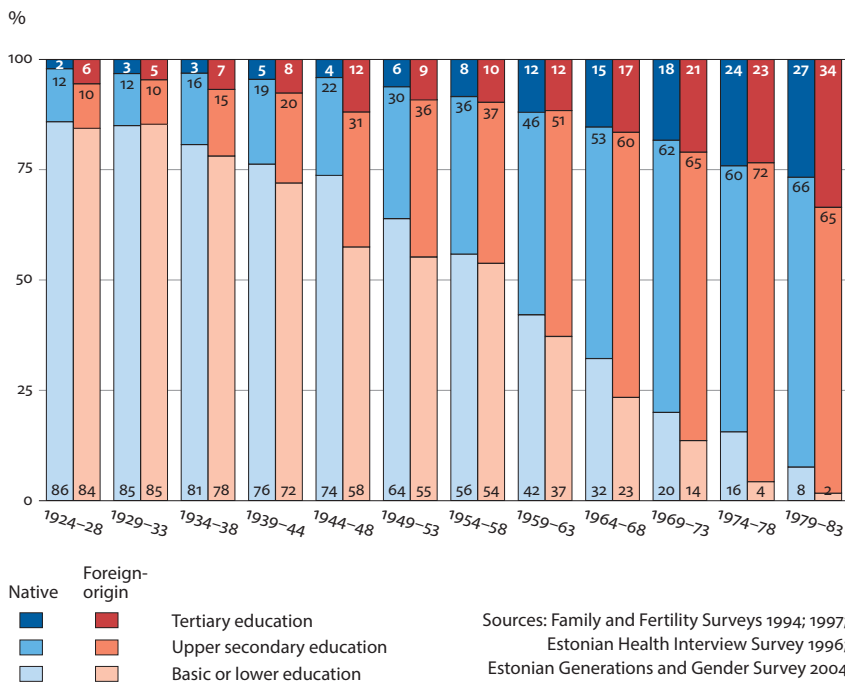
Educational characteristics

The educational attainment of parents influences offspring in multiple ways. It can be assumed that education makes the difference in what values, attitudes, and norms are passed on to the next generation. Further, the education of the parents is associated with the amount of resources that are available to the children in the family. Sociological studies have also revealed that the education level of parents constitutes an important predictor of a child's education and occupation outcomes (for Estonia, Saar 1997; Titma et al 2003). Finally, parents with different levels of education may exhibit patterns of demographic behaviour that lead to varying outcomes with respect to number of children, risk of family dissolution, etc.

In this study, we combined the highest attained education level of mother and father into three broad groups. The first group includes respondents whose parents had attained basic or primary basic education, along with a small number of respondents whose parents had no formal schooling. The second group includes respondents whose parents have upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. The third group includes all respondents whose father or mother attained a higher education degree.

With respect to the education level of the parents, the native and foreign-origin populations exhibit very similar trends. In the cohorts born in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the share of respondents whose parents had attained only basic and primary education amounted to 85% in both sub-groups. Moving to younger generations, the proportion of the first group sharply decreased. It fell below 50% in the birth cohort of early 1960s and reached levels at or below 10% among respondents born in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The shrinking of the first group was paralleled by a rapid increase in the number of respondents who had parents with at least upper secondary education. The proportion of the second group increased from 10–15% in the birth cohorts of the 1920s and early 1930s, to levels at and above 90% in the generations born

**Figure 8. Respondents by education attainment of parents,
Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983**

%

Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997;
Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996;
Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The near-universal attainment of upper secondary education was driven by education policies which, in that period, maximised the provision of upper secondary education in Estonia in the 1970s and 1980s (Helemäe & Saar 1999).

In relative terms, the proportion of respondents whose parents attained tertiary education has risen even more rapidly. In the cohorts born in the 1970s and early 1980s, the proportion of respondents with tertiary-educated parents amounts to 29% among the native population and 34% among the foreign-origin population. In fact, a somewhat higher share of parents with tertiary education is characteristic among migrants and their descendants in all generations covered by the study. We assume that the advantage of the migrant population stems from the selection of immigrants for higher levels of education. In older generations, the selection was partly driven by the policy of sending administrators to the

countries that were newly incorporated into the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II.

Religion

Among the major dimensions of the cultural values to which individuals are socialised in childhood, Inglehart (1990; 2006) has distinguished religious and rational-secular values. The former is considered characteristic of traditional agrarian settings while the latter tends to predominate in modern urban and industrial societies. Our surveys provide evidence of the shift from religious to secular-rational values, based on the respondents' assessment of the prevailing atmosphere in their parental family.

The results in Figure 9 suggest that our surveys capture the tail end of the global value shift described by Inglehart. Even in our oldest generations, born in the late 1920s, a minority of respondents grew up in religious families (24% among the native population and 37% among the foreign-origin population). In the subsequent generations, the shift from religious to secular rational values progressed further. In the birth cohorts of the 1960s and 1970s, the corresponding proportion bottomed out at levels below 5%. In a similar way to their older counterparts, foreign-origin respondents in younger cohorts report slightly higher exposure to religiosity in the parental home, compared to the native population. As regards the distinction between the native and foreign-origin populations, it also has to be borne in mind that these two sub-groups belong to different confessions. While the majority of the native population adheres to the Lutheran church, the foreign origin population is mainly related to the Russian Orthodox Church.

It is assumed that the very low levels of religiosity reported above reflect not only the global value shift, but to some extent also the outcome of anti-religious policies exercised by the Soviet authorities. The Soviet Union prohibited any public manifestation of religiosity, even persecuting people because of their religious beliefs (Plaat 2003). The collapse of the Soviet regime and the restoration of Estonia's independence brought the anti-religious policies to an end. As a result, in the late 1980s and early 1990s Estonia witnessed a moderate revival of religiosity with the number of those participating in religious activities temporarily increasing (Altnurme 2006). However, judging from the data, this revival hardly implied any change in the religious values to which the younger generations were socialised in the parental home.

In general, our results corroborate earlier findings according to which Estonia belongs among the most secularised countries in terms of church membership,

**Figure 9. Respondents from religious parental homes,
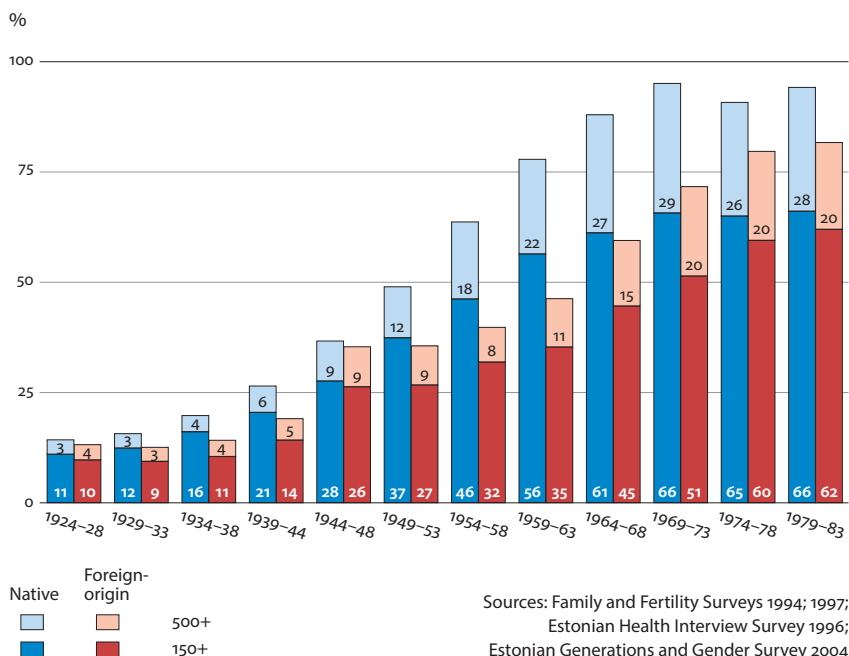Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983**
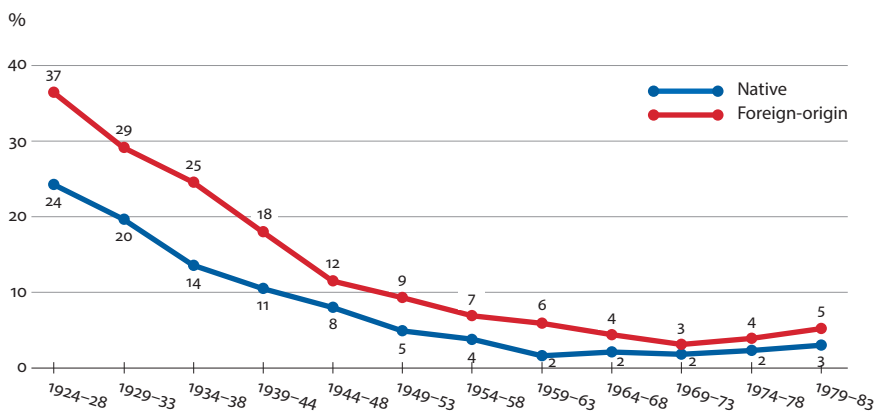
%

Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997; Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996;
Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

attendance of religious ceremonies and other religious practices (Dogan 1995; Halman & Riis 2003). The strong secular-rational value orientation among the population is likely to be associated with the family patterns discussed earlier in this chapter. According to Lesthaeghe (1983), secularisation, the transformation of demographic patterns and several other developments can be seen as parts of a broader emancipatory process in society. In the course of this process, the traditional regulatory mechanisms, upheld by religious, communal, and family authority, give way to increasing individual freedom of choice. Against this background, the comparatively early introduction of non-traditional family behaviours in Estonia (for example cohabitation, non-marital childbearing, divorce), and socialisation to a secular-rational mindset could be regarded as manifestations of the same process.

Domestic library

To characterise the cultural milieu in parental family, we introduce information about the domestic library. The importance of the social dimension relating to books and reading in Estonia has been highlighted by a number of previous studies (for example Kalmus et al 2004; Lauristin & Vihalemm 2014). Figure 10 presents the proportion of respondents who reported having more than 150 books

Figure 10. Respondents by size of domestic library at parental home, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983

Native	Foreign-origin	
▢	▢	500+
▣	▣	150+

Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997;
Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996;
Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

and those with more than 500 books in the parental home. The surveys did not make a distinction between the kinds of book, but the first threshold is likely to exclude households which only had cookbooks, phone directories, etc. The second threshold is assumed to signal the presence of more systematic cultural interests.

Not surprisingly, the domestic library has become an increasingly common element of the home environment in the generations covered in our study. In the cohorts born in the 1920s, it was still quite unusual to have a domestic library with more than 150 books: the proportion is at level of 10% among native as well as foreign-origin population. In the next generations, the situation gradually changes. Among the native population, the proportion exceeded 50% in cohorts born in the early 1960s; in the birth cohorts of the early 1970s, it reached 65%. Our study does not provide information on the factors underlying the upward trend but it can be assumed that both improving living standards and the prestige of books and reading may have contributed to this outcome. However, in the

youngest generations born in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the upward trend comes to a halt. This evidently mirrors the transition to a market economy which rendered books relatively expensive and less affordable for large segments of the population. Lifestyle changes that leave less time for reading may also be part of the explanation.

The prevalence of domestic libraries with 500 or more books follows a similar trend, although the proportions are understandably lower. In the cohorts born in the 1920s and early 1930s, 3% of respondents reported a large domestic library in the parental home. Over the birth cohorts covered by the study, the proportion of respondents whose parents had large domestic libraries increased almost tenfold; the proportion approached 30% in the cohorts of the native population born in the 1970s and early 1980s. As with smaller home libraries, discussed above, the upward trend stops in these youngest generations. Although the trends are basically similar for native and foreign origin population, the prevalence of domestic libraries in the parental home tends to be lower among the latter. It is interesting to note that this finding does not boil down to the difference in the education levels of parents: as reported earlier in this chapter, the foreign origin population features somewhat higher proportion of respondents with parents who attained upper secondary and tertiary education. According to this, the results pertaining to the domestic library suggest variation in cultural practices between the native and foreign-origin populations that seem to be rather persistent across generations.

Incidence of political repression

Previous sections provided some evidence on the impact of historical events, including World War II, the annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union, and the ensuing change of societal regime. To cast some additional light on this issue, we present evidence of the scale of political repression in the 1940s and 1950s. In Figure 11, we consider only the respondents whose parent(s) were killed, deported, or sentenced to long-term imprisonment by the authorities. The incidence of milder repressions (for example restrictions in access to education, loss of property or employment, etc.) is not considered.

Concurring with the findings of previous studies (for example Hiio et al 2006; 2009), the results of this study show that severe repressions hit a relatively large segment of the population in Estonia. Among the native population, the proportion of respondents whose parents were killed, deported, or sentenced to long-term imprisonment amounts to 20% in the cohorts born in the 1930s and early 1940s. Parents of these birth cohorts were themselves born at the beginning

Figure 11. Respondents with politically repressed parents, Estonia, birth cohorts 1924–1983
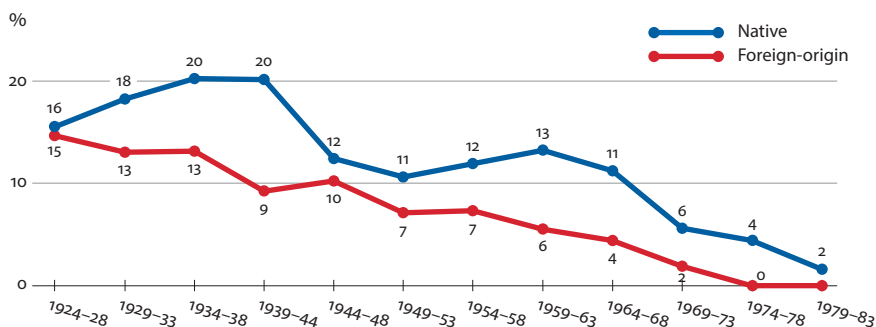
Sources: Family and Fertility Surveys 1994; 1997; Estonian Health Interview Survey 1996; Estonian Generations and Gender Survey 2004

of the 20th century and constitute Estonian generations that were hit hardest by political repressions.[7] The peak in the incidence of political repression coincides with the highest proportion of dissolved families in the parental generation, discussed earlier in this chapter.

In the cohorts born in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the proportion of respondents with severely repressed parents is approximately halved relative to the preceding birth cohorts. Nonetheless, the proportion with repressed parents stays above 10% in the cohorts who were born in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when severe repressions were generally over. This result corroborates the notion that due to linked lives, the impact of dramatic historical events may extend beyond the period in which the events occurred.

Among foreign-origin population, the proportion of respondents with severely repressed parents is systematically lower. On the one hand, this underscores the harshness of Stalin's regime in the territories annexed by the Soviet Union during and after World War II (Mertelsmann & Rahi-Tamm 2009). On the other hand, the difference between native and foreign-origin population may be to some extent exaggerated by the selectivity of migration to Estonia. Many immigrants of the late 1940s and 1950s were administrators who were sent to Estonia with the task of establishing the Soviet regime. As regards cohort differences, among migrants and their descendants, the highest proportion of politically repressed parents is observed in the cohorts born in the 1920s. This is evidently a reflection of the dynamics of Stalin's repressions in Russia and Ukraine, which culminated in the 1930s.

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Summary and discussion of findings

The aim of the present chapter is to outline the trends in the characteristics of the parental home among the 1924–1983 birth cohorts of the native and foreign-origin populations in Estonia, against a background of macro-social change. The concluding section of the chapter highlights some plausible implications of these trends for the individuals and generations affected. In this section, we draw mainly on demographic and sociological literature and studies conducted in other settings, as relevant empirical research on Estonia is relatively limited.

Among characteristics of the parental home discussed in the chapter, determinants and implications of the break-up of the parental family have been addressed in a large number of studies. For instance, drawing on evidence from United States, Pavalko and Elder (1990) found that during the mass mobilisation of World War II, the entry of men into military service contributed to the disruption of marriage and a greater likelihood of divorce. A recent micro-level analysis by the authors of this chapter also reveals a strong link between accelerated family dissolution and societal discontinuity related to World War II and its aftermath in Estonia (Puur & Klesment 2014).

As regards the implications of the break-up of the parental family, several studies have demonstrated that broken parental families and families involving step-parents are associated with early home-leaving, early sexual initiation, early entry into parenthood, and higher risks of union dissolution and single parenthood among children (Mitchell et al 1989; Aseltine et al 2010). Single parents tend to have lower living standards; they are more vulnerable to poverty, and their socially and psychologically less advantageous position is found to negatively affect the life chances of their children (Moors & van Nimwegen 1990; Thornton 1991; Goldscheider & Goldscheider 1998). Being raised by a single mother increases the risk of school dropout and reduces enrolment in post-secondary education; it also affects the timing of residential independence, and the timing of entry into the labour force (Aquilino 1996). Psychological studies have revealed that people who have experienced hardship during childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood often perceive themselves as being older than their peers (Johnson & Mollborn 2009).

In the context of Estonia, some factors may have moderated the adverse socio-economic impact of lone parenting. Since the 1960s the labour force participation rate for women has been very high in Estonia, even in comparison with other former Soviet countries (Puur 2000b). It can be assumed that the economic independence of women might have to some extent cushioned the non-favourable economic effects of family dissolution. The evidence from household

income surveys conducted in the 1970s and 1980s reveal some financial support provided to single mothers by the state, in addition to alimony payments from divorced fathers (Klesment & Sakkeus 2010). Despite a large gender difference in earnings, with subsidised prices for food, other basic commodities, and housing, single parents in Estonia during the Soviet period may have experienced less acute deficits in economic resources than their counterparts in Western countries, particularly the countries with more pronounced male breadwinner systems.

The literature provides evidence of the intergenerational transmission of divorce, meaning that children of divorced parents tend to face higher risks of union dissolution in their own partnerships. At the same time, there is also evidence that, with union dissolution becoming more common, the effect of parental divorce on offspring divorce tends to diminish (Wolfinger 1999). However, in a more recent study, Li and Wu (2008) argue that if the exposure time is correctly taken into account, then such a weakening in intergenerational transmission of divorce cannot be observed. Seeking an answer to this question in future research would be very important in case of Estonia. In particular, the answer would be important for predicting future trends in family dissolution – if the intergenerational transmission of union dissolution remained unchanged, it would lead to even higher dissolution rates in future generations.

Our surveys do not enable parenting practices in the aftermath of divorce or partnership dissolution to be studied further, although recent studies in psychology suggest that adverse behavioural outcomes among children may be the consequence of the inadequate attention that parents give to children during and after disruption of family life (Wallerstein et al 2013). With regard to Estonia, it would be interesting to investigate the extent to which the outcomes of family dissolution in the parental generation varied depending on whether it resulted from macro-societal events (war and repressions), or from dysfunctional couple relationships.

As regards siblings, we observed a significant decline in the prevalence of large families and the consolidation of the two-child (one sibling) norm. This is a consequence of modernisation in fertility behaviour, as it leads to marked homogenisation of sibling group size. At the same time, the results for the native population suggest that larger families do not vanish in contemporary settings. Similar findings in other demographically advanced countries have stimulated research into the transmission of fertility patterns across generations. For instance, Murphy and Knudsen (2002) have found that children from larger families are more likely to have large families of their own. This seems to be the mechanism that upholds the persistence of larger families even in the context of sub-replacement fertility. From the life course perspective, a greater number

of siblings triggers earlier residential independence: earlier research indicated that children from families with three or more children leave the parental home several years earlier on average than their counterparts from families of one or two children (Katus et al 1995a).

The intergenerational transmission of demographic and social behaviours is considered to be driven by intra-familial socialisation processes that occur during childhood and adolescence (Hendershot 1969; Thornton 1980; Axinn et al 1994; Murphy & Wang 2001). More recently, Rijken and Liefbroer (2009) have shown that the transmission of parental attitudes, values, and norms is to an important extent mediated by the child's own degree of subscription to these values. For that reason Balbo et al (2013), in their overview of recent research on intergenerational transmission of fertility behaviour, underscore that the transmission of parental values should be considered with care: it is not mechanical but depends on the interaction between generations.

Our results reveal a marked reduction in the age gap between parent generations and child generations covered by the study. For the United States, Rindfuss et al (1988) found that the Great Depression and World War II had a selective impact on the timing of childbearing, i.e. during the recession, younger cohorts delayed childbearing whereas the older ones, closer to the upper limit of reproductive age, did not. They also concluded that during World War II, as well as after the war, childbearing moved into earlier ages in the United States. For Estonia, our findings suggest that the age gap between children and parents did not significantly change until the cohorts born during the early 1950s. It was only from these birth cohorts that the age gap to parents started to shrink, although the decrease proved remarkably long and persisted until the cohorts born in the 1980s. It is assumed that the observed shift towards a smaller age gap between children and parents implies a significant increase in the 'co-longevity' of successive family generations and the prevalence of multigenerational ties (Uhlenberg 1993; Farkas & Hogan 1995; Schoeni 1998). This assertion is in accord with the results of a recent comparative analysis of nine European countries, among which Estonia featured the highest prevalence of multigenerational ties beyond adjacent family generations (Puur et al 2011). The most common of these historically novel multigenerational ties is the link between grandchildren and grandparents (Herlofson & Hagestad 2011).

Finally, the results also revealed major shifts in the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the parental home. Studies from other settings have demonstrated that even if socio-economic conditions have generally improved over time, the disadvantages of children from vulnerable sub-groups of the population (for example single-parent families) tend to persist (Moors & Nimwegen 1990).

Other studies have found that a high level of education attainment in parents delays the entry of their children into parenthood (Michael & Tuma 1985) and makes children more divorce-prone as they come from a more liberal environment, less imbued with religious values (Lyngstad 2006). At the same time, children of highly educated parents are more likely to receive emotional and material support from their parents when the partnership is dissolved.

In this chapter, it was beyond our aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the evidence regarding the implications that the parental home has on the life course of children. In the concluding section, we merely wanted to draw attention to the variety of ways in which conditions experienced during childhood can leave an imprint on the adult lives of individuals affected. The profound transformation in the socialisation environment of generations born in Estonia in the 20th century, documented in this chapter, calls for further research on implications of this transformation. In particular, future research should focus on features that are especially pronounced in Estonia or specific to the country. For instance, what are the long-term implications of the 'divorce revolution' that gained momentum remarkably early in the country? Have the outcomes of parental divorce become weaker over time as the phenomenon became increasingly common in society? How have people perceived the diminishing age gap between generations and increasing prevalence of multigenerational ties? Is it possible to find a connection between the harsh conditions of World War II and its aftermath, on the one hand, and the current physical and mental health of the generations who grow up in that difficult period, on the other hand?

The answers to these questions are expected to contribute to an improved understanding of not only the role of childhood conditions but also of some salient features of contemporary Estonian society. Finally, it would be desirable to extend the analysis of the parental home and its implications to generations who were born after the early 1980s and whose childhood has been moulded by the societal transition of the 1990s. These questions warrant a new round of nationally representative life history surveys, the undertaking of which is a tall order for the social research community in Estonia.

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Notes

1 In this chapter, we use the terms 'birth cohort' and 'generation' interchangeably. In population studies, cohorts denote groups of people who experience certain life events in the same calendar period. Depending on the type of event, we may speak about birth cohorts (people who were born in a specific calendar period), marriage cohorts (people who got married in the same period), immigration and emigration cohorts (people who arrived in the country or left the country in a specific period), etc. Demographers regard generation and birth cohort as equivalent concepts (Demopaedia 2014). See also Ryder 1965.

2 According to the 2011 census, the foreign-origin population comprised 26.4% of the total population in Estonia, including 14.8% in the first generation and 11.6% descendants (Eesti Statistika 2014). This sub-group of the contemporary Estonian population grew rapidly in the aftermath of World War II as a result of large-scale immigration, mainly from Russia. More information concerning immigration to Estonia and the formation of the foreign origin population is available in other publications (Sakkeus 1991; 1996; Katus et al 2000a; 2002b; Puur 2000a).

3 Parity denotes the number of children born alive to a woman; for example, 'two-parity women' are women who have had two children and 'zero-parity women' have had no live births.

4 Among women born in Estonia at the beginning of the 20th century, circa 25% remained childless. In the cohorts born in the 1950s and early 1960s, the share of childless women was below 10% (Katus et al 2002a).

5 In demographic research, fertility measures, including the age gap between generations, are usually presented in relation to women (Demopaedia 2014). This study follows the same approach.

6 The 2011 population census enumerated more than 140 ethnic groups in Estonia (Eesti Statistika 2014).

7 It should be noted that the evidence presented in Figure 11 understates the true scale of repressions in parental generations because the estimates are conditional on the survival of offspring until the surveys conducted in the 1990s and 2000s.

Memory and identity

The Soviet past
through the lenses of different memory communities

Aili Aarelaid-Tart

Abstract. The chapter raises a methodological question about the 'correct' remembering of the Soviet period. Basing her research mainly on autobiographical books, the author shows how reminiscences of the Soviet period presented by different memory communities have become more diverse over the past two decades. All such representations have been influenced by the gradual legitimisation of memory culture in the post-socialist period. The author holds that the revival of the socialist past in the minds of present-day people is influenced, on the one hand, by active state-directed memory politics and, on the other, by interaction of different memory communities influenced by age peculiarities as well as their earlier activities. The biographical books related to the Soviet period, which are shaped within different discourses, can figuratively be treated as 'magic carpets', by means of which the reader can fly from one area of the solely true memory land to another, looking for the best collective memory place related to his or her personal past.

About my memory and historical truth

I would like to start with the description of two fragments of my own memory back when I was five or six years old. I was born in Tallinn in 1947 and I regard myself as a representative of the post-war generation,[1] which constitutes a specific memory community. I remember myself going crayfishing on a Sunday with my mother, father, and father's colleagues. It all happened in the early 1950s when people had only one day off per week and work collectives played an important role in filling people's free time. Back then, to get an open lorry to organise an outing for the families of the workers of a small cooperative was a big deal. Estonian waterbodies abounded in crayfish; they were caught with homemade traps and no permits were required. By the afternoon of that particular Sunday, the crayfishing party had caught their catch, boiled them, and started their way back on the open lorry. The road ran through a dense forest, and at some point someone ordered us to lie down on the lorry bed. For the adults it was self-evident:

**Aili Aarelaid
with her parents,
mid-1950s**.

such forests were hiding places for Forest Brothers and you never knew when they would decide to start firing. Stories were told about their deeds, and not always did these stories tell about brave and spirited Estonian men. As a child, I did not know what to think of them but for many years to come I remembered the fear that I experienced when lying there. All I had was the phrase 'forest brother' and the very real fear of an urban child of the thick forest and the evil hiding in it. One of my fellow students from southern Estonia has mentioned a similar experience. He remembers himself as a little boy, paralysed by fear, standing at the coffin of a militiaman he knew, killed by the Forest Brothers. This fear was still deepened by his mother's constant warnings that children were allowed to go wild strawberry picking only up to the railway and not further into the thick forest: the forest was evil and men with firearms could be hiding there. So, due to children's fears, many people of my generation attributed a negative meaning to the phrase 'forest brother'. These men were never mentioned in the homes that had no direct contact with them. It was forty years until the publication of

Mart Laar's book (1992)[2] and more than fifty years until Forest Brothers' remains began to be reburied in festive ceremonies.

There is another memory fragment that dates back to the same period. Most townspeople had no summer homes, yet the idea of sending children to the countryside for the summer, encouraged since the 1930s, had already taken root. As our family had no relatives living in the countryside, my mother was trying to find a way to get me out of town at least for a week or so. A family friend had suggested a farm in the vicinity of Tallinn, where the farmer's wife had agreed to put us up, and a distant relative took us there in his Pobeda.[3]

I saw the house as a big and imposing building, with a spacious kitchen and a large veranda. For us as holiday-makers, the use of these facilities was restricted; only once a day was mother allowed to cook something quickly on the range corner. We were given an old and shaky bed in the attic, which looked like a dusty lumber room rather than accommodation for holiday makers. I was forbidden to run about and make noise. Our family's economic situation must have been rather poor, as we could not afford to pay rent and so mother had to help our landlady to make her ill-fitting pre-war clothes somewhat more fashionable. This was a typical post-war deal, as clothing and fabrics were difficult to obtain and altering old clothes was the main possibility to wear something smarter. We were trying to behave in a prim and proper fashion and to our landlady's liking, but it was not easy. One day, when we went to a nearby grove of trees, where Mother felt more at ease, she gave a sigh from the bottom of her heart, saying, "This woman is a real kulak!" My mother was far from being Red-minded, she had lost her next of kin in the 1941 deportation and there was nearly nothing left of her former, more prosperous life. It was rather the ideological noise, as both the loudspeakers in the streets and the Philips radio that had survived at home, constantly blared about the abolishment of the kulaks as a class. The 1949 deportation was a vigorous example of this. A number of people, so-called kulaks, were designated an abominable social group by the new authorities, and throughout my Stalinist childhood it was difficult to understand, in reality, what exactly they were. The people deported to Siberia were relatives and family friends, whom common sense refused to allow me to call public enemies or kulaks. I think that my mother was trying to interpret the novel concepts and ideas that Soviet rule had given rise to, and suddenly this word seemed truly appropriate to describe an unpleasant and greedy person. However, a child sees the world primarily through his or her parents' eyes, and most probably I established a connection between a conceited and greedy person and a kulak. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, no one was eager to explain to me if kulaks really existed or it was just a Soviet concept; however, later textbooks confirmed the evilness of this human

group. So this word circulated for decades, above all on the level of ideologised consciousness, and made its way back into everyday speech only in the 1970s. This was the time when people dared to acknowledge that they were descendants of big farmers, although these stories were rather told jokingly. Only after 1990 did the time come when one could start settling accounts for designating one's parents kulaks and deporting them (for example, Mäesalu 2007).

Using these two autobiographical cases as examples, I am trying to explain how during such troubled times, confusing even for adults, concepts and attitudes take shape in the minds of the younger generation, who are not always able to fully understand them; yet, the evaluative burden falls on them for years to come. I did not have many contacts with these groups in my everyday life, but, as background forces, Forest Brothers and kulaks were evil, wicked women and men for a Soviet child for quite a while. Such a hotchpotch in the mind of a 1950s child has been humorously described by Estonian writer Leelo Tungal in her book *Seltsimees laps* (*Comrade Child*, 2008).

I gradually grew up, and certain well-known things started to acquire quite different meanings, especially after Estonia regained independence in 1991, although I had realised some things earlier. New post-socialist mainstream historical discourse calls the Forest Brothers freedom fighters, and kulaks are treated as victims of Soviet repressions. As a competent citizen, I cannot but agree to such assessments; yet, I am not able to completely erase the childish fears from my memory – the same way that Maarja Talgre,[4] who was born in Sweden into a family of boat refugees in 1945, is not able to blot out from her memory the completely practical fear of and anger towards Stalin, with whom she had no contact whatsoever, but who, nevertheless, embodied the evil of the whole world for her (Talgre 2004).

> While my playmates were afraid of ghosts, I was afraid of Stalin and Hitler, especially Stalin. I had heard about Stalin's trains taking people to Siberia. At night, when I heard the Stockholm train go to Partille, I was scared that Stalin had found us and came to fetch us on a train (Paju 2003, 16).

I would not say that the memory fragments from my childhood are memories denied (Paju 2006)[5] or that they are somehow traumatic. Rather these are regime-based traces in the evolution of personal memory and it is not an aim in itself to disburden one's mind of the weight. These fragments are buried under heaps of memories and become topical only when, under changed social conditions, the words denoting these phenomena are taken into use once again. When Forest Brothers started to be heroised, I recalled my fear, as a child, of the 'bloodthirsty'

men. Maarja Talgre's descriptions of the Stalinist bogey found their way into literature five decades later, evoking a response in the re-independent Estonia as fascinatingly original reflections of history. Within one generation people's politicised childhood ghosts were completely diametrical due to their different social environments. As these two little girls – Maarja and I – grew up on different sides of the iron curtain, our layers of remembrance from different periods cannot be similar. We belong to different memory communities, but this is also true about our pre-war parents, and about completely dissimilar Swedishised or post-socialist children. Each person is entitled to autonomous and truthful memories, although these are mainly analogues of truth, and it is hard to find a method that would help to prove that one reality recorded by a memory community is more truthful than another.

Remembering as a process of reinterpreting the past

The past is usually treated as a set of experiences abounding in various events, detached from the present in the timeline, and due to this seems to exist objectively, independently from our current experience. Such interpretation of the past and present is certainly illusory, as is speaking about the 'truthful' and 'untruthful' recollections, 'good' and 'bad' nostalgia (Kõresaar 2008, 760). Our past is made up of a myriad of extremely different and randomly recorded memory fragments, most of which are of no significance from the present-day point of view. Most of the memory fragments gradually fade into oblivion, yet a few may become topical during certain stages of life and acquire a substantial meaning. We need a huge set of events and fragments from our personal past to find relevant memory material to individually arrange the social phenomena around us, to render temporal depth to our thoughts and assessments, and discern our self-continuity. Émile Durkheim has noted that to reopen our past, we have to use a subject-centred framework of presently available collective representations that is influenced by current situations. The part of the temporal structure that we call the past always proceeds from the part of the same structure that we call the present, which in turn is a selective application of the practically endless compendium of events (Zerubavel 2003, 5).

> There is no past independent of the present, as there is no present independent of the past. Memory can never rescue the past through reflexivity, since there is no past in itself to be rescued (Santos 2001, 170).

Different social groups and different people may recall shared similar life experiences in completely different ways. Maurice Halbwachs, the classic author of collective memory studies, maintains that the recollection of the same fact can occur within incomparable frameworks (1992, 52). In different periods of history and under different political systems, the same society's interpretations of the past can vary considerably. As a result of political upheavals, emphases on past events are changed at the state level, thereby also specifying everything destined to be forgotten (Aarelaid-Tart 2009, 172, 179).

Polish-American researcher Iwonna Irwin-Zarecka (1994) uses the term "communities of memory" (in turn derived from the term "groups that remember", coined by Halbwachs), which denotes groups formed not only of individuals with common experience, but also of people for whom this experience is similarly significant.

> A great deal of our daily interaction takes place within various communities of memory allowing us the comfort of feeling at home with people we are with (Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 54).

Through the social groups formed on the basis of generational, gender and other features, people are involved in a process in which models for suitable recollection of the past are created, with the aim of making the public concept of the past acceptable to or at least usable for an individual. As a result of various social agreements and subjecting or even repressing some memory communities, so-called truthful knowledge applicable in the contemporary social situation is created to tackle real past events. Sometimes great differences occur between what was considered to be true in the past and what is regarded as the truth at present; moreover, these truths can be multiple both in the past and in the present.

Both collective and individual reminiscences and memory fragments become legitimate mainly if those who have seized or risen to power accept them as such. The legitimacy of biographical narratives and identities is not the aftermath of some conditional events in the past, but has to fit in the context of presently valid social narratives. Besides, the present always features some (memory community) reminiscences that are not legitimised by those in power and are therefore not disclosed to the public. British cultural historian Peter Burke has wittily remarked that it is always relevant to know "who wants whom to remember what, and why" (1989, 107).

By reviving these two memory fragments from my childhood I tried to demonstrate that, the way I told them, they are at variance with the currently valid norms of 'correct' remembering. They seem to be illegitimate and should be

viewed as eccentricities of a child's memory in the period after Stalinist repressions (obviously I do not remember myself before 1950). However, with this in view, Maarja Talgre's politicised Stalinist ghosts should be treated in the same key, although that is something we refuse to do. According to currently valid remembering strategies, the reminiscences of a boat refugees' child are genuine, whereas those of a child born into Soviet society are distorted. And hence the main problem posed in this chapter: how does present-day Estonian society want to remember and legitimise a past that we call Soviet? It cannot be that side by side with the collapse of the political system called socialism, the collective memory of the people of the period has also collapsed.

Forms of autobiographical recollection of the Soviet past

The judgement standards for the past are prescribed by the politicised thought patterns shaped in the course of election campaigns, in press debates, even in memory institutions specifically established for this purpose, etc. In the 1990s, the prevailing attitude was that the Soviet period must be recalled with disdain, calling it the culture of disruption (Krull 1996), an era of repressions and sufferings, a life in dark shadow orchestrated by the Kremlin's powerful rulers. But is it really so that today everyone thinks about or remembers it this way? Rather everyone seems to view it from their own angle: younger people were not born at that time, for the very old it is a long but not unique past, while for the middle-aged the collapse of the Soviet system presented entirely novel opportunities for self-actualisation. Autobiographical narratives should, in their Soviet reminiscences, systematically compare different periods of life; unfortunately, most of the individuals are never precise and reliable in this way. In socio-normative terms, the Soviet period should currently be recalled in a negative key; yet, many people were doing quite well at that time and this period in their personal lives was quite successful. There are certainly also people who refuse to remember their own careerism and collaborationism with the Reds; they present their reminiscences in a rather peculiar (see, for example, Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2012), yet not penitential way.

The haste of the present time, in turn, intensifies the necessity to forget the Soviet era: it is just not topical any more as rapid globalisation brings about more and more new problems. In reminiscences the social upheaval of the period leading from socialism to capitalism can bring to the fore unexpected comparisons (*à la* there were no bananas, wieners, or tights available in shops during the Soviet period), as well as a nostalgic state of mind (*à la* rents for flats and bus tickets were so cheap). The challenges of the re-independence era and daily troubles

resulting from the economic depression of the past five years (i.e. 2008–2012, eds) shape memories of a way of life from more than twenty years ago in order to fit them into today's society.

Here arises a complex methodological problem concerned with the truthfulness of the reminiscences of the Soviet period. The elderly, who were youngsters in the first decades of the Soviet era, are well aware of the fact that each person had at least two or three biographies at that time: one version was written down to be presented to the authorities, another was for a possible KGB interrogation, and a third was to be told among reliable friends (Voronkov & Chikadze 1997). A Soviet citizen had to be flexible to describe his or her life story according to changeable ideological guidelines.[6] Contradictions in the biographies, intended for either public or private spheres, are a manifestation of doublethink characteristic of the Soviet period (Aarelaid 2000). Is it not so that the then double-dealers have, as a personal and generational heritage, brought to the present the way of presenting reminiscences of the Soviet period, depending on the current time and place? Is it not that in today's autobiographical narratives they present their positions in the nomenklatura[7] as the messings-about of a modest Red-tapist (Hagelberg 2008)? Are not the obligatory couple of months that the Estonian young men had to serve in the German aviation auxiliary services at the end of World War II amplified into the magnificent aureole of a freedom fighter?

More than two decades have passed since the collapse of Soviet rule in Estonia, and several modes of presentation can be distinguished in the plethora of biographies[8] published and narrated to the public. The 1990s were characterised by a discourse of re-establishing historical justice through sad stories about those who had been deported or subjected to other Soviet repressions. The truth was interpreted as the victims' revenge on perpetrators (Truupõld 2011). The lost ideals of youth, and often also physical suffering, were expected to be compensated by social and, to a certain extent, also financial recognition (pension increase, free public transport, etc.). The Soviet period of four and a half decades began to be seen as the one and only period of disruption, in which normal everyday life as well as private and collective (Estonian people's) welfare was impossible (Kõresaar 2008, 764). As a counterweight to the 'bad' Soviet period, these types of narrative depicted 'good times' or happy pastoral childhoods between the two world wars. This discourse of disruption and suffering has not yet subsided (for example, Madisson 2012; Nõlvak 2010) but it seems to be fading largely into reminiscences about the Forest Brothers (for example, Mandel 2010).

The voice of the 'children of the republic' (Grabbi 2008)[9] is gradually being replaced by that of the post-war generations. An 'early harbinger of spring' was Estonian writer Viivi Luik's (b. 1946) poetic image of a child who has a peculiar

understanding of the new 'promising' Soviet reality that befalls her mother and father (1985). Literary descriptions on the same topic were also published in the following decades (Veidemann 1996; Tungal 2008) in a style that is humorous-lyrical rather than one that is self-pitying and curses the 'Red evil'. As a counterbalance to the mild-toned stories about the Stalinist children, a deeply pessimistic childhood description was published by Ene Mihkelson (2001). These books feature extremely personal and rather intimate truth about what happened, clearly from today's viewpoint, yet their polyphony adds to the credibility of the past for the present audience.

Side by side with the discourse of disruption, another – that of a person coping well with unpopular Soviet power – appears at the beginning of the new millennium. Some other biography researchers have also mentioned that, speaking about everyday life throughout the 1960s–1980s, the more recent narratives emphasise the competence in orientation in the corridors of power, playing double games and obtaining the necessities under conditions of the economy of scarcity (Kõresaar 2008, 766; Jõesalu 2009). The Soviet period ceases to be merely an era of repression; it is rather modified into a layer of nice reminiscence about the possibilities of playing with the system; a period of so-called cold war featuring humorous and pungent oppositions; or a period of either a brighter 'human-faced' or socio-critical 'real socialism'. In addition to the earlier biographical collections, published by the Estonian Literary Museum, one-man stories in fanciful and fluent style (Parmasto 2010; Valk 2010; Stolovitš 2006) or academically restrained stories about successfully lived lives (Hagelberg 2008; Veiderma 2009; Siigur 2011; Viires 2011) also appear in bookshops. The generation that grew up under socialism starts to present itself more boldly and shamelessly on a social plane, telling stories about everyday life in the post-Stalinist period (Raudnask 2011; Pajula 2011; Karm 2011; Kask 2011; Ots 2012; Kühn 2012). Nevertheless, tales about war atrocities and life after escaping from the GULAG also persist. More often than not the lives of the victims of Stalinism are depicted as extremely monotonous: worked as a builder after the years in Siberia and outside work did the same, only for one's own sake (for example, Loosaar 2006).

In the 2000s, following the lead of the West, the publication of famous people's biographies becomes predominant. Their number increases year after year, and, to improve sales, the tricks used by the countries with extensive culture industry are taken as an example. In Estonia, writers (for example, Kallas 2011), singers (for example, Velli 2012), actors and others write the biographies partly themselves, however it is evident that producing presentable hardcover biographies of important public figures has come upon as a profitable job. It is inevitable that older or middle-aged Estonian celebrities all have a Soviet past. In these

glamorous stories the motif of disruption is fading, the Soviet era is not so bleak and dull anymore; it is rather filled with pleasant memories, exciting meetings, anecdotal experiences, intrigues behind the scenes, strained relations with the opposite sex, enjoying publicity, and unpoliticised self-analysis. These books have become bestsellers; they sell out quickly and have long waiting lists in libraries. Why is it that the social scope of these stories is so wide? I am of the opinion that the readership of these books also comes from the Soviet past and envision themselves as co-travellers of these famous people. When tickets were still cheap, they frequented theatres and cinemas; they also watched Estonian TV as the only national channel, were keen visitors to museums and listeners to Vikerraadio.[10] They have been part and parcel of the same life as the celebrities, and constitute a massive memory community with rather vague age limits.

While reading stories about these remarkable or controversial lives, the readers feel themselves to be part of the era with its problems and vagaries. They realise that their own stories can be more modest; yet, in the reminiscences of these prominent people values and understandings are the same (cf Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 146). In a Sunday morning radio programme for farmers in the 1970s and 1980s, Kärna Ärni[11] explained to Estonian people in painstaking detail and with great humour the 'peculiarities' of the Soviet order, and the reminiscences of the actor impersonating this character (Nõmmik 2012) sell well today. On the other hand, the autobiography of Estonian animator Rein Raamat looks back to the dilemmas of the Soviet period, asking "how to harbour the fragile and beautiful if dark forces breathe down your neck" (2011, back cover). Biographical books are so numerous that a detailed classification of the myriad of recent autobiographies remains beyond the scope of this chapter, which aims to outline the general characteristics of such accounts. As an Estonian peculiarity, I could mention the shortage of memoirs from Soviet functionaries.[12] Everyday consciousness regarded actors, writers and other intellectuals as standing on the same side of the political curtain as common people. Therefore, we fail to fully understand the staging rules of nomenclatural performances.[13] Many cultural figures have described their contacts with the KGB; yet, there seems to be only one of them that reveals the inside of this machinery (Kasak 2011). In the 1960s active students of the University of Tartu criticised the censorship practiced by the Minister of Culture Albert Laus. Now, the next generation has given an insight into those times from another viewpoint (Laos 2009). Under this category we could also mention, for example, Estonian politician and social scientist Marju Lauristin's (2010) life scenes, as they feature the 'tightrope walking tricks' performed between constant proximity to authorities and opposition to them.

So, during the two decades of regained independence, at least three or four (at closer inspection, even more) extensive memory community discourses for explaining the Soviet period have emerged. Most narrators have lived the majority of their lives in Soviet Estonia and been involved in all the pains and pleasures of the era. However, those whose corresponding experience dates back only to their childhood or who were born in the post-socialist period, are developing a completely different understanding of the socialist era. In the following I briefly discuss the three currently circulating concepts of the past, used for the purposes of different memory communities on the basis of today's ideologies.

In reality, there are many more circulating concepts of the Soviet past; besides, we have to consider the fact that each age cohort includes several different and often opposing small memory communities or micro-cohort ways of remembering. However, the task of finding out what they are is for future research.

Stories told by representatives of three memory communities

The first reminiscences are those of a man from among the 'children of the republic', who, by a twist of fate, happened to join the Estonian Rifle Corps[14] (Aarelaid-Tart 2011). This corps was part of the Soviet Army and men who had served there enjoyed the Soviet privileges of better jobs and social services. At the beginning these 'Corps Boys' had the reputation of war heroes and were protected by the authorities; the tragic notes in people's life stories started to emerge only several decades later (Kuusberg 1965; Peegel 1979). After Estonia had regained independence, a new interpretation appeared, which viewed these men as 'Red soldiers', in contrast with the legionaries[15] and Finnish Boys[16] who had fought on the 'right' side. A certain shift occurred in the middle of the past decade, when the Corps Boys started to be treated as nameless pawns in the big war. At the same time, their life stories started to appear in print (for example, Nurm 2006).

Ailo Ehamaa was born in 1922, grew up in a family in which the father had participated in the War of Independence, attended the patriotically-minded Tallinn Secondary Science School, and in this sense was a typical 'child of the republic'. His school-leaver's life dreams were disrupted by the Soviet occupation and two weeks after graduation he found himself in the Red Army. His life story dwells upon the mentality in the Rifle Corps and on combat, yet never from the position of victim.

For Ailo the war ends in 1946, when he is released from a military hospital as a second-degree war invalid. Typically for a young man back from war he is eager to start full-blooded life again: he looks for a girlfriend and an agreeable job, wants to continue his studies at a higher level, and makes efforts to stand

on his own feet financially. At the beginning, Corps friendship comes in useful, but during the 1949 deportations he appears to be a kulak's son-in-law and everyone looks askance at him. As an indigenous inhabitant of the capital Tallinn, Ailo decides to take his young wife and new-born daughter to the countryside, nearer to where food is and farther from social strains. The following fifteen years see him as head of the local dairy, able to graduate from the Estonian Academy of Agriculture (presently Estonian University of Life Sciences) and complete his Candidate of Sciences thesis. In the 1960s, he again moves to the capital to have a better education for his children. He finds a good position at a research institution outside the city, takes advantage of his Corps Boy past to get a two-room flat, and thinks of himself as a man who can manage his life well enough. In no time he is appointed head of the research unit; he is lucky to graduate from three months of training in East Germany, and attracts the attention of research gurus in Moscow. He retires at the age of seventy, and might have happily lived to a ripe old age had destiny not had other plans for him. It is the time of the Night Song Festivals,[17] actions in defence of the mother tongue, the Baltic Chain,[18] defending Toompea against the Intermovement[19] and, finally, the re-establishment of the Republic of Estonia in 1991.

In his life story, Ailo Ehamaa does not use the discourse of disruption or that of a deft manipulator of Soviet power. It has been important for him, throughout his life, to keep the course his Estonian-period upbringing has bred in him – honesty and righteousness. Looking back at his life, he opines that he had adapted himself fairly well to Soviet reality. He regarded himself as an Estonian-minded person throughout his life, and the re-establishment of the Republic of Estonia is one of the highlights of his life. Fighting in the war was a tough experience, and choosing sides was impossible; nevertheless, Ailo greatly appreciates the activity of the Finnish Boys as real warriors. He maintains that the derisive attitude towards the Corps Boys comes only from armchair politicians: only those who have been in real war can see bravery in men on either side.

Summarising his life, Ailo Ehamaa uses the discourse of a man in control of his own destiny. In the life stories of people who have lived complicated lives, such a discourse starts to take shape at the end of the past decade (Subbi 2008; Kaljuste 2008). The reminiscences of those who have remained optimistic and active up to a ripe old age reveal that a life infested with political changes has, time and again, required new adaptation strategies; yet, this has not given cause for complaint, discontent with destiny, or wearing the aureole of martyrdom (for a longer analysis, see Maaris Raudsepp's chapter in this volume). Ailo Ehamaa summarises his life as follows:

What should I say at the end? In my life there have been two great wonders. One was that I did not lose my leg, although I got chronic inflammation in it. During those sixty years that have passed from getting wounded, the wound has remained open and I have to take care of it daily. But still a bigger wonder is that Estonia managed to restore its independence. There was no hope that a small republic, incorporated into a totalitarian giant that was threatening to destroy the whole world, would have an opportunity to become free. This really was a wonder and it was worthwhile living to see it happen. Several dreams that I had, have now come true: I was born in Free Estonia and now I can die in Free Estonia. This is the greatest wonder of all, and I thank God for it (Ehamaa 2011, 159).

The second example is concerned with a Komsomol activist's attitude towards life. It is exactly this category that the official approach to the past suggests to be called 'Red commissars of building brigades', Komsomol careerists, etc. Up to now the analysis of these people's life stories has been presented rather in publications oriented to the foreign market; I cannot currently recall any autobiographies by former Komsomol activists in Estonian.

Marko[20] was born in 1951 as the first and only child to middle-aged parents. His father was a life-long goldsmith, who had made it through the war in the Estonian Rifle Corps. Marko remembers his mother only as a housewife, who, unlike his risk-averse father, was overly nationally minded. Marko attended school in Tartu, and thought of it as perfectly normal to join the Pioneer Organisation and the Komsomol, as everyone around him did. He recalls the days at secondary school as follows:

We were an elite class in a sense that it was composed of a certain selection; the children were somewhat more talented, not only from Tartu, but also from outside. The wish to study was dominant and it was no wonder that all my classmates continued their studies at university. Quite a number of them have now become well-known political figures. Eve Pärnaste, for example – she was the Komsomol secretary of our school, and later on a founder of the Estonian Independence Party, a dissident, and a Member of Parliament. In general, Komsomol life was like that: it was the only youth organisation and the only opportunity for self-expression for the young people who wanted to do something interesting, to actively participate in cultural life (Aarelaid-Tart 2006, 290).

Marko claims that people with an active and positive attitude stand their ground, whatever the political regime may be. He was not able to choose the country to live in or the regime under which to operate, but he was always a man of action. At university he studied chemistry, had some odd jobs at the university lab and later on also in the chemical industry, but, apart from his field of study, he was drawn to Komsomol activities. At the end of his fifth year at university, he became commander of the south Estonian region of the Estonian Students' Building Brigade.[21] He recalls this time as a kind of managerial training period by the "school of life":

> I had a lorry, a GAZ-51, which I used to drive around and organise work. Work started already in April: first I had to conclude contracts, drive to all these collective farms and building organisations that were interested in hiring students and find out what they offered. There were better conditions and there were worse, and eventually, I had to conclude detailed contracts with them. It was a time for bargaining, as the student workforce was quite in demand, so only the ones with the best offers struck a bargain. The headquarters of the building brigade did not pay me any salary; I was able to get some money through contracts (Aarelaid-Tart 2006, 297).

In his Komsomol career, Marko works himself up from Komsomol secretary of the chemistry department at university to a head of department of the Young Communist League of Estonia. He does not feel ashamed of this period in his life, as during the stagnation period it was this organisation that enabled him to organise a cultural life for the young people. He also objects to the rumours that people like him were showered with all kinds of privilege. He vividly describes the problems with his living space in Tallinn, where he had to start in a two-room section in a hostel, which housed three people. After some time, he was offered a flat in an old stove-heated wooden building, with a toilet in the corridor. As he was sick and tired of the hostel mentality, he accepted the offer. Soon he realised that the next-door neighbour was a drunkard who constantly scrounged money to buy vodka, the walls were not insulated and on winter mornings the room temperature was not more than 6 to 8 degrees above zero. He struggled in this flat for a couple of years, hoping for the best. Yet, finally he lost hope and moved to his girlfriend's commonhold flat. Marko describes his years as a Komsomol functionary as years of travelling all over the Soviet Union, attending both brainwashing and training courses with fascinating lectures in Moscow. He also presents a colourful description of coordinating action 'from above' during the youth unrest in the 1980s, which clearly demonstrates the absence of any sensible

connection between the things heard from the public or seen in the streets and the guidelines coming from the Central Committee. One was lectured no matter what, and it was wisest to remain calm. Marko also remembers the Russification campaign in the late 1970s, when Russian was established as an official language for all bureaucratic procedures, typists had to be replaced, and pointless forms from Moscow had to be filled in. He recalls with a smile a package sent from the Central Committee of the Leninist Communist Youth League, which included hundreds of medals to be awarded to the best maize growers, which were supposed to be given in Estonia, although due to climatic conditions maize never ripens properly here. Reminiscences of bright and active young people and the events of the 1960s–1980s constitute an optimistic discourse still largely unexplored. These are the people who now have significant roles in political and economic life, and this might be the reason why their 'compromising' youth is seldom recalled. Komsomol activists were undoubtedly active participants in the Soviet way of life, who struggled within the System, looking for more sensible solutions and shaping their understandings of democratic society (Allik & Vihalemm 1968, 1559–1563). Their activity and attitudes played an important role during the Singing Revolution,[22] yet they sometimes feel that the connection between yesterday and today is deliberately muted.

Thirdly I would like to give a brief insight into the understandings of the young people who lack any first-hand experience of the Soviet era. They have two main sources at their disposal to get an idea of this period. The official approach to history taught at schools and universities is certainly of essential importance. Today the emphasis is laid on describing Stalinist repressions, glorifying the brave fighters for freedom, and mediating the harsh destiny of dissidents. For many of today's youth, the Soviet era is 'past perfect', which does not really matter but which unfolds in the movies made in the discourse of suffering, and through their teachers' negative attitudes. In interviews these youngsters sometimes represent the position of a sophisticated 'philosopher', who describes the Soviet era as follows:

The entire period was pervaded by a brainless idea; it was a kind of idée-fixe, to which the whole nation was subjected. In terms of an idea, the concept of communism could even be good, with praiseworthy intentions – all people are equal, everyone must have equal opportunities – but the implementation was violent. I think that this modus operandi was improper throughout. Even the best things turn to bad if they are implemented by force. It was utterly wrong to abolish freedom of choice! For decades people lived in fear of not being able to make their own decisions (male, born in 1990).[23]

To some of today's university students, their faraway childhood appears as fragments of the economy of scarcity. Later on, in domestic conversations, these flashbacks have been proven to be true and presented as a summarised recollection of the Soviet era:

> My first memory from the Soviet period is that I am queuing up with my father for sausage. It was some butcher's shop, and father had taken me with him; I am not sure whether it was to jump the queue with a child or because children also had a sausage quota allocated to them. Father always took me with him, and I remember him saying: "I have a child with me!" (male, born in 1985).

Those who were born around the 1990s are the children of the 'golden sixties' generation and the grandchildren of those who were born before the war into the Republic of Estonia or during World War II. They are only now becoming interested in their parents' youth; for the time being, this period seems to be related to some Red-mentality blur and procuring the things necessary to struggle with the difficulties in everyday life. Since today things also play an important role, it would be good to know what people did when there were shortages of everything. However, the members of this memory cohort are more interested in the reminiscences of their grandmothers and grandfathers, as these coincide better with the image of a pastoral childhood and the feeling that the following years were filled with atrocities. Today many families keep alive memories of the deportations and imprisonments of their relatives in the 1940s. Young people do not hear very detailed descriptions; yet, it is important for them to realise that their family has also been subjected to the injustice of Stalinist repression:

> Very bad things happened to our family. My grandparents had to give up their farm and start working in a kolkhoz. I have heard a lot about my great uncle who was deported to Siberia. It was certainly very bad. I do not know exactly what happened, but I have heard that the whole family was sent there and they all died. My great uncle was somehow associated with former statesmen. That's why it all happened (female, born in 1989).

For those who lack first-hand experience of the Soviet era, this period might seem hard and brutal, or, on the contrary, ridiculously naïve, anecdotal, weirdly old-fashioned, or just cool, fantastic and funny (there were no mobile phones!). More detailed investigation of the field is definitely yet to be carried out. And in three decades, this generation comes to the point when they start putting down

their own life stories filled with quirks characteristic of their own neoliberal period.

In conclusion

Throughout the whole existence of the restored Republic of Estonia, the archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and the Estonian National Museum have collected and preserved the life stories of native Estonians, as well as those of the Estonian diaspora and Estonian Russians. Many of these life stories, either based on archival material or written as autobiographies, have been published. This chapter dwells upon only those autobiographical books that, in one way or another, testify to the possibility of living under Soviet rule. The author holds that the revival of the socialist past in the minds of contemporary people is influenced, on the one hand, by active state-directed memory politics (Tamm 2012) and, on the other, by the interaction of different memory communities influenced by age peculiarities as well as their earlier activities. In the 1990s, after Estonia had regained independence, publicly (in the mass media and meetings) the right to remember was predominantly given to those who had suffered from Stalinist repression; the Forest Brothers, legionaries and Finnish Boys followed somewhat later. At the turn of the millennium, this right was extended to writers, who, by means of artistic imagery, started to create a more generalised picture of this period, aptly called the decade of 'immobile flying'. The 2000s – especially the second half of the decade – are characterised by a boom in biographical books, bringing about the diversification of the discourses of remembering the Soviet past. On the one hand, stories about playing the system were legalised; on the other, it gave rise to memoiristic literature concerned with famous people. In recent years the right to voice one's opinions has also been given to those who claim that, despite the complexities and discrepancies of the Soviet way of life, they lived full lives and were happy.

All four discourses – those of the sufferer, the gambler, the celebrity, and the architect of one's own fortune – reverberate in the minds of young people with no first-hand Soviet experience. None of these memory community discourses (and micro-discourses therein) can claim to be the exclusive historical truth. The biographical books related to the Soviet period, which are shaped within different discourses, can be figuratively treated as 'magic carpets', by means of which the reader can fly from one area of the solely true memory land to another, looking for the best collective memory place related to his or her personal past (Pierre Nora's famous *Les lieux de mémoire* (1984–1992)). Quite a number of biographies produced today, illustrated with glossy pictures, can be classified as part of the

literature of leisure, which is currently out of the sphere of my interest. I am mainly fascinated by autobiographical books that aim to create and present to the public the personal truth that has given meaning to the past years. Most of these books describe Soviet lives as clear-cut, noble and benevolent, and this is exactly what readers need: both those who are looking for a clue to interpret their Soviet pasts in a more suitable key, and their children, who would like to understand their parents.

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Notes

The original version of the chapter was published in Estonian (Aarelaid-Tart 2012b). The editors have updated and improved the text for this volume. The editors are grateful to Tiina Mällo for translating the chapter from Estonian to English.

1 In more detail, see Aarelaid-Tart 2012a. An analogous book has been published about a somewhat older generation, see Ugaste 2007.

2 Mart Laar, historian and prime minister in 1992–1994 and 1999–2002, published the study *War in the Woods: Estonia's Struggle for Survival, 1944–1956* in 1992 (eds).

3 A well-known expensive Soviet make of car that was often interpreted as a symbol of a higher living standard. Pobedas were usually owned by directors of bigger institutions

or enterprises and other members of managerial staff. In the post-war years an ordinary person was lucky to have a motorcycle with sidecar.

4 Maarja Talgre (b. 1945) is a Swedish journalist, writer and producer, who has published two books about her father Leo Talgre, who was an intelligence officer during World War II and perished in 1944.

5 In 2005 journalist Imbi Paju made a documentary about Estonian women's experiences during World War II and Stalinist repressions, titled *Memories Denied*. In 2006 she published a book in Finland with the same title, which has been translated into many languages and became a bestseller (eds).

6 Our family archive includes my mother Linda's written autobiography from the year 1950, when she was a housewife in early middle age. The text was written to apply for a post that she never took. Facts about her life are relevant, yet their trite interpretation has been attuned to the requirements of the new regime. Her work as a senior saleswoman at her uncle's jewellery shop turned into humiliating service for a capitalist exploiter; she also stresses zealous participation in the courses for accountants, which is possible only due to Soviet power, etc. Unfortunately, I cannot ask my long-deceased mother for explanations about the origins of such writing.

7 The nomenklatura were a category of people within the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries who held various key administrative positions in all spheres of those countries' activities – government, industry, agriculture, education, etc. – and whose positions were granted only by the approval of the communist party of each country or region.

8 In August 2012, the bookstore chain Rahva Raamat offered 7516 biographies or books of reminiscences. More than half of them were translations, and some were memoires in the form of fiction.

9 Hellar Grabbi (b. 1929) is an Estonian journalist, literary critic and editor. His family escaped to Germany in 1944 and settled in the USA in 1949. In the first volume of his memoirs he describes the generation born in the 1920s and 1930s as "children of the republic" (eds).

10 The Estonian radio channel with the largest audience, which started operating in 1967.

11 A kolkhoznik impersonated by Sulev Nõmmik, a popular Estonian actor, whose satirical performances on the radio could be heard in a programme called "Good morning, farmers!".

12 There are many more in Lithuania, including the memoires of Algirdas Brazauskas (2007), the long-term leader of the Communist Party and later the president of Lithuania. However, some remarkable memoirs of former Estonian functionaries can be mentioned: Saul 2006; 2012; 2014; Meri 2008; Kasak 2011; Sillaste 2009; Laks 2015 (eds).

13 I have used a small number of interviews conducted with so-called Estonian-minded communists in Aarelaid 1998.

14 See note 9 in Maaris Raudsepp's chapter in this volume.

15 See note 8 in Maaris Raudsepp's chapter in this volume.

16 Finnish Boys, Infantry Regiment 200, was a unit in the Finnish Army during World War II made up mostly of Estonian volunteers who preferred to fight against the Soviet Union in the ranks of the Finnish army instead of the armed forces of Germany.

17 In 1988 the Night Song Celebrations held at the Tallinn Song Festival Ground attracted hundreds of thousands of people in support of the re-establishment of the Republic of Estonia (eds).

18 The Baltic Chain was a political demonstration on 23 August 1989. Approximately two million people joined hands to form a human chain across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to mark the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which led to the occupation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union in 1940 (eds).

19 The Intermovement, founded in 1988, was aligned with the pro-Soviet wing of the Communist Party of Estonia, and opposed the Estonian independence movement. The Intermovement operated mainly at military plants and factories of all-union importance. On 15 May 1990 groups of Russian-speaking workers led by the Intermovement attempted to storm the seat of the Estonian Parliament at Toompea.

20 Marko's (pseudonym) life story has been published in Aarelaid-Tart 2006, 288–306. The same book includes my longer interpretation of this biography (op cit, 82–86).

21 The Estonian Students' Building Brigade was a voluntary working team of young people and students from universities and secondary vocational schools. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, many of the squads fostered youth culture critical of the Soviet system.

22 The events that occured between 1987 and 1991 and which led to the restoration of the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The term was coined by Estonian activist and artist, Heinz Valk.

23 These quotations are taken from Eeva Konsa's bachelor thesis *Nõukogude aeg 1990-ndate aastate vahetusel sündinute teadvuses* [*Soviet Era in the Minds of Those Born around the 1990s*] supervised by the author, defended at the Estonian Institute of Humanities, Tallinn University, in 2010.

Estonian memory culture since the post-communist turn: conceptualising change through the lens of generation

Ene Kõresaar, Kirsti Jõesalu

Abstract. This chapter explores how various Estonian generations and their post-Soviet memory culture(s) have influenced the meaning and interpretations of late socialism. The analysis follows the "dynamics of memory" approach while focusing on question of differences and similarities of meanings the various generational cohorts have attributed to the late socialist era since the post-communist turn. A diverse selection of sources is used to juxtapose individual, social, political, and cultural formats of memory: autobiographical accounts from the Estonian Cultural History Archives, thematic interviews, written memoirs, museum exhibitions, novels, and theatre plays. As a result, this chapter argues that despite the persistence of the post-1989 memory culture, which labelled the late socialist experience of the 1960s-1980s as unsuitable for the future of independent Estonia, that time period had become a key referent of memories by the turn of millennium. Furthermore, it was followed by the diversification of mnemonic discourses, going from metaphors of 'rupture' and distress, to complex attitudes involving reference to 'good old Soviet times'. The chapter also demonstrates that shifts in the meaning making and interpretations of the late socialist period in Estonia are related to different generational agents entering the field of public memory work.

Introduction

At the turn of the millennium, noticeable changes occurred in the practices of remembering and interpreting the experience of late socialism in Estonia. Instead of a discourse emphasising impassable differences between Estonian culture during Soviet rule and during its prior and regained independence, more diversification in the approach that period became noticeable. Interestingly enough, the layers of meanings of late socialism seem to resonate differently in the memories of the various generation groups. This chapter explores how differences in generational memories have changed the post-Soviet memory culture. We investigate

what meanings have been ascribed to this period by different generation groups since the end of the socialist era, and how they ascribe them. More specifically, the focus will be on 'late socialism' – spanning from the late 1950s to the second half of the 1980s, a period that researchers of socialism consider one of normalisation, of people becoming accustomed to the system (Yurchak 2005, 31).[1]

This chapter identifies the status and meaning of late socialism in Estonian remembrance culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century by focusing on media and its negotiation of memory in a broader sense, rather than just at the political level, i.e., written autobiographies, museum exhibitions, theatrical plays, written media reports, etc. In order to understand the developments that have occurred in Estonian memory culture during the past decade, we draw on our previous research on the mnemonic processes of the 1990s.

According to our approach, the different views of late socialism are affected by different generational convictions. The view of the late Soviet period espoused during the 1990s mainly reflected the experiences of individuals born in the 1920s. In the twenty-first century, on the other hand, there is a much more complex set of mnemonic practices available that is composed of interpretations of the past characteristic of those born in the 1920s and 1940s, as well as in the mid-1960s and early 1970s.

The "dynamics of memory" approach to generational remembering

This analysis is based on the "dynamics of memory" approach (Misztal 2003, 67–74), i.e., a combination of approaches that focus on problems related to the active construction and mediation of the meaning of the past in a changing time-space. Unlike the 'presentist' mode of analysis, which attempts to define who controls and creates the content of social memory (op cit, 56–61), the "dynamics of memory" approach does not consider the social elite to be the only group that controls the 'content' of memory. It also recognises the potential for the occurrence of various changes and shifts while simultaneously seeing memory as a platform for negotiation between the dominant ideology and alternative interpretations of past experiences (Popular Memory Group 1982; Schwartz 1996; Thomson 1994). The "dynamics of memory" approach stresses the importance of observing identities and meaning systems throughout their (historical) development, and treats memory and social action as continuations, not causes and effects, of one another.

Studying the dynamics of remembering requires a complex approach to the dimension of time, including the recognition of consistency in change. Barry Schwartz has shown that social change brings about new social and

symbolic structures that overlay old ones without replacing them (Schwartz 1996). The same conclusion has been reached by Jeffrey Olick (2007), who has demonstrated that the changes in commemorative practices does not mean that the earlier forms of commemoration are simply 'overwritten' or replaced by later ones. Instead, he argues, the new practices are based on 'memories' of the earlier forms of commemoration. This "memory of memory" (Olick 2007, 12) brings the past into the present. James Wertsch (2009) recently demonstrated the extent to which certain "narrative templates" that mediate our understanding of the past are able to resist and adapt to social change, constituting a deep memory of a textual community that remains consistent through time.

However, participation in a shared textual community does not ensure a similar and uniform distribution of meaning. Research has shown that even if people attribute meaning to their experiences on the basis of the same cultural narrative or interpretation template (Wertsch 2002), the application of that template primarily depends on its capacity to articulate experience (Kõresaar 2005a). Living memory (*Erfahrungsgedächtnis*, Assmann 2006) can be used to differentiate between smaller mnemonic communities (families, groups of colleagues, ethnic groups) in which the individual participates through mnemonic socialisation (Zerubavel 1996). For the purposes of our study, we differentiate between social groups according to their temporal horizons (Giesen 2004, 32). Generally, we proceed from Giesen's observation that

> in a common attempt to remember the past, social groups can and frequently will encounter differences of temporal horizon or differences in focusing on special events as turning points of history. Events that have a key importance for the collective memory of one group may be ignored or omitted in the collective memory of others and even if both agree to attribute crucial importance to a particular event they still can greatly diverge in their interpretation of it (op cit).

Exploring the generational differences in memory by identifying what earlier experiences are carried forward in memory by age cohorts has become prominent in social memory studies since the 1990s (Bodnar 1996; Schuman & Scott 1989; Schuman & Corning 2000; 2011). The research focused on both how different generations attribute importance to different events as well as how the meanings of events differ for various cohorts. It has been demonstrated that each generation receives a distinctive imprint from the social and political events of its youth. A 'generational memory' structured by generational divisions allows people to have a certain social identification, both on an individual and a social

level. Sharing memories, i.e. mnemonic socialisation, is the basis for constructing generation identity.² Following Mannheim's classic study (1928), the majority of the research tends to focus on unusual historical events as the most important moments for a generation. Here, the interests of oral history on family memory and generational transmission as well as that of the study of historical memory and social memory studies intersect. By focusing on intergenerational transmission of experiences of historical traumas, oral historians gain important insights into the processes through which families construct and negotiate their memories (Freund 2009). Historians in their turn have particularly investigated the connection between the experience of war and the formation of generational memory cultures (Platt & Dabag 1995; Reulecke 2003). Generations in these contexts are understood as age groups with distinct generationalities, i.e. "as communities of experience and carriers of memory, who then can also potentially exhibit a 'memorial resistance' towards the more or less official interpretations of history" (Reulecke 2008, 123).

This chapter dwells on this notion of 'generation' and its role in mnemonic processes. However, the scope of our analysis is not limited to the question of whether and how the ways to remember a certain period/event contribute to or are the result of the creation of distinct generational memory cultures. Instead, the focus of our inquiry is on the general dynamics of remembering a certain period in the Estonian past – late socialism, a question that we approach by asking how the meanings generated by different generations about their experiences in late socialism have contributed to the transformation of remembering that period in the public sphere. In what follows, textual and visual articulations of three generational groups are analysed; their defining years of socialisation (Weisbrod 2007) acuminate on three periods respectively: (1) World War II and its aftermath, (2) the relative stabilisation of everyday life during the 1950s and 1960s, and (3) the transformational society of the 1990s. Members of all generation groups have voiced the significance of Soviet-era experience both in their individual lives as well as in their lives as a generation (Kõresaar 2005b; Jõesalu 2007; Grünberg 2008). In juxtaposing their memories and interpretations of the late Soviet period, we also include social and cultural processes as factors that define experiences (and potentially a sense of shared social belonging) (cf Kelly 2007, 165–166).

An integrated view on remembering: sources

Keeping in mind that the aim of the study was to explore the dynamics of remembering late socialism as a complementary interplay of different generational

perspectives, sources were selected for the analysis that implement the broadest possible variety of arenas and agencies of articulation of the social memory of late socialism. According to Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper (2004, 17), "arenas of articulation" "refer to those socio-political spaces within which social actors advance claims for the recognition of their […] memories", ranging from networks of families to the "public sphere of nation-states and transnational power blocs", whereas "agencies of articulation" "refer to those institutions through which social actors seek to promote and secure recognition". In other words, the sources under analysis represent diverse "formats of memory" (Assmann 2010) – individual, social, political, and cultural. To date, research into memory has largely focused on group memories developed through interaction, on the one hand, and on much higher forms of memory (memory systems, memory discourses, memories of ethnicities, etc.), on the other hand. In attempting to provide an outline of the consistency and transformation of the meaning of a certain time period, this chapter sets out to bridge the gaps between different formats of memory by demonstrating how the meaning of an event develops simultaneously in several different arenas of remembering – i.e., the autobiographical, theatrical, literary, etc.

This analysis is primarily based on autobiographical accounts that have been sent in by people in response to the life-writing campaigns organised by the Estonian Cultural History Archives and the Estonian Life Stories Association since the end of the 1980s. The largest campaigns of the 1990s, Life Histories of Estonia (1989–1990, 133 life stories), My Destiny and the Destiny of Those Close to Me in the Labyrinths of History (1996–1997, 262 life stories), and A Hundred Life Stories of the Century (1998–1999, 232 life stories), framed individual stories as deeply relevant to the newly renovated national history. Autobiographers, in turn, wished to testify as authoritative witnesses of their time and their generation (Hinrikus & Kõresaar 2004, 21–25; Kõresaar 2004a, 12–16). The aim of autobiographical writing in the 1990s was to separate the history of the Estonians from Soviet history, a process shaped by stories from people who had been born before World War II. Life stories used as the basis for the analysis of the dynamics of remembering in the first decade of the twenty-first century are mainly drawn from autobiographical accounts submitted to the My Life and My Family's Life in the ESSR and in the Republic of Estonia life-writing competition (2000–2001, 330 life stories). This campaign was set in motion by a social trend that was beginning to become very well established in Estonian society during the 1990s; both the organisers of the competition and the writers of the life stories were specifically looking to re-democratise and diversify the process of remembering.

In addition to written life stories, we have used biographical and thematic interviews conducted during the past decade by the authors of this chapter, as well as by students of ethnology at the University of Tartu. Our analysis is also based on biographical materials concerning daily life in the Soviet Union stored at the Archive of Correspondents' Materials at the Estonian National Museum; our main sources of information are the responses provided to the questionnaire entitled Working Life and Work in Soviet Estonia (2001–2002, 118 answers, correspondents born mainly in the 1920s and 1930s).

In this study, the shifts and changes in autobiographical remembering have been linked with the developments that occurred at the end of the previous century and the beginning of this century in other arenas of collective remembering, specifically in the spheres of official and popular culture (cf Bodnar 1994). Official culture is seen as including history books and canonical works of history funded by the state that express historical interpretations that are also manifested in other areas of official political culture, e.g., the national calendar. The sphere of popular culture includes plays, films, literary works, and museum exhibits, which always make up a part of cultural memory due to their disposition towards generalised aesthetic formulation (Assmann 2006, 207). We also base our analysis on journalistic texts (such as opinion stories and cultural reviews) that mediate developments in various arenas of remembering to the public, but also constitute their own arena in which memory is continually reproduced, sedimented, and challenged (Edensor 2006, 526). The breadth and diversity of our selection of sources corresponds to the individual's daily experience of how memory 'happens': rather than occurring in the form of a concentrated debate over some explosive event, remembering is usually quite de-localised and fragmented, sometimes taking place in the form of individual references. To paraphrase Michael Billig (1995), remembering is usually banal, as it reminds a community of its role in the world of nations and its place in history on a daily basis.

We will begin our analysis by focusing on the discourse of the Soviet era that dominated Estonian society in the 1990s and by exploring the role of the generation of the 1920s in this discourse. We will then demonstrate how late socialism came to be the central realm of experience in autobiographical memoirs through various crises of depiction by focusing especially on the life stories of the generation of the 1940s. Finally, we will outline the templates of remembering that were coming into being during the first decade of the 21st century, including the nostalgic view of the 'good old Soviet times' initially evoked by the "generation of winners".

Omitting late socialism: the generation of the 1920s

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the meaning of late socialism was being shaped in Estonian society by the concept of 'the rupture', which had developed at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in the anti-Soviet spirit of 'taking back Estonia's history' and which initially signified the experience of the Stalinist period. As a metaphor, the rupture stands for the interruption and deterioration of the harmonious national development of the pre-war independence era. The Stalinist years are described primarily through events that involve conflict, national repression, and destruction.[3]

In post-Soviet Estonian memory, 'the rupture' is the dominant template for interpreting the Stalinist era, both in official accounts and in autobiographical interpretations of the past. This conformity has been achieved through a process of mutual contribution. At the end of the 1980s, researchers of legal and historical issues provided the quantitative and interpretative framework through their reports on the magnitude of Stalinist crimes, which was subsequently "fleshed out" with autobiographical stories (Anepaio 2003, 209–214). The life stories, in turn, came to be used as sources of ideological motivation and information by historians looking to fill in the 'blank spots' in history (Rahi 1998).

'The rupture' as a version of history is dominated by the events and processes that marked collective trajectories in Estonian society during the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s: repression, ideological pressure and persecution, nationalisation and collectivisation, repressive political actions, etc. Individual lives within the context of these collective events are described as being threatened by external forces and emphasis is put on people's inability to control their own lives. The image of 'the rupture' was accompanied by a strong rhetoric of victimhood, both in public discourse and in life writing. Historical, social, and political injustices are closely intertwined with personal traumas (Aarelaid-Tart 2006; Anepaio 2003; Kõresaar 2004b; Rahi 1998).

By the end of the 1990s, the concept of 'rupture' had become established in the Estonian national narrative as a metaphor applicable to the Stalinist era in Estonia and provided the focus for self-identification for more than one generation (Hinrikus 2003a, 184).[4] For the public at large, the image of "ruptured lives" was exemplified by the lives of people born in the Republic of Estonia before World War II (Kõresaar 2005b, 27–29). In the life stories of this "Republican generation" (Aarelaid-Tart 2006, 96, 103; Aarelaid-Tart & Bennich-Björkman 2011, 2) the discourse of 'rupture' has developed a strong ethnic and cultural repertoire focusing on symbols, morality, and national unity. It differentiates between the carriers of 'our own' national history (the Estonian middle class and farmers) and

the carriers of 'alien' history (communists and Russians). The meaning of stories of 'the rupture' unfolds through the concepts of ethnic identity and distinctiveness. Life writers discuss which features are characteristic of Estonians (us) and of others. Defining which features were not characteristic of Estonians had an important effect on the collective as well as the individual identification process in the 'transitional society' of the beginning of the 1990s.

For example, a woman born in 1925 describes the waning of civilised table manners during the Soviet period by comparing a child's baptism celebration in the 1930s to later table-setting customs:

> Of course, later there was a celebratory dinner where the mother could once again show off her excellent cooking skills. In those times, tables were generally set very beautifully when people celebrated something. The tableware was selected and laid out much more carefully than it is these days. Nowadays, I often feel embarrassed that hostesses don't know even the most elementary of table-setting rules, despite the fact that their cupboards are full of expensive services. It is a sad fact that these skills simply haven't been passed on to the younger generation. Nobody thought that these skills mattered in our 'workers' paradise', since there were a number of things that were seen as much more important than teaching the proper manners for setting the table and receiving visitors (Astrid, b. 1925, KM EKLA f 350, 519, 25).

This excerpt also reveals how the Estonian/Russian cultural conflict discussed within the context of 'the rupture' caused by the Soviet occupation is applied to the entire Soviet era in Estonia, i.e., the Soviet-born generations are seen as possessing 'uncultured' features that are similar to those attributed specifically to Soviet soldiers and other representatives of the Soviet system in stories of 'the rupture' of the 1940s. In the popular discourse of the 1990s on Estonia's past and future, the categories of hygiene and culture are drawn on in various ways and directions. Pille Runnel (2003) has demonstrated how hygiene and culture became the main categories for defining change, identity, and distinctiveness in the popular discussion of Estonia and the European Union. In this discussion, being dirty ('being uncultured') represents the Soviet past, while being clean stands for the anti-Soviet future. President Lennart Meri took up this issue by initiating a public performance in a Tallinn Airport lavatory in 1997 (Runnel 2003, 121). His point was to denounce the toilet's state of disrepair and express how the lavatories in Estonia's 'gateway to Europe' showed the country's inability to prove it was based on the Western value system.[5]

In the 1990s, popular discourse on Estonian culture followed the main narratives of civilisation, according to which the border between Estonia and Russia was also the outermost border of Western values. In the popular view, expressed in public texts and also in grass-roots-level conversations, the concept of 'culture' as a set of specific values and quintessential characteristics was closely linked to place and region: Estonia was seen as a part of Europe in terms of its geographical location, as well as its "European values" (Runnel 2003, 123–125). The Soviet past was considered to have changed the Estonians' mentality, which, in the words of one life-writing campaign participant, created a situation in which people "did not care about anything, had no sense of pride in their environment, were prone to spoiling and destroying things, and believed that they owned everything" (female, b. 1927, KM EKLA f 350, 372, 7).

People also perceived a negative change in the work ethic during the Soviet era that was inadequate to meet the needs of the new society. Whatever the arguments of distinctive groups involved in the debate,[6] all of them utilised the interpretative template of 'the rupture', according to which the Soviet occupation cut off Estonians' 'natural' national development and forced the people to adopt traits that were unacceptably 'alien'. The belief that it was necessary to get rid of the unwanted traits in order to head successfully towards the future also served as the basis for the Estonian intellectuals' discourse of (re)civilising the society, which Anu Kannike (2002) has studied in terms of home decoration. In trying to explain what was tasteful and/or European, experts in this field also used the past *Ausgrabung* strategy (Niedermüller 1997), which was characteristic of the 1990s and saw the Soviet legacy as something that had to be disposed of as quickly as possible.[7]

Thus, during the 1990s, a discourse according to which the 1940 Soviet occupation interrupted Estonia's natural national development and started a general degeneration of society came to represent the whole existence of the Estonian SSR. Elsewhere, we have described this tendency as the "prolonged rupture" (Kõresaar 2004b). It is characteristic of "prolonged rupture" discourse to deny the possibility of normal daily life for an individual during the Soviet times and to see repression and suffering or resistance as the only accepted forms of existence.

'The rupture' in crisis: conflict between public and private remembering

On the one hand, the status quo in the form of the discourse of 'the rupture' remained dominant at the turn of the century. Among other places this discourse is also canonised in monumental treatments of Estonian history. The period from

the 1960s to the 1980s is mainly discussed in terms of repression and resistance (Vahtre 2005). The tendency to make use of the discursive practices that describe the Stalinist experience politically to legitimise or de-legitimise the experience of the late socialist period also occurred in 2006 through discussions in the Estonian media (Laar & Tulviste 2006; Närska 2006).

At the same time, it had already become clear through everyday interaction, as well as through life writing, that this framework no longer satisfied the needs of the society, including the people actively using this discourse. Instead, people became ironic and resentful of the fact that the public sphere did not offer them suitable frames of remembering the late socialist period, for writing their life stories.

Opinions claiming that the experience of late socialism had been suppressed by the post-Soviet nationalist discourse appeared in our biographical interviews in the second half of the 1990s, although the topic was broached even earlier in everyday discussions. In the field of life writing the tension between private and public interpretations of the past came to a head at the turn of the century. This was especially noticeable in the My Life and My Family's Life in the ESSR and in the Republic of Estonia (2000–2001) life-writing campaign. The use of contrasting paradigms in describing one's life during the Stalinist period and during late socialism, which was recognisable in the life stories of the generation born in the 1920s from the very beginning of the post-Soviet life-writing tradition (cf Kõresaar 2001), became more and more pronounced.

In the public arena, the economic and social policy discourse of the turn of the century was based on the ideology of the 'prolonged rupture' and mainly focused on the category of culture, stressing the 'natural' incompatibility of the Soviet work experience and general mentality with the needs of Estonia's capitalist present and future. In the everyday conversations, however, life during the Soviet period was interpreted in a positive way, with the narrators seeing themselves as active and socially competent individuals counterbalancing the rapidly changing present.[8] This view of the past conflicted with the previous decade's negative or non-existent public discourse on the experience of the late Soviet period.

Increasingly, the authors of the autobiographical accounts collected in the first years of the twenty-first century voiced their dissatisfaction with the remembering paradigms that dominated the public sphere, especially with regard to the inclusion of the 1960–1980 period in the rupture paradigm. The dissatisfaction with the dominant discourse on Soviet era was often discussed in the life stories of the people born at the end of Republic of Estonia and beginning of the Soviet era. The life stories pointed critically to the widespread tendency

in post-Soviet Estonian society to refer to the work that was done during the Soviet era as an "imitation of work". In public discourse, the 'Soviet legacy' (along with the ingrained work routines) was seen as the reason why the transition of Estonian society to a free market economy and welfare society was not taking place as quickly as it should.[9] The unsuitability of the Soviet work experience for the "generation of winners" at the beginning of the 1990s has also been discussed before and after the turn of the millennium in teachers' life stories (Kõresaar 2004c). In the life writing of the beginning of the twenty-first century, the authors of life stories raised the issue of the devaluation of their work experience and demonstrated a high esteem for practical everyday skills. The sociologist Martins Kaprans (2009) has pointed out a similar tendency among Latvian biographies.

The following example of attributing value to one's work experience is taken from the life story of a woman born in a deported family in 1949. Titled "Memories from the Soviet Era (1971–1993) (Including two years in the Republic of Estonia)", her story focuses on her professional life:

> Who can say that we did not work when we were young? We raised children and worked hard (embarking on what people today call careers, even though we had no time to really think about it). In our time, professional success was measured by certificates of honour that did not involve any material benefit (Viiu, b. 1949, EKLA, f 350, 1078, 3).

The second example is also taken from a life story submitted in response to the above-mentioned life-writing campaign. The author feels that there is a discrepancy between her life story and the particular call for submissions. The author addresses this discrepancy by disputing the public discourse of the daily struggle for physical and moral survival she feels is dominant over the 'actual' late Soviet experience (Lauristin 2003, 7; cf Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2011). In addition to the conflicting understandings of the late Soviet experience on the part of both researchers and storytellers, the following quote also exemplifies the changing relationships during 'mature socialism' when, according to Garcelon (1997) and Zdravomyslova and Voronkov (2002), the private sphere became more and more detached from the official public realm:

> My mother used to tell me often that I should write something like this. For me, the compelling force proved to be the call for submissions published in the newspaper. It seemed that the organisers of the campaign wanted to hear about our difficult lives during the socialist era [...]. It is not up to us to decide when we are born into this world. I have to say, though, that my time

here has been a relative success. I haven't had to live through any wars yet and I have been lucky enough to experience an interesting time of national awakening. Our personal lives are relatively independent of which flag is being flown or who is having a meeting on Toompea. Of course, I wish with all my heart that I will not have to go looking for a new flag and that the powers that be sit on Toompea, rather than in the Kremlin (Helja, b. 1947, KM EKLA f 350, 1343, 55).

After its rapid evolution at the beginning of the new century, the online media became another channel through which people could debate the meaning of late socialism and express their dissatisfaction with the dominant interpretation of the Soviet era. For example, people actively commented on articles that debated the issue of criminalising the communist regime. The criminalisation of the communist regime was mainly debated in 2001–2002, both in the Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia (the Estonian Parliament) and in the media.[10] The comments submitted online clearly expressed the commenters' dissatisfaction with the narrative of the Soviet era that had been declared dominant by the social elite. One example of this trend is the following (anonymous) comment on Kaarel Tarand's (2002, 11) opinion piece "Those Bolsheviks again":

> Oh, that Tarand boy![11] What does he know about free fuel and living on a kolkhoz? And it's not only him: a small number of people in our society (who have access to the media) have 'developed' a set of clichés about the 'Soviet system' and their broken record keeps on playing. It is the people with some analytical powers who actually had to wallow in that stew that know what was actually going on in the countryside (Anonymous 2002).

The author of the last example contrasts the rupture-based interpretation of the past with the 'reality' of the Soviet system and criticises the former for the fact that it fits the needs of only a small segment of Estonian society. In the criticism levied against the dominant discourse at the beginning of the new century, 'reality' is connected to the level of everyday life, which is described as "personal life" by the woman quoted above, born in 1947. The everyday activities and experiences of an individual are seen through the prism of the continuity of the private sphere, which is incompatible with the discourse of 'the rupture'.

The turn to late Soviet everyday life: the generation of the 1940s

Writing about everyday life in the period of late socialism became the main theme of autobiographical narratives at the turn of the millennium. Less and less space is devoted in these narratives to describing collectively significant historical events in the Estonian past, with the focus primarily on observations and recollections related to everyday life. This means that the events that were important in the rupture narrative, such as the Stalinist deportations, begin moving to the background. Similarly, the narratives avoid focus on the events connected to the national awakening that occurred at the end of the period of late socialism, regardless of the fact that the national awakening takes up a significant place in the Estonian national narrative. While the concept of the historical rupture was shaped by the life stories of people born in the pre-war Republic of Estonia, the interpretation of the period of late socialism that has gained ground in the twenty-first century is largely based on the stories of people born in the 1940s, most of them female, for whom the motif of continuity was more important than that of rupture (see also Jõesalu forthcoming).

Those born in the 1940s can also be seen as the first Soviet generation, since they were integrated into Soviet society through education as well as through their professional lives. In other former socialist contexts, the post-war youth is described as "Stalin's last generation" (Fürst 2010), and in the case of the GDR, people born in the 1945–1960 period are described as "the integrated generation", therefore characterising their participation in various social structures (Linder 2003).

Since the members of this generation were born during the war or the postwar years, the theme of poverty frequently appears in their descriptions of childhood or school years. The life stories of the 1940s generation emphasise the fact that the hardships these people had to endure in later life cannot be compared to those of their childhood at the end of the 1940s. Due to the tuition fee that was charged at secondary schools until the 1956–1957 academic year, many people of this generation chose to continue their studies by attending technical or vocational schools and therefore went on to study technical specialties at institutions of higher education. Due to the economic growth of the 1960s and 1970s, the members of this generation saw an improvement in their living conditions during a time that coincided with the period when they were active professionally and were starting families. The tendency of the life stories of the 1940s generation to focus on the years of mature socialism is therefore significant for several reasons.

A sense of continuity is primarily created in the narratives through accounts of everyday life, with a considerable share of a text often being devoted to describing an author's working life. The autobiographers see their professional experiences as a part of their private and social spheres:

> I had just graduated from TEMT (Tallinn Construction and Mechanics School) as a construction engineer and had a letter of referral in my pocket. The people at my new place of work greeted me like a queen, and I will never forget how I was introduced as a specialist with a diploma. After we met, the manager asked me if I wanted to work at a construction site or in the office. Of course, I preferred the option of working at a construction site, since I had completed a six-month practical training course at various construction sites. Ever since I had begun my studies, I had had a bee in my bonnet about participating in the construction process both mentally and physically. I managed to do all this from 1 April 1971 to 14 October 1993. What did this period encompass? My entire youth (Viiu, b. 1949, KM EKLA, f 350, 1078, 1).

At the same time, the emergence of the sphere of everyday life in the life stories did not mean that the discourse of the rupture was completely abandoned. It was still used to attribute meaning to the 1940s and 1950s, in connection either with first-hand contact (for example, in the case of deported children) or with indirect experience.

> That was when the terrible times began. People were arrested and deported. My paternal aunt […] was deported to a place near Irkutsk, along with her husband and three little children. After that, my father was arrested for guarding a bridge near our home (with a gun)[12] (Irma, b. 1948, KM EKLA f 350, 1297, published in Hinrikus 2003b, 347).

However, the narrators definitely no longer viewed their everyday lives during the entire Soviet era through the discourse of ruptured nationhood. Moreover, for many people born in the 1940s, 'the rupture' actually occurred during the 1990s, especially if the narrator of the life story had personal experience of unemployment (either through being unemployed themselves or seeing their family members unemployed).

A similar shift of attention from the 1940s to the 1990s also occurred in public discussions related to the social sphere and people's ability to cope. In the spring of 2001, Estonia's social scientists issued a public letter aimed at calling attention to "the dangerous weakening of the common ground on which Estonian society

stands and the need to find a new balance" (Proos et al 2002, 5). The metaphor of 'two Estonias' was coined and used as a figurative and emotionally compelling means to emphasise new social problems and point to the need to address them without delay. However, the metaphor that actually remained in use was that of 'the other/second Estonia'. Arnold Rüütel, who was elected president in September 2001, was also seen as a representative of the 'other Estonia' (Tigasson 2006, 8–10), saying in his inauguration speech that "there is another Estonia right next to the successful Estonia and it is in no way smaller than the first one" (Rüütel 2001).

Late Soviet era in cultural texts

In the 1990s, the discourse of 'the rupture' was supported by official memory policy, as well as by cultural texts such as museum exhibitions and theatre plays, which did not differentiate between periods of the Soviet era. The experience of the period of late socialism distinguished itself and broke through into the realm of cultural memory as the new century progressed. This part of the chapter looks at the emergence of late socialism in cultural memory primarily through exhibitions on Soviet everyday life in Estonian museums. We relate the emergence of the mnemonic discourse on the Soviet past to the temporal horizons of the creators of these cultural texts, thus stressing their role as generational agents in the construction of cultural/collective memory. The first exhibition of this kind was opened at the end of 2000 and bore the title *Things in My Life: Soviet Estonian Product Design* (the curators of the exhibition were Kai Lobjakas and Karin Paulus, both born in 1975).[13] The exhibition was popular among visitors and received coverage in the Estonian media (e.g. Korv 2001; Läkk 2001). The curators promoted the exhibition as a place where one can meet things familiar from the past:

> It is an exhibition of products that were mass-produced in Estonia from the 1950s until the 1980s, and which dominated our homes for several decades. These popular items, which appeared so frequently in our everyday surroundings, should offer the joy of recognition to many (Näitus "Asjad minu elus" 2000, see Internet sources).

By emphasising the items' familiarity and the joy visitors would get from recognising them, the curators were attempting to re-introduce Soviet 'classics' of everyday life now undeservedly forgotten. When speaking about the exhibition, Lobjakas and Paulus (2000) also referred to the dominant attitude toward the legacy of the late Soviet period, generally as one of scorn. The description of the exhibited objects as "low-quality" and "made of poor materials" fit the

dominant characterisation of the Soviet-era work ethic. However, the prevalent message that emerged was for citizens to free themselves from the conceptions of the past that encumber them and to take a fresh look at the everyday aesthetics of Estonia's recent past:

> It sometimes seems simply unjust that people are condescending towards and repulsed by the items that were created within the limited possibilities of the socialist era and compare them to design classics. The material fruits of the modernist ideology, which were such a perfect fit for the socialist system, can sometimes be low-quality objects made of poor materials, but if we separate them from their context, it is evident that they are strong form-wise (Lobjakas & Paulus 2000, 9).[14]

The material culture of the late Soviet period gradually became more and more accepted in other types of media as well. For example, in 2004 the daily newspaper *SL Õhtuleht* launched its Retro section, which reflected on the more curious aspects of everyday Soviet life. Admittedly, however, the topic of late socialism did not garner wide attention during the first years of the new century. In 2004, the Estonian National Museum (ENM) featured an exhibition dedicated to one specific product that was popular during the Soviet era: *Bag the Plastic! Plastic Bags Produced at the Tartu Experimental Plastic Product Factory during the 1980s* (curators Anu Järs, b. 1967, and Kristi Kaljumägi, b. 1975) (Päärt 2004; Viira 2004). The next exhibition that focused on one of the aspects of everyday life in Soviet Estonia and received a lot of attention was put on display two years later, in the spring of 2006. The exhibition, also held at the ENM, was dedicated to the Soviet food culture and was entitled *We Ate and We Drank* (curators Terje Anepaio, b. 1965, Ellen Värv, b. 1959, and Reet Piiri, b. 1955).[15] The exhibition focused on practices that were popular during the period of late socialism, with an emphasis on issues related to public catering as well as to stocking up on and storing foodstuffs. The exhibition revolved around the subject of coping, managing to make do, and inventing clever methods of dealing with the shortage economy. A visitor experienced the joy of recognition at the exhibition and wrote in the ENM guestbook: "I enjoyed the exhibition. Why? Because these household chores used to be a part of my everyday life" (museum visitor, b. 1948, ENM guestbook, 28 April 2006, from Kirsti Jõesalu's field notes). At the same time, some people also felt ambivalent about the exhibition. The following quote shows that one visitor felt the need to stress the continuity of everyday life during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras and expressed her discomfort at the musealisation of routine day-to-day practices:

> It is strange to see you consider the dishes I use <u>every day</u> [text underlined
> by the visitor][16] as museum pieces. There is nothing rare or interesting about
> them for me. My grandchildren feel the same. Maybe your exhibits would
> seem exotic to their children? (museum visitor, "grandmother from Pärnu
> County", ENM guestbook, 9 April 2006, Kirsti Jõesalu's field notes).

In 2007, another exhibition was held at the ENM on the subject of a cultural phe-
nomenon characteristic of the period of late socialism. Although the curators had
not intended it to be a source of nostalgic feelings, the *Soviet Introduction to Life:
Youth Summer Events in the ESSR* exhibition (curators Terje Anepaio, Ellen Värv
and Anu Järs) inspired many visitors to reminisce about their youth (cf above:
"What did this period encompass? My entire youth"). However, the exhibition was
also used by former members of the Soviet *nomenklatura* to prove the viability of
their past practices. For example, Vaino Väljas, the head of the ESSR Komsomol
organisation in the 1950s and the last First Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the ESSR, stated in an interview after the opening
of the exhibition that he saw a continuity between the youth summer events of
the Soviet era and the summer days organised by political parties and companies
today.[17]

Although exhibitions are not the only cultural texts used to reflect on the
period of late socialism, they are a medium that reaches a relatively large number
of people in Estonia. Theatrical plays constitute another popular medium that
has been used to interpret issues related to the deportations of the 1940s and the
guerrilla war of the Forest Brothers, as well as subjects connected to everyday life
during the period of mature socialism (for example, *Raimonds* performed at the
Endla Theatre, *Sigma-Tau-C705* at the Estonian Drama Theatre).

In recent years, members of the generation born in the 1970s, whose identity
has been significantly shaped by their Soviet childhood and the following years
of transition, have attempted to express their Soviet experiences (limited to the
period of late socialism) through a variety of media.

The discourse of the 'good old Soviet times':
the generation of the 1970s

The difference between the way the period of late socialism was remembered
at the beginning of the new century, and during the previous decade, is best
characterised by the widespread use of the term *nõukaaeg* (good old Soviet
times). Reminiscing about the good old Soviet times as a new way of remem-
bering late socialism is exemplified by the campaign to collect memories that

was announced at the beginning of 2004 by the publishing house Tänapäev and the newspaper *Postimees*. To date, the effort has resulted in the publication of four books (Tammer 2004; 2006; 2009; Tammer & Luts 2010). Articles about curious memories from the late Soviet period published in *Postimees* and *SL Õhtuleht* have also contributed to the public discussion about the Soviet past. All this points to the fact that the dominant discourse was changing, and people preferred to use humour to interpret their Soviet past (as a period that did not conform to contemporary norms), while generally avoiding the subject of the repressions of the Soviet occupation regime (cf Anepaio 2003).

In the realm of material culture, the discourse of the good old Soviet times appeared even earlier, at the end of the 1990s, and was not limited to Estonia (Korkiakangas 2004, 122; Nadkarni & Shevchenko 2004, 500–501). It was characterised by a warm but irony-laden relationship with the society of the late Soviet period.

The dynamic status of late socialism in Estonian post-Soviet remembrance culture is best reflected in the changing content of nostalgia. While people born in the 1920s more or less omitted the late socialist experience from their life stories (Kõresaar 2001), the emergence of the everyday-life paradigm in the autobiographical accounts of the 1940s generation simultaneously brought with it a nostalgic view of this period. As described above, the nostalgia of the first Soviet generation is connected with the need to recognise alternative ways of existence during the late Soviet era.

Following Daphne Berdahl's (2010) observation of *Ostalgie* as a form of resistance, the 1940s generation's nostalgia for socialism can be described in terms of a counter-memory to the hegemony of the nationalist discourse of remembering as well as a form of criticism of the liberal reforms of the 1990s which resulted in a feeling of social insecurity in society (Proos et al 2002). In the same vein, the 1940s generation's nostalgic feeling toward its socialist past was not about identification with the ESSR. Instead, it was about creating a meaning about the present (cf Berdahl 2010, 56). The first years of the twenty-first century witnessed the arrival of a new, more self-referential mode of nostalgia, which in the case of Ostalgie has been characterised by "cynicism, irony, and parody" (Berdahl 2010, 131).

An interesting aspect of this process of nostalgia was the self-definition of the "generation of winners" as the "Russian cartoon generation" (Grünberg 2008). "The generation of winners" is what social scientists called the people who were in their twenties at the time of transition and became instrumental in expanding and taking advantage of the new opportunities presented by the market economy (Titma 1999; see also Saar & Kazjulja in this volume). The media actively

exploited this image and by the turn of the millennium it applied to success-ful people within broader age limits than first defined by sociologists, shifting the borders of the generation both upwards and downwards depending on the context.

The expression "Russian cartoon generation" comes from the play *Light Blue Railway Car* by the popular Estonian author Andrus Kivirähk (b. 1970).[18] The "Russian cartoon generation" is depicted in the play as the last generation that remembers the Soviet era: a mnemonic community that evolved through shared textual experiences (which include shared literary and cinematic experiences, an important identification marker) and is therefore different both from younger generations as well as 'Westerners' (Keller & Vihalemm 2003; Runnel 2003).[19] This metaphor was picked up by drama critics who belong to the same age group. The nostalgia of the "Russian cartoon generation" is also childhood nostalgia felt for childhood candy and 1st of May celebrations with balloons – memories that are important to the characters in this play. The nostalgic feelings of the "Russian cartoon generation" were legitimised by the fact that this generation is doing very well in the new type of society. In the introduction to the play, as well as in its later reception, members of the generation used this fact to contrast themselves with the former members of the *nomenklatura* and kolkhoz farmers, whose nostalgia for the Soviet era is seen as dangerous and frightening.

The events surrounding the play highlighted some interesting tendencies regarding what is considered legitimate nostalgia, who has the right to be nostal-gic, and how the different generations understand each other's nostalgic feelings. Based on the reception of the play, Kristi Grünberg (2009, 9–11) has located the line separating "justified" nostalgia from "forbidden" nostalgia as running between different age groups. It was easy for the drama critics born in the 1970s to find common ground with their contemporaries who were sharing their nos-talgic feelings on stage. The critics expressed their positive emotions in reviews, calling the childhood of the play's protagonist the "funniest" and "pithiest" era of the ESSR. On the other hand, drama critics born after the end of World War II and before the second wave of mass deportations interpreted the period remem-bered in the play (the Brezhnev era) through the experience of the Stalinist era and retorted that it "was not some kind of 'costume party'".

The fact that different generations have opposing attitudes to nostalgia is also evident in the following story, written by a person born in 1943. She refers to the fact that young people see her memories, including her criticism of the privatisation of the agricultural sector at the beginning of the 1990s, as nostalgia for the past.

> With this breath of fresh air [perestroika], we started self-management and forced our [sovkhoz] departments to budget more and make their own decisions, and it didn't take long for our strong and vital enterprise to fall apart just like that. The young people may say that this (what I am going to say now) is nostalgia, but when you witness how these strong, decent farms have come apart, how the soil lies fallow, and how people hang around unemployed, you cannot help wondering whether we actually got what we were so anxious for (Valli, b. 1943, KM EKLA f 350, 1229, 10–11).

This shows the persistence of the tendency to define the experience of the period of late socialism as a 'rupture' when it is discussed in terms of contact with institutions that have come to represent (or symbolise) the Soviet system, the official ideology, or the *nomenklatura*. The experience of everyday life, on the other hand, is interpreted positively, due either to a sense of continuity with the present or to the tendency to view the past as an exotic 'lost world'. The different age groups' perceptions of nostalgia range from seeing it as a dangerous tendency that leads to oblivion (this is how the "Russian cartoon generation" saw the former kolkhoz managers and also how the drama critics born in the 1940s felt about their younger colleagues who identified with the nostalgia for the good old Soviet times) to believing that it was just harmless reminiscence about childhood.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the change and persistence of the meaning of the late Soviet era in post-Soviet Estonian remembrance culture in the light of generational positions. Remembering was conceived of as a processual practice that involved tensions, selections, and exclusions. An integrated view was taken of the developments that have occurred in autobiographical, communicative, cultural and political remembering.

The aim of the mnemonic processes of the 1990s was the creation of new anti-Soviet mnemonic templates. Estonian memory culture at that time was focused on explaining and processing the most essential experiences, i.e., the Soviet annexation of Estonia and the Stalinist repressions that followed. In the context of the history of the twentieth century, these developments were interpreted through the discourse of 'the rupture' at all levels of collective remembering. For society, the experience of 'the rupture' was personified by the generation born in the Republic of Estonia before World War II.

By the end of the 1990s, the fruitfulness of this mnemonic process had been exhausted and alternative interpretations of Soviet-era experiences were

beginning to be suppressed. This point in Estonia's post-socialist mnemonic history can be described as a crisis which most likely affected a broad range of people, although discussions of the subject did not reach the level of public debate. At around the turn of the century there was a recognisable increase of interest in verbalising, collecting data on, and studying the experience of 'mature socialism'. At that time, people born in the 1940s gained a greater say in the shaping of mnemonic processes and contributed by making 'mature socialism' seem like more of an everyday experience. It became important for members of the first Soviet-born generation to emphasise the continuity of their experiences, and their autobiographical narratives reflect this by leaving aside the ideological categories characteristic of the Soviet era and focusing on everyday practices (Jõesalu forthcoming). Consequently, as of the beginning of the new millennium, the period of 'mature socialism' has been remembered primarily through the prism of everyday life. The fact that the change in the mnemonic processes took place at this particular point in time can be attributed to the people born in the 1940s reaching a new stage in their lives (retiring and looking back at what they had accomplished). For this generation, the period from the 1960s to the 1980s was the prime of their lives (in terms of organising their lives), which explains their focus on biographical continuity. In the paradigm of everyday life, the era of late socialism can be seen as one of the longest periods of stability in Estonia during the twentieth century. In some cases, the autobiographical accounts of the first decade of the twenty-first century reveal that the authors discursively place 'the rupture' in history into the 1990s, rather than the 1940s, thereby deviating from the established narrative template.

An even younger generation, the people born in the 1960s and 1970s, have made their own contribution to interpreting the period of late socialism since the early 2000s. They had a tendency to view their Soviet childhoods as exotic and to express their distinct identity primarily through various cultural texts. For this younger age group, remembering the late Soviet era was primarily a means of creating a distinctive identity for their generation. Their experience of the period of mature socialism separates them from younger generations, in both the post-socialist and Western world. Another generational line was drawn by the people born in the 1970s, between themselves and older generations whose experiences of the Soviet era (unlike those of the 1970s' generation) are associated with support for Soviet ideology.

The mnemonic processes of the first decade of the twenty-first century resulted in a situation in which the negative discourse of 'rupture' and the positive discourse that emphasises the continuity of everyday experiences have found ways of co-existing and should not necessarily be seen as mutually exclusive and

competing discourses. Instead, they describe the Soviet experience in different social spheres: 'rupture' represents the official sphere whereas the discourse of normality is applied to informal and private spheres. However, the discourse of 'the rupture' remains influential in the interpretation of the experience of the period of late socialism. It continues to affect the national evaluation of the past, giving meaning to the entire period of history and shaping memory policy. Furthermore, the discourse of 'rupture' can function as a basis for criticising new ways of remembering the Soviet past (for example, in connection with the issue of different generations' rights to nostalgia). Conversely, it can also be used by the proponents of new ways of remembering to create their own space for reminiscing (see the description of the development of new generation-based identities provided above). However, 'the rupture' as a total interpretative paradigm tends to be increasingly used solely in reference to World War II and the Stalinist period, while a more ambivalent approach is taken to the experience of the period of late socialism.

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Exhibitions

Asjad minu elus. (Nõukogude Eesti tootedisain). [*Things in My Life. Soviet Estonian Product Design*] (2000–2001) Curators Kai Lobjakas & Karin Paulus. Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia.

„*Kile kotti!" Tartu Plastmasstoodete Katsetehase 1980. aastate kilekotid.* [*Bag the Plastic! Plastic Bags Produced at the Tartu Experimental Plastic Product Factory During the 1980s*] (2004) Curators Anu Järs & Kristi Kaljumägi. Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia.

Ise sõime, ise jõime … Toidukultuur Nõukogude Eestis [*We Ate and We Drank … Food culture in Soviet Estonia*] (2006–2007) Curators Terje Anepaio, Ellen Värv & Reet Piiri. Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia.

Nõukogulik lähetus ellu – noorte suvepäevad Eesti NSVs [*Soviet Introduction to Life: Youth Summer Events in the ESSR*] (2007) Curators Terje Anepaio, Ellen Värv & Reet Piiri. Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia.

Notes

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The authors would like to thank Kristi Grünberg for her overview of the Soviet era-related plays put on by Estonian theaters in the twenty-first century.

1 The sociologist Oleg Kharkhordin claims that between the 1960s and 1980s "on the one hand, official terminology took root in people's cognition of life, while on the other hand, there developed spaces of discourse that were inconceivable in the institutional sphere" (1999, 280). In this chapter we use the terms 'late socialism', 'late Soviet period' (Yurchak) and 'mature socialism' (Kharkhordin) as synonyms.

2 On the concept of generational memory and related concepts cf Misztal 2003, 83–91.

3 The rupture is a script: a sketch where the details may be altered but the primary structure remains mainly unchanged (Thompson 1993, 35; cf also Wertsch's (2002) 'narrative template' concept as an explanatory scheme organising remembering). In constructing the rupture of the Stalinist era, the Estonian national narrative also relies on earlier 'layers' of cultural memory (Kõresaar 2006).

4 The manifestation of the discourse of rupture should be viewed in a complex relationship with the restoration politics and its underlying discourse of national continuity (Pettai 2007). In this process other generational groups, most notably the cultural and political elite born in 1960s had a powerful role as memory agents in promoting the rupture based image of the past in the public and official sphere of remembering.

5 The categories of purity and dirt as a mode of constructing boundaries between Soviet and Western worlds were represented even in early post-Soviet anthropologies (see Rausing 2004); the category of 'dirt' has special prominence in her memoir *Everything is Wonderful* (Rausing 2014).

6 In the social debate about the vanishing of the work ethic (which can be seen as an aspect of the struggle for a place in emerging work market) the 'winners' blamed the 'losers' and the older generation blamed the younger. The arguments of the former group were based on the liberal ideology of success characteristic of the 1990s, while the latter group's position derived from the idea of national continuity.

7 See the last example from a life story (female, b. 1925, KM EKLA f 350, 519, 25), where the lack of familiarity with etiquette is associated with the "paradise of workers" which, in addition to the Soviet connotations, also carries the meaning of something that has little social value.

8 During late socialism people often discussed their experiences on city buses; it was common to happen upon such discussions while riding the bus.

9 During the 1990s, the poor quality of work in the Soviet period and the negative effect of the Soviet mentality on the transition society were common topics of discussion

in Estonia at every level of society. One of the proponents of this discourse was Lennart Meri.

10 On 18 June 2002, the Riigikogu adopted the Statement on the Crimes of the Occupation Regime in Estonia. The full text of the statement is available in *Riigi Teataja* (2002) (see English version: http://www.riigikogu.ee/index.php?id=172149).

11 Here "Tarand boy" refers to Kaarel Tarand, who was the editor of *Eesti Päevaleht* at that time and is the younger son of a well-known Estonian family. His father, Andres Tarand, has been the Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia and a member of the Riigikogu and the European Parliament, while his brother, Indrek Tarand, is a former long-time public official and member of the European Parliament. All three are well known in Estonian society for their opposition to the Soviet ideology.

12 Irma's father was a member of the Home Guard, a voluntary territorial defence organisation established following the example of the Estonian Defence League in summer 1941. In December 1941 the Home Guard had 40,599 members. During the Nazi occupation, guarding military objects was one of the tasks of the Home Guard. It remained a voluntary territorial defense organisation until the autumn 1943 after which it became compulsory for men aged 17–45 (17–60 in 1944). Following the Soviet occupation in 1944, the Home Guard was declared a 'military-fascist' organisation accused of fighting against the Red Army and causing violence against the peaceful population.

13 The exhibition was first displayed at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu from 12 December 2000 to 4 February 2001. The same exhibition was shown in Tallinn at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design from 3 April 2001 to 10 June 2001. On the topic of this exhibition see more in Jõesalu & Nugin 2012.

14 For a more comprehensive analysis of this exhibition's role in evoking the topic of late socialism in Estonian cultural memory see Jõesalu & Nugin 2012, 23–25.

15 The exhibition was open from 8 April 2006 to 1 October 2006. The introduction to the exhibition can be found on the ENM website (Näitus "Ise sõime, ise jõime …" 2006, see Internet sources). The exhibition also travelled to Tallinn and was displayed at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, with a few modifications, from 1 December 2006 to 14 January 2007.

16 The notes in brackets in excerpts have been added by the authors.

17 "This generation did not choose when to be born. They had to live their lives. This is why I believe that the wisdom, understanding and help of our creative intellectuals, scientists, and heads of agricultural establishments made these summer camps fun and attractive for the young people, while also teaching them skills that would benefit them in the future." Vaino Väljas smiled and added that, although these summer events were last organised in 1990, the tradition had not been lost. "The Estonian countryside is filled to the brim with summer events held by political parties, ministries, institutions and companies" (Vaino Väljas, reported by Rein Joamets, Estonian Public Broadcasting (Est. ERR) news program Aktuaalne Kaamera, 28 September 2007).

18 The stage director of the play, which opened at the Viljandi Drama Theatre Ugala in 2003, was Taago Tubin.

19 Kelly 2007 has demonstrated that the shared experience of children's programmes function as a generational marker across the whole of the ex-Soviet Union.

Temporal horizons in two generations of Russian–Estonian families during late socialism

Uku Lember

Abstract. In this chapter I discuss the temporal horizons of people in Estonia during the period of late socialism (1960s–1970s) based on Estonian–Russian intercultural families. After the annexation of Estonia into the USSR, the number of Russian-speaking people in Estonia increased from 5% in 1945 to 35% in 1989, giving rise to a tense and diverse situation that still characterises Estonian society today in ethnic, political, and cultural terms. How did the people in intercultural families relate to the period prior to World War II and how did they imagine their future during late socialism? In this chapter, I focus on the relationships between culturally intermarried parents born in the late 1920s to the early 1930s and their children born in the 1950s and early 1960s. In this manner I combine temporally horizontal and vertical relationships between age groups and between cultural communities. I discuss four family case studies based on oral history interviews with the members of each family. I argue that the discourse of 'the difficulty of life in the past' played an important role informing the historical consciousness of the children through the stories of their parents. The past was recounted in families without references to antagonistic politics but rather with improvements in everyday life. Such discourse offered a way to overcome potential disagreements among the parents and also aligned with many of their own life experiences. In addition, such discourse helped the children of intercultural marriages to socialise into Soviet society and to imagine the future within Soviet frames.

Introduction

I discuss the temporal horizons of people in Estonia during the period of late socialism (1960s–1970s) based on interviews with Estonian–Russian intercultural families, which provide an insight into the complexity of social relationships in the country. I bring together two potentially conflicting ethno-cultural

identification patterns and two different age cohorts in order to ask how the knowledge of the time prior to and during World War II, and the ideas about the future, had formed and changed during late socialism. The chapter is based on the findings from the oral history interviews that I conducted between 2009 and 2011 with parents and children from intercultural families that were formed by a marriage between a 'local Estonian' and a 'newcomer Russian'. These general labels mark the two distinct cultural identification patterns that emerged in Soviet Estonia, and refer to the socially 'in-between' condition of the families under study.[1] With this research I aim to contribute to unearthing histories of ethno-linguistic cohabitation in Soviet Estonia in a manner that is neither state- nor nation-centred but rather focused on social relations as they unfold.

After the annexation of Estonia into the USSR, the number of Russian-speaking people in Estonia increased from 5% in 1945 to 35% in 1989, giving rise to a rather tense and diverse situation that still characterises Estonian society today in ethnic, political, and cultural terms. Contemporary tensions between the two linguistic communities have increasingly found public and scholarly attention, especially after the Bronze Soldier crisis of 2007 (for example, Tamm & Petersoo 2008),[2] but much less has been said about the inter-ethnic dynamics in Soviet Estonia and the life of the Russian-speaking community during this period. By demonstrating diverse ways in which people identified with cultural meanings in relation to past and future perspectives in their lives, I will simultaneously question the homogeneity of the Estonian–Russian social divide.

In addition to ethno-linguistic patterns, I employ the notion of 'generation' in order to bring together temporally vertical and horizontal relations between age cohorts. The wider connotations surrounding 'generation' relate to human capacity and will for both generativity and generationality – to the biological and social aspects of (re)generation of life (family) and the on-going aspect of human time (history) (Reulecke 2008). In Karl Mannheim's (1952 [1927/1928]) classical approach, the concept of 'generation' combines the effects of the ('external') empirical events that were formative to young adults and the ('internal') consciousness of these young adults who were socialised at the same time.[3] Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley (2012, 117) note that the 'generation' concept has been successfully used to map subject positions in their "horizontal relation[s] in time with others who share [the same][4] historical location", however, "vertical relation[s] through time with what came before [...] and what may come after" are often de-contextualised.[5] In this chapter, I will specifically touch upon the relationships between culturally intermarried parents, who were born from the late 1920s to early 1930s, and their children, who were born in the 1950s and early 1960s. Thereby, family generations and their temporal locations will collide so

that parents were socialised during and after World War II, and children in the late 1960s and 1970s (potentially also forming historical generations). Moreover, ethno-culturally, parents belong to either 'local Estonian' or 'newcomer Russian' cultural constellations, with children placed in between. Such is the macro level snapshot of the horizontal and vertical relationships between age groups and between cultural communities that is undertaken in the chapter. Familial references to parents and children will be used as primary labels in the text over historical (temporal) ones to acknowledge the different formative experiences of inter-married parents even if they belong to a similar birth cohort as that defined by World War II and its aftermath.

Trajectories of members of Russian- and Estonian-speaking cultural communities in Soviet Estonia were different and this seeded mutually conflicting identification patterns. For a short historical overview, it is worth mentioning that Estonia was an independent nation state between 1918 and 1940 with a moderately multicultural society in which Russians formed the largest minority (8.2%). During World War II, the local minorities left, escaped, were deported, or killed by occupying forces to such extent that Estonia became almost mono-ethnic by 1944.[6] The subsequent Stalinist period of socialism (1944–1953) was marked by executions and deportations that targeted former elites, intellectuals, and the wealthier peasantry. Many interwar Estonian Russian-speakers were also the targets of Stalinist repressions and many either escaped Estonia prior to 1944 or were left outside the Estonian borders with the administrative changes to the borders in 1945. The formation of a new Russian-speaking community in Estonia started directly after the end of World War II, and by the late 1970s, the proportion of Russian-speakers had grown to one-third of Estonian population (0.5 million out of 1.5 million); "becoming a minority in 'one's own country'" had become a widespread fear among the local Estonians and the popular view of an immigrant as a "poorly-educated and uncultured Russian construction worker" loomed large (Misiunas & Taagepera 1993, 215–216). This new, largely working class migration was generally voluntary, but it was encouraged by the expansion of local labour-intensive industries. Additionally, the generally higher living standards of the ESSR were attractive for people from various social backgrounds who stayed after military service or moved to Estonia to study (Katus et al 2003; Sakkeus 1992).[7] The sentiments about Soviet Estonia among 'newcomers' have not been much examined, but based on my own research it may be said that Estonia was perceived as generally "somehow different" although organically connected with the rest of the USSR, more specific attributions depended on the interviewee's social position and place of residence.

The sources of this study are oral history interviews, and the chapter therefore intertwines generational and ethno-cultural considerations with social patterns of remembering from late socialism to the present. Such an approach benefits from a 'thick' understanding of 'culture' because the division of 'local Estonian' and 'newcomer Russian' cultural constellations ranges from personal historical experiences and sub-group memories to culturally established canons and institutions of memory.[8] Therefore, I define 'cultural memory' widely as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" (Erll 2008, 2) so that it includes various "modes of remembering in culture, […] [proceeding] from the basic insight that the past is not given, but must instead continually be re-constructed and re-presented" (op cit, 7).[9] In this definition, the large-scale 'newcomer Russian' and 'local Estonian' ethno-cultural division is congruent with the divide of their multi-layered cultural memories.

Nevertheless, when focusing on familial discussions of the past, one deals primarily with 'communicative memories': past-related references based on everyday interactions and oral intergenerational communication, limited to 80–100 years back in time (3–4 generations) (Assmann 1995; 2008). In their comprehensive model, Jan and Aleida Assmann (1987) propose a definition of 'cultural memory' that pertains to institutionalised references to the past that are well established over time, for example, classic books, films, memorials, museums, and commemorations (and that thereby differs from Erll's later proposal for using 'cultural memory' more widely).[10] Now, as for the situation in Estonia, on the one hand the Estonian and Russian ethno-cultural division was maintained not only by canonised references to the past but also by personal experiences and also other widely shared meanings and dispositions; on the other hand, the main focus of this chapter lies on personal memories in the family realm.[11] Therefore, in this chapter, I use 'cultural memory' following Erll (2008) for a wider understanding of past-related references of ethno-cultural macro-constellations, and I use 'communicative memory' following Assmann (1995; 2008) to discuss personal remembering and meaning assignment to the past in the family environment through recent generations. With such an approach, communicative memory forms part of cultural memory through given story-telling themes, topics, genres, and through intimate family ties. However, the latter individual influences also indicate the potential variety and diversity that family memory entails and which this chapter explores. (In reference to intercultural families, it may be presumed that the communicative memories of the intermarried parents would be divided along the wider patterns of cultural memory. For their children, the communicative memories would create in-between and liminal spaces between the two cultural constellations.)

As for public discussions of history during late socialism, the dynamics between the seemingly official, often linguistically Russian, historical narrative and the 'native' narratives in the Baltic States have rarely been studied. On the one hand, the non-Soviet national identities of 'locals' and how their cultural memory differs from 'newcomers' is often emphasised (for example, Aarelaid-Tart 2006; Hinrikus & Kirss 2009; Krikmann & Olesk 2003). On the other hand, in reference to the Russian-language public discussions of history, it is argued that there was little space for discussion of World War II and Stalinism in ways that would diverge from the public narrative. The Soviet regime, in which families of 'Russian newcomers' had been immersed since the 1920s, was continuous throughout and made no clear distinction between the Stalinist past and what came after (for example, Etkind 2013; Figes 2007; 2008).[12] This study aims to nuance the 'Estonian local'–'Russian newcomer' dichotomy of cultural memory during late socialism by bringing social class positions and familial cohesion, among the other factors, into the picture with a discussion of communicative memory in the family.

The 1990s attested to a public upsurge of conflicting cultural memories belonging to the Russian- and Estonian-speaking communities. Estonia followed the larger trend of the East European 'memory boom' in which the post-Soviet nations have strongly opposed the Soviet Russian-dominated influence and have only later started to face their own entangled participation in the Soviet world. However, the Estonian situation was quite unique as one third of its population were Russian-speakers without historical ties to the interwar republic. Most 'newcomers' suffered from the structural downgrading of the status of the Russian culture and language, deprivation of citizenship by the new Estonian state, and often unemployment as large Soviet industries collapsed; in contrast, most 'local Estonians' capitalised on the positive notions of the inter-war period with which the Soviet era, especially Stalinism, was contrasted (Lauristin & Heidmets 2002; Vetik & Helemäe 2011). The nationalist cultural memory of 'local Estonians' rose forcefully to public dominance, where it became syncretic with the communicative memories of the older Estonians (born mainly in 1920s) whose loss of future prospects with World War II coincided with the loss of the republic. In this story, Stalinism was a 'national rupture' that was followed by the colonisation and effective destruction of the nation's normal course of life (Kõresaar 2004; 2005). In addition, Aarelaid-Tart (2006) argued that in the 1990s, 'Estonian locals' attributed their difficult experiences to the Soviet past, as the discourse of negative 'testimonies of the Soviet reality' dominated among them, while 'Russian newcomers' rather described the loss of a stable socialist life in traumatic terms with discourses of 'fall of the Soviet dreamland'. Such powerful metaphors

have focused less attention on intergenerational transfers and commonalities, and rather portrayed a linguistic group as a whole, even if identifying different biographical cohorts within generations.[13]

Estonian life-story research has today moved from the focus on the period of Stalinist repressions towards the era of late socialism (Jõesalu 2010; Aarelaid-Tart & Kannike 2012; Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2013). Kõresaar and Jõesalu (in this volume) argue that more discrepancies have emerged between the Estonian public discourse of history and the diverse memory dynamics within various social cohorts. They show that many Estonian-speaking life-story authors who were born in the 1940s are reluctant to place their personal experiences (and communicative memories) on the canvas of publicly expressed Estonian cultural memory as it upholds the idea of 'Stalinism as national rupture'. On the one hand, in public discourse, the paradigm of repression and resistance, under which the individual is assumed to be united with the nation, has persisted; on the other hand, people, whose most active adulthood passed during the period of late socialism, often present themselves as "active and socially competent individuals" who worked hard and established normality during late socialism (op cit). Nevertheless, based on family influence or negative personal experience, Estonians who were born after World War II have continued to point to the general animosity with Russian-speakers. At the same time, these Estonians did not experience direct repressions, went to Sovietised schools, and understood Russian. Russian-speakers who were born after World War II adapted to life in independent Estonia in very different ways depending on their socio-economic position and cultural capital, and these have also influenced their judgment of the past. Sociologists have mapped '(post)-Soviet' identities among older respondents and new 'globalised' tendencies among younger respondents; however, there has been an increase in identifications with the Estonian and Baltic territories and with the Russian language-nation among different age cohorts in the 2000s (Vihalemm & Masso 2003; 2007; Vihalemm & Keller 2011).

In short, on the macro level, the structural differences in cultural and communicative memories among Russian and Estonian speakers in Soviet Estonia and today form an important background to the current study because historical periods – such as the interwar republic, WWII experiences, the Soviet regime – continue to be dramatically differently valuated (for example, Tamm 2008). The scholarship on 'Russian newcomers' in Estonia has grown steadily over the last 20 years, but the making of the Estonian Russian-speaking community and their patterns of identification during the Soviet era are still under-researched.[14] This chapter contributes to the research on socialisation in the late Soviet Union and the negotiation of communicative memories and dispositions with the dominant

cultural memories by focusing on the situations in which intermarried parents have had to relate to macro-level cleavages, while their children have had to juggle contradictory heritage patterns.

Many studies of family life in socialism have looked at the family as somewhat isolated and autonomous from larger society. Valorising the notion of privacy and family experiences in opposition to the public realm of action is quite characteristic of the post-Soviet research climate. In such approaches, more often than not family stands for authenticity and the external world for deceit and manipulation (Bertaux & Thompson 1993).[15] Relationships and communication within the family become isolated in contrast to public discursive repressions (Semenova & Thompson 2004; Semenova 2002; 2000).[16] Another perspective is offered by Harald Welzer who warns against idealising vertical channels of familial communication and memory transmission, especially in situations in which the contemporary standards of moral judgment are very different from the past. He argues in relation to Germany's National Socialist past that, when telling family stories the grandchildren have a strong "need to reconcile the crimes of 'the Nazis' or 'the Germans' and the moral integrity of [their] parents or grandparents" (Welzer 2010, 7).[17] He shows that the contemporary public discourse forms the interpretative frames for grandchildren and thereby vertical family transmissions are overridden by horizontally acquired meanings. In this chapter, I deal with intercultural as well as intergenerational communication. I demonstrate how the culturally intermediate positionality of children opens up ways to distance themselves from their parents' historical narratives in the course of lengthy life-story interviews.

In the chapter, I argue that the discourse of the 'difficulty of life in the past' played an important role in referring to the past during late socialism among the parents passing historical knowledge from parents to children. This means that the past was recounted without references to antagonistic politics but rather to improvements in everyday life. Such a mode was in alignment with Soviet public discourse as it fit with modernist ideas of improvement and progress and offered a way to overcome potential disagreements between spouses, but in addition, it was in alignment with the life experiences of these spouses. I also argue that the parental discourse of the 'difficulty of life in the past' helped their children to socialise into Soviet society. The children thought of themselves as Soviet citizens who had control over their lives and no fear of the authorities; they demonstrate the emergence of a web of social meanings and the Soviet future horizon that complemented and substituted the potentially non-Soviet historical patterns of identification. The perspective on history that these children formed

did not significantly conflict with their experiences of schooling and young adult life in Soviet Estonia.

In the following, I discuss two families with higher education and prominent jobs that had experienced some repressions in their past and two working class families that had not.[18] I first describe the parents' relationships with the past and family heritage; thereafter, I return to the case studies in order to discuss the emergent temporal horizons of the children. The primary voices presented in the discussion vary as I use interviews according to their availability.[19] People were initially targeted for interview using the snowball methodology through the author's social networks; further contacts were built on initial interviews and on the author's fieldwork contacts. The interview sequence was broadly divided into two: the first part was a free-flowing life-story narration that started from references to the backgrounds of the parents; the second part was a semi-structured conversation that built on the elements of the life-stories and inquired into family life during late socialism.

Parents and the past

Kasemaa family
Tamara (b. 1930) – mother, 'Russian newcomer'
Martin (b. 1930) – father, 'Estonian local'
Nina (b. 1957) – daughter, interviewed

The parents of Nina Kasemaa (b. 1957) married in the early 1950s when Nina's father Martin (b. 1930) was studying in Leningrad. Nina's mother Tamara (b. 1930) was born to a Russian family of Tsarist-era small entrepreneurs. Tamara's family had been dispossessed and some members had been repressed in the early 1920s, but Tamara's parents kept a low profile and remained free throughout the War Communism of early Soviet years and Stalinism. In the 1990s, Tamara had told Nina some details about her childhood that she had formerly not revealed: "It had been several times that they had to escape from Vitebsk and they just drove away somewhere. […] Because in Russia, in the 1930s, life had become 'pretty joyous' […]" (Nina).[20] Tamara's father had possessed an "entrepreneurial spirit" and disliked the inefficiency and inactivity of the Soviet system. "On the one hand, he himself took responsibility for what he was doing and he considered it important that he is responsible, and gets by, and seeks solutions; and on the other hand, he was, I understand, pretty religious" (Nina). However, Tamara's mother's principle had been that

children should not be put into such a situation that … at home there is one story told and at school there is something that totally contradicts the first story. […] One should not create such internal contradictions in children. […] One could account a bit also for the fact that this ideology had some generally humanistic theses […] which [my grandmother] could be in favour of (Nina).

Nina's father Martin grew up in a rather Red household. Martin's father had supported the communist turn in Estonia in 1940 and had retreated with his family to the Soviet home front in 1941. This is where Martin spent his years of adolescence; being the oldest son with many younger siblings, it was a trying time. Nina does not remember any bright or emotive stories of Martin's interwar childhood in Estonia; when looking for possible reasons for this absence she says that maybe it was "because the conscious life [of my father] started at the age of 8 or 9, only in the years [19]38 or [19]39". She explains this relative lack of "national Estonian" memories and stories in their family by Martin's left-wing convictions and working class background. As for the war, it had just been "[a] terribly hard time [on the home front]. It was just a difficult time and all, but not because it was something ideological or something fearful …" (Nina). As Nina reflects on her father's stories she adds some notes on the familial dynamics at home when she was growing up: "My father was a pretty delicate person, […] at the end of the day, he [had] brought my mother here, and he was responsible for protecting her from all these things that could have got very edgy". Gendered family roles also enter the picture: "Father was – I'm sorry, like all men; I shouldn't say so, but … pretty comfortable with himself." He did not have to participate actively in domestic life and so he also stayed out of potential confrontations over historical truths.

Tamara Kasemaa got accustomed to the Soviet regime and worked "in the party line". Her own mother's principle of prioritising harmony with the socially dominant values had prevailed in their household. Tamara had been aware of her wealthy family origins but did not talk about these to Nina before the 1990s. Tamara spoke about history in rather Soviet terms while Nina was growing up and Martin's stories about the past were about the generally difficult childhood rather than any involvement in historical controversies. With this approach to the past, the conflict between Estonian and Russian cultural memories would not develop. Focusing on the generically "difficult past" was an accommodating and fairly open discourse for the Kasemaa family which does not come across as a calculated choice or concealment. It fit with Tamara's references to efforts during the Great Patriotic War (WWII) and to the preceding poverty; it did not seek to question Tamara's presence in Estonia as a 'newcomer'. Talking about the generic

difficulties in the past also fit with Martin's upward career in Soviet Estonian society that confirmed the ideas of Soviet progress and meritocratic opportunities to the former poor.

Yulianov family
Sergei (b. 1926) – father, 'Russian newcomer', interviewed
Luule (b. 1929) – mother, 'Estonian local', interviewed
Aleksander (b. 1961) – son, interviewed

Luule (b. 1929) and Sergei (b. 1926) met in Leningrad while they were both studying there. Luule refers to this time at the beginning of the 1950s mainly in the key of 'the friendship of peoples' – it was the time of national dances, choir singing, living an international life. The Yulianovs settled in Estonia in the 1960s.

Luule is descended from an Estonian family of teachers. Her disposition is not nationalistic – she takes great pride in her family's left-wing history and refers several times to the fact that Estonians' "blood is mixed anyway". Luule would stress the old dichotomies between Estonians and Germans: "[My] relatives were from these kinds of [birth] years that they all went to the [Estonian] Corps [of the Red Army]. And they were [anyway] such folks who considered their main enemy to be the Germans." As for Russia and the Russians, there had been very little information about them prior to 1940. "There was no talk about the hopes for or trust in [the Russians] … there was no connection to them at all. My father did not know Russian at all; he only learned it at the [Soviet] home front. My father had to give classes of Russian and then my mother taught him the letters [of the Cyrillic alphabet] at home" (Luule). Luule would remain rather casual also with references to her youth during late Stalinism: there was "no habit of fear and panicking at home". This is vividly illustrated with our discussion of the 1949 deportation – Luule mentions the event and stumbles, somehow compelled to explain her family's *non*-relation to it. On the 25th of March 1949

> […] my mother was at a seminar for teachers. […] And there were the stories that "oh, he has been taken and she has been taken", afterwards when [the seminar participants] got back home [they found out that] all were still there – so that it was more on the level of talk. […] The ones whose parents had been deemed bourgeois nationalists were told that they couldn't study to become teachers. They went somewhere else, to the Technical Institute or elsewhere, and they were very happy afterwards that they had become economists and not teachers. […] Of course they did not say that [to us then], it was just said that [they] are not going to this school any more and disappeared. We had

several such people, two were the daughters of a [former] county chairman. […] But well, the deportations did not affect us and none of the students mentioned it. There was no, well, there was no panic whatsoever (Luule).

"The disorder and misinformation" had left a false impression of a larger catastrophe than it had actually been, Luule argues. Her reference to the children of the deported people who could not continue to study to become teachers also contains some irony: "they were very happy afterwards" as they got better-paid jobs. In reality, the children of repressed people often faced discrimination by the regime and stigmatisation by their peers, even if the people to whom Luule refers may have found creative ways to 'capitalise' on previous misfortunes.

Sergei Yulianov (b. 1926) came from central Russia. His childhood includes a story quite similar to Tamara Kasemaa's. In 1937, Sergei's father had come home and said: "Tomorrow we'll be leaving […]. First, there were the Party members, then, whoever else, now, it will be the administrative staff." Later, after they had returned home, they were asked: "Where were you? We were looking for you!" With this anecdote Luule referred to her father-in-law's "administrative work". Luule's and Sergei's son Aleksander (b. 1961) was more direct with me in the interview, thereby placing his grandfather in a very different social setting from that of Tamara Kasemaa.

> My grandfather was a Chekist and so he explained also to my dad how the Cheka are working, is working … before the NKVD, then the KGB, right.[21] How the system was, who is being monitored, who not. He taught my dad how not to get 'squeezed'. […] And then, [in 1937], my grandfather noticed that all his former companions, they were disappearing one by one. And then he evacuated his family. […] He took his family along and started to travel, from one train station to another. From each station he bought a ticket to the next one. […] When the times became calmer, he returned. The others asked: "Where were you Comrade K.?" [He replied:] "On business in N. town, developing the forest industry" (Aleksander).

When comparing their discussions on history during late socialism, the Yulianovs appear to have had more complex and detailed discussions than the Kasemaas. The 'Russian' sides of both families faced and escaped repression, although they referred to it in different, even if similarly mythological, registers. Tamara Kasemaa's (b. 1930) humanist and left-wing values were in harmony with her Soviet experiences and socialist discourse; they helped to leave her social origins out of the world of her daughter Nina (b. 1957). Conversely, Sergei Yulianov's (b. 1926)

father worked for the Cheka and Sergei's experience of repression is more inti-mate and even traumatic. Later, being a military officer in Estonia, Sergei sensed displacement from a spatial distance to Russia, he also socialised with the KGB staff which added to his childhood insecurity. In the 1980s (but not earlier), he passed this knowledge on to his son Aleksander (b. 1961) as a somewhat mys-terious "fear of *organs*" – the Soviet institutions of surveillance and repression.

The 'Estonian' sides of both families point to their poor or modest lives in the interwar Estonian republic (a theme that is rarely discussed today in public as it does not form a part of the established cultural memory). Discussing everyday hardships in relation to the past was not an ideological threat in late socialism and it was passed on to younger next generations quite freely. Martin Kasemaa (b. 1930) grew up in poor conditions and had little to hide from his children (although he also participated quite little in domestic life). At the same time, Luule Yulianov (b. 1929) consciously chose not to speak about some aspects of the past to her son and reinterpreted some other facts to accord with what was socially acceptable in the 1970s. Luule argues that stressing "useful" aspects of the past came to her naturally and without the feelings of fear.

In the interviews and in analysis it was tempting to focus on the (silenced) repressions and shattering historical events rather than to expand on the less articulated ordinary life experiences. But many interviewees mention that they "do not have these things in [family history] that everyone now talks about".[22] There were many stories without references to direct repressions among the ancestors of mixed families and this is also the case with the Paju and Parts families that comprise the next case studies.

Paju family
Valeria (b. 1930) – mother, 'Russian newcomer', interviewed
Vello (b. 1931) – father, 'Estonian local'
Lyudmila (b. 1951) – daughter, interviewed

Valeria Paju (b. 1930) met her husband Vello (b. 1931) in a small town near Mos-cow at a factory where they were both working. He was in Russia due to the Stalinist post-graduation work allocation in which people were often sent out-side their union republic's borders. They married and, when it became possible, moved to Estonia with their daughter Lyudmila. Stalinist repressions passed by Valeria: even if the "enemy of the people was never asleep", repressions were not a daily concern in her social circles. She remembers that a person was arrest-ed at her factory around 1950 on charges of being the "enemy", such arrest had made perfect sense for her at the time: "I knew nothing then. We were told that

everything was alright." Dwelling on it, Valeria remembers that her father had had "some doubts", or at least he had expressed some criticism after Stalin's death.

> My father said: "Something is wrong in Russian politics. How can it be that we have such a rich state and we live so badly." This is how my father spoke. He never said it publicly, one could not do that, but I heard it from him. "Such a war we won, so many men fell, many years have passed since the war, but we still have nothing good. Russia is rich, it has everything – oil, gas – but we are so poor, such small salaries, such bad living conditions, empty shops …" (Valeria).

Valeria has many vivid memories of the Great Patriotic War. It was a very difficult but also memorable time for her – she worked at a factory from the age of ten, her father was almost never at home due to long working hours at another factory, and her mother had to take care of all the family members in addition to her own work. As many others, in 1953, Valeria arrived in Estonia with the idea that the country had voluntarily joined the USSR, but unlike most of others, she went to the countryside where vivid memories of the pre-war past had not faded, where old houses still stood, and where some resistance fighters (Forest Brothers) still inhabited the forests. Being a friendly and active person, Valeria was received well and she managed to forge close relationships with her new relatives, who made little secret of their opinions of the annexation of Estonia into the USSR: "When I arrived here, and when my husband's father started to tell me how it had actually been, I was shocked. But later I analysed and matched it all: I am pretty smart, I quickly figured it out". Being from Russia, she describes her relationship to the Estonian past as follows: "Most important is that in the [early] Soviet Union it was all the same way, but it was in the year 1918, right? No living witnesses, right? But here, there were still living witnesses of 1939".

Valeria refers to the anti-Soviet – effectively anti-Russian – sentiments and how she overcame them by a friendly, confident and active approach to life. In these frames, her husband Vello (b. 1931) appears to be the opposite. Vello was from the Estonian countryside, where his parents worked at a collective farm and where he was the family's only son as his brother had fallen in 1944 fighting for the Red Army. Vello's drinking problems, lack of initiative and, seemingly, any investment in family life come across in all the interviews with three generations of the Paju family. "At ours [in Russia] … if you got married – live with it. Here [in Estonia] the mentality is a bit different", says Valeria referring to personal discord in their relationship and to the compromises in her own life.

The childhood homes of Vello and Valeria had not suffered from the Stalinist or Nazi repressions and the Paju family did not dwell much on the past at home. However, when they did, then they spoke of general hardships of wartime. Actually, Vello rarely participated in family discussions with his daughters. Valeria appreciated the differences in Estonian history, although her own experiences were based on the wartime hardships and constant improvement that ensued.

Parts family
Anatoli (b. 1927) – father, 'Russian newcomer'
Virve (b. 1927) – mother, 'Estonian local'
Maria (b. 1957) – daughter, interviewed

Anatoli Parts (b. 1927) grew up in the Krasnodar region in southern Russia and Virve (b. 1927) was from Estonia. Their daughter Maria (b. 1957) felt compelled to explain to me how her mother could have married a Russian man in post-war Tallinn: "I asked – the people asked – 'why did you really go to a Russian … or to a Ukrainian?' But well, how many men of that age were there to choose from? […] And I should say that my father was a handsome man. Handsome, did not drink or smoke, was polite". Anatoli was stationed in Tallinn with the Red Army and stayed there after marrying Virve. Throughout the interview, Maria was also worried by the following question: was her father an "occupant" in Estonia? To deal with the contemporary societal pressure, she had asked Anatoli in the 1990s: "Did you kill anyone during or after the war?" He had replied that he did not. "So he has the right to be on Estonian soil. The first years he cleaned [the sea of mines], he did such a hard job, and then [he] got married" (Maria). This was the first thing in our long interview that Maria would tell me, it was important for her to fix that uncomfortable matter of "occupation". She framed Anatoli's presence as not being about destruction and death but about cementing peace through hard work. On the other hand, Anatoli had told her that as a soldier it had been dangerous to be outside of the city, on the roads and in the country:

> He indeed feared the Forest Brothers to a certain extent. When they had to drive through some forest and, say, a group of soldiers were in the lorry – they had such partially open lorries, covered from the top – so the guys who were more outside, had to keep low … so that it would not be visible, that the bullet would not fly … […] There was a certain fear at that period for sure. It was a serious time (Maria).

Anatoli Parts had shared that story about his experiences of Estonia in the late 1940s with his daughter and this story is removed from the everyday confrontations that he claims that "he did not notice". For Anatoli it had been important to stress Estonian liberation from fascism, to have contributed to ending the war. "He did not distinguish 'us' [Estonia] versus the USSR. He certainly did not do that" (Maria). During the Singing Revolution, already at the end of the 1980s, Maria had asked him:

> "Father, did you really not understand – when you married, when you were here for the first years – did you not see that everything is so different here – another culture. And when you took an Estonian wife, did you not get that your children, that this is all a different land?" He looked at me a bit and said: "*Net, ne ponyal.*" Did he really *ne ponyal* [not understand] or did he just say so – I am not sure.

Maria dwells much on her school experiences. She went to a Russian school as "there was indeed no desire" to send her to an Estonian school. After her first school year she had wished to transfer to an Estonian school, but her mother was against it as she had already started learning in Russian. Eventually, it becomes apparent that Virve did not wish to confront Anatoli about their children's identities. "Because for the father it was a natural thing that his kids go to a Russian school – *his* kids. He didn't consider them … well, either he didn't think about it or he didn't consider us to be really Estonians" (Maria).

Neither the families of Anatoli nor Virve had suffered from Stalinist repressions or World War II. Maria replies to my inquiries about the darker vestiges of the past by saying that "these historical difficulties which they talk so much about had generally passed them by". There had not been many discussions about history and controversies of the past in her childhood home. Anatoli took the Soviet presence in Estonia for granted and lived a fulfilling life after his military career; and we do not quite learn what Virve really thought about the distinct Estonian past or if she ever spoke her mind. We know that Maria wished to go to an Estonian school but her mother did not facilitate that change; Maria's references to childhood are filled with warmth and security, but the indirect references to the patriarchal relations of her parents appeared a little uncanny to me.

The families of Paju and Parts are examples of working class families in which the immediate repressions of the past had been missing. Vello Paju's (b. 1931) absence from the family affairs and Anatoli Parts's (b. 1927) dominance in raising children indicate how familial togetherness and cohesion greatly varied. The Paju and Parts families talked significantly less about the past at home than was

the case with the Yulianov and Kasemaa families. Indeed, while the "historical difficulties had passed them by", there was also little reference to and interpretation of general historical knowledge. People assigned importance to the present and the future. Both families experienced significant increases in living standards. However, whereas Valeria Paju (b. 1930) was exposed to the anti-Soviet sentiments in the Estonian countryside, Anatoli Parts appears to have generally overlooked such local problems. "Estonian aspects" were less present in family life and children were put in Russian schools.

Children and the future

In the following, I ask how the younger generation's perspective on life was formed during late socialism by building on the discussion above. Another primary channel of socialisation next to the family is education, and even if I mainly focus on family influences, the importance of school comes across. This is due to the fact that in Soviet Estonia, Russian- and Estonian-language schools maintained different curricula, and their teachers and peer groups had different cultural backgrounds.

Nina Kasemaa (b. 1957) stressed that in her family it was important to avoid contradictions and potential conflicts with each other and with societal norms: "*This* was kept away from me. When there were [such] contradictions … there was an attempt to solve them in a manner that would spare me." Nina went to a Russian school but participated in an Estonian sports team. She proposes that the latter group "might have spoken their mind about matters of nationality somewhere else. I think they did not mention it when I was present." In stating "*this* was kept away" from her, Nina refers primarily to adapting to the Soviet regime and ideology. However, she says that "I was pretty aware of the fact that there are different worlds and that there are important distinctions. As I was part of both groups, I perceived it." She grasped the difference in cultural memories in Estonia and considered herself to be "in between". She did not became "nationally minded" and "needed more time to think things through" during the Singing Revolution in Estonia (1988–1991). Going along with the Estonian-minded crowd was not her immediate choice at that time.

Aleksander Yulianov (b. 1962), on the other hand, went to an Estonian school and had no problem with going along with the Singing Revolution; he was excited about the outburst of social activism in this period. However, he stresses the continuity and congruence of his "Soviet" and "Estonian" values:

> In general, it is so that I was a loyal Soviet citizen, and I am also a loyal Esto-
> nian citizen. Let's say that I do not see a contradiction … It is often pictured
> as if there were only two options – that you were either nationalist or col-
> laborationist – this is not really correct. I mean that I was not uncomfortable
> in the Soviet Union, and neither do I feel uncomfortable now (Aleksander).

Aleksander would summarise his previous mentality elsewhere by saying bluntly
that he "became a full rank Soviet Estonian person". Digging in the past appears
to be easier for him and his experiences at the Estonian school seem to give him
courage to be outspoken and comfortable about his position during late social-
ism, when he became a "loyal Soviet citizen". Nina Kasemaa's full belonging to
Estonian society is less secure today after attending a Russian school and she
remains less outspoken.

When thinking about his youth, Aleksander would say that there were many
"tales and rumours" among his Estonian peers about the past but he had been
"taught at home to only believe what you can check yourself". But he also con-
cedes that "there were many things that my parents did not tell me at all, there
were things that I had never heard of … All these blank spots in history". In 1987,
he had heard a lecture about the Estonian War of Independence of 1918–1920:
"They said that there was no Civil War in Estonia, that there was the War of
Independence. Then I told my mother: "So, why didn't you tell me before, did
you really not know that?" – "Of course I knew, and of course, I did not tell you"",
his mother had replied (Aleksander). He had heard of historical struggles of
1918–1920 but the dangerous interwar concepts had been left out.

The parents in the Kasemaa and Yulianov families had all graduated from
university and had rather prominent jobs. The children in the Paju and Parts
families, however, grew up in a working class milieu. This is probably one of the
reasons why the discussions of the past are mentioned much less when refer-
ring to their childhoods. **Lyudmila Paju** (b. 1951) lives in Tartu where the over-
whelming majority of people are Estonians, but she went to a Russian school and
her Estonian father Vello was absent from family life. Lyudmila does not feel
at home in Estonian social settings even after working with Estonians for more
than thirty years. As for the Singing Revolution, she admits that "the people who
had probably suffered, who had been repressed at previous times, were of course
in high spirits. [But] I should tell you right away that I was indifferent, I did not
understand these people".[23] Her father Vello had "never told [her] what feelings,
well, what all has accompanied him as he had [also] lived in this other period
[prior to the war]" (Lyudmila).

When I ask Lyudmila if she had heard about deportations in her youth she claimed to have "known nothing". The old times and past experiences were mentioned only "in passing" in her family. When I insisted on talking about the war, Lyudmila said: "there is no point in talking much about these events … Our generation … maybe even my daughter, they do not need to hear about the war. They know exactly how difficult it was …" The difficulties of World War II are a seminal trope in references to the past for her but she also expresses some unwillingness of talking to me as an Estonian about this. I might not agree with her today. Lyudmila remembers that once at work, among a largely Estonian-speaking community, the events of the following story happened (some time in 1982–1983):

> I learned that the Estonian Republic had had a blue-black-white tricolour only when I already worked full time … We had a big scandal with one well-known person who also probably did not know [that flag]; he was a big boss and with a foreign family name, he did not know, and made some kind of a poster or something for a conference … There were these three colours together on it, blue, black, and white. And there was a big, serious problem with this person. […] There were talks about it and then I [finally] asked, eyes wide open, what the problem actually was. Then everyone looked at me as if I were really a fool (Lyudmila).

When asked to reconstruct her social situation in the 1970s, Lyudmila echoes the temporal distance and a certain impossibility of explaining all this to me today: "Oh how should you … you may speak to a hundred people, but you would still not understand. You certainly would not understand it, because you are so much younger."

Maria Parts (b. 1957) shares these difficulties expressing her social position during late socialism. After attending a Russian school, she worked among Estonians and often refers to the currently prevalent ways of talking about the past.

> There was *no* family story of our own. It was said that "this person had had some family member taken away", whatever, nothing detailed … The most I learned about it at the time when we had that Singing Revolution. Then I got more interested myself, too. Before, there was also no time: family, children, family, children all the time (Maria).

The past was rarely a subject of conversation in the Parts family. When I ask if it had felt harrowing or fearful to live in the USSR, Maria responds clearly that

there was "absolutely no fear" and that she felt no need to show her discontent "as these punks or rebels" had done (distinguishing herself from the 1980s youth cultures). These "rebels" had been alien to her at that time even if now she knows that some of them are taken today as resisters of the Soviet regime.

> I had absolutely no fear, of course, maybe I was a bit silly when I was young – there was so much else [going on] there … Well there is some point to saying that "when we were young, the sky was bluer and the grass greener and all". A young person is eager to experience something good and new, and waits for this in life. And … these people who came out, so to say, as punks or rebels – I do not know what makes a person like that … I was waiting for … something good for myself. This "Red politics" was like that and it was not good – but I did not go into it, I went to its side. And this Red terror during the first Soviet years … when I was born and grew up, then there was no more of it. In Estonia there was nothing. You had to try hard to be arrested for political reasons. And I would not do it, I would not pay attention … Of course, it can be said that it was backwardness, foolishness, cowardice … all these things could be listed here (Maria).

An apologetic tone cannot be missed in Maria's speach when explaining her youth. She did not pay attention to "Red politics" and also to the rebellious culture on the margins of that "good and new" the young people were searching for. Perhaps, she had been "backward, foolish, or cowardly" by embracing the Soviet realities in this rather unchallenging way, or should she "have feared more"? Maria continues by stating that she "did not believe that this [Soviet regime] would end. Such an idea never crossed my mind. I was not a Russian – I felt my kind of Estonianness – but … I could not imagine that this Estonian state would return. This felt totally impossible".[24]

There is something uneasy in these questions about late socialism that the children of inter-marriages have not thought much about – these questions are imposed by me and they initiate a search of words and a narrative. My interviewees had jobs, their standard of life has not fallen since the Singing Revolution, and their own children are doing pretty well. Insisting on a lack of fear during late socialism, therefore, seems to be more than a critique of present material conditions or a nostalgic recourse to the memories of youth.

Aleksander Yulianov went to an Estonian school and he positions himself somehow counter-intuitively more in opposition with the Estonian public expressions of cultural memory by claiming that he had become a "Soviet Estonian". Such a position could serve as intellectual hyperbole in an interview situation

but it also matches other references in his life-story. Nina Kasemaa, Lyudmila Paju, and Maria Parts had a different socialisation path – they all went to a Russian school but then mingled with Estonians. They tend to be more cautious with me as an Estonian listener in expressing the "Soviet" views of their youth. However, they do identify that they were Soviet citizens who had control over their lives and no fear of the authorities; they also say that they did not consider political participation important (Lyudmila was more enthusiastic about Soviet youth organisations than the others). All four children, born from 1951 to 1961, hint at the emergence of an inhabitable Soviet web of social meanings and future horizons that complemented the ethnically-loaded identifications. The historical knowledge they got at home did not significantly contradict with their schooling experiences and young adult lives in Soviet Estonia. The Soviet future had rendered digging into past controversies somewhat unimportant.

Conclusion

In the chapter, I looked at historical memory in Estonia by primarily focusing on generational relations in a familial and historical context, with regard to major ethno-cultural constellations, and in vertical and horizontal connections across time. More specifically, I analysed the temporal horizons of people in intercultural families during late socialism through two generations, discussing the families of 'local Estonian' and 'newcomer Russian' parents (born from the late 1920s to early 1930s) and their children (born in the 1950s and early 1960s). I focused on how the parents passed their communicative memories about the time prior and during World War II on to their children against their wider cultural memory background. I also looked at how the children's ideas about the future were formed in relation to their perspectives on the past.

It should be noted that there were several references to the difficult interwar period and to *not* suffering from the Stalinist repressions on the 'local Estonian' side; conversely, there were several 'Russian newcomer' families that had suffered from Soviet repressions. For example, information from the 'local' families reveals the hard lives of the urban and rural poor and the struggles of the left-minded people in the interwar Estonian republic. 'Newcomer' parents referred in the interviews to the difficult life in the 1930s, but stressed the hardships of the Great Patriotic War (World War II) more frequently; the 1940s were much poorer in Russia than in Estonia.

I showed that large-scale structural differences between the cultural and communicative memories of Russian and Estonian speakers continue to form conflicting repertoires for the informants of this study. This chapter contributed

particularly to the study of the memory dynamics of a birth cohort that was born in Soviet Estonia in the 1950s and was socialised in the period of late socialism (as children of intercultural couples). I showed that intercultural positionality exposed children to divergent cultural memories and this opened ways for them to distance themselves emphatically from more singular historical interpretations of their parents. In addition, the children who were more rooted in the Estonian cultural field expressed views that mismatched them with the dominant tropes of Estonian cultural memory more courageously.

The chapter also discussed the dynamics of cultural and communicative memory between the 'newcomer Russian' and 'local Estonian' perspectives in Soviet Estonia. I argued that the references parents made in late socialism to the pre-war, wartime, and Stalinist experiences could be generalised as references to 'hard times' and 'general difficulties' since the family had remarkably fewer stories related to traumatic and dramatic events. I showed that it was the discourse of the 'difficulty of life in the past' – an accommodating and moderating discourse – that mediated between the potentially different opinions in the family (between 'newcomers' and 'locals') and between the public Soviet historical narrative and family experiences of past. This discourse was applicable both to the experiences of many people in interwar Estonia and in the Soviet Union prior to World War II; a focus on human difficulties also emphatically relates to wartime hardships regardless of ideological sympathies towards the combating sides.

I also showed that there were more possibilities for creative and selective discussion of the past among families with higher education as the parents were better equipped to reinterpret history in order to suit the Soviet context. In addition, family cohesion, interpersonal relations and family bonds came across together with socio-economic origins as important factors that influence intergenerational relationships in the family, and the resulting picture may portray public conflict as quite unimportant for family life.

In most instances, the insecurities, difficulties, and fears of the parents were not passed on to the children during late socialism. Negative or even traumatic topics appear also to have lost their actuality at that time. Detailed knowledge of the past was not considered worthwhile cultural capital. This enabled children to grow into the essentially new Soviet reality and to feel fairly comfortable in such a world: for them, it was a liveable normality with the prospect of a Soviet future in mind. Normalisation rendered getting involved in past controversies rather unimportant. The children claimed that they controlled their own lives and did not experience fear, but also that they did not consider political participation important.

Interviews

The biographical oral history interviews were conducted by the author from autumn 2009 until summer 2011 in Tallinn, Tartu, and eastern Estonia. Most of the interviews were in Estonian, while some were in Russian. Further information in the Appendix.

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Notes

   1 It should be immediately clarified that in the current public and scholarly discourse several terms are used in reference to the non-Estonian population group in Estonia: 'Russian-speakers' (based on language), 'Russians' (based on ethno-cultural reference), 'aliens' (in Estonian *muulased* or 'the others') and 'non-Estonians' (in Estonian *mitte-eestlased*). 'Russian-speakers' is often the preferred term as it involves a large majority of Soviet era 'newcomers' – in addition to Russians, people who identify primarily as Ukrainians and Belorussians, but also most of the other people who came to live in Estonia during the Soviet period. This linguistic term thereby hints at ethnic mixing and a blurring of the lines often prevalent in the Slavic community in the USSR. It is also sometimes important to distinguish between assigned and self-assigned identifications. 'Russians' is an ethno-cultural reference that is either reserved for ethnic Russians or which designates Soviet era 'Russian-speaking newcomers' in general. The latter usage of 'Russians' is an especially prevalent reference in everyday language among ethnic Estonians. In this chapter, I do not firmly distinguish between 'Russian-speakers' and 'Russians' when talking about Soviet era 'newcomers': I generally interviewed people who identify as 'Russians'. (However, when it matters, I point out when someone is 'Russian-speaking' with Ukrainian origins.)

   2 In late April 2007, following the decision of the Estonian Government to relocate the Soviet Bronze statue commemorating the Unknown Soldier and to rebury the bodies below according to a political mandate received from the parliamentary elections, the citizens of Tallinn witnessed unprecedented riots and looting by mainly Russian-speakers. Bad timing (the relocation came two weeks prior to the 9th May celebrations), a lack of information mixed with misinformation and provocations from both 'sides', the harsh government rhetoric, and the actions of riot police all contributed to an escalation of the conflict. The meanings of the Soviet World War II statue and its relocation were, however, rooted in deeper questions of history and identity, in the legacy of the Soviet era, and in the 'historical rights' of being in Estonia. While not coming as a surprise to sociologists, who had warned of a growing structural schism between Russians and Estonians, the 'Bronze Night' reminded the public of the ethnic division in Estonia. The unrest was in strong contrast both to the prevalent political 'Estonian success' discourse and the memory of the essentially peaceful Singing Revolution (1988–1991).

   3 Mannheim argued in his classical article that some socio-historical conditions inculcate people's dispositions much more than stable situations, therefore some age cohorts and some members of these cohorts are influenced more strongly. In short, historical generations with shared dispositions appear in society irregularly, depending on history, and include possibly only some members of a birth cohort (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928], 310). The term 'generation' is sometimes used in similar ways to the concept of 'birth cohort'; however, 'generation' implies more self-consciousness about one's own temporal location.

   4 The notes in brackets in excerpts have been added by the author.

   5 Pickering and Keightley (2012) rightly critique the majority of generational studies for having focused on how cultural memory forges generational 'horizontal'

commonalities, pointing out that much less has been said about temporal 'vertical' connections between generations as this would complicate the otherwise neat distinction between generations. (For classical overviews of generational studies, see also: Jaeger 1985; Spitzer 1973.)

6 In the late 1930s, the Estonian population included 8.2% Russians, 1.6% Germans, 0.7% Swedes, and 0.4% Jews. The coastal Swedes would escape the Soviets and leave Estonia in 1944, the Germans would leave in 1939, and the urban Jews and some Russians would escape the approaching front to inland Russia in 1941; some 1000 local Jews were killed in the local Holocaust, mainly through accusations of communism. A significant number of ethnic Russians, who had lived in independent Estonia, also found themselves living in Soviet Russia after the administrative reduction in the size of Soviet Estonia in 1945. On the Sovietisation of Estonia, see the classic Misiunas and Taagepera (1993) or Mertelsmann (2003).

7 It may be added that one of the leading leitmotifs among 'Estonian locals' in reference to migration was (and is) that one million inhabitants is an absolute minimum for an ethnos to survive – Estonians were (and are) on the edge of survival as a nation. In relation to 'Russian newcomers' it should be said that the turnover of the Russian-speaking population in Soviet Estonia was high – a larger majority of immigrants actually left Estonia after spending some time in this Soviet Republic. This study is focused on the people who created a family here and stayed.

8 For example, a classic semiotic and anthropological definition is given by Clifford Geertz (1973, 5): "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs …" He then goes on to define the task of anthropology: "… and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expression on their surface enigmatical" (op cit).

9 'Cultural memory' thereby grasps individual acts of remembering, group memories, national memory, and transnational mnemonic tropes. Erll (2008, 4) argues that there are several factors that influenced her use of 'cultural memory' over 'social memory' and 'collective memory', with the latter especially highly controversial and triggering "many wrong associations". The primary wrong association, as I understand it, would be the assignment of human properties of remembering to past-related social phenomena, which may easily lead to interpretations that go far from contemporary scholarly consensus of what constitutes social analysis. Erll (op cit, 4–5) further divides 'cultural memory' heuristically according to a three-dimensional framework comprising "social (people, social relations, institutions), material (artefacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities)". She also indicates that culture and memory intersect on the individual (cognitive) and the collective (social and medial) level; i.e., individuals need collective contexts remembering and groups to reconstruct a shared past in "some resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perspectivity" (op cit). Erll reminds us that in collective understanding, 'memory' acts as a metaphor for social processes.

10 Aleida and Jan Assmann (for example, A. Assmann & J. Assmann 1987; J. Assmann 1995; 2008; A. Assmann 2011) see 'cultural memory' and 'communicative memory' as

phenomena that are brought together under the umbrella of 'collective memory'. For a discussion on alternative concepts and approaches, especially for 'historical culture', by Rüsen (1994) and for nuances of Assmanns' theory, see Kõresaar (2014).

11 I consider it fruitful to use the umbrella term 'cultural memory' (Erll 2008) to illustrate diverse levels of mnemonic differentiation in the 'Estonian local' and 'Russian newcomer' cultural constellations. This should not essentialise the Russian–Estonian divide but rather reflect the empirical reality of cultural division. This chapter is an attempt to show spaces of negotiation and overlaps in cultural spaces.

12 Aleksander Etkind (2013) argues that working through Stalinism resulted in a curious mixture of cultural nostalgia and amnesia, in which the fractured meanings of terror would proliferate. He discusses cultural texts and elite experiences, but his claim about the 'generational' lack of working through is widened to the whole of society. Orlando Figes (2007; 2008) makes a similar point in his lengthy oral history of survivors of Stalinist repressions by arguing that an overarching approach to dealing with private repression experiences was to silence them due to fear and insecurity about the future – past sufferings were not spoken about with relatives or the next generations, in many Russian families such pasts were only mentioned from the late 1980s onwards. Figes make a promise to focus on 'ordinary people', but a central figure in his book is eventually a Soviet establishment writer, Konstantin Simonov.

13 For example, in her work in the 1990s and 2000s, Aili Aarelaid-Tart described the Estonian 'testimonies of the Soviet reality' and the Russian 'fall of the Soviet dreamland' as 'cultural trauma' discourses by focusing on the broken elements in the 'cultural tissue' during the socio-cultural transition of the 1990s in both ethno-linguistic communities. In her approach, traumatic experiences for native Estonians lay in the 1940s and for Russian speakers in the 1990s. Aarelaid-Tart's work was mainly based on interviews with cultural elites, especially in the case of local Estonians. An implicit assumption about elites representing the nation may have been partially behind this. (See, for additional materials on memory studies in Estonia, Kõresaar et al 2009; Aarelaid-Tart & Bennich-Björkman 2012.)

14 Aili Aarelaid-Tart (2012) and Tiiu Jaago (2012) use life-story interviews and autobiographies to discuss the identities of Russian-speakers in Soviet Estonia and in the transition period.

15 Two international family history projects took place in Russia in the early 1990s with a focus on intergenerational exchanges – a more sociological one (led by Bertaux) and a more historical one (led by Thompson) (Bertaux et al 2004). In a jointly written piece, these researchers argued – somewhat in line with the totalitarian historical school – that "the two centres of resistance which the totalitarian system repeatedly sought to destroy were the family and memory" (Bertaux & Thompson 1993, 5–6). Bertaux and Thompson welcome recovery of the histories that had been "suppressed" for two or more generations by focusing on intergenerational family perspectives on the Stalinist repressions, suffering, survival, and its socialist and post-socialist after-life. They stress the lack of knowledge about the family past, the lack of social control and ability to respond to social change, and the lack of self-perception as active social participants (rather than as victims) (Bertaux et al 2004).

16 Such discussions are often built on the paradigm of 'family culture' as the authors tackle intergenerational transfers of family experiences, shared values, norms, and dispositions. The family is often seen as a stable and discrete unit in which people produce and receive defined 'messages' from the past. For example, see the interesting articles on the cultural model of 'Russian popular classes' which followed a 'moral economy' built on the collective values of peasantry, which persisted throughout the 20th century (Bertaux 2004); or on family socialisation patterns in which there was either "the aggressive revolutionary culture of class hatred" or "the kindness and gentleness of a privileged elite which typified the culture of gentry covertly surviving from the pre-revolutionary era" (Semenova & Thompson 2004, 136). See also the discussions of family cultures and generational transfers in the following collections: Breckner et al (2000); Rosenthal and Bogner (2009).

17 Welzer (2010, 6) argues that grandchildren even fabricate stories in which their "grandparents act in a morally upright, dissident way and show moral courage", even if the grandparents themselves suggested that Nazism, anti-Semitism, and racism had been integral part of their lives at the time of National Socialism. See also Erll (2011) for a discussion on family memory in the classical 'collective memory' paradigm of Maurice Halbwachs.

18 Altogether, I use information from 41 interviews with 20 families. The four family case studies are generally representative of the wide patterns of identification that emerged in the interviews.

19 When discussing real people in the four case studies, I refer to them by pseudonyms that differ from the original pseudonyms used in my previous research. Some other biographical details are also altered in order to maintain privacy.

20 Nina ironically juxtaposes the famous Stalin quote from the first all-Union Conference of Stakhanovites in November 17, 1935 with the reality of the great purges from two years later. In his speech, Stalin explains why the Stakhanov movement had suddenly become "absolutely ripe". As the first cause he notes that, "the Stakhanov movement was first and foremost the radical improvement in the material welfare of the workers. Life has improved, comrades. Life has become more joyous. And when life is joyous, work goes well. Hence the high rates of output. Hence the heroes and heroines of labour" (Stalin 1976, 784).

21 The name Cheka comes from Russian acronym ChK (Ru. *ЧК – чрезвычайная комиссия*, Extraordinary Commission). It was the first of a succession of Soviet state security organisations founded by Felix Dzerzhinsky.

22 Admittedly, I initially set forth to discuss how familial secrets and repression experiences were dealt with. Only over time did pattern appear by which, in many families, there were no such experiences; or that repressions had happened to some ancestors but not to most of them.

23 Lyudmila would add somewhat ironically: "… and what were we ready to eat [if need be]? Potato peels … right." The same is recalled by Lyudmila's daughter Natalya (b. 1974): "I frankly confess that all these feelings there, that the flag was returned, and perhaps even that the culture was returned, and the real Estonia was returned – well for me these feelings – I would not say that I do not care, this is still a republic, independent – but these [feelings] were not so sharp."

24 Maria adds in contrast: "For example, we have this [friend] Johanna – she is this … she is Leo's daughter – she would tell me: "When we walked by the tower of the Estonian Parliament and there was a red flag hoisted – [then Leo] mentioned that Estonian rule will be restored [one day]." She, Johanna, said: "I laughed about it, I did not believe it." As for me, I did not laugh at anyone, because this idea did not even cross my mind. It was all so secure, so fixed … I did not see how it could be possible – I simply did not see."

Appendix 1. Family case studies

Asterix (*) marks people who were available for interview; their interviews are quoted.

Family	'Newcomer' parent	'Local' parent	Child	Grandchild
Kasemaa	Tamara (1930, F)	Martin (1930, M)	Nina (1957, F)*	
Yulianov	Sergei (1926, M)*	Luule (1929, F)*	Aleksander (1961, M)*	
Paju	Valeria (1930, F)*	Vello (1931, M)	Lyudmila (1951, F)*	Natalya (1974, F)*
Parts	Anatoli (1927, M)	Virve (1927, F)	Maria (1957, F)*	

The interpretative background of the chapter is based on the following interviews in the author's original oral history interview database (including the four case studies of this chapter): Alekseyev (int. 53, 60), Allikas (int. 87), Arhipelagov (int. 10, 18, 19), Dimitriyev (int. 37, 80), Glebov (int. 56), Keerpuu (int. 5, 12, 21), Kesamaa (int. 92, 93), Kisseljova (int. 7, 23), Kits (int. 35, 70), Kõlar (int. 30, 31), Laas (int. 44, 77, 78), Laiküla (int. 13, 20, 22), Lebedeva (int. 39), Lodjapuu (int. 61), Loks (int. 88, 94), Nikonov (int. 1, 2, 9), Poska (int. 71, 89, 95), Sander (int. 74, 86), Sharpov (int. 15, 27), Toompuu (int. 8).

Religion and generation: exploring conversion and religious tradition through autobiographical interviews with Russian Orthodox believers in Estonia

Irina Paert

Abstract. This chapter deals with religion from the perspective of generations, focusing on the Russian Orthodox believers in Estonia who were born in the 1960s–1970s. I use Viktor Pelevin's playful expression "Generation P" to characterise these men and women who came of age during perestroika and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This generation of Orthodox believers is compared to the older generation of Russians who were socialised in the church during the interwar period in independent Estonia. 'Generation' is used to mean a cohort of people whose experience and worldview were shaped by their specific location in a historical era (in Mannheim's terms) as well as an age cohort of people who lived together through a period of time and shared a sense of identification, generational consciousness, and generational culture. The chapter views religious conversion as an active embrace of a new identity and a way to moral renewal. In Estonia, the imagined community of the Russian Orthodox had been constructed with the use of both the idealised world of rural faith and a reference to the spiritual lineage. The heavier emphasis on subjective experience rather than community differentiates "Generation P" from their predecessors, but within the Orthodox Church, the intergenerational connections are quite strong.

Viktor Pelevin's novel *Generation P* (1999) was a playful response to Douglas Coupland's *Generation X* (1991). While the latter referred to the generation of Americans born after the baby boomers, in the 1961–1981 period, Pelevin's cult book was about the Russians coming of age during perestroika. The 'P' in "Generation P" stands for 'Pepsi' after the slogan of a popular ad in the 1980s: "the new generation chooses Pepsi". The lives, worldviews, and careers of these young Russians have been transformed by the neo-liberal economic and political reforms of the 1980s–1990s. If we accept Pelevin's ironic idea, then "Generation P" followed

what Don Raleigh (2006) called the "sputnik generation" (those born in the late 1940s–1950s), the equivalent of the Soviet baby boomers.

Unlike their predecessors, who believed in science rather than God, the members of "Generation P" were spiritual seekers. Their youth coincided with the upsurge in religious activities that occurred when political restraints on religion were relaxed beginning in the mid-1980s. Spiritual seeking and religious affiliation were not necessarily a defining feature of this age cohort: the number of believers in this category is not significantly higher than in other age groups. However, their religious experience was different from that of their parents, as they came of age when religion had become more tolerated and even fashionable.

Even though there are studies that address the problem of Soviet generations (Kelly 2007; Yurchak 2006; Raleigh 2006), the study of generations and religion in Russia is lacking. An exception is a study of Russian Orthodox practices on the basis of the poll carried by the Levada Center in 2009, which provided a nuanced analysis of beliefs and patterns of church activity by focusing on different cohorts of people born between 1917 and 1991 (Bremer 2013). Even less studied are generations of Russians outside Russia, i.e. in the former Soviet republics. We still lack the empirical evidence and the mature methodology to make comparisons between the specific age cohorts of Russian-speaking people in Estonia with either their Estonian-speaking peers or people of the same generation who live in Russia. This chapter might provide some material for further discussion and research in this field.

In this chapter 'generation' is used interchangeably to mean a cohort of people whose experience and worldview were shaped by their specific location in a historical era (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928], 290) as well as an age cohort of people who lived together through a period of time and shared a sense of identification, generational consciousness, and generational culture (Newman 1996). Through a focus on generation, I explore the tension between religion understood as tradition, on the one hand, and the relation of religion to social change, on the other. According to Mannheim, "traditions bearing in a particular direction only persist so long as the location relationships of the group acknowledging them remain more or less unchanged" (1952 [1927/28], 292). Encounters with the accumulated heritage, what Mannheim calls "fresh contact", by a new generation may lead to a redefinition of tradition (op cit, 294). Even though age, cohort, and generation could potentially be productive categories to apply to the study of religion, especially in redefining the secularisation thesis, sociologists warn against a reductionist use of these categories. Michele Dillon points out that despite "inter-generational differences evident in the march of religion through time,

there are also trans-generational continuities in how Americans from diverse cohorts construe religion" (2007, 544).

The religious views and experiences in Estonia exemplify inter- or transgenerational continuity of religion. Focusing on the life stories of Estonian believers, Lea Altnurme (2011) highlights significant similarities between different age groups whose spiritual formation took place around the same time. She suggests that religious culture depends on the time of religious socialisation, regardless of generation. For example, the pre-war generation, who received a religious upbringing and were socialised before the war, has exhibited a traditional Bible-based religious view with a clear distinction between good and evil personified by God and the Devil. In contrast, the religious worldview of those who have found religion after 1991, regardless of their age, can be called "reflexive spirituality", which is characterised by the loss of Christian myth and the influence of the New Age (Altnurme 2011, 89).

This chapter will cover the significant gap in the social aspects of Russian Orthodoxy in Estonia by a focus on generations and the passing down of religious tradition among their members. This research has been triggered by a number of contradictory or paradoxical statements that can be found in the scholarly literature. While some Western studies deem religion extraneous for the identity-building of the Russians in Estonia (for example, Laitin 1998), the majority of Estonian scholars disagree and emphasise the trend towards increased spiritual values among Estonian Russians (Lõhmus et al 2009), the strengthening role of religion for ethnic solidarity (Liiman 2001), and the indicated similarities between Orthodox ethics and Soviet ideology, especially as these apply to middle-aged and elderly ethnic Russians (Vihalemm & Kalmus 2011). The findings of the 2011 census show that more Russian speakers (about 50%) identify themselves with religion – in this case, primarily the Russian Orthodox Church – than do Estonians (19%), who primarily identify themselves with the Lutheran church, or with other beliefs (Statistics Estonia).

Keeping in mind the tensions between tradition and social change, and intergenerational difference and continuity, I would like to indicate the main research questions of this chapter. Can we speak about generational consciousness among the Russian-speaking Orthodox believers in Estonia? Are there different generational units (Mannheim 1952 [1927/28], 47) within the church and, if so, what is their relationship with each other? Which strategies are more typical for Russian Orthodox believers?

I will answer these questions on the basis of in-depth semi-structured interviews (2008–2011), participant observation recorded as a research diary, and participation in the unintentional focus groups, which coincidentally addressed

several of the research issues and helped to redefine the agenda. Interviews were conducted with 26 men and women who belong to different Orthodox parishes, born between 1922 and 1977, 18 of whom were born in Estonia. Most of my respondents are active church-goers (attending church at least once a week), and some work either as employees or volunteers at the church. Six of my informants (16%) were born between 1922 and 1935, while 20 of them were born between 1947 and 1972. The use of the interviews for my publications has been agreed orally with the respondents, and the names, places, and individuals have been changed. Approaching people for the interviews was through personal contacts that enabled openness and readiness to share information. The interviews, between 1.5 and 3 hours long, were loosely structured around questions concerning the individual's memories of the Soviet past, and their conversion, religious experience, and activity in the church.

The interviews were carried out in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, which has a high proportion of Russian speakers (around 37%) and is home to seven Russian Orthodox parishes. In Tallinn the number of Russians who identify themselves with the Orthodox Church in 2011 was about 41% (Statistics Estonia). Even though Russian speakers have a high presence among various denominations, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Baptist communities, as well as non-denominational New Age groups, Orthodoxy claims about 47% of all believers (op cit). The sample thus reflects the position of the Russian-speaking Orthodox in the context of an Estonian city that has multicultural ambitions, as opposed to north-east Estonia, where the prevailing Russian-speaking population straddles cultural marginality and proximity to the Russian border.

Russian Orthodoxy in Estonia

During the Soviet period religious activities were restricted in a number of ways: religious organisations could not easily recruit new members, their publishing activities were limited, the authorities closely supervised their work, and the negative public image of religion prevailed in mass culture. Work with youth was very strictly controlled: churches were patrolled during Easter to prevent school children from attending the services. As did other religious groups, the Orthodox Church in Estonia experienced a resurgence in the last years of the Soviet regime. The liberalisation of the late 1980s dramatically changed the generational profile of the church, adding the missing younger generations to the ageing congregations. There was a sharp rise in the number of Orthodox worshippers between the late Soviet period (late 1980s) and the period of post-socialist transformation.

While in the late 1980s the clergy reported about 17,000 members of congregations in Soviet Estonia (UNVA 1988, 23), in the 1990s this number dramatically increased so that by 2000, 143,554 men and women identified themselves as Orthodox (Ringvee 2007).

During the late 1980s many Soviet people, including the citizens of the Baltic republics, recovered their religious identity, which was symbolically expressed through the performance of religious rites. In the late 1980s the performance of Orthodox rituals such as baptisms, weddings and funerals has increased (Ringvee 2007, 23).[1] The influx of newcomers to the church altered its ethnic makeup, with a prevailing number of Russian-speaking members.[2] There are currently two jurisdictions in Estonia, the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Moscow (Moskva Patriarhaadi Eesti Õigeusu Kirik; MP EÕK) and the Estonian Orthodox Apostolic Church (Eesti Apostlik-Õigeusu Kirik; EAÕK), under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Even though there are Russian-speaking members within the EAÕK, the overwhelming majority of Russians belong to the MP EÕK, with many of them not even aware that there is another Orthodox church in their city.

The Orthodox parish as a social space

On a normal Sunday a visitor to an Orthodox parish can meet various age groups: a group of old women (rarely old men), aged 60–80, some of them doing some tasks within the church; middle-aged men and women in their 40s–60s, worshiping or lighting candles; younger parents, most often mothers with small children who often spend most of the service in the churchyard (if the church has one), or who come towards the end of the service to take the children to Holy Communion. Some grandmothers bring grandchildren, unaccompanied by the parents. It has become an inside joke that church-goers are divided into *prikhozhane*, that is regular church-goers who attend almost every Sunday worship and the feast days, and *zakhozhane*, that is occasional visitors who come at times of need or for a specific occasion like commemorating their deceased relatives, baptising a child, or receiving holy water. There is also a division between the ordinary *prikhozhane,* who just attend church services, and the active church members, who help the priest at the altar, clean the church, sell items in the candle shop, participate in the parish council, run Sunday schools, sing in the choir, and organise work with children and youth. Some of these people are volunteers while others are employed by the church.

While some aged people may be recent converts, it is still possible to find 'cradle believers' within the Orthodox Church who have been raised and

socialised in the Orthodox culture. When I explained my field of interest as "the history of the Orthodox church in Estonia", I was immediately directed to several men and women who were born before World War II (1922–1935). Their parents were either refugees from the revolution, members of the White Armies, or the inhabitants of Pechory region. The church was the centre of their cultural universe; some of these elderly parishioners remember the clergy of the Russian emigration and the Russian Student Christian Movement (RSKhD) (Pliukhanov 1993); they went on pilgrimages to the Pühtitsa (Kuremäe) convent and to the Pskov-Pechory and Valaam monasteries, and organised Bible reading groups.

Sovietisation had a traumatic effect on religious life, but despite the atheist culture and repression, the generation of cradle believers were able to continue their spiritual pursuit. During the Soviet period, Estonian Orthodoxy came into close contact with the Russian Orthodox underground. Father Valerii Povedskii (1910–1973), who was rescued from the concentration camp in Põllküla in 1944 by Father Mikhail Ridiger (father of the future patriarch Aleksii II), was a member of the underground circle of priests headed by Aleksei and Sergei Mechev that implemented traditions of pre-revolutionary spiritual guidance based on ascetic theology in Soviet Moscow (Paert 2010). Father Sergei Mechev (now canonised as a neo-martyr) and some members of his circle were executed in 1942. Father Valerii, who was secretly ordained by an underground bishop in the forest, has become a spiritual guide for many men and women who sought a deeper religious engagement. There are several ways in which a lineage of religious tradition is constructed: charismatic spiritual guidance, local Orthodox traditions (pilgrimages, monasticism, holy places), and personal relationships with older members of the church. In this way, new generations who come to church are being incorporated within these existing lineages. In this chapter I coin the term 'bearers of tradition' (Ru. *nositeli traditsii*), to members of a religious community who possess knowledge and the spirit of their religion that they gained through long commitment and activism. Within the Orthodox Church, the personal connection with one or other charismatic spiritual leader (an elder, or a starets) is especially important in forming this lineage.

The life stories of the converts. Secular childhood

Unlike those cradle believers born in independent Estonia before the war, the men and women who came to the church in the 1980s and 1990s grew up in an environment devoid of religion. In a world of a profoundly "secularised childhood experience" (Kelly 2007, 378) the occasional encounters with organised religion usually had no impact on children's development. Even though

passionate atheism was rarely expressed among children, religion was not part of the worldview of the generation born after the war. Tamara (b. 1947) admits that she always thought that religious people were uneducated and primitive, and her neighbour's family was just an illustration of that. Inna (b. 1965) characterised her parents as the people of the generation of the 1960s (Ru. *shestidesiatniki*) who followed the spirit of free thinking, had an easy, optimistic attitude to life, were free of the suspicion engendered by the Stalin era, and displayed an openness and love for the arts and music. Religion was not part of their life.

Soviet schools actively formed an atheist worldview. According to one informant, in Estonia – where religious life allegedly was more vibrant than in Russia – teachers felt more urgency to hammer anti-religious propaganda into the heads of the pupils (Daniil, b. 1972). Membership of youth organisations such as the Pioneers and the Komsomol was incompatible with churchgoing. Many of my respondents had no experience of visiting a church during their childhood; Ivan (1967), who has lived in Tallinn since childhood, did not even know that St Nicholas Orthodox Church was in the centre of Tallinn; Alexander had never been to St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on Toompea before he was in his late 20s. Oksana (b. 1969) remembers her childhood's abhorrence of the living religion. She gives an ironic account of a visit to a monastery during a school excursion to Mikhailovskoe, the family estate of the Russian poet Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin in Pskov oblast:

> The most repulsive thing there which appalled me was the presence of monks … The first thought was, what are they doing here? Well, I have been in museums. I came here to admire the church architecture. But there they were selling crosses and icons. Disgusting! Speculators! The church is separated from the state. How did they dare?

A secular childhood and education did not absolutely preclude spiritual experience. Children could slip into churches during Easter; some found a Gospel or other religious literature among their grandparents' belongings; others watched religious programmes on Finnish television. Many attended church while spending summer holidays at their grandparents' houses in Russia. "My grandmother used to take me shopping. But on the way home we would visit a church," recalls Ivan. Children's spontaneous faith and perception of the world as enchanted is recalled in later life as an experience of having a special calling from God. Ivan recalled that he had written a letter to God because he was distressed by his stepfather's long period of absence. Without knowing where to send it, he just dropped it out the window.

Paradoxically, the Soviet ideological efforts to promote the cult of the revolution and the Great Patriotic War (World War II), including the pantheon of Communist martyrs, dwelled on the Christian narrative of self-sacrifice and *podvig* (exploit, as well as 'an act of self-denial'). Popular culture, however, did not always capture the intended meaning and tended to honour self-sacrifice for its own sake, not for the greater good. Oksana, for example, recalls the cult of the youth heroes of World War II who were promoted at school as examples of fortitude and heroism sanitised for children's consumption (Leontyeva 2006).

> Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Oleg Koshevoi, Zina Portnova, Marat Kazei[3] … were in fact the lives of saints in my childhood. [The teachers][4] told us with great enthusiasm about 'grandfather' Lenin. They were able to inspire, and one was able to believe in these ideals as if real. I wanted to believe in this, that self-sacrifice was possible. Cover the machine gun with your body![5] … I envied them – because of my youth crisis, I mean my youth protest – when you look at the films of the 1950s: it is so annoying to listen to the happy voices of these 'builders of the bright future'. I felt annoyed but, at the same time, deep inside I envied them terribly because they had an aim, but I sat there and had no aim … I wanted to believe in this but I couldn't. I could see our [political] situation. Fish rots from the head; I saw the quarrels within the Party, I saw these 'mothers' and 'fathers', these Communists who were not really Communists because they didn't deserve their titles. I understood this and felt sad and sick (Oksana, b. 1969).

Irony should not mask a longing for true faith. She relates that during her childhood she envied the idealism of the older generations, who sincerely believed in communism and were ready to sacrifice their lives for it. As for her, despite some inarticulate need to live a meaningful life, there was no longer belief in the Soviet dream in the period of the Brezhnev 'stagnation'. Oksana compares herself to the previous generations as presented in the films of the 1950s. She was torn between a desire to believe and an inability to do so; this was not untypical for her generation, which respected some of the ethical values of socialism whilst critically assessing the distortion of these values (Yurchak 2006, 98). The reference to 'mothers' and 'fathers' suggests a construction of emotional and ideological distance from the generation of the 'parents' that was marked by complicity and moral double standards. This construction of 'old' and 'new' generations was presented in the early culture of the perestroika era as, for example, in the cult films *Assa* (1987) and *Little Vera* (1988). In this context, we understand why conversion to Christianity for some young people could become a search for

a symbolic distinction from the generation of their parents, which was marked by its belief in science and its secular values. "For me joining the church was a protest against my parents" (Maria, b. 1960). In reality, however, the contrast between the younger generations and their parents was not necessarily one of conflict; religious commitment did not become an issue for the 'atheist' parents, many of whom also joined the church after their children.

Those men and women born after the war who joined the church in the 1980s–1990s did not have experiences of war, arrest, and deportation personally or through a loss of one or both parents. As they became Christian during the liberalisation, they did not experience the moral dilemmas of maintaining their faith in an atheist society. Yet, even within this group the attitudes towards the Soviet past may vary. For example, for the generation born between 1947 and 1960 the memory of the war is inseparable from the heroic and dramatic narrative of the Soviet people's sacrifice (for example, Vladislav, b. 1956). Among the younger generation, born in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, the attitude is more ambivalent. One respondent (Daniil, b. 1972) remembered that after watching a popular serial called *The Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1973), which was about a Russian agent named Stirlitz working undercover within the German SS, all his classmates wanted to play Stirlitz. They painted the Nazi Swastika on the reverse side of their red armband, which they had to wear as members of the Pioneer squad (Ru. *druzhina*). Once the teacher was not looking, they reversed their armbands and turned into Nazi officers. While Stirlitz was portrayed in the film as a Soviet hero, playing with the Swastika was insulting for World War II veterans and could hardly be possible among older generations. The film, the impact of which was to downplay the Nazi atrocities and romanticise the aesthetics of the Nazi uniform and style, had some impact on young Russian nationalists in Russia, such as Sergei Troitskii (b. 1966), who was the leader of the heavy metal band Korrozia Metalla, and Vladimir Popov (b. 1968) of The Russian Republic (Mitrofanova 2005). The subversion of the narrative of the Great Patriotic War, therefore, could be seen as more typical for what Yurchak (2006) called the "last Soviet generation". It is interesting that for the respondents who grew up in Estonia, playing with the swastika was something that separated them from their Russian peers: they admitted that they painted swastikas in their notebooks in boring lecturers while studying in St Petersburg in the 1990s, by which they deeply shocked their fellow students from provincial Russia.

Coming into 'fresh contact' with tradition.
Stories of conversion in the post-socialist context

Studies of post-socialist religion explain religious conversion by the dislocations produced by post-socialist economic and social changes (Pelkmans 2009). Pelkmans argued that national forms of religion were attractive at the initial stages of post-socialist transition, giving way later to missionary, international-based religions (op cit, 7). In the case of conversions to Orthodoxy, in Estonia it is precisely the national aspects of the church that continue to draw men and women of Slavic background who have not experienced religious socialisation through family and school.

By understanding conversion as a process, we see multiple, overlapping factors that paved a spiritual journey: a search for an answer to existential questions, an interest in the mystical and esoteric, religious programmes on television, visiting churches, seeking help from priests, prayer in situations of personal crisis, etc. Many of my respondents were actively socialised in the church during the period of the socio-economic reforms that affected the lives and the families of all people who lived through the 1990s. Many of the respondents who completed their university degrees in the late Soviet period could not find a job using their qualification. Denis (b. 1969), who graduated as a paediatrician in 1994, could not find work as a doctor, according to him, because his degree was Russian and his Estonian was inadequate. After working for a year as a medical assistant, he left the medical profession and worked as a customs officer before he successfully retrained as an alternative medicine practitioner. Inna, who graduated from teachers' college, was not successful in finding a job as a pre-school teacher and worked as a postman before she became unemployed; Oksana, who studied to be an engineer, works as a cleaner. Ivan's story presented the breakup of his acting career as a choice he made in favour of the church. According to his wife, the situation was different: even though their experimental theatre performed abroad successfully, they could not fit into the theatrical world in Estonia.

Conversion was also an individual response to moral uncertainty and a lack of structure caused by the disintegration of the Soviet economic and political system in the 1990s. The impact of the social disorientation on the personal level was expressed in the loss of moral ideals and signposts, mental or psychological instability, and self-doubt. "I came to church because I could not find any support, no understanding about how to live. It was evident that people do not live by their words. I felt in my heart that there was a true path but in reality nobody followed [their moral instinct]" (Ivan, b. 1967). "I used to have very hazy views. […] Yet today my life has some framework … After I came to church I gained

family stability. Before that there were lots of internal contradictions and kind of constant turbulence" (Oksana, b. 1969). The newcomers to the Orthodox Church found an opportunity to organise their lives in accordance with Christian "protocols of identity" (Brown 2000) and under the guidance of experienced members of the church, normally the clergy. Religion was of course not the only response to social disorientation, and not all people experienced the period of transition as moral disorientation. However, as Robert Wuthnow (1998) argued in the context of the shifts in American religion in the 1980s and 1990s, during periods of instability and change religions become more attractive because they emphasise moral and spiritual discipline, a set of certain rules to follow, and the necessity of spiritual guidance.

I do not intend to trace a causal link between experience of social or economic frustration and religious conversion. It is important, however, to demonstrate the ways in which converts interpreted their experience through the prism of their newly received faith. Conversion stories are a collectively constructed genre and do not always accurately reflect what happened in the past. Like charismatic evangelical groups (Wanner 2003; 2007), the Orthodox Church too provides a rich repertoire of narratives that can help structure one's life story.

In the overall explanatory framework of Divine Will, social and economic conditions are understood as just the means with which Divinity operates on the human plane. "It just coincided that social conditions that pushed us out of society, brought us closer to the church" (Inna, b. 1965). The same respondent uses the concept of "initial betrothing grace" (Ru. *Pervonachal'naya obruchayushchaya blagodat'*) by which she probably means that as he draws believers to him, God removes obstacles (including material ones – IP) on their way to true faith and helps the new believer to take root in church before starting to test him or her.[6] It is interesting that in describing the time of the 1990s as social collapse and mental trauma, Inna singles out herself, her family, and people as those who were protected by grace. While her overall description of the social disintegration fits into what has been interpreted as "cultural trauma" (Aarelaid-Tart & Hachaturyan 2006), Inna's strategy is also typical of the life stories of Muscovites described by Shevchenko (2009), who tend to present their horrific stories of the post-socialist crisis as exceptional and untypical of the general tendency.

> I don't know a single family that hasn't been touched by the ethnic question or economic troubles, which simply slashed peoples' relationships. Families broke up, the inner world of people who were not protected by grace fell apart. These people could not digest the changes in society, sometimes their

consciousness could not cope. My friend has become psychologically ill. She was a philologist … 40 years old. Sadly, she lost her sanity (Inna, b. 1965).

Referring to Byzantine hagiography, Inna emphasises her special position of being singled out from the socio-economic turmoil of the 1990s.

During this time I acutely felt the protective veil of the Mother of God[7] because all this awful social turmoil that affected people, to which I was a witness, did not touch our family. We lived as if under some protective veil. We experienced difficulties when the acuteness of social change was over, and we had different trials, but then we had grown in spirit and could withstand it.

Ivan too recollects his journey to the church as a chain of miracles, including miracles that affected his mundane life. He and his wife, actors with no stable income and new church-goers, had no money to start a family.

One of the patrons [of our parish], who owned a brokerage, [asked:] "Guys, do you have anything to live on? I am going to pay you a salary". Miracles like that [happen]. Every month we have received from him a good deal of cash. I prayed for him. We have borrowed some money from him to buy an apartment … There was a chain of miracles, good works [happening to us]. I felt that someone stood behind these people. There were many happy coincidences.

The motif of being protected by divine grace is typical for Denis too, who had to start a new career during the 1990s when he could not find work according to his medical qualification.

I believe that to this day everything is in place. That is with God's help, of course. As if God has continuously led me. Now, looking back I think that if I was an unbeliever I could explain everything by fate, luck, or by astrological signs. [Those who are born under the sign of] Sagittarius normally are quite lucky because Venus leads them, or something like that. However, this is not like that. Everything is much more complicated …

Denis is contemplating whether his inability to practice his medical profession was also part of this divine plan: because his practice as a doctor would not allow him to practice successfully methods of alternative medicine, which is based on a different philosophy of illness.

The narratives of being led by God, of a divine plan behind the turns and twists in one's life course after socialism, are not exclusively specific to the Russian Orthodox but are characteristic of various religious groups who interpret their life experiences in accordance with the symbolic narratives acceptable in their communities. To understand the function of these narratives one needs to look into the central principle of a religious worldview. "By placing the origin of the world outside time and by attributing the order of the world to a necessity beyond society, it erases the chaos represented by reality, at the same time removing reality from the transforming effects of human control" (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 84). These narratives could also be placed in a broader framework of what Wuthnow called the "discipline of detachment", "a focus on attitudes rather than on behavior; instead of bringing one's behavior under control, one learns not to care about control and to be content with circumstances as they are" (Wuthnow 1998, 95).

Tentatively, it is possible to locate an important difference between the uses of the narrative structure of experiences among the different generations within the church. For the older generation of 'cradle Christians', born before the war, the use of a divine plan in their lives was not essential; there is more emphasis on salvation and living according to the commandments. On the other hand, they speak of divine election in reference to Estonia. "Do you know that Estonia is a land not divested of God's mercies?" I was asked provocatively by Vladimir Ivanovich (b. 1924). In this question, Ivanovich refers to the tradition of holiness associated with the figures of St John of Kronstadt, Pechory, and the Pühtitsa ascetic tradition, and the holy martyrs, many of whom were of ethnic Estonian descent; additionally, according to medieval legend, Livonia is Maarjamaa, that is, the land of Mary (Terra Mariana), as declared by pope Innocent III in 1215. By way of conjecture, I see that the narratives of the converts of the post-socialist era have more emphasis on the subjective understanding of the workings of the Divine in human history, while the older generation speaks about the role of the Divine in the destiny of the land, institution (the Russian Orthodox Church) and community.

Restoring the chain of memory

In the anthropological studies of religious revival in the post-socialist world, religion is often presented as an invented tradition, the roots of which lie in Soviet modernity. The confluence of religious and ethnic identity in popular consciousness was an unintended result of Soviet identity politics and religious objectification (Pelkmans 2009). The ethnicisation and folklorisation of religion that took place during the Soviet period can be recognised in the contemporary

forms of popular Orthodoxy, which are built on the search for authenticity and the construction of an idealised vision of the past (Kormina 2009). Pilgrimage to monasteries and holy places searching for spiritual leaders and experiences in rural Russia represent the forms of romantic escapism and invention of tradition by educated urbanites (Kormina 2011; Sibireva 2010). This position, however, while correctly challenging the production of popular myths and folklorisation of religion, does not explain how religion survives and reinvents itself in the modern world, how individual believers' stories and modes of engaging with the past stimulate the creative construction of modern identities. According to Hervieu-Léger (2000), the powerful hold of memory within a religious group is maintained by the group's awareness of itself as a "lineage of belief": "The religious reference to a chain of belief affords the means of symbolically resolving the loss of meaning that follows from the heightened tension between the unrestrained globalisation of social phenomena and the extreme fragmentation of individual experience" (op cit, 166). There are different levels at which this lineage of belief can be constructed: within liturgical time and space; within historical and theological reflection; and on an individual level, within the individual life-stories. While some stories refer to a personal 'chain of belief' through a biological connection to the believers of the past (grandparents), others develop a spiritual lineage; yet others construct a personal link to a broader Biblical concept of the 'people of God'. This search for the lineage of belief cannot be interpreted as a romantic protest against globalisation and postmodern fragmentation of individual and social identities. On the contrary, this is responsible social living in accordance with confessional ethical and spiritual norms, accompanied by the process of individual and collective reflection on the challenges of such a life in the modern world.

A narrative strategy of referring to one's conversion to Orthodoxy as returning to the faith of one's ancestors was explicit in some interviews and implicit in others. I was struck in particular by the theme in the interviews of emphasising a deep spiritual and cultural connection with the generation of the interviewees' grandparents. This is typical for the generation whose parents (b. 1940s–1950s), urbanised and educated Soviet men and women, benefited from Soviet social mobility and culturally separated themselves from their rural roots. These rural grandparents (b. 1920s–1930s), probably grandmothers, were often the mediators of traditional faith who brought their grandchildren to church for baptism and communion during the Soviet period. The important role of grandmothers as transmitters of family cultural traditions has been discussed in relation to Russian families (Semenova & Thompson 2004). In Ivan's (b. 1967) narrative, there is a profound connection with his grandmother, a simple village woman who

looked after her grandson when his mother had to go to work. "My grandmother was a real believer. She was from that generation, born in 1918, a bearer of the Christian culture of the Orthodox Rus' who are almost gone now."

Becoming an Orthodox Christian meant restoring the link with the generation of his grandparents: when he became a reader in church, Ivan noticed that in front of the stand where he read during church services was an icon of St Basil (Vasilii) and St Pelagia (Pelagiia), both of whom were the patron saints of his grandparents. In both narratives by Inna and Ivan, there is an emphasis on 'roots', the family background that provided them with a moral example and invisible help (through prayers). Vadim (b. 1956) recovered his roots as a Don Cossack in the 1980s and 1990s. While he had known about his Cossack background before, it was only in the 1990s that he joined the Orthodox Church because of the strong association between the Cossacks and the church in the past: "What kind of Cossack am I if I don't go to church?" He met other 'Cossacks' in 1993 after having read in a newspaper about the new monument to the members of the Russian White armies in Kopli, erected by the Estonian society (Ru. *zemliachestvo*) of Cossacks. Anna, a Ukrainian, was surprised about my question regarding her choice of faith: "The Ukrainian people had always an organic connection between nationality and Orthodoxy. In the villages everybody had icons which were inseparable from your ancestors."

It is not surprising that the family background to which our Orthodox respondents appeal is associated with the peasant culture, culturally removed from the inhabitants of modern urban spaces to which my informants belong. The idealisation of the moral and religious life of the Russian village goes back to the 1970s' search for the uncorrupted roots of Russian culture (the 'village writers' and Solzhenitsyn praised the moral superiority of the villagers). Within the Russian Orthodox Church this movement found expression in the search for authentic religious spirituality in the Russian countryside, rather than towns. Given that my respondents belong to the second generation of Russian urban dwellers who came to Estonia after the war, their religious rural grandparents reside outside Estonia.

However, apart from the search for family roots, spiritual genealogy is also important for the 'lineage of belief'. Among the Estonian Orthodox, it is not untypical to create implicitly or explicitly a personal connection to one or another holy person, a saint, partaking therefore in the tradition in Berger's (1980) sense as the memory of a specific religious experience. A specific style of spiritual instruction as practiced by one or another popular priest and the sum of experience and knowledge passed from a priest to his parishioners are regarded as a specific tradition that goes back to the teacher of the teacher: Father Valerii

Povedskii, Fathers Aleksei and Sergei Mechev, St John of Kronstadt, Optina Pustyn', Mount Athos, etc.

Passing on tradition: youth and children

While the converts discovered new faith for themselves in their youth, often in opposition to their parents, they feel it is important to pass it down to their children. Most of my respondents who converted to Orthodoxy in the 1980s and 1990s are today parents themselves. The respondents born between 1950 and 1960 have children in their 20s or 30s, while those born in the 1960s and 1970s have children of school age. There are various forms in which parish communities organise work among the youth: summer camps, football matches, pilgrimages, Sunday schools, Christmas parties. There is, however, a growing anxiety among the parents that their children are not ready to keep their Orthodox faith in a world characterised by pluralism of cultural (and religious) choices and liberal attitudes to morality (cf Zigon 2011). During the meetings with parents I have heard criticism of young people's behaviour on public transport, their use of drugs, revealing fashions, etc.

The problem is that among the Russian Orthodox there are conflicting interpretations of what is meant by tradition when it comes to passing things on along the 'chain of memory' to new generations. On the one hand there is a view of Orthodoxy as part of a symbolic code of being a Russian, an ethno-cultural view of Orthodox tradition. Russianness is defined as rooted in the language, perceived as "the code of the Russian nation", the language through which historical memory is transmitted (Maier 2010). In this view, the ethnic culture is preserved by maintaining the purity of the language. Russian literature is imagined as literature imbued with Christian values.

Secondly, there is a view of Orthodox tradition in a sense described by Berger (1980), as a collective memory of extraordinary religious experience, encounters with the Divine, mediated through religious institution. In this sense the canons of the church, its creed, ethical requirements, sacraments, liturgy, soundscape, visual culture, and sacred landscape all serve as a source of mediating the experience of such encounters. The linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of Russian Orthodoxy is perceived as one of the variables but not the essence of tradition. The Russian culture and Church-Slavonic language of the liturgy are important but not essential for practicing Orthodoxy and passing it down. Tradition in this sense is understood as the lineage of holiness and experience of 'divine encounters' passed down from the apostles; the Russian Orthodox tradition is only one such repository or line of holiness among others. This position is shared

by a minority, although not an insignificant one. Practically, it is expressed in the support of the use of the Estonian language (or bilingualism) during the liturgy, education, translation, and publishing of work within the church.

The limitations of my sample do not allow exploring the variety and complexity of attitudes towards the Orthodox tradition and its links with Russian culture. The situations that I have encountered in the course of my fieldwork were characterised by mundane concerns that might have appeared irrelevant to the problem of religion, yet in many cases these problems were discussed and, sometimes, resolved within the Orthodox community with the assistance of the clergy or other members of the community. In this context, the problem of the Russian language and Russian-language schools – certainly a broad problem not only concerning the Russian Orthodox – emerged as one of the concerns that were discussed within the community.

Kristina (b. 1965), who came to Estonia as young girl from Ukraine because of romantic love, converted to Orthodoxy in the late 1980s. As she married a second time to an Estonian man, she sent her three children to Estonian schools. After her conversion she started to visit the Pühtitsa and Pskovo-Pecherskii monasteries together with her children, spending summer holidays there. She believes it was thanks to the church and monasteries that the children did not lose their Russian language. Even though the children communicate between themselves in Estonian, they express their filial attachments in Russian. "I don't know why, perhaps, because Russian is the language of love," Kristina says. While it is only her daughter, who is 26, who practices Orthodoxy, Kristina worries that she might not remain in the fold. Kristina's worries are shared by other parents who feel that sending children to Estonian schools would lead to emotional, cultural, and ideological separation between parents and their children, leading to the loss of authority over the children's moral development. Oksana, herself the child of a mixed ethnic marriage, recalled her feeling of isolation when attending an Estonian kindergarten. The position she adopted towards her children's education was informed perhaps by her sense of non-belonging as well as her bitter attitude towards her Estonian father who dominated them.

> Even if I tried to send my children to the Estonian kindergartens and schools … I only risk getting more problems. See, even if I call myself Kaidi or Tiina, I will never become their own, 100% Estonian. … My friends who want to integrate, or rather, assimilate, give their children to Estonian kindergartens and schools, and then their children tell them: "Don't walk here, by my side. I'm ashamed of you, because you are Russian". This is because they are being saturated with such attitude at school, they want to be like everybody

else. … This is such a split. This is a knife to the mother's heart. As if you have brought up people who have become foreign [Ru. *chuzoi*] to you (Oksana, b. 1969).

Like Oksana, Kristina (b. 1965) felt that a Russian school would help to sustain affinity between the parents and children. She had consulted about her decision with some members of the clergy and other Orthodox people who have encouraged her. It seems that now she is not quite sure about the correctness of her decision because her daughter is struggling with learning Estonian, which she studies 5 times a week at school as well as taking private lessons. Ilona (b. 1956), too, lamented the fact that only after a special exchange programme, in which her daughter practiced her Estonian by living with an Estonian family in south Estonia, was she able to speak Estonian.

During the discussion in the unintended focus group (10 May 2011), it emerged that some participants believe that a conflict of worldviews was at the basis of the school problem. One teacher (F, about 50 years old) reported that children from Russian families have huge difficulties with the Estonian language, although they are not allowed to use Russian in the classroom. As a result, they become aggressive and unruly. One child, it was said, sent by the parents to an Estonian school, had "hysterical fits" at school, so severe that an ambulance had to be called. Another participant (M, b. 1972) added that internal conflict arises from the opposition between the "Soviet worldview" of the family and the pragmatic aim to go through the Estonian school system. One participant suggested that before children can understand and love another culture, they have to learn to love their own culture, to discover their own roots. At the same time, many parents from the Russian Orthodox community were concerned about their children's language barrier, lack of contacts with the Estonian environment and, generally, their future.

While I have no interviews with representatives of the younger generation of the Russian Orthodox, from conversations with the parents I can deduce that there is a widespread concern about the impact of the modern world with the dominant lifestyles of consumption, individualism, liberal attitudes to sexuality, and the performative aspects of identity on the young. The parents are typically confronted by constant questions about the boundary of the acceptable and the unacceptable. A specific area of 'cultural threat' for the Russian Orthodox are the missionary religious groups who have consistent programmes of youth work, charity programmes, and an international network of religious associations that is often used for economic and social purposes. One priest showed me the letter written by one of his young parishioners who asked him to sign

her out from membership of the Orthodox Church (even though such letter is not required); he assumes that normally this type of letter is written by Jehovah Witness converts.

Vihalemm and Kalmus (2011) have pointed out that a gap in cultural orientations between the elder and middle-aged Russians, on the one hand, and the younger generation (defined as born between 1976 and 1990) of the Russian-speaking minority, on the other, increases. The studies of Russian youth have pointed towards more globally oriented cultural templates and a sense of transculturalism (Hatšaturjan 2012). Thus the fears and concerns of the older generation, in my instance the group of 'Orthodox parents', might have some real basis. They might perceive an increasing cultural gap between older and younger members of the church, as well as the possibility of conflicting values between parents and children within the same family. My data suggests that for at least some members of the Russian Orthodox Church this fear is based on the perceived danger of acculturation to the Estonian environment, which is perceived as more liberal, extremely tolerant, and anti-Russian. By embracing a position of cultural isolationism they believe they can protect themselves and their children from the influence of globalised modernity.

Conclusion

The Russian Orthodox who discovered religion in the late 1980s and 1990s, during a time of rapid social change, were not passive victims of historical change. On the contrary, the converts actively embraced their new identity as a way to moral renewal. The converts felt estranged in Estonian society and actively constructed a community that provided them with a spirit of solidarity, acceptance, and mutual support. While there are inter-generational differences within Russian Orthodox communities, there is also an enhanced sense of continuity and linkage between pre-war and post-socialist Orthodoxy in Estonia, achieved by various means. Firstly, they refer to the idealised world of rural faith, which had only a tenuous link to Estonian Russian Orthodoxy as it was based in towns, although it appealed to the idealised origins of the migrants from other Soviet republics after the war. Secondly, there is a reference to spiritual lineage, that is, an imagined community of charismatic spiritual leaders and saints, both living and dead. There are some differences too. The older generation perceives Orthodoxy as spiritually embedded in the territory and in the traditions of holiness that are relevant for community. This is a communal experience. In contrast, the narratives of the converts (the generation born in the 1960s and 1970s) placed more emphasis on their subjective experiences. However, the differences are not

dramatic, which supports the suggestion that there is more affinity than difference in terms of the cultural orientations of the older and the 'middle' generations among ethnic Russians (Vihalemm & Kalmus 2011).

While the relationship between the older generation and the converts is not one of family (the 'older generation' are not the biological parents of the converts), the problem of keeping the younger generation in the fold is becoming most acute. The problem of education and integration within the Estonian environment is connected with this problem: Orthodox believers are concerned about their traditions, the values of which are not supported in society at large. Adherence to traditional morality is seen as the only possibility to protect youth from the influences of a globalised society, especially as this concerns moral relativism, diversification of sexual identities, etc.

"Generation P" (those born in the 1960s and 1970s) incorporate many spiritual seekers who came of age during the burgeoning religious market. "Generation P" within the church is full of contradictions. On the one hand, they perceive their life choice as a protest against the hypocrisy of the late Soviet era and the immorality of the post-socialist era. On the other hand, many are prone to be nostalgic about the Soviet era and uncritical of the institutional church. Through their conversion they often cut themselves off from their parents, who remained either agnostic or passive church-goers. Yet, they are determined to bring up their own children within their system of values. The combination of conservatism and non-conformism are in constant tension within this generation.

Interviews

Fieldwork material of the author, Tallinn, Estonia, 2008-2011. The names of the respondents have been changed.

Focus group. 10 May 2011.
Daniil, b. 1972, religious seminary, works in church. 2 December 2011.
Denis, b. 1969, medical higher education, works in alternative medicine. 11 February 2011.
Ilona, b. 1956, higher technical education, works in church. 7 December 2011.
Inna, b. 1965, higher pedagogical education, unemployed. 20 May 2011.
Ivan, b. 1967, unfinished military college, employed by the church. 20 May 2011.
Kristina, b. 1965, secondary education, works as freelance photographer. 9 December 2011.
Maria, b. 1960, married to a priest. 12 September 2011.
Oksana, b. 1969, technical higher education, works as a cleaner. 2 February 2009.
Vadim, b. 1956, unfinished higher technical education, works in medical technology production. 1 December 2010.
Vladimir Ivanovich, b. 1924, retired. 4 December 2008.

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Filmography

Assa (1987), directed by Sergey Solovyev. Mosfilm.
Little Vera (1988), directed by Vasily Pichul. Gorky Film Studio.
The Seventeen Moments of Spring (1973), directed by Tatiana Lioznova. Gorky Film Studio.

Notes

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1 Patriarch Aleksii II pointed out that the number of baptisms after 1988 in the Soviet Union increased 300%, and weddings 2000% (*Trud* 1993).

2 Among 143,554 self-identified Orthodox were 104,698 ethnic Russians (18,517 were ethnic Estonians).

3 Youth heroes of the World War II, presented as martyrs by Soviet propaganda.

4 The notes in brackets in interview extracts have been added by the author.

5 Here Oksana refers to Aleksandr Matrosov, a young infantryman who, during World War II, covered the enemy's machine gun with his body.

6 The concept of 'initial grace' in patristic thought refers to the prelapsarian state of Adam and Eve (St Basil the Great). The use of this concept in today's Orthodoxy is perhaps a variation on this theme.

7 Inna refers to the legend of the Protective Veil of Mary in the vision of the holy fool, St Andrew (Andrei), in the middle of the 10th century. According to this legend Andrew had a vision of the Mother of God, who covered all those who prayed at Blachernae Church with her veil. Despite the Byzantine origin of this legend, the feast of the Protective Veil (Pokrov) is only celebrated as one of the 12 central feasts within the Russian Orthodox Church, where it has been established by Jurii Dolgorukii. The significance of this feast for Russians explains its popularity within the Russian Diaspora.

Looking for generational profiles

A happy old age:
individual life trajectories through cultural change

Maaris Raudsepp

Abstract. This chapter deals with the trajectories of successive adaptation to different socio-political regimes by the generation born in pre-war Estonia. The empirical material consists of autobiographies, memoirs, and 9 interviews with elderly people who personally experienced the pre-war democracy and autocracy (the so-called Estonian period), fascist and Stalinist totalitarian regimes, the Soviet regime, the transitional turmoil of the 1990s, and today's liberal democracy. Particular choices in critical periods have differentiated this generation into distinct units that are characterised by different trajectories through changing societal fields. People in Estonia who were born in the 1920 and 1930s and who met the same socio-political challenges could choose between three general adaptation modes: exit (emigration), resistance, or loyalty. The chapter argues that now there are two main interpretative frames available through which to present their life stories: a dominant nation-centred frame and the former Soviet frame, used today to express passive resistance. Replacement of one socio-political system with another makes the relevant structural determinants visible. Reflection arises when new social representations interfere with the old ones. People with long and varied life trajectories are habituated to constant political change and the modulation of psychological distance from varying social suggestions. Optimal social, cultural, and biological capital has led to a wise and happy old age, although there is some disappointment in the post-socialist reality.

Introduction

Happy are those who are able to maintain clarity of thought and interest in life into old age. There are some very old people in Estonian society who grew up in the pre-war Republic of Estonia, experienced World War II, lived their adult lives in the conditions of the harsh Stalinist regime and the later 'soft' Soviet period, and participated in the restoration of the independent Republic of Estonia and its subsequent development. It is characteristic of the generation of

80–90-year-old people in the first decade of the 21st century that their personal turning points have been intertwined with dramatic political change: being the main characters in their own life drama and minor characters in the collective drama of the 20th century, they have participated in the creation of these changes. People belonging to the same age group have had different positions in the social and cultural field, a different sequence of I-positions, and different resources for coping with change. Because of this, their view of the present day also differs.

My research goal is to observe present-day changes through the subjectivity of long-lived people in order to shed light on the times experienced in the modern context and analyse different ways of adjusting to sociocultural changes. The initial research questions included the experience of socio-political and cultural changes of direct participants, and the effect of different life trajectories on their current assessments. But we can also ask if and how the rich life experience of long-lived people can become an adjustment resource for the next generations. I do not aim to give a representative picture of the way of thinking of elderly Estonians. I focus on one special group of people – exceptionally vital and energetic elderly people who make up a very small proportion of their peers, but whose memories help us examine what is characteristic of their generation. The general aim of the study is to reveal central features of generational consciousness of this particular cohort of people and describe typical adjustment strategies used throughout their life course.

The background: elderly people in Estonian society and culture

In Estonia there are more than 50,000 people older than 80, and within the last 40 years this figure has doubled (Sotsiaaltrendid 2010). The stereotypical idea of old people as a coherent group is not true. Manuel Castells (2010) writes about the diversification of elderly people today: in the same age group there are healthy and sick, retired and early retired; the differences between the age groups "will greatly depend on their social, cultural and relational capital accumulated through their lives" (Castells 2010, 476). The same varied picture is also manifested in Estonia: there are a few octa- and nonagenarians who continue to work and considerably more who live in nursing homes.

In the majority of traditional cultures, old age has a special meaning: elderly people are objects of self-evident respect, sources of wisdom, and keepers of collective memory. In the societies that value traditions, different stages of life are normatively regulated: each stage, including old age, has its values, tasks, and roles (for example in India, see Saraswathi et al 2011).

In contemporary Estonia, old age has an ambivalent meaning. Being old is not publicly valued (see Tulva & Kiis 2001). The position of elderly people is hierarchically lower than that of young people, and attitudes of rejection towards old people have spread (for example young people's negative stereotypes of the pointless pensioner) (Värnik 2010). The 2009 Eurobarometer survey (Intergenerational Solidarity 2009) revealed that in Estonia the attitude towards old people is the least tolerant (22% of people consider the elderly a burden on society, whereas the European average is 14%) and solidarity between generations is relatively low compared to other European countries (76% think that young and old people do not agree on what is best for society, the European average being 66%). Sociological surveys do not even consider people in advanced years worthy respondents: the maximum age in surveys is 74 (see Repson 2010).

In the post-socialist period, ambivalence emerged in Estonia and because of the victory of new historical paradigms (for example, Pettai 2007), an extensive re-evaluation and re-politicisation of the past took place. The so-called conception of 'interrupted history' became dominant together with the negation of the legitimacy of the Soviet period (Kõresaar 2005; Laanes 2009). Such a practice of rewriting history in order to legitimise a new political system is common (e.g. Laszlo 2008, 166); this is done deliberately and methodically (see Jõesalu 2003; Pettai 2007). A change in the dominant perceptions gave rise to a differentiation among elderly people in which the personal past of some people changed from a resource into a burden, while other people's life courses became valued and idealised. An extensive effort to collect and publish memories began to spread in Estonia, the oldest generations being the most active in this process.

Theoretical framework

The present analysis of the elderly relies theoretically on three keywords: external constraints, internal freedom, and dialogicality.

Structural opportunities and constraints

The general context of cultural change can be described by means of spatial concepts (cultural space, the staged world) (Viik 2009). To construct such a whole, Pierre Bourdieu (1992) relies on specific social relations, which sum up to form a certain dynamic 'field' structure. In the context of such fields we are able to understand and interpret human activity. Depending on the structure of the field and the position of a person in it, people develop a certain internal structure, the *habitus* – a body of persistent attitudes and behavioural tendencies.

Participating in different fields, they develop multiple habitus, which make up a hierarchical system in a person. When the habitus and the social world are compatible with each other, the person "is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 127).

Habitus embodies a relative persistence, so that rapid social change leads to a temporary mismatch between the new structure and the old inert habitus. Thus, for example, the inadequacy of the habitus shaped during the Soviet period with the new structure of liberal capitalism has been described (for example, Struck 2003; Glaeser 2000; Sztompka 2004), and also applies to Estonia.

Bourdieu's theory helps to describe the structural effect, that is, the external opportunities and constraints of field(s), how political, social and cultural fields provide possible positions where a person can place him/herself, and how the structure of a field transforms into a person's habitus – lasting dispositions that guide his/her perception and action across his/her life course. Bourdieu (1987) emphasises the unavoidable determining aspect of habitus when he writes about the so-called biographical illusion: a subject does not reflect on the wider social context of his/her own life and its determining impact on his/her life.

A similar determining effect on people is also produced by the field of social representations or a collective symbolic world (Marková 2003). In the field of representations there are both hegemonic (consensual) and polemic representations; in the representations of history the dominating historical schemes are in contrast with the so-called counter-memories. Remembering and interpreting historic events can unite and divide people; in post-socialist countries, a fragmentation of memory has been observed (Struck 2003). The Estonian representational field is characterised by certain dominant and consistent organising principles that are manifested as basic contrasts (for example being Estonian-minded versus not being Estonian-minded), the tension between which forms a persistent collective interpretative framework, including the emergence of generational self-consciousness (for example, Aarelaid-Tart 2002; 2011). The black-and-white opposition of history representations in the 1990s later transformed into a more pluralist framework (for example, Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2013; Harro-Loit & Kello 2013), but the basic symbolic oppositions remain the same.

According to Mannheim (1952 [1927/1928]) and Corsten (1999), the common social and cultural context in the formative years, leading to a similar structure of experience and opportunities, creates generational identity and generational consciousness with similar major trends (*Grundintentionen*) and background knowledge. However, at the same time differentiation also takes place within a generation – people in direct contact with each other form groups with different

experience, whose life trajectories diverge. As a result, we are able to describe a generationally shared life world and different experience communities within it.

Individual autonomy:
the functioning of culture in an individual's psychological system

Human beings as active agents in their fields of life are influenced by the structure of these fields, the events taking place and the balance of forces, on the one hand, while on the other hand they are relatively free to choose available cultural forms to give meaning to and regulate their activity. Valsiner (1998) describes the phenomenon of "dependent independence", where people, in spite of being exposed to limits and regulations imposed by the social or cultural system, are relatively free to create their own system of meanings and action strategies.

Creating personal meanings is a means of semiotic self-regulation. As resources, people combine collective cultural forms in unique ways and relocate them to new contexts to achieve individuality. When narrating his/her biography, a person strives to find a balance between the biography viewed as typical by the given culture and the personal individuality of his/her biography (Bruner 2001). An important method of creating balance is to draw on one's generational consciousness to contextualise the individual as a part of the culture.

The system of semiotic resources of a culture acts as general guiding principles that channel and restrict individual choices. Culture-based social recommendations (semiotically mediated systems of meaning) provide external resources and constraints; within these limits, people are free to construct their subjective meanings and action strategies in each specific situation (including traumatic situations). Semiotic mediation is the basis of individual freedom because with the help of self-constructed semiotic means (interpretation and conceptualisation), a person is able to distance him/herself from the immediate situation. Through recombining the semiotic means provided by the culture (cultural forms), individuals create their own system of regulators, which helps them organise their thinking and action in a specific situation. Semiotic self-regulation happens through various mechanisms: transforming cultural forms into personal meaningful resources (Zittoun 2007), positioning oneself dialogically, and the selection of I-positions or perspectives in symbolic fields (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010; Raggatt 2007). Semiotic self-regulation becomes especially important in critical turning points of one's life trajectory (Zittoun et al 2003; Sato et al 2009) that are greatly influenced by sudden macrosocial changes.

Collective culture manifests itself through living people who reconstruct social recommendations and cultural forms in their individual contexts. Past

and present life experiences are organised and conceptualised by means of cultural forms (for example, through the narratives of peers and through public ideological contexts of interpretation). Thus certain narrative frameworks are distinguished and hierarchically sequenced, which in the given socio-cultural context are considered suitable for presenting a person's biography. In post-Soviet Estonia there is a conflict between the so-called 'patriotic' and 'Soviet' biography frameworks (Kõresaar 2005). It is possible to present a biography in different 'genres': emphasising the factual accuracy (a positivist presentation) or looking at the past from a certain angle (a playful, poetic, dramatic, humorous, ironic, romantic, self-glorifying or self-effacing, etc., way of presentation).

Thus the freedom of an individual is manifested in two aspects: firstly, through the choices he/she makes in the turning points of life and the ways of adaptation to change that he/she prefers, and secondly, when telling about his/her life in retrospect, a person is free to choose which events to bring from the past to the present and through which framework to view his/her experience.

Creating meaning through dialogical processes

Remembering is an active constructive process involving a dialogue between different systems: the normative collective memory, the memory of a particular group, and individual memory. An individual interacts with the collective representative field, obeying the existing norms, or defying them. Political views (choices) and the course of life can both be normative. Narrating a biography is a cultural practice that is subject to certain norms (Wang & Brockmeier 2002). In addition, a dialogue takes place within an individual: the self of today interacts with the self of the past (auto-dialogue), both of which are related to both the previous interpretation systems (socio-cultural recommendations) and those that exist today. A lively dialogue goes on in the course of an interview. The narrator of the biography addresses a particular researcher and a wider imaginary audience. If the context changes, the conceptualisation of one's life and the form of presentation might also change.

Interacting with modern history schemata, a person launches a dialogue between his/her lived experience and its schematic representation. Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) points to the tension that arises between live experience and the description/interpretation of it by means of cultural forms. Thus, for example, the (epic) past when cast in the form of a myth is a finished whole, a closed world with a clear hierarchical structure and idealised heroes. A living picture of the present involves many voices, and is controversial and unfinished. As the temporal distance increases, the past becomes increasingly more schematic and

black and white (an analogy is that when moving away from an object in a space, its colour comes to be perceived as black and white at a certain distance; in the Mongolian language there is even a word to mark this distance). Living witnesses carry a coloured image of history, whereas later interpretations become black and white. When narrating their biography, people try to find a compromise between the widespread stereotypical interpretations and their own lived experience. In the dialogical data generation process, a respondent interacts not only with a particular researcher, but also with the 'generalised other' – their perceptions of public opinion and the 'official' history, his/her memory community, the younger generation, etc., who embodies different social expectations and attitudes. Thus a narrative about one's lived life is a situational compromise between different normative forces.

Empirical material and method

The empirical material consists of biographical interviews, manuscripts, and published biographical materials collected in 2008–2009. The focus is on vigorous people over 80 years of age whose conscious life started in pre-war Estonia, known as the "children of the Republic" (Grabbi 2008) (see the analysis of the same cohort, Kõresaar 2005). A wide spectrum of different life trajectories is covered; represented are experiences acquired on and behind the frontline of World War II, the experiences of a Forest Brother guerrilla and being deported after the war, different career paths during the Soviet period and different areas of interest in retirement, as well as Estonians and Estonian-born Russians and Jews.

The criteria for selection were people's availability and the diversity of their life trajectories in similar conditions (Sato et al 2007). A criterion for selection was the incorporation of possibly different life trajectories within a generation (including those who are out of the limelight or non-existent in the memoirs currently published). It was my aim that many different voices and different points of view would be represented. My interview partners were 5 women (born 1917, 1919, 1921, 1927, 1930) and 4 men (born 1917, 1922, 1923, 1926). As support material, I used memoirs published by the representatives of the same generation. The education level of the interviewees varied from secondary (special) to higher education; their professional career unfolded during the Soviet period and varied intrapersonally (for example one respondent was a skilled worker, a specialist, and held leading bureaucratic positions) and interpersonally (respondents worked in industrial and agricultural enterprises, education, or government institutions); all respondents were or had been married and all have offspring.

When interviewing, I applied the method of the semi-structured focused interview (Smith et al 1995), asking guiding questions about their life trajectories. On some occasions a biographical dialogue (Harrist & Gelfand 2005) developed and, in one case, an opportunity arose to compare a person's oral narration to his/her written memoirs. The transcribed interview texts were analysed using a paradigmatic approach (Polkinghorne 1995, 12).

Experienced adjusters to cultural change

When the multi-layered sociocultural context changes, people have to change externally and/or internally by reconstructing themselves, reconsidering their self-concept, looking reflexively at the past and towards the future. The precondition for self-awareness (reflexivity) is contact between several different viewpoints (for example as a doer and an observer, or between two different cultures) (Gillespie 2008). These people have lived long lives, encountering the unknown over and over again, and have had to adjust to cultural changes accompanying very different successive socio-political regimes.

These regimes have given rise to 'new rules of play', qualitatively different systems of social and cultural norms, new paradigms of value. Estonia's tumultuous recent history has resulted in unique politicised biographies that describe different life trajectories in constantly changing objective fields. A change in the political regime leads to numerous changes at different levels: changes in the social structure and related cultural field (norms, systems of meanings, symbols) and a transformation of the world of the everyday. An individual as a bearer of personal meanings responds to external changes by choosing a certain adjustment strategy. The multitude of changes experienced over a long lifetime cause people to develop a proficiency in adjusting to change, such as the ability to switch over or to use the experience of previous times as a resource (life asset) to help cope with new changes. Thus the experience acquired in the period of the Republic of Estonia regained its value after the restoration of independence.

A long life course allows people to experience different qualities of social time. These people have been repeatedly exposed to the beginnings and endings of eras. Thus the interwar 'Estonian era' and the Soviet world have become determinate as the 'epic' (fixed, finished) past for elderly people, which contrasts with the chaotic present that has not yet taken a definite form. The undefined transition periods of the 1940s and 1990s are viewed as catalysts for new opportunities. The respondents have experienced the excitement of new beginnings (the post-war start of the peaceful period, the beginning of the new Estonia) and the stagnation of endings, alternating periods of certainty and uncertainty. Indeterminacy

is nothing frightening to such experienced people, but a frequently experienced state. Change is normal: "Each time had its opportunities and its fears" (F, 1917).

Possible strategies for adapting to sociocultural change

The analysis of adjustment strategies reveals a mutual connection between external structural influence and a person's agency. The adjustment to changes occurs at behavioural and symbolic levels. The subjective experience of change is based on the creation and interpretation of meaning (Crossley 2000). People establish certain strategies to adapt to changes by modifying individual meanings, positioning themselves in a certain way in relation to new values, norms, and dominating ideas (Zeitgeist), by employing cultural resources to make sense of the new experience.

The interaction of the more or less imposed social suggestions with a semiotically free subject may potentially generate a diverse spectrum of responses, from unconditional espousal of the new to its complete negation. Based on different classifications (for example, Sztompka 2004; Todd 2005; Hirschman 1970), and relying on two main psychological activities related to external factors (for example new values, norms and rules) – distancing oneself and symbolic regulation of the direction, it is possible to identify relatively stable types of adjustment strategies:

(a) obedience, espousal happens when the internal and external regulations have the same direction;

(b) resistance, a breach of norms takes place when the internal direction is opposite to the external regulation;

(c) ignoring, leaving the field – increasing physical or psychological distance to the external influence;

(d) creating new regulators, creative synthesis – the integration of divergent regulators. These forms of adaptation may occur consciously or unconsciously.

Thus, at the most general level, the behavioural and psychological responses to external pressure can be divided into four categories: acceptance, resistance, escape, and innovation.

(1) Acceptance of changes and going along with them, extreme flexibility, rethinking of one's position, seeing the world from a new perspective. In retrospect people perceive their inconstancy (such were the times), and sometimes they seek justification in terms of today's spirit of the times. The espousal may be complete (the reassessment and replacement of the key ideas, consciously changing oneself to comply with key ideas – see Hellbeck 2006) or superficial and hypocritical (externally accepting new ideas while remaining internally sceptical).

The superficial espousal may manifest in the simultaneous preservation of the old and acceptance of the new while isolating them from each other, which enables the concurrent coexistence of mutually exclusive ideas/versions of reality. In the descriptions of the Soviet mindset, so-called double-thinking (Aarelaid-Tart 2000) is often observed, which allowed people to use different forms of thinking and language in the public and private spheres (for example, Fitzpatrick 2009, 25). The strategy of 'duplicity' leads to a situation in which, under favourable conditions, the preserved old forms are liable to resurface.

(2) Opposition may manifest as public (collective) struggle (dissidents, Forest Brothers) or as passive daily resistance (dissatisfaction, criticising in absentia, disobedience). Different forms of resistance in the conditions of the Soviet regime have been described by Viola (2002), Hellbeck (2006), Kozlov et al (2011).

(3) Regulating the distance. Maximum distancing of oneself can occur physically (departure) or mentally – completely ignoring, disregarding the novel, or deliberately taking the position of a (critical and alienated) spectator. The so-called inner emigration – retreating into a private sphere, ignoring the public sphere as much as possible, is characteristic of both the early (for example, Chuykina 2006) and the late Soviet period (for example, Yurchak 2002). Such a strategy allows the maintenance of inner peace in the midst of the storms of life. Partial distancing is also possible in that one can internally move away from the immediate situation by means of certain cultural forms, for example observing life from a certain perspective – a positive dramatisation of life, a romantic and poetic representation of life. This also includes the strategy of mental trauma release by working it through, employing the "narrative restructuration" (Crossley 2000).

(4) Synthesis of the old and the new, creating a new meaning, integrating divergent influences into a meaningful whole, taking a meta position. This is the way of generating novelty and versatility. Jennifer Todd (2005, 443) identifies the 'assimilative strategy' where the identity is redeveloped to combine the old and the new into a continuous whole. This strategy is attainable by people who have already developed an internal readiness for change. The other option is 'ritual acceptance' – adopting new forms of behaviour when filling them with the old content. In spite of the change in the external forms, the continuity of meaning is maintained. Unlike in the strategy of superficial acceptance, here the old and the new are not kept separate from each other but there is discordant interaction between them. A good example of creative adaptation strategy is humour, which makes stressful situations and the blows of fate tolerable and allows people to maintain inner freedom everywhere, reprocessing their experiences in the spirit of comical peace of mind (cf Sheftel 2012).

Different strategies can be used in different spheres and situations. A person can oppose change in one sphere and be submissive to it in another. In one and the same person there can be both a 'conformist' and a 'rebellious' self. The choice of the ways of adjustment is partly conditioned by the positioning of the life trajectory in socio-cultural fields, but also by the strength of the external pressure and the richness of personal resources (education, health, social ties, personality characteristics) (Todd 2005). The main adjustment strategy may change over time due to a change in the external pressure or personal resources (for example resignation in old age, giving up resistance and coming to terms with existence).

Next I look at the strategies elderly people have described in their biographical narratives and the resources they have employed in different adjustment strategies at different times and in the context of different life trajectories.

A retrospective view from today's position: generational focal points

Today's views guide attention and priorities, direct us to choose meaningful events, which are deemed necessary and appropriate to tell, comment on, justify. In the public discourse concerning Estonian history, a paradigm shift, a change in the dominating interpretative framework, took place in the early 1990s. The official Soviet rhetoric was replaced by the opposite, a nation-centred paradigm (for example speaking about the Soviet period as "occupation" or the "communist regime"), until then only developed by exile Estonians or dissidents. Today, historians are articulating several diverse understandings of the past, in memoirs and everyday discourse; theoretically an individual can choose between different ways of relating the self to the dominant or alternative representations.

A generation is given a certain field of possibilities; trajectories arise as a consequence of particular choices, which open up the next possibilities (cf Sato et al 2007). A whole picture should capture all the possibilities realised in the given circumstances.

Pre-war Estonia: a common starting ground

All respondents have grown up in the Republic of Estonia, directly experienced the social atmosphere and the institutions of that time (school, parents' workplace, the press, voluntary activity). Of course, the Estonia of those times was seen from the position of a child or an adolescent. The context of growing up provides a central point of reference, a basis of values and ideas for subsequent assessments and choices.

However, behind the similar background of the generation, there were differences based on positions in social and cultural space: the division is based on wealth, parents' professional activity (civil servant, artist, farmer), cultural background (Estonian, Russian, Estonian–Russian mixed family), and parents' political views (member of the Vaps movement,[1] critical left-wing intellectual, apolitical person). At that time a foundation was laid for different development trends (vectors), the combination of which at critical moments of choice define the direction of a life trajectory (Sato et al 2009). In the interviews the following topics emerged that were considered especially relevant in the contemporary context:

• The high quality of education at schools of the Republic of Estonia, an environment that encouraged creativity, self-realisation and independent thinking. The respondents describe their thirst for self-development and parents who supported their education. Recurrent themes were solidarity and equality at school (there was no bullying, there was camaraderie between schoolmates) and value education (cf Kõresaar 2005 similarities with many written biographies).

• The national question: respondents spoke of linguistic unity and cultural diversity in the Republic of Estonia with a multicultural environment (Jews, Germans, Russians) enabling and supporting Estonianness. It was repeatedly emphasised that there was no tension between nationalities in Estonia, national disparagement and anti-Semitism were frowned upon by people. Ethnic minorities also developed Estonian patriotism. The national diversity of play- and schoolmates did not present any language problems according to today's meaning of that phrase – everybody coped with the Estonian language. On the other hand, within the family multilingualism prevailed: the educated parents of the interviewed generation were fluent in Russian and/or German. The level of foreign language taught in secondary school was very high. A good knowledge of foreign languages became an important adjustment resource in the changing subsequent circumstances.

• Criticism of the Republic of Estonia from both the perspective of then, and today. Not everything was perfect: people were split along socio-economic and ideological dividing lines; there were economic inequalities and social tensions; there was opposition and even revolutionary activity among university students and the intelligentsia; respondents criticised the authoritarian policy of the Silent Era.[2]

• Different political views, including a strong left-wing tradition: there were communists and social democrats in families and circles of acquaintances; left-wing student organisations were active.

• Freedom of religion in the Republic of Estonia was manifested in the fact that although the majority of the population were formally members of the church, people who were not strongly religious or were atheists had an opportunity to realise themselves. There were people among the respondents who had not been baptised or confirmed and who at the request of their parents had been exempted from the lessons of religious instruction at school (since religious education was compulsory for schools, but voluntary for teachers and pupils).

• The above emphases must be partly viewed as a reaction to the biased idealisation of the Republic of Estonia especially characteristic of the 1990s.

The events of 1940 constituted the first sharp curve where people encountered completely new guiding ideas.

> In 1940 politics flushed over all of us. Everything was so new, so unexpected. I did not have enthusiasm but rather a sort of anticipation about what was going to happen. I took part in the elections; as a young person I was labelled an agitator [Est. *agitaator*] (F, 1917).

In terms of the mentality prevailing today, the choices made in 1940, especially that of going along with the new regime, require explanation and justification, for example referring to social inequality in bourgeois Estonia:

> I was 17 then. I was in the countryside and saw how Russian troops came in, how Russian bases came in. Before there was relatively high unemployment in Estonia, because foreign markets collapsed. Many Estonians went to work at the Russian military bases: salaries were higher there and work was provided for a longer time. Some workers were happy: "We got a job" (M, 1923).

Among the respondents who were about to reach their adulthood at that time, there were those who looked at the coup with misunderstanding and rejection, but also those who considered the coup natural and necessary and readily switched to the new regime, joining the Young Communist League and studying Marxism. The impetus was provided by different factors. Friends recruited each other, since the membership of the League provided access to hobby groups that were not available before (M, 1922); "everybody joined and so did I" (M, 1917);[3] since as a leader of Young Pioneers it was easier to complete pedagogical training (M, 1923); similar choices were made by relatives and support from family members (cf Gross 1996). On several occasions, members of the same family made conflicting decisions, which led to ideological and political confrontation (see Roots 2010). There were people whose espousal of the new regime took

place due to their inner beliefs rather than practical considerations (as is often stated when speaking about past memories). The social-democratic visions of striving for social justice (Bauman 1976) and the orientation towards a bright future fascinated many people at that time.

> In 1940 A. went along with the new; he was hopeful. He introduced me to new ideas, everything was florid; he was a social democrat at heart. He told me about what was good in Russia, that learning and medical aid were for free. It was very easy to get higher education there. In Estonia it was very hard to get a higher education. These were all positive things (F, 1917).

Kõresaar (2005, 91) has observed that people recalling the events of 1940 take on an ironic and ridiculing manner of speaking. This was also observed in the respondents to this study, as well as a tendency to provide justifying explanation and analysis. The new beginning of the 1940s was viewed from different positions: that of a hesitant and naïve bystander, a supporter of the coup trying to understand it, an espouser, a person prepared to put up resistance. The previous world began to change radically and in line with that, the main adjustment strategies developed – espousal, distancing oneself, and passive resistance.

The war was an upheaval, a crisis that affected everyone. Families were scattered to the winds, and the 'children of the Republic' were forced to take different sides – men went to the forest or to opposing armies (either volunteering or mobilised), women and children stayed at home and were evacuated to the Soviet rear or later fled to the West. Different "memory nests" emerged (Hinrikus 2009). In some cases, members of the same family were recruited to opposing armies.

Paradoxically, the war left no one untouched. It brought suffering and mourning and closed down many of the expected developmental paths, although it also opened up new unexpected paths: people were thrown into new situations and human groups that would have been less likely in a time of peace.

> In the spring we wrote our final essay and one of the topics was 'Who I would like to become?'. In a couple of months we no longer had a choice of who to become but had to take the path that was forced on us. […] Those born in 1922 or before, all went to the Russian side and the younger ones to the German side; one did not have any choices here (M, 1923).

The women who had stayed in Estonia experienced the forced disintegration of their families and also direct military events. People who were evacuated to Russia remember experiencing hunger and misery, which was comparable to

the experience of those deported. Numerous memoirs and biographical analyses of frontline experiences have been published (for example, Kõresaar 2011). When speaking about their war experience, our respondents used broader contextualisation, comparing the fate of Estonians to the suffering and sacrifices of the Russian people on the one hand and, on the other hand, remembering schoolmates and relatives who had fled to the West and with whom contact was interrupted for many years. Thus they avoided attaching too much importance to their position as victim.

> I cannot forget it. The town of Rzhev on the morning of May 9th. The town was in ruins, the railway station was full of people, old men and women and young children, young women were all in the army or worked at military plants. The people were very poorly clothed, with burlap skirts and *telogreikas*, birchbark shoes. Oh dear, how they kissed and embraced us, how the Russian people welcomed the end of the war! Our people, our politicians do not understand at all what the meaning of war was for Russia, for the Russian people. They suffered so very much (M, 1923).

The end of the war and the post-war period

Staying alive and healthy in the war was a matter of great luck for young men, as many of their companions lost their health or lives. Now people were facing new choices. Some of them were able to make their own choices about how to go on, while for others choices were made institutionally or repressively. Women remember the joy of being reunited with their family members who returned from the front or from post-war reconstruction work. For many people, this constituted a new beginning full of hope.

The new words of the day were Forest Brothers and the establishment of collective farms. The Forest Brothers phenomenon was described from two different positions: from the viewpoint of a direct participant, as the fight for freedom that today is legitimised, and the opposite view from a Soviet activist of that time, as criminal activity.

> Not all Forest Brothers had clean hands or were as ideological as they are depicted today. They simply avoided army recruitment and the system; many of them had to commit crimes (M, 1926).

When speaking about the establishment of collective farms, an Estonian-born Russian who had lost her family farm in the process used a surprisingly indulgent

tone, which is in contrast to the more common position of victim of enforced changes.

> Estonians who suffered will remember it till the end of their days. They are so full of hate, they will never forget. My father also suffered. We had a large household, everything was taken away for the collective farm – horses, the house. But he put up with it, didn't regret it, he accepted it calmly. It's more relaxed like this, less concern. We had never eaten more before. Why did we drudge so hard before? Now the soul is satisfied. My grandpa didn't hate the Soviet regime. There's no point in resistance, they'll stalk you (F, 1930).

The post-war period required adaptation to material distress, the only consolation being that everybody had difficulties.

Stalinist repressions

In today's context, where deportations are marked in the ritual calendar as remembrance days and as part of official memory discourse and histori-ography, it may seem unbelievable that some people in the 1940s were completely unaware that deportations were happening around them.

> I did not know anything about it – this event absolutely passed me by. Nobody I knew was sent away. People did not speak about this topic (F, 1917).

A similar lack of awareness about the fate of Jews has also been described by a woman who stayed in Estonia during the German occupation (see Hinrikus 2006). Even if people heard something, they did not attach much importance to it.

> We thought that the Soviet regime was pretty normal. It was only later, when the repressions started, when I learned about the killing of my uncles, it was only after that that people began to talk about it in a loud voice. We didn't know about these repressions even in the [Soviet] rear. We knew that eve-rything was more or less hunky-dory. But we didn't think much of those repressions; perhaps they were to blame after all (M, 1926).

Political repressions befell both resistance fighters and communists. Among respondents there were those repressed as well as family members of the repressed. A woman whose husband was imprisoned experienced complete social exclusion for many years when her former acquaintances stopped communicating with her.

> I had no one to talk to, to ask for advice, I was really alone with my worries. Several good acquaintances of our family had started to avoid me. They ignored me in the street. They turned their heads away. It was hurtful, but also understandable. It was also understandable that after Arvo's return they started to notice and greet me again. True friends, however, remained (F, 1917).

Working in one's professional field was banned; people had to contrive and scheme to cope. It was also necessary to tell children prudent lies ("I told my son that his father had gone to work on a communist construction project").

One of the respondents described life in prison and work camps from the perspective of an inmate. The extreme situations encouraged the use of resistance strategies.

As adjustment strategies under threat of repression, people used hypocritical adjustment (for example celebrating Christmas at home as grandmother's holiday and New Year as children's holiday) distancing themselves and keeping the most valuable things a secret (keeping counter-memory private). Thus, forms of hidden resistance could also be to maintain old forms of life and emphasise preservation, for example remaining an upright person, "an Estonian-era lady" in the Soviet period (see Tarand 2008).

Post-Stalin period

After Stalin's death, the repressed were able to return home. The subsequent psychological effects of long-term imprisonment and hard labour were described in two different ways, either as an increase in inner strength, or a breakdown. Some people exhibited mental hardiness, fearlessness, pride, standing fast by their convictions; others developed withdrawal, resignation, distrust of people, loss of a sense of humour.

> When he returned he was sickly, emaciated, with heart disorders. Working was out of the question. He didn't talk about his prison years and I didn't ask, ever: I thought there were much better topics to discuss. I could've learned a lot from him about life in prison and in the camp. But we never talked about it. And I purposely didn't want to wake all this in him again … But he had changed. He didn't have the same sense of humour as before. And he didn't want to be in the company of other people, he didn't trust them … The Soviet period ruined a lot. Because we didn't trust people, we had to choose words and things to say. This had a very strong effect on people's characters, of all things (F, 1917).

Former political prisoners who had returned home continued to communicate and support each other, but in the wider public they had to keep quiet about their experience.

> If you held your tongue, you survived. You had to know how to behave if you didn't want to go back. If you wanted to work and be … But I have never held back. When I went to work at that technical school, I wrote that I'd spent eight years in the Mordovian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Head asked what it was about and I told him that I had upgraded myself politically. […] More specifically? […] I was so stupid in politics that they sent me to learn (F, 1921).

Mature Soviet period

One way in which the reassessment of the collective history of Estonians is manifesting itself is that the Soviet period is treated as an interruption, an incomprehensible anomaly, in the country's natural development (Kõresaar 2005). Studies in recent years have begun to reveal a more nuanced and diverse representations of that period (for example, Aarelaid-Tart 2012; Jõesalu & Kõresaar 2013; Lember 2014).

The respondents to this study calmly integrated the Soviet period into their biographical narrative. Since the interviewer has also lived at that time, it was not necessary to translate the different reality of those days into today's language (which would have been necessary if the interviewer was much younger). Several respondents noted that in the Estonian language media the dominant way of representation tends to ridicule the Soviet period, accentuate repressions and persecution and, from the perspective of the consumer society, focus on the shortage of consumer goods. Yet the interviews revealed a more diverse picture that included negative as well as positive aspects, and they discussed more varied subject areas. Respondents paid attention not only to consumption, but also to social stability and the values advocated (social justice, solidarity, collectivism, moral intelligence, purposefulness, benevolence, etc.). Many of them focused on ideas and ideals rather than on daily life and living conditions, which were considered less important.

The spread of the socialist system of values in the private sphere has been described by several researchers (Yurchak 2002; Molloy 2010; Berdahl 2010; Todorova & Gille 2010) – equality, selflessness, friendliness, being well educated, helpfulness, and diligence were the de facto functioning values. In Estonia some such values, presented by official ideology as 'socialist' (diligence, modesty, education) coincided with traditional Lutheran, bourgeois, and national values. Life

stabilised in the mature Soviet period of the 1970s and 1980s, a period especially referred to when people nostalgically recall the advantages of the Soviet era over the present time. Informants referred to the possibility to live a full life: everyone had a job that left them with enough time and opportunity for recreation.

> I did like the Soviet time. Life was better then, we lived very well. I didn't lack anything then – for 10 years I was able to visit a sanatorium [spa] every summer. I got a voucher from my workplace, it was cheap. Every summer we toured Estonia in our car, drove to Latvia and Lithuania. My kids say I'm crazy, but I really did like the Soviet era (F, 1926).

The assumed consensual black and white approach of the Soviet era is contrasted by a nuanced picture of reality. Respondents recalled that, for instance, among arty functionaries there were both corrupt and fair people; some security personnel risked their careers to help long-standing acquaintances. The motives for joining the Party were different, an inevitable move accompanying certain social positions ("It was a situation similar to your birth certificate – you are given it whether you want it or not." M, 1917); or the hope that it will benefit one's repressed family members or bolster one's shaky position.

> In 1961 I joined the Party. There was no ultimatum; they told me nicely, why would you not, there was no demand of any kind. But I thought that it would further secure my husband (F, 1919).

In today's context an Estonian-born Russian respondent stressed the uncomplicated nature of inter-ethnic relations at that time:

> There were good relations with Estonians in the Soviet period, actually in both the Republic of Estonia and the Soviet period. People always got on well. There were never complaints about one being Russian (F, 1930).

Men who had fought in the Soviet army during the war had certain privileges at the time, to which too much importance is sometimes attached today in their opinion.

> Many Forest Brothers quibble now that, what the hell, you got everything you wanted then. Well, that wasn't much. I was only once given permission to buy a car. I've never used any other advantages. We sometimes discuss these topics

with former freedom fighters. They say: "We have generally nothing against it, but you were too privileged at that time" (M, 1926).

It was noted that in a paradoxical way the shortages prevailing during the Soviet period facilitated creativity and independent thinking in people. The adjustment strategies people used were partial or complete espousal or distancing themselves.

Perestroika and the Singing Revolution

Perestroika is remembered as a happy ground-breaking event full of hope. It was an uplifting and unifying time: everybody had a desire and an opportunity to get involved in and contribute to the life of the society, and in these conditions people's collective creativity emerged. Acting together gave rise to the feeling of liberation and the expectation of positive changes. People were filled with the hope that "everything positive will continue and we will get rid of everything negative". Against the background of the discourse prevailing today, respondents emphasised that it was not only a national revival but also a struggle for democracy, that the main goal of supporters of the Popular Front[4] was democratic open society, with freedom of speech and pluralism instead of the former authoritarian society.

> It was the most liberating time. Then we were all involved in politics. Then we were really very active. The atmosphere was that of joint thinking. The best time was perestroika – the advantages of the previous system were still there, to that freedom was added. Freedom to think, to speak, to act, to travel. Many people share this opinion (F, 1919).

This was also the time when the borders opened, when people were reunited with relatives and acquaintances living in the West.

The era of the new Estonia

The restoration of the nation-state is valued by all respondents. They compare the current reality to their memories of both pre-war Estonia and the Soviet period. People are aware of the change in the collective paradigm, but take different positions in relation to it. Tõnu Õnnepalu has pointed out the roots of the changed world view: "The modern Estonian Republic, after all, has in many respects been established in accordance with expatriate insights, tips, and sometimes also interests (concerning, for example, restitution of assets), beginning already with

its underlying uncompromising restitution ideology" (2009, 78). This framework makes the denial of the positive side of the Soviet legacy logical and inevitable.

However, entrenched attitudes and behaviours manifest themselves (especially in case of conflict) and do not simply disappear into oblivion. As manifestations of the Soviet habits and attitudes, elderly interviewees mentioned frugality and economy, keeping things and equipment in use rather than buying new, and ignorance of new brands and indifference to them. They view the values and practices of the consumer society with certain reservation and scepticism. As sophisticated people, they are able to distinguish between appearance and essence. Behind the beautiful façade of everyday life they perceive the deepening of social inequality and distortion of interpersonal relations (property disputes). The respondents prefer a more egalitarian and fairer society. They are critical of the overt greed for profit of neo-liberal capitalism and the blurring of ethical norms.

> What has caused a lot of trouble in our time and ruined relationships, is the matter of money and inheritance – it's very ugly. Reckless decisions such as this problem of forced tenants,[5] Estonians pitted against Estonians. The houses wouldn't have lasted if someone hadn't lived in them. No thought was given to where people should go – under the open sky, as far as the decision makers were concerned (F, 1917).

Respondents were concerned about ethnic tensions:

> Nowadays there's a poor attitude towards Russians in spite of the fact that Russians have built everything here in Estonia; they're still viewed as occupiers. It was easier before to communicate with Estonians. No distinction was made that there was some difference. Nobody felt any hatred. It's only in recent years … They generally began to hate and pursue Russians in the 1990s when they got their independent Estonia, since then they hate Russians. At that time, it was all good. At work people were so friendly, even very friendly. What they were thinking, I don't know, but there were no insults (F, 1930, ethnic Russian).

Some respondents felt that there was a danger of a new kind of manipulation of people's minds, for example, inciting hatred towards Russia.

> See how people are intimidated, that's what the media is doing, making fools of the people with this ultra-nationalism and hatred of Russians. Well, how

can they do so, there's a major holiday in the neighbouring country[6] (M, 1926, veteran of World War II).

Some of respondents worry about the slowdown in economic growth opportunities, neglect by medical personnel, political fissures, etc. They are sad that there is still active resentment between veterans of World War II who fought on opposite sides, and that the former fighters of the Estonian Corps of the Red Army are not recognised. They feel that they also deserve the semi-official approval that the members of the German army received (cf Kõresaar 2007).

> Veterans have been divided in two [in Estonia] and this is very bad. Europe is not divided any more, the[ir veterans] even share the same burial ground. Germans have white crosses, others have black crosses, in Normandy. But here a distinction is drawn […]
>
> But during the Russian period we weren't divided in two, we were all together. Of course, the 'German boys' kept quiet then, they were not in favour, although […] they were able to build houses, were given loans, got jobs, got education […]. They were not in favour ideologically, though, while there were no restrictions for them materially […]. It was in the early days of the Estonian Republic that this issue got very critical, because the younger statesmen attended their meetings, they were extolled, they were awarded, the President of the Republic keeps giving them awards even today,[7] but have the Corpsmen received any awards for crushing fascism, no they haven't. The difference still applies today (M, 1923).

The new Estonia does not completely meet expectations – respondents find the corruption, bureaucracy, lack of order, etc., disturbing. These evaluations are based on images and experiences in pre-war Estonia (cf Kõresaar 2005, 128). Among the respondents were some who were not pleased with membership of the European Union and the changeover to the euro.

> Now there is nothing we can call our own – we don't have our own money, or our own bread, we even don't have our own sweets any more. We have swapped one union for another. At the moment I think we would fare better under Russia than under Brussels. I don't even hoist the Estonian flag anymore. We won't have our own state any more when the euro comes (F, 1926).

In some areas people use a distancing strategy: families continue to celebrate some former national holidays, people avoid public appearances or disclosure

of their memories or historical studies. The strategy of creative synthesis may be observed in the attitude towards peers who fought on the opposite side. Many Corps 'boys' are tolerant of those fighting on the German side, based on the principles of balance and justice. They admit that Legionnaires[8] were suppressed for so long, now it is their turn to be in the limelight. Let everyone have his or her own history.

Adjustment strategies in different types of life course

The *social trajectory of life* describes a person's journey in the social world, his/her successive positions in the fields of life. People in similar structural positions may have different attitudes depending on the different trajectories that have taken them to these positions. "Social actors are the outcome of history, the outcome of the experience gathered during the history of the whole social field and the personal way they have come through" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 136).

A course of life may be viewed at three levels. Externally a person's relocation in social and geographical space (fields) happens. The internal journey takes place through conscious choices and/or the dialectical connection with passive espousal under prevailing circumstances. This is the course of experience, feelings, and meanings. The third level is the latter contextualised presentation of a life course, the life 'story', which may happen through different narrative forms (Gergen & Gergen 1984).

Important choices that determine the subsequent trajectory have often created a core identity, which includes both the self-concept and how others (stereotypically) view the person, for example "a Corps 'boy'", "a guy who fought in the Finnish Civil War", "an expatriate Estonian", "a Red Estonian".

Estonian biographical researchers have distinguished between the national biography and the Soviet biography (Kõresaar 2005, 114), and between the Estonian-minded and Soviet-minded life orientations (Aarelaid-Tart 2000). The narratives of our respondents gave a considerably more varied picture that resembles more what Rikmann (1997) describes. It is possible that a change in the public discursive context has an effect here: the black and white approach to history of the 1990s is giving way to a more diverse picture, as was mentioned earlier.

A shared generational context, with a similar structure of experience and opportunities, creates a general generational consciousness, which has similar basic orientations and background knowledge. At the same time, within a generation, differentiation takes place – people who are in direct contact with each other form groups based on diverse experiences, who may then choose different life trajectories (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928] in Corsten 1999). The 'Estonian-era'

generation discussed in this chapter is not entirely homogeneous; different choices in critical points having led them to different life courses. The unison and dissonance of different trajectories constitute the 'complete melody' of the generation. The characteristic feature of the generation born in the 1920s is the diversity and political markedness of their life trajectories.

Based on the type of choices made during focal points (primarily in the 1940–1945 period) viewed above, it is possible to classify the life courses of the generation in various ways. If we rely on the relative proportion of active and passive ways of adaptation, we can divide the explored life courses into those where passive espousal of changes prevails and those dominated by active choices.

Passive adjustment

The trajectory of suffering. A separate group is formed of the people who themselves or whose relatives and friends have survived extreme existential situations (war experiences, repressions). For many people it is a central experience that has had a strong effect on their subsequent life. The interviewees reported several such situations experienced personally or by someone close to them: in a camp in Russia, in a concentration camp in Germany, in the Leningrad Blockade; being rescued from a sinking ship during the evacuation of the Baltic Fleet from Tallinn (1941), and being a civilian surviving the bombings of Tallinn (1944 March) and Dresden (1945). The common factor is the difficulty of describing extreme tribulation in an easily understandable way to others, because people without analogous experience are inevitably unable to completely understand (cf Paju 2006). Some people have even abandoned speaking about it, although many continue interacting with peers with similar experiences, or have joined relevant associations (see, for example *Elu pisarad* 2004).

The topic of victim may be addressed in a national (Kõresaar 2005; Anepaio 2002), or general humanist (Jaago 2004) context. At the individual level it is important what resources a person has for adjusting to a difficult situation: friendships, knowledge of languages and any other practical skills, the ability to use the whole of their potential in a camp (e.g. Jõgi 2010; Tilk 2010), or reliance on cultural resources (for example religion, admiring nature, recalling books previously read). People have described different ways of adjusting in extreme situations: internal rebellion or submission to fate, religious humility and reconciliation, showing altruism, preserving internal identity. Here the role of semiotic freedom is especially clear: by creating an imaginary field of representation, it is possible at a symbolic level to distance oneself from an immediate situation. Thus, for example, the conceptualisation of experience in religious framework allows

people to experience the deeper meaning of suffering, its purifying and lucid effect (e.g. Miljutina 2007; Kirschbaum-Pljuhhanova 2007; Kashneva 2008; Tilk 2011): "[…] and you can feel, even for a minute, that wherever you are, no-one can rule over your immortal soul" (Kashneva 2008, 190).

Adjustment strategies depended on the preceding life trajectory. For some repressed people the Soviet period remained utterly alien; they chose a path of hidden and public resistance or self-isolation. At the time of the new independence they fitted well into the mainstream discourse of victim and suffering, becoming new heroes in the 1990s. There were material and moral attempts to rectify their suffering, but later the public interest declined. The suffering of the victims of Nazism was in the centre of focus during the Soviet period. In the newly independent Republic of Estonia they receded into the background; there have even been disparaging voices publicly expressing the opinion that the Holocaust has been overstated (e.g. Weiss-Wendt 2008; Pettai 2011).

People who have followed the trajectory of suffering can teach us how to survive and remain a human being under extreme circumstances, and which inner resources facilitate that.

Smooth life course. Apolitical biographies (Kõresaar 2005, 151) describe the lives of common people who have smoothly endured difficult times. They have passively gone along with changes and without any great losses successfully adjusted – they have been good workers and family people, have seized the arising opportunities, and have reached peaceful old age. The dominating adjustment strategy in their case is non-reflective privacy. Two examples from our respondents represent the trajectory in the rural to urban direction:

(1) A bright and sheltered childhood in a south Estonian farm, school years with many hobbies, war experience of the front going through the village twice, the establishment of collective farms and deportation of village people as the turning point, the loss of the household, a new beginning in the town (simple jobs, the main attention on family life and hobbies). The mutually supportive communication pattern characteristic of the village community continued in the town. In old age is surrounded by caring children and friends.

(2) An Estonian-born Russian from a wealthy farm in Petserimaa, two brothers fighting in the Red Army were killed in the war, there were those among the relatives who were mobilised into the German army and those who fled to the West. When collective farms were established, the family lost their farm, but father escaped deportation because of his sons who had served in the Red Army. Parents continued to live in the village. The respondent got married and started a new life in Tallinn. She worked all her life as a seamstress, brought up

a child, and looked after the grandchildren. A true Orthodox Christian believer (extremely exceptional against the background of the more common secularity and atheism) and a churchgoer, she kept away from public life. Her old age is peaceful. Religion as an alternative key ideology allowed her to distance herself from any circumstances and facilitated a conciliatory attitude (see analogous biographies, for example Veber 2007; Kuus 2007).

Undulating life course. Some life trajectories are highly patchy, with severe ups and downs and unexpected turns. One example is a child of a relatively wealthy family who has lived in a rural place as well as in several towns. After her father's death she was forced to give up further studies and take several jobs to make ends meet. Next, she had a happy marriage but a long separation during the war; after the war the husband was promoted and then repressed. In the Soviet period, she brought up her children alone, had a long and varied working life alongside taking care of several generations of offspring. Now she enjoys a meaningful and vital old age. She considers herself apolitical, but was drawn into political storms through her husband. The respondent looks critically back at her life and reproaches herself for some things. She regrets not completing her education. Her central life asset is human relationships as she has an extremely wide and varied circle of communication. Former schoolmates, colleagues, hobby companions and even their progeny, friends and sympathisers from different stages of life constitute an important part of her life. In addition, she is surrounded by a large supportive family who also need her help. She feels good when she can offer help and support to other people and is deeply grateful to people for the support they have given her. She has maintained into old age her vivid interest in life and joy of communication. In some respect this story is similar to the biography analysed by Jaago (2004), in which a woman's choices were guided by love and desire to be helpful to others, openness to the new and to life changes based on her ability to draw on varied cultural resources (literature, music).

> There have been so many of those twists and turns of life. My life's been motley, very motley … There have been returns from hopeless situations … The most peaceful time is now … My life has flown in waves, sometimes things were one way, sometimes the other way. All those rules were different, pains and fears were different … There was something good under each government … I'm quite embarrassed that I've had such a good life (F, 1917).

As adjustment strategies, complete or partial espousal and creative synthesis have been implemented.

Active choices

This group includes life trajectories where in critical times conscious decisive choices have been made. In this group the life has a direction and purpose. We will look at some examples where a critical choice was made in the 1940s.

Conscious resistance. The resistance trajectory – an exemplary (proper Estonian) biography in today's context (Kõresaar 2005, 114): "a national biography" that has become a norm. Important characteristics are an idyllic youth in pre-war Estonia (a romanticising and adulatory description of the reality of the Estonian Republic), denial of the coup in 1940, active resistance in the form of the struggle as a Forest Brother, being a victim of the Soviet regime (pursuit, arrest, prison, camp for political prisoners), rehabilitation and return after Stalin's death, and overcoming many obstacles and cautiously adjusting to the reality of Soviet life. The time in the restored Republic of Estonia is marked by compensation for suffering and restitution of property, being a hero of the new times, and a happy old age. A clear identity of a victim and freedom fighter has developed, and resistance and imprisonment constitute the central period of life. These people describe themselves as fearless and as having become hardened in "Stalin's universities", having pulled through against all odds.

> I have never regretted that stay in Russia. I comforted myself that I had been included in the company of the strongest ones who will survive (F, 1921).

They are not embittered by the past, but today's society attracts criticism. Their torments have been remedied; people have achieved a peace of mind and inner freedom. An important mental breakthrough has been conquering their fears, becoming hardened against fear.

> They didn't break our spirit. […] Well, I wasn't afraid of any one of them anymore … I was quite shy when I was young, but this life itself taught me. I was hardened quite a bit in the forest and camp; that left a strong mark (F, 1921).

The resistance trajectory frequently occurs in current memoirs of the older generations (e.g. Soosaar 2008); many expatriate Estonians can also be included in this category (Vello Salo, Fanny de Sivers).

The 'Red' course of life. The respondent representing this trajectory spent his childhood in a poor rural family. In 1940 he actively went along with the changes:

he joined the Young Communist League, and at the beginning of the war volunteered to fight in the Red Army. Although after the war he was formally in the position of a winner–hero, restrictions were imposed on his career because of his brother who had served in the German army. He welcomed perestroika and actively participated in the Singing Revolution. In the new Estonia he actively continues social and hobby activities. He has stood firm in his choices, and does not reassess his past. He is disappointed in the bias in the official attitude: "I'm sorry that the Estonian state does not respect us Corps 'boys'".[9] He uses the strategy of creative synthesis, attempting to mediate between those having fought on different sides, to reconcile the competing communities of veterans.

> They will never come to an agreement, the 'boys' of the Estonian Division and the Red Army. I've been trying to relieve this relationship a bit, I communicate with everybody, especially because of my brother. I communicate equally with those who fought on the German side and the front-line soldiers, exactly the same way (M, 1923).

There have been relatively few memoirs published recently describing this type of life trajectory (for example, Pilt 2009).

In the Soviet period, certain politically marked life trajectories were relatively isolated from each other. The choice of one's social circle was subjected to written and unwritten norms; for example on certain occasions it was forbidden to communicate with relatives living abroad, and some people avoided communication with repressed acquaintances. However, individual choices were always free. In spite of the dominant attitude, people continued to communicate with "unsuitable" people. Thus, mutually exclusive life trajectories came into contact, which allowed people to develop awareness of alternative choices and their (psychological and social) consequences. Today there are no longer any such normative restrictions, but psychological barriers may have survived (a former Forest Brother despising a former militiaman). Published memoirs help to better understand peers with different life courses. An assessment by a respondent who had read *Kultaste saaga* (The Kultas Saga) (Jõgi 2010), the memoir of a former businessman, could serve as an example: "I admire that man: how resourcefully and wisely he was able to solve difficult situations when he was in the camp. An all-round education is really very important – you never know when you may need it" (F, 1917).

Contextuality of choices and meaning making

Important choices are not made in isolation, but in the context of direct social relationships. A biography always potentially involves many voices, its characters are the family and significant others, companions of meaningful events: all important relationships at the intersection of which the narrator is located, "… the subject of a narrative is in certain respect always 'more' … than an individual" (Kirss 2006, 32). Choices people make may be motivated by a desire to emulate someone or to be different from someone, whereas authorities and guardians (mentors) have a significant impact (for example, Kuus 2007), and choices may be motivated by opportunities or limitations that have occurred as a consequence of choices made by close relatives. Many critical choices, decisions that have affected life courses, have been made by someone else acting as a catalyst: a friend who in 1940 was invited to join the Young Communist League; a spouse who in 1940 supported the Soviet regime; a brother who fought in the Destruction Battalion.[10] The position or choices of a husband also define his wife's fate, leading for example to repression, while a close relative on one or the other side of the frontline or state border can create either impediments or favourable conditions for career advancement. The supporting characters seemingly playing secondary roles in our life drama may actually have fundamental importance.

People perceive their involvement with companions who have suffered similar experiences (war, camp, prison) as special. Being survivors, they feel responsible for their fallen comrades; they feel they have an obligation to make headway and pass on their memory. "One in two hundred in those born in 1922 returned from the war (in the countries participating in the war)" (Murre 2008, 96).

The narrators of biographies often put themselves in a wider context – family, generation, Estonian people, thus indicating that what they have experienced is both personal and collective.

> I'm sorry for the people who perished in Siberia. Innocently, they were lost for Estonia, and the lives of their offspring weren't easy. When I've talked to expatriate Estonians, their life wasn't easy either. People with higher education left or were taken. Those who stayed here were the mediocre ones. This century has really been extremely damaging to us (F, 1917).

Perceiving oneself as part of a greater whole, dependent on others, leads to a different categorisation and appreciation of one's experience, to life stories that are differently organised from those who perceive themselves as independent from

others (Wang & Brockmeier 2002). In this respect the biographies of that generation probably differ from today's life stories.[11]

Symbolic and interpersonal resources of adjustment to change

People make particular use of collected capital in times of crisis: social (relationships, experience), cultural (available forms of culture, including Soviet cultural capital), health, acquired skills. When exposed to a new or problematic phenomenon, it is possible to pay attention to its different aspects, to interpret it differently. In meaning making and transformation people rely on the cultural forms available to them. Zittoun (2007) writes that a semiotic object (for example a literary work) becomes a symbolic object when it is applied in the context of the life of an individual. The universal meaning becomes an individual meaning that contextualises and organises a specific experience. Richer available resources mean a wider repertoire of interpretations (different I-positions, viewpoints), and broader space for interpretation, and more flexible the symbolic adaptation. For example, 'self'-construction on the basis of a cultural myth (Sarbin 1997) (*the myth of life* is the mythological centre of an identity, a creative principle within a story).

Adjustment to dramatic sociocultural changes requires reorganisation of a person's system of meanings and actions. While carrying out such transformation, a person relies on available resources. People who have successfully negotiated critical moments mention four types of life asset. First is education, including any skills and competencies that may prove useful in the changed circumstances (see Jõgi 2010).

> I remember my dad saying: "I cannot leave you a fortune, but you must learn languages, you'll always need languages". The language saved me (F, 1923).

Second are social skills, such as building and maintaining good and stable interpersonal relationships, creativity in communication, and buoyancy. Respondents described getting through hard times with the help of good relationships, which crossed the borders of social categories and political beliefs.

> The only thing I have learned is to appreciate people. Apart from everything else, apart from politics, it is people who are able to do something. And I really appreciate it … I've been lucky. There have been very many good people, and this applies to every era (F, 1917).

Third are the various cultural resources (poetry, literature, music, historical narratives, religion, universal values) that allow people to internally distance themselves from any plight while maintaining peace in the midst of the storms of life and provide a basis from which to rise above the immediate situation and look at it from a certain perspective. Our respondents, whether they managed to complete their university studies or not, have versatile cultural interests and use cultural assets on a daily basis – thus, for example, one respondent was able to cite Estonian poetry or sing a Russian romantic song during the interview. Fourth are personality resources, i.e. flexibility (a wide repertoire of I-positions, compromises between different ways of thinking) and mental toughness.

Individual and generational conclusions about life

It is characteristic of elderly respondents to draw conclusions, to give a concise overview and assessment of different periods they remember and where they have gained their experience. When summarising their lives, they compare their achievements with their earlier objectives and attempt to formulate the primary subjective change ("what life has taught me"). The pre-war memories from people's youth contain trends and aspirations of those days: goals, dreams, values and ideals to strive for. Even if the specific aims (to become a teacher, a doctor) have not been achieved, it is possible to consider one's life successful at the more general level of values and ideals.

A lesson that respondents repeatedly mentioned learning was the mellowing of their former extreme views, achieving a more balanced picture of the world. When assessing their lives, the respondents use two different background systems: they (re)assess their activity in today's context, comparing themselves to the views and experiences of their offspring, or in the context of previous (their parents') generations (for example an imaginary dialogue with their mother and father). They also use the universal framework as a meta-perspective, experiencing how the spirit of the times and prevailing ideologies are changeable, whereas a more comprehensive viewpoint can offer sustaining support.

> My life could have been very different, but there have been people in my life I've met who have guided me so that I've been able to live on. […] Everywhere I've been, there have been good people everywhere (F, 1917).

When thinking of their generation, respondents note its fragmentation in the vortices of history – a playmate may have been killed in a concentration camp, a female schoolmate may have fled abroad, and male schoolmates may have

fought on opposite sides of the front lines. At the same time, a certain solidarity may be perceived underneath such fragmentation. Viewing from the meta-perspective, people who were born in the early decades of the 20th century and are still alive today may say:

> […] we are one of the luckiest generations in history: we survived the Great War … We survived Stalinism, we have seen a man go into space, we were the first to see what television is, now we have the Internet and mobile phones. We are very lucky people (Lõhmus 2010, 34).

Dialogue with the present day

The respondents interact with the present day at both the macro and micro levels. On the one hand, elderly people are influenced by today's manifestations of technology, mass culture, consumer society, general social atmosphere, and spirit of the age as communicated by the media, while on the other hand, they also experience this through direct interaction with peers and family.

Elderly people generally feel good in today's society. The most valued changes for them are related to the restoration of the nation state, the democratic turn towards openness and pluralism, the opening of the borders, and technological development. Modern information devices (mobile phone, computers) are also used by many elderly people on a daily basis, who are still attracted to travel and the diverse consumption of culture.

As negative factors, the respondents mentioned the simplified and biased approach to history and the schematising myth creation observed in the media. Against the background of their personal experience the uncritical depiction of pre-war Estonia and sneering at life in the Soviet period seem untruthful. They have experienced both good and bad in every period. While young people, who gain their knowledge about the past largely through the media and school, tend to use stereotypes and black and white assessments, direct witnesses to past events prefer a multi-dimensional and multi-coloured depiction of history.

All respondents have a supporting family and several generations of offspring. Young people, as the bearers of today's mentality, provide direct information about the views of life and historical schemata of the next generation. Interaction with them teaches the elderly what they need to separately explain or comment on when speaking about the past, which new myths of normality they need to overturn. Through their offspring, elderly people are exposed to today's uncertainty and insecurity (for example unemployment).

It has been experientially found that the best form of relationship is balanced contact with the younger generation: the elderly have the position of the wise adviser, although they refrain from daily interference.

> They listen to me very nicely, put on a good face, but then go and do things their own way. I feel I shouldn't probably give that much advice to them (F, 1917).

Some elderly people have controversial relationships with their offspring and that makes them sad. The next generation sometimes faces the dilemma of whether to understand or condemn their progenitors. It is a tragedy for everyone involved when parents' life courses are not legitimate or dignified in the eyes of children or grandchildren.

> I feel the deficiency of communication. The young do not have time for me. They are busy pursuing their successful careers. They are ashamed of me, trying to hold me back from public life (M, 1923).

A solution to this situation is described by Tschuggnall and Welzer (2002), who suggest that the third generation converts controversial biographies into simple schemata that show their grandparents in a positive light. Another solution is to focus on interaction with peers, sympathisers, and fellow sufferers. A large proportion of the people in the respondents' generation have passed away, which makes interaction with surviving peers even more intense. The majority of our respondents have extensive and varied interpersonal networks and are active in maintaining and even building new relationships.

Contemporary welfare societies provide the conditions in which one can be active in old age. Our respondents keep active in many spheres of life and are eager to communicate as much as possible. Even when their physical movements start to get painful, they prefer not to give up. They participate in voluntary activities, carry out research in archives (to specify the facts of the key events they have experienced), organise personal archives, write memoires, continue to learn (English, computer literacy, study at the Third Youth University), and pursue recreational activities (singing in a choir, playing an instrument in a band, attending a language club, etc.). They read the published memoirs – the biographies of their peers give them information about alternative choices made at one time and relevant consequences – with interest, thus creating a mental context of reference.

Respondents attach great importance to clubs and societies as 'experience communities' (organisations of war veterans and repressed people in which people who have shared the same fate regularly meet). Here also intragenerational interweaving and differences occur: men who fought on different sides of the frontline may go separately to rival veteran organisations, while at the same time may meet in common choirs or alumni associations, etc. If in their youth they developed political and other dividing lines, now attempts to reconcile are made.

In conclusion

People born in the 1920s are the last living cohort who have experienced almost all critical periods in the history of Estonia in the 20th century, and thus they have a privileged position in the interpretation of history, compared to the other cohorts. Based on their experience, they often define themselves as a generation of bearers of the values of the 'Estonian era' (Kõresaar 2001, 122). Without doubt, this generation can be considered a strategic one – in terms of its personal connection to WWII as a traumatic event, its activeness (in both building up Soviet Estonia and bringing forth the discourse of rupture after the restoration of the Republic of Estonia) and distinct self-reflexive generational consciousness (Turner 2002).

These are the people who witnessed the 20th century's technological, political, and socio-cultural developments, including the failure of great utopias. Members of this generation carry the optimistic spirit of the early 20th century – faith in technology and social progress, a common hopeful future vision of a just society, secularism. Their life experience has eventually confirmed their faith in the progressive development of society and the fact that through setbacks and challenges Estonia has ultimately taken a hopeful trajectory. The peaceful restoration of the independence of Estonia was the happy ending of a collective path of development for their generation. Trends that originate from the Enlightenment – rationalism, future-orientedness, and solidarity – characterise many representatives of this generation. Patriotism was also emphasised in the education of the 'Estonian era' (for example, Aarelaid-Tart 2011).

People who were born in the 1920s in Estonia have lived through several parallel changes: technological development (in their childhood cars and phones were rare, television only came about when they were adults, mobile phones and the Internet emerged when they were in advanced age); a transformed relationship with nature (most of them have their roots in rural life, being either first or second urbanised generation); alternating political regimes and hegemonic ideologies; changes in commonplace mentality.

Being our contemporaries, they bring habits to modern life that were more viable in the past and may stand out again in the future. The generation that was born in pre-war Estonia is characterised by strong education aspirations and appreciation of knowledge, deliberation, and contemplation. Their pre-mass-culture socialisation facilitated the development of a vivid personality and critical thinking. Over their long lives they acquired valuable experiences of how to adjust to change in diverse ways, how to maintain inner freedom in conditions of external oppression, and how to retain their identity against the background of radical changes. They have learned to look at events from different aspects and overcome contradictions in a creative way. Both Soviet and nationalist viewpoints belong to their repertoire and they are able to combine them through a universal framework. Some of them are also able to look at today's liberal capitalism from a distance, with sophisticated scepticism, saying that this is not necessarily the best or the only alternative social order.

However, a generation is not homogeneous, it is divided into generational units, "which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways" (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928], 304). In Estonia some of these generational units of the pre-war generation were separated into semi-hostile camps as a consequence of political upheavals and the war. The interviews of this study revealed some controversial interpretations from representatives of different generational units who have experienced the reversal of power relations.

The 'children of the Republic' have had very different life trajectories, multi-coloured lives full of paradoxes. Against the background of generational unity, differences that have survived to the present day can be observed. The present study revealed a multitude of different intragenerational voices and perspectives: as a consequence of earlier choices, people have developed different positions in life, between some of which there is no dialogue (for example war veterans' failed attempts at reconciliation). Some trajectories are currently stigmatised and relatively invisible to the public. However, every culture needs different descriptions to be able to understand itself.

> The concept of collective memory should be differentiated and the culture of remembering different from the national one should also be included [...] They represent the part of collective historical memory that does not have an accepted output in the public sphere (Kõresaar 2005, 200).

In terms of life cycle dynamics, the respondents to this study may be considered real winners within their cohort: they are happy survivors in the turbulent context of 20th century history.

Elderly people have become free of the burden of the struggle for survival and have collected enough life assets to be able to increasingly distance themselves from the temporary nature of everyday life. In this respect we can say that old age sets us free. The eighties and nineties are the period on the life trajectory during which people potentially reached a conclusive, integrative stage of life (Erikson 1980; Sarbin 2000), therefore we may expect mature and deeply felt views from such people. The respondents to this study are indisputably exactly such old wise people who have been able to synthesise in themselves a long stretch of development. Despite the experienced social and cultural interruptions, they have maintained internal coherence. They have taken with them life assets from each experienced era, embraced all periods of life, and integrated them into a whole. The interviews covered a small and exceptional group of elderly people, but the comparison with published memoirs allows us to claim that they represent their generation's widespread trends and life trajectories.

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Notes

1 The Vaps movement, the Union of Participants in the Estonian War of Independence, was originally an Estonian association of veterans of the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920); later also non-veterans were accepted as members. The organisation was founded in 1929, emerging as a mass anti-socialist and anti-parliamentary movement.

2 Collective name for the political life of the Estonian Republic in the second half of the 1930s, when the governing of the state and the press were under the strict control of President Päts' authoritarian regime and civil initiative was suppressed.

3 In 1946 there were about 12,000 members of the YCL in Estonia.

4 The Popular Front of Estonia (Eestimaa Rahvarinne) was a mass movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was influential in the processes leading to Estonian re-independence. "The Estonian independence movement in 1989–1991 had two institutional pillars: one was the National Front movement that was based on local Estonian intelligentsia and former 'Estonian-minded' part of the Communist Party; the other was the Estonian Congress that gathered around younger people, some dissidents and representatives of the emigre community. After the proper restoration of the republic in 1992, the government became more dominated by the Estonian Congress" (Lember 2014, 185).

5 After its independence was restored in 1991, Estonia also reinstated the continuity of the right of ownership. The most significant social conflict in the Ownership Reform process stemmed from the return of rental houses, which placed both the new owners and the tenants in a difficult position. The former needed considerable resources to recover their property, but the latter were often not capable of paying higher rent or moving to another residential space. However, the situation was abated with the help of soft loans, and subsidies provided for housing construction and the resettlement of tenants. Returning property to the Baltic Germans who resettled to Germany in 1939 and had already received compensation from the German state was also perceived as unjust.

6 The context of the conversation is the 9th of May, which is celebrated as the Day of Victory by those who fought on the Soviet side in WWII and the fact that in today's

Estonia this holiday is officially ignored. However, on 8 May, war victims from both sides are commemorated and official ceremonies take place at cemeteries.

7 Actually, no official rewards have been given in Estonia for fighting in the German army. The respondent probably means rewards to freedom fighters with special merits, i.e. men and women who participated in anti-Soviet resistance during and after World War II.

8 The Estonian Legion (Eesti Leegion) was a military unit within the Combat Support Forces of the Waffen SS during World War II. 500 volunteers signed up for the Legion by October 1942. In March 1943, the German occupying powers turned to mobilisation by conscripting men born in Estonia between 1919 and 1924. Up to August 1943, 5300 men were drafted into the Estonian Legion and 6800 into the support service (*Hilfswillige*) of the German Wehrmacht. A mobilisation in October 1943 called up men born in 1925–1926. A consequence of the 1943 mobilisations was a wave of an estimated 5000 Estonian men fleeing to Finland in order to avoid the German draft. Over half of these men volunteered for service in the Finnish armed forces. In 1944 on the basis of the Estonian legion and other formations, the 22nd Estonian voluntary SS division (*20. Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS*) was raised. During World War II circa 20,000 volunteers and 50,000 mobilised Estonians fought in the German army.

9 The 8th Estonian Rifle Corps (Eesti Laskurkorpus) was a national formation in the Soviet Army, created in 1942. It was formed of mobilised Estonians (30,000), members of destruction battalions, and mobilised ethnic Estonians living in the Soviet Union, and incorporated former officers of the Republic of Estonia's army (900). After the war, a considerable number of demobilised members of the rifle corps (20.7%) started to work in the administrative or legal bodies of the Soviet regime (the Communist Party, Komsomol, trade unions, etc.). National formations in the Soviet Army were liquidated in 1956.

10 Destruction battalions were a paramilitary organisation in the western part of the Soviet Union that fulfilled tasks of internal security on the Eastern Front (WWII) and afterwards. The fight against anti-Soviet partisans and the implementation of scorched earth tactics were accompanied by terror against the civilian population, all of whom were treated as supporters of the Forest Brothers.

11 The collectivism of the older generation was shaped in both a national and a social sense. The deepening individualism in today's young people is referred to in texts by Nugin, and by Lilleoja & Raudsepp in this volume.

Appendix. Interviews

No.	Year of birth	Gender
1	1917	F
2	1917	M
3	1919	F
4	1921	F
5	1922	M
6	1923	M
7	1926	M
8	1927	F
9	1930	F

Winners and losers in the generation of winners

Ellu Saar, Margarita Kazjulja

Abstract. This chapter examines the interplay between changes at the macro level and the destinies and decisions of representatives of the so-called generation of winners, i.e. the people aged 20 to 30 at the beginning of the period of post-socialist reform in Estonia. The chapter is based on in-depth interviews conducted in 2003 and 2004 with people who graduated from secondary education institutions in 1983. Our analysis indicates clear cumulative advantage and disadvantage patterns in the life course of this generation. The channels by which risk was averted depended upon pre-existing inequalities of resource. The differentiation within the generation of winners is remarkable.

Introduction

In Estonia and other post-socialist countries, hardly any aspects of life were untouched by the force of events at the beginning of the 1990s. Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka (2004) has characterised the collapse of communism as a traumatogenic change because it was sudden, unexpected, rapid, and multidimensional, it embraced politics, economics, culture, and everyday life and it shook the foundations of the earlier system. This very sudden and radical system change was to have a significant impact on life trajectories. As Mayer (2006, 4) maintains: "the analysis of life courses is particularly well suited for the study of post-socialist transformation because individual biographies link the society of origin and the society of destination. Individuals bring their biographical past as resources and constraints into the transition process." The case of Estonia demonstrates the linkages between the macro level structural and institutional changes and individual life histories.

In Estonia as in other post-socialist countries, the transition to a market economy opened new opportunities, such as private enterprise and self-employment, yet it also engendered new risks, such as unemployment, decline in social status, and pauperisation. Such risks and opportunities were unevenly distributed among different groups in the general population. It has been pointed out that the transition in Estonia meant a change from a gerontocratic to a "youth-oriented"

society (Tallo & Terk 1998). Adaptation to the new environment was relatively successful for younger age cohorts. The generation that entered the labour market at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s had many advantages thanks to its youth. This generation has been called the "generation of winners" due to their successful careers (see Titma 1999; Titma et al 1998). Further sociological analysis, however, has shown that not all of the 'winners' have been successful, and that the cohort actually includes a considerable number of 'losers' (Helemäe et al 2000; Kazjulja & Saar 2010; Saar & Unt 2008; 2010; Kazjulja 2011).

In this chapter, we will analyse how changes at the macro level affected the life course of that generation. We ask why some members of this age cohort have lost their age advantage in a society that glorifies youth, while others have not. We examine roughly why there are so many 'losers' among the "generation of winners". We deconstruct the rather simplistic collective categorisation that has been created about this particular age cohort. We concentrate mainly on professional careers, because life in industrial societies is largely organised around the system of labour (Kohli 1986).

On a more general level we ask how previous life events and trajectories constrain or foster transitions and outcomes in later life at the micro level. Some authors have underlined the fact that sometimes the unexpected consequences of old choices might be even more important than new choices. It has been discovered that the duration of exposure to risk or opportunity leads to an accumulation of advantages and disadvantages (Diewald et al 2006). An additional question is connected with the role of personality and agency in the life course. Are persons subject to forces outside their influence and control, or do their personal resources, motives, and mentalities significantly contribute to their life course after major societal changes?

The chapter is based on semi-structured biographic interviews conducted in 2003 and 2004 with representatives of the "generation of winners".

Societal changes and the role of agency

Life course research focuses on the interplay of institutional and personal dynamics through a person's lifespan (Heinz & Krüger 2001). This framework adopts C. Wright Mill's conception of the intersection of biography and history, producing social heterogeneity and inequality (O'Rand 2009). Individual agency is central to life course studies, which relate individuals to broader social contexts. Agency is also crucial for an understanding of the interrelationship between social change and life course. As Elder and O'Rand (1995, 457) indicate: "… despite the empirical evidence on links between life transitions, the agency of

individuals and their life choices ensure some degree of loose coupling between social transitions and stages. […] Loose coupling reflects the agency of individuals even in constrained situations." It has been argued that changes in the 1990s such as globalisation and particularly increased international competition and labour market deregulation increased the incidence of exposure to risk (DiPrete 2002). These changes are making life courses less standardised and less collectively patterned. According to the individualisation concept, individuals are assumed to gain greater control over their lives and pursue a wider variety of life trajectories (Beck 1992; Junge 2002). However, other authors mention involuntary individualisation. This means that individuals have to follow life trajectories that are not collectively well-trodden pathways (Shanahan 2000).

Mayer (2006) identifies three mechanisms that account for the forms and outcomes of life courses. First, institutional and structural contexts constrain to a large extent which life avenues are open and which are closed. Second, the agent's position within the social stratification restricts individual agency. Life course contingency also determines the internal dynamics of the life course. This means that future states and events are always dependent on prior life course in the sense of experiences, resources, choices, and turning points (Diewald & Mayer 2009). Third, cohort membership is important (Ryder 1980). Life course opportunities depend to a large degree on the historical circumstances surrounding the year of birth and dates of important turning points both empirically and theoretically. The specific historical conditions in a particular country at the point of entry into the labour market have been shown to have a substantial impact on subsequent career outcomes (Blossfeld 2009).

Therefore, social changes impact life course in several ways. All individuals are exposed to changes such as economic downturns, regime change, etc. This phenomenon is called a "period effect" (Mason & Fieneberg 1985). Events and contexts may affect individuals differently depending on their timing in the life course. Such impacts can be captured as age effects. The historical effect in certain life phases is often especially consequential for later life. As members of certain cohorts, people are exposed to positive and negative risks particular to specific historical periods. This kind of influence is generally called a "cohort effect" (Glenn 1977). Mayer (2006) points out that as well as age and historical period, process time is a very important effect on life course outcomes. Evidently, age can operate either as a liability or as an asset depending on the historical period.

The socialist period could be characterised by an extreme institutionalisation of peoples' life paths, meaning less risk for the individual but also fewer possibilities to choose. The paternalistic state intervened much more in the choices made by individuals than in Western-type societies (Kupferberg 1998). Socialist

society stabilised life planning and minimised the personal risks involved. The result for individuals was a clear reduction of occupational risk and autonomy of choice. The burden of risk was taken from the individual and placed in the hands of the state. The constitutional right to work, as well as the principle of full employment, shaped both occupational and employment opportunities available to workers (Mach et al 1994).

The transformation of socialist societies can be seen as a turning point in the life course of individuals. It destabilised life paths and forced individuals to make unexpected choices under conditions of great uncertainty and risk, for which their experiences had not prepared them. The sudden changes not only led to unexpected job shifts and employment trajectories, but they may have had an impact on adaptation processes as well.

The transformation threatened the experiences and skills earned during the socialist period but also started anew the time for life course opportunities. For individuals, different sorts of potential benefit ('positional advantage') can derive from personal capital. The positional advantage, however, does not emerge from those accumulated skilful characteristics themselves; it rather stems from their interaction with the rules of social institutions. Those skills only give an advantage, provided they stand out conspicuously and meet the requirements of the institutions. The utility of capital is determined by institutions, which set the rules of its application and, thus, determine its value. In times of social change, capital accumulated under different institutional conditions is deployed to fit new institutions. Individuals have to match the past with the present, employing capital developed under one set of institutional rules, in processes and acts governed by a different set of rules. The life course theory suggests that the initial endowment with resources may be especially influential in times of major and sudden disruptions (Elder 1974; Caspi & Moffitt 1993). New political and economic institutions presented new opportunities and constraints for people; however, people responded to those opportunities and constraints on the basis of their existing resources. It has been mentioned that during the rapid economic, social, and institutional changes in post-socialist societies, the meaning of previously gained resources also changed (Róna-Tas 1997). Caspi and Moffitt (1993) argue that in conditions of system change, when standardised ways of channelling life courses by institutions vanish, differences in personality characteristics become more important for the direction of life course trajectories than under stable institutions. This also means that the role of agency may become more important for success and failure in life. The shift from a centrally planned economy to a market economy is, in theory, in itself linked with an increase in importance of self-initiative and self-responsibility (Diewald 2006). However, a change from

a more egalitarian and homogeneous society to a more differentiated one with larger social inequality (see Kazjulja & Paškov 2011) might increase inter-cohort differences.

Changes in the Estonian labour market in the 1990s

The Estonian economic reforms have been among the most radical within the post-socialist countries, particularly regarding its highly liberal economic principles and the modest role of the state (de Melo et al 1996). Estonia cut back on state involvement and promoted extensive foreign ownership, undertook a mass restructuring of the economy away from industry, and pursued a tough nationalities policy aimed at encouraging the departure of many of those who worked in industry (Bohle & Greskovits 2007). The economic restructuring has significantly influenced the labour market. All in all, the changes might be characterised as a transition from a world of stable wages, stable labour demand, and stable labour supply to a more dynamic and flexible system in which market forces were allowed to operate. Withdrawal from the policy of full employment, the development of industries according to their economic efficiency (not because of their ideological importance), and privatisation policies meant that "workers have been assigned the responsibility for finding work and have been given the right to make occupational and geographical choices. […] Rewards have been granted, and failures have been allowed to occur" (Orazem & Vodopivec 1995, 202).

In the early 1990s, the immediate reaction to economic uncertainty was a sharp decline in labour demand. As compared to 1991, the number of working people declined by an astonishing 27% by 2003 (or by 218,500 jobs in a country with 1.4 million inhabitants) (Saar & Unt 2006). One could imagine that it was a shock for people when guaranteed employment was replaced by competition for the rapidly reducing number of jobs.

The collapse of the institutional and technological links of the Soviet centrally planned system disrupted the supply of inputs for production and the delivery of outputs. The share of the service sector increased dramatically, whereas the decline in the industrial and agricultural sectors accelerated. Blue-collar workers were particularly affected, and their numbers declined by almost 1.5 times from 1989 to 2001, while the number of white-collar workers declined by less than one-third (Pettai 2001). These changes accompanied collective downward social mobility of industrial and agricultural workers. For them the risks were increasing and the opportunities were decreasing. On the other hand, there were certain sectors of the labour force for whom new opportunities prevailed, and they have experienced upward mobility (for example employees in the finance sector).

Bohle and Greskovits (2007) indicate that identity policy remained the major issue during the transformation years in Estonia and led to an exclusionary democracy. Estonian politics is dominated by a conservative-liberal approach. Adam et al (2009) explain this dominance by the presence of an 'external' threat in the form of Russia. They also argue that in Estonia radical liberalisation and deregulation resulted in typically liberal capitalism with the minimal role of the state. In Estonia the extremely neoliberal character of the market reforms co-existed with an ethnic model of nation building (Vetik & Helemäe 2011). The nation state model, based on the legal principle of continuity, became the basis for many new social and political institutions and policies (i.e., the Aliens Law, the Citizenship Law, the Language Law) that separated the different ethnic communites (Pettai & Hallik 2002). Given the character of the market reforms in Estonia, this type of ethnic nation state ideology created a new kind of opportunity structure, contributing to the emergence of new forms of economic and ethnic inequality. The ideology of the legal restoration of the nation state had important consequences for the social, economic, and political status of non-Estonians. Through the issue of citizenship, the majority of the Russian-speaking population did not become a part of the politically active community and thus lacked the opportunity to influence the creation of basic social and economic institutions. This in turn contributed to the growth of non-Estonians' economic dependence on Estonians.

Estonia had an ethnically divided labour market already during the Soviet period. The ethnic segmentation of the economy was a by-product of its bureaucratic organisation. Non-Estonians (mostly immigrants) were concentrated in basic industrial branches closely connected to the military complex. After the Soviet system collapsed, the inevitable result was a drop in status for those (mostly non-Estonians) most closely linked to these previously privileged sectors, as the enterprises of the industrial sector underwent the greatest transformations or were closed completely. For non-Estonians, the transition was not just about moving from a planned economy to a market economy, but of moving from a privileged nation within a large empire to becoming a minority within a new nationalising state (Kennedy 2002). In sum, both the legacies of the Soviet period as well as the ethno-political changes contributed to the restrictions of labour market opportunities of non-Estonians.

Data and analysis

Our analysis is based on in-depth interviews conducted from June 2003 to January 2004. The sample of respondents was drawn from a longitudinal study entitled

Life Paths of a Generation (PG) (see, for example, Titma et al 1998; Helemäe et al 2000). PG has followed the life course of a specific cohort from secondary school graduation until the end of the 1990s. The initial panel of respondents in PG was selected to represent the population of 1983 secondary school graduates (born between 1964 and 1966). Members of the PG cohort were educated under the Soviet system, completing their schooling in the mid- to late-1980s and first entering the labour market as the major social and economic transformations of Estonian society began. Furthermore, young adults who were in their 20s at the beginning of the economic changes (for the PG cohort, those 24–26 by the beginning of 1990s) are often considered to be the most successful age cohorts under the transition. In order to shed light on the internal differentiation and success of the 'winners of the transition', we make use of biographical interviews. The biographical research approach is particularly effective in capturing the experience of a changing social system because it focuses on personal destinies and demonstrates how these are linked to societal transformations (Hoerning 2000).

The interviews were semi-structured and followed a general list of questions about the respondents' life paths and especially about their biographical experiences in the years preceding and following the social changes in Estonia at the beginning of the 1990s. We conducted interviews with 32 members of this cohort. Those interviewed had a variety of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, places of residence, gender, economic status, etc. (see Appendix). Each interview lasted 1–3 hours. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

In this chapter we concentrate on the biographies of people who have been active in the labour market during the reform years and during the time of the interview. Respondents are divided into four groups: people with stable careers, people with unstable careers, people moving into self-employment, and 'losers' (people with unstable careers and unemployed at the time of the interview). One task for the analyses was to look for common elements that occur across different interviews. We are using the inductive approach, whereby generalisations are produced through analysis of a series of biographical profiles. These case analyses are compared and contrasted with each other. The steps of analysis were: biographical data analysis, contrastive case comparisons, and type development. These types are analytic. We can identify patterns of similarity or difference within life course patterns. We are interested in the experience of societal change; we consider the interviewee's statements on this change in the context of his or her whole life. On the basis of such reconstruction, we are in a position to construct a type of adaptation to societal change, as well as to explain the biographical course that leads to it. This analysis allows us to reconstruct the interrelationship between individual experience and collective frameworks.

Analysis

'Losers'

From among the respondents, two people, one male, one female, can be categorised as 'losers', that is, people with unstable career and unemployed at the time of the interview who defined themselves as losers. They are both of Russian origin and have completed tertiary education. However, neither of them has succeeded in their personal careers. Both respondents have defined their own position in the labour market as "unemployed". They were facing significant hardship. There was only one breadwinner in their respective families and that made the economic situation quite hopeless.

Since they had not worked for a long time, they were no longer eligible to unemployment benefits. Occasional jobs remained temporary and informal. They both had difficulties in utilising their qualifications in a changing environment. They were feeling that the long unemployment period was decreasing their chances to find a good position.

In the case of the man (Eduard), one reason was that he obtained a degree in a very narrow speciality – the military. In 1991, before the putsch in Moscow, he left the army as he understood that the Soviet Union was failing and the Soviet army would leave Estonia soon. He wanted to stay in Estonia and worked for two years as a parking lot guard. In 1993 he started a private business together with his brother, who was living in St Petersburg. They mainly had links to Russian enterprises. In 1998 the firm failed as a consequence of the Russian financial crisis and he lost his job as well as the property. He was very pessimistic and felt deprived. Eduard characterised his life since 1998 as "hell":

> And so since 1998 my life is hell, it has not changed for the better … I still have not found myself, no permanent job, nothing at all (Eduard, unemployed).

The speciality obtained by the woman (Irina) is of a substantially higher demand (sales and service), but she graduated from the correspondence department (distance learning) in the early 1990s and has had no time to make full use of her education. As she said, she had no opportunity to utilise her qualification. She got married and a child was born in 1989; she got her diploma in 1991. She was offered a job in a bar and worked there for two years. After this, she experienced an unstable period: she changed her workplace several times. She characterised this period as "free floating". In 1994 she and her friend started their own business: they rented a shop and borrowed money, but were lacking finances

and knowledge and their business failed. The informant claimed that she had no choice, it was a forced decision. In 1998 another child was born. After one and a half years she started to work again in a bar but after two years the bar closed and she lost her job. Now she is unemployed. Like Eduard, she understands that she has limited time to find something more stable. However, she does not think of herself as a loser. In her case, the period of instability is shorter than it was for Eduard. In addition, as she said, she has completely realised her plans regarding the creation of a family and the birth of children. These circumstances increase her optimism.

The labour market problems of non-Estonians could be associated with the two main ethno-political changes in Estonian society in the 1990s – citizenship and increasing demands for Estonian language proficiency. In the case of both non-Estonians in this group, poor command of the Estonian language had placed additional restrictions on their competitiveness in the labour market.

> […] the most important, … why it happens to me – because I don't know Estonian (Eduard, unemployed).

At the same time the woman notes that knowledge of Estonian is not enough.

> I simply understand that it is necessary to learn languages … actively. Only Estonian doesn't help. Estonian and English. And it is necessary to know them at a very high level in order to find something good … and any education in addition (Irina, unemployed).

Staying on the previous 'track'

Most people with stable careers worked in the public sector during the transformation. Our sample included five people who stayed on their previous track: a teacher, a medical nurse, a judge, and two researchers. However, all of them had considered the possibility of taking up the challenge of the private sector or even of starting 'their own way', i.e. creating a company. However, life went on and they did not realise their visions. They justified their decision to stay in the public sector less with the attachment to their previous work, but rather with their own laziness or the security of public sector employment. For those people who had a family, the security of public employment was an especially strong reason to keep their jobs. The teacher, who has two university diplomas, pointed out that even though she would like to take a different job, she does not see any alternatives to her current employment.

Then the Republic of Estonia was already formed. But the situation was still such that school was safe and certain to an extent. If you join a private company, it will go under. When you manage yourself, you can't hope that, okay, someone else will keep me for half a year. Of course having a flat kept me afloat as well; at first I had a flat I got with the job. Otherwise I would have had to look for a flat on my own. Those were the factors that kept me afloat … Actually, later I even looked into jobs a little. Then there was someone I knew who had a lot of acquaintances, who said then: "You know, I can't recommend you to anyone I know: you have a small child." … Told me the reason straight up and I didn't start looking. I knew I would stay here, I would keep working here, I could manage here, so why should I change anything. Actually we don't have any of those opportunities. Of course I could change my occupation and go somewhere else now, but *we don't have any real opportunities* (Mare, teacher; original emphasis).

She belongs by definition to the middle class but she argues that her income is not in accordance with her social status and qualifications. She cannot afford to realise her cultural and educational needs, for example to visit the theatre or cinema, to travel, to subscribe to newspapers – a condition she conceptualises as "poverty":

A teacher might visit the theatre to see what children saw, might read those books, watch those movies. It would be nice to travel … You need a kind of … charisma in a teacher's position, so that your personality would attract them, to be able to influence them (Mare, teacher).

People working in the public sector expressed a feeling of their educational credentials being downgraded. It is not due to the need for a new type of skill in their work areas, it is rather the devaluation of those domains in general. This statement holds for education, but not for the court system, which still has a favoured position in the social hierarchy. For those who stayed, it was easier to continue on their previous track. Therefore, one could conclude that the public sector worked as 'sticky' ground in that it promoted the continuation of the previous life path. We have, however, still observed that people in the public sector were less likely to be mobile. Rather than opting for new emerging possibilities, they rely on established routines. This is especially true for people who had formed their families by the time of the economic reforms; they placed particularly high value on a secure, stable workplace.

People working in the public sector belong to the middle class. But there were also some respondents who worked in primary and secondary sectors at the beginning of the 1990s and who had quite stable careers. The company (a corn processing factory) where one Russian woman was working was not closed. Despite some layoffs, she succeeded in keeping her job. She was protected by her experiences, age, and not having children. Another Russian woman was at home with her child during the most unstable period in the early 1990s. In her case it seems to have not been a restriction but rather an advantage. She was not discharged. The enterprise was closed at the 'right' time. She reacted very quickly and was successful in finding a new job in an electronics manufacturing service company. She is not pleased with her job, but she believes that it is better than nothing. This interviewee recognises her condition as socially and economically disadvantaged, yet has no intention to change it and interprets it as relatively satisfactory.

> Now it's just good to have a job that you get paid for, too. Well, so that you can sort of live on it (Irina, worker).

One man stayed in agriculture. He works in a cattle shed as an employee and does not see any difference in his life due to the new economic system. He works in the same place, although there now is a private owner instead of the state. He drinks heavily and has rarely left his home village. It seemed that he does not even imagine that he could do something else. If one was to exaggerate a little, one could say that the village and the cattle shed were his universe and that he lacks a way out. He describes their life as follows:

> We manage. We don't complain. Of course, we work like a horse, that's clear. But, overall, we manage (Rein, agricultural worker).

The following respondent is a medical orderly in a nursing hospital section, where many dying patients are treated. She does hard work for a very small monthly salary. In the 1990s, she had a low-paying job in a shoe factory. Asked about things that might have had an impact on her life, she says: "I wouldn't say that something has influenced me. All decisions I've made, I've made them myself". When asked about her salary and how one can cope with that, she answers:

> We often joke that if we had a lot [of money], we could hardly cope so well. And we're doing well […] I've not died from starvation yet, and I wouldn't

say I am underfed […] I never say I'm doing badly. Let it be bad, I'm still well. You think that all's going well, and so it'll go (Virve, medical orderly).

Explanation of a certain way of life as the result of individual choice ("I was not sacked, I quit myself"; "I've made all my decisions myself") is in obvious contradiction with this interviewee's references to the absence of choice as the cause of her actions (low-paying job, very modest nutrition habits, etc.).

All respondents in this group have had reasonably stable careers, remained at the same level of social hierarchy, and could not see any significant improvement. Due to quite important strategic restrictions – relatively low level of education, and for both Russian women, also the additional restriction of not knowing the Estonian language – it is difficult to expect any rapid improvement in the future for those respondents. The interviewees belonging to this type, in general, approved social changes, although there were also changes that made them feel insecure.

Unstable career

Two Russian men and one Russian woman working in manufacturing at the end of 1980s have had very unstable careers during the transition period, but their lives later stabilised and they now work in the secondary sector. One man's career is especially characteristic. He moved to private business at the end of 1980s. A friend set up a bar and he decided to become a barman. It was a very difficult time; there was a shortage of products and hard liquor. The competition was tough and the bar went bankrupt. After this, he worked as a plumber for three years, but with the reorganisation of state enterprise, he, as most workers, lost his job and became unemployed as well. When one of his acquaintances set up a business, he was employed as his assistant. There were no political borders and they imported school supplies from Belarus. However, the business did not last long. In 1996, he began working in an oil shale mine – a job he got thanks to his social contacts. As his father had worked as a miner for 13 years and had lost his health there, he had sworn that he would never go to work in a mine, but needing money, he had no choice.

Two other Russians had changed their workplace several times as well, but they both stayed in the secondary sector. They all are aware of their poor opportunities; they have no plans for the future. A non-Estonian woman working as a seamstress in a clothes factory is quite frustrated. She said that "the foolish perestroika ruined everything … Now you have to be an adventurer to achieve

success". She is pessimistic regarding her opportunities to find a better job because she thinks her education is not valued.

> There is nothing else to be found in Narva. Going from one sewing factory to another would be stupid. To study to become a technician – well, they take people up to 35 there. I could take a distant training programme but that wouldn't pay off either. These days you can also get by really well without an education, if you have an acquaintance who is *somebody* or works *somewhere*. Then you might be stupid, but you would live very well. I don't have connections like that; therefore, I don't have anything better to hope for (Svetlana, seamstress; original emphasis).

She answered a question about her future plans:

> I don't have any plans. Now we live on a day-to-day basis … It used to be easier before, there was work and I felt secure … I do not see any special prospects here, either for myself, or my children … Maybe only in Russia … We shall see, perhaps in the European Union … (Svetlana, seamstress).

Three interviewed women had worked in sales and service in the late 1980s. All of them changed their workplace several times. In spite of the expansion of the personal service sector, the labour turnover in this sector remained very high. All interviewees complained about very poor work conditions and long working hours. These were the main reasons why most of them moved out of this sector. The salaries were very low too (the salary level in service and trade was one of the lowest at the beginning of 1990s, especially for women). One woman characterised her salary as a diet-salary. Another Russian woman had very sad experiences with the owner of the shop.

> I tried to work in a store, but the owner cheated us. This was the time when those little stores were just being set up. She robbed us of everything. […] Worked there for two months. Totally horrid (Irina, unemployed).

Personal services turned out to be very dynamic: a lot of small shops and bars were opened in the 1990s. But most of them were closed after some years due to the competition being very high; only bigger shops survived. We noticed some devaluation of qualifications in this sector, but they were selective. People working in business service, which was the sector where there was the largest increase in the number of workers, were more successful.

Economic changes in the early 1990s destabilised the life courses of interviewees belonging to this type. Individuals working in economic sectors, where restructuring was the most profound – such as sales, personal service, construction, transportation, and most of all manufacturing –, were forced to change their chosen life path. It was the period of searching for new opportunities, mainly for men. Women have a very important limitation – small children restrict their opportunities. During the transition period, all representatives of this type were very active in labour market. But the process of restructuring of the economic sector in the industrial region of Estonia, where all respondents of this group lived, did not guarantee reliable jobs. The number of jobs was cut and the enterprises closed. Most often new work was found with the help of social connections (contacts with relatives and previous co-workers). These social networks helped find a new job, but did not guarantee stable work or a higher level in the social hierarchy. One of the crucial restrictions of the interviewees of this type was the weakness of their starting position – they started the transition period with fewer opportunities. Their living standard had declined. All of them lived in industrial regions of Estonia, with mainly a non-Estonian population. That area had suffered the most from the changes in the economy and politics in the transition period. They had scarce personal resources, as well as scarce social resources (social networks for instrumental support only). Interviewees who had an unstable career during this period and were presently employed in skilled work, were aware of their poor opportunities and had no future plans.

Self-employed

We were able to separate different groups of self-employed people based on their experiences (see also Saar & Unt 2010; Unt & Saar 2011). The first group includes individuals who entered self-employment in the early 1990s and have stayed there. Representatives of this group were employees working in the primary and secondary sectors in the early 1990s. People working in the privatised branches of the economy were much more directly affected by the turbulences of economic reforms. Most companies were restructured after privatisation and massive redundancies were everyday events. People faced the increasing work insecurity and experienced unemployment for the first time. As one interviewee, who was working at a collective farm, describes:

> […] then the farms started to break apart and rental companies were formed. I spent several years in that rental company. Then the land returns started and things fell apart. Everyone wanted their own share and then I started

a business on my own. Created my own transport company (Ülo, owner of a small transport company).

On being asked whether he still considered entering private entrepreneurship a good decision, Ülo said there was "nothing else to do anyway". In addition to the very insecure work contracts, he acknowledged that he hardly gets any days off. He works during public holidays and during weekends. He also repairs his trucks by himself. In general, Ülo considered his time as a private entrepreneur the most difficult of his life. In spite of being a private entrepreneur, his working conditions were poor, his working hours long, and the material reward for his work limited.

The following respondent (car electrician) had also entered private entrepreneurship at the beginning of 1990s. His life path illustrates the lost institutional embrace of the socialist economic system quite clearly.

When the period of change began, I worked in a public company in my own specialty, a specialty close to mine, but in connection with the arrival of the new era, state companies started to disappear one by one and I had to start thinking about my path myself, about creating something, and thus that company was founded. That was it … the beginning was quite difficult … the situation was such that one really had to start making one's own decisions, for oneself, and one's own future and all that (Tõnu, car electrician).

However, the motivation behind starting a private business was not purely taking advantage of newly emerging possibilities. It was quite clearly also a forced move since previous workplaces disappeared as a result of the collapse of collective farms or the closing of industrial enterprises. Especially in rural areas, where regular jobs were scarce, self-employment was almost the last resort when grasping for survival.

At the same time, new possibilities to start private businesses emerged. Private entrepreneurship has been seen as a mobility opportunity for all people who are able to take risk, irrespective of their educational background. One interviewee described the privatisation process of collective farms. Some of his friends, who were specialists and managers in collective farms, succeeded in privatising thousands of hectares of land (in his words, they "put their hands on the kolkhoz"). They live well since they managed to seize just the right moment to use the available resources in the countryside.

In general terms, the individuals belonging to this type had benefited from the new economic situation and had been upwardly mobile because they established their firms without higher education. However, taking a closer look, they

were successful at the beginning of their private businesses, when there was only limited competition. The businesses gave them a very good economic return in the early days but most of them did not manage to survive the expanding competition. They were heavily dependent upon just a few major clients, which made them vulnerable to changes in the job demands of these clients. At the beginning of the 2000s, in the context of tightening competition and more and more regulated legal environment, the respondents continuing their business were very pessimistic about the future of their firms.

Another group includes employees working as specialists or managers in the different sectors. They also entered private business in the early 1990s but later quit and started to work as dependent workers. They have higher education. Due to their studies at university, they entered the labour market shortly before the collapse of Soviet rule. This was in some sense an advantage because an important characteristic of this group was that they were not as rooted in the old kind of work culture. However, they too were disadvantaged because they did not have enough time to achieve a position in state companies to get significant pieces of these companies when they were privatised.

One illustrative case of how structural changes had pushed a person to move to self-employment is the biography of a man with higher education who is currently working as a project manager in a foreign construction company. He had tried hard to find a stable position during the changes, but he was just not lucky. The following passage from the interview describes in a vivid fashion how profoundly the labour market was restructuring and what was the magnitude of the instability people faced in privatised sectors.

I had an assignment and a job and everything already. Exactly a month before I graduated, that company ceased to exist, just like all of melioration [agricultural engineering]. In the 1990s actually the whole state-supported, as it had always been, melioration ceased to exist in Estonia … Most of us [course mates] went into construction, since we got as much construction at school as melioration itself. I worked in this firm 2 years exactly, then this company ceased to exist, as it was also a kolkhoz construction office but kolkhozes ceased to exist as well; there were no finances, but all construction departments became small limited liability companies at that time. Practically the same group of people was just a limited liability company now. The firm spawned some 10–20 companies like that, each department made their own limited company. Then there was the chance to work two more years in that small company, after that the Estonian kroon came and all construction activity in Estonia stopped for a while completely … Then the company

> where I worked … some information was obtained from somewhere and well, we formed connections with that factory in Germany for importing leisure goods: garden furniture, bicycles, lawnmowers … something like that. We continued the trading with Germany. Until … almost last year (2002) (Vello, manager in private building company).

Vello used his knowledge and contacts with a German factory gained from his previous workplace to start his own private business. He did not do anything differently than he did in his old workplace; he just continued trading with Germany in his own limited liability company.

Another engineer was also active in trade because this is where the opportunities were in the early 1990s. However, by the end of the 1990s the economic situation had changed and small shops were becoming marginalised in the context of more intense competition. Both engineers then decided to leave the shrinking field of private business and to continue their careers as employees. Having a degree in engineering played a very crucial role in taking this step. They were successful in taking advantage of their education credentials and private business experience and found work as managers of big state- or foreign-owned companies. A manager who had started to work for an Estonian Railway company explained his decision as a new challenge:

> […] to go from my own 10-person private company to a company with 360 employees just in one day basically, where before I had a million as the yearly turnover, then there the turnover was 60 million a year, you know, the temptation was great to challenge myself, working with other people (Toomas, manager in railway company).

They made the move to more secure employment during the cooling down period of the Estonian economy. It was a time when many businesses, especially small ones and those bound to Russian markets, either closed down or atrophied. Compared to the previous group, they had secure work and a substantial income without taking any entrepreneurial risks. However, they emphasised the importance of their experiences in self-employment and thought that they had advantages compared to colleagues without such experiences. As one interviewee said, he now knows what it means to be responsible for the success of the firm, to be economical. Thus, it seems that the more educated people who also had an appropriate social network were not only more often successful with their private entrepreneurship, but also had more possibilities to leave self-employment for a job if their business did not prove to be beneficial anymore. The more

educated individuals were better able to orient themselves in new, challenging situations and succeed where others would not.

Conclusions

Our analysis reveals that, at least in the early years, the transition period led more to a collective fate than to increased individualised activity. Company closures and reorganisations triggered inter-company shifts and transitions to unemployment. Individuals changed their plans and behaviour because they had to adapt. Most of our interviewees emphasised that the transition period brought about unexpected consequences for their careers and their lives in general. Work dismissals were often collective experiences, which had nothing to do with individual qualifications and motivation. Our analysis indicated the stability of relative rankings in the social hierarchy despite the huge number of job moves. The transformation experiences were to a high extent of a collective nature, insofar as they resulted from national collective decisions and were mediated via sectoral changes and the reorganisation of companies.

Contrary to expectations that change in a system allows differences in personal characteristics to become more important for success and failure in life, a structural position had a decisive role at the beginning of changes. Success was less a matter of individual control than a matter of structural conditions. The self-initiative of people was not realised because institutional rules and structural conditions led to passive coping strategies. Competencies and self-initiative were important for the decision to start a business, as well as for direct company shifts. But in aggregate, they had only a limited impact on the chance of upward mobility and on the risk of unemployment. Restructuring in the economy severely limited the unfolding of individual agency. Having a job in the primary or secondary sector during the reforms often worked as a push factor for mobility, since massive layoffs and economic restructuring left people no choice other than to start looking for new possibilities. Mainly it was forced movement, as old workplaces often disappeared with the fall of the old system. Collective risks of unemployment emerged, for which personal characteristics and former resources were of only minor importance. As Offe (1993) indicates, having the right past, knowing the right people, speaking the right language, living in the right place, belonging to the right age and gender category, and working in the right sector made substantially more difference in the determination of future life chances than any individual agency.

While a move to private entrepreneurship is often seen as an upward path, the situation is less clear-cut upon closer inspection. People often opted for private

entrepreneurship because they did not have other alternatives. This kind of entrepreneurship could be characterised as 'survival trading'. The conditions such individuals worked under were often very poor and, in many cases, self-employment held little promise of cumulative growth. Since the self-employed were unable to find new resources, their success depended on resources (land, equipment, know-how, etc.) they had inherited from the socialist period. A leading position in the old power structure was an important factor in successful entrepreneurship. The chances for ordinary workers who lacked the necessary social networks and skills to set up a profitable business were much more limited.

Our analysis indicates clear cumulative advantage and disadvantage patterns in life courses of the generation. The winner/loser divide from the first half of the 1990s consolidated during the subsequent period. It was very hard to overcome exclusion of the first phase. The channels by which risks were shifted depended upon pre-existing inequalities in resources. Increasing economic risks in the process of post-socialist transformation were shifted towards the more disadvantaged groups within the labour force; the market transition benefited those who were already better rewarded. Members of the "generation of winners" who were already in middle and lower positions in the 1980s found themselves again in such positions. The diversity among those belonging to this generation is remarkable. A radical system change from a socialist planned economy to a liberal market economy has not devalued prior personal resources. Education played a crucial role among these resources. Devaluations of education can be observed, but they were quite selective. The highly educated are the winners in the Estonian labour market.

However, the interviews display that the 'victory' of 'winners' has been relative: a number of them experience financial hardships, perceive their income as insufficient to satisfy their social and cultural needs, or refer to the decrease in control over their own lives. Changes in the 1990s affected the two national communities in Estonia differently. Non-Estonians had a twofold risk of being downgraded: as an ethnic group moving from a privileged nation to becoming a minority within a nationalising Estonia, and because most of them worked in industry as representatives of a previously privileged social group (industrial workers). Having only higher education did not guarantee non-Estonians stable positions in the labour market. They had to have a whole 'package' of different assets (higher education, broad social network, good knowledge of Estonian, favourable structural position) to become successful (see also Saar & Kazjulja 2007).

The analysis of the biographical narratives has also disclosed the strategies that respondents used to cope with social challenges, as well as the discontinuities

and disruptions that serve as symptoms of difficulties the respondents have experienced or continue to experience in their efforts to overcome their socioeconomic situations.

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Notes

Ellu Saar, Margarita Kazjulja

Appendix. Interviews: the list of respondents

Fieldwork material of the authors, Estonia, 2003–2004

Sex	Language of interview	Type of institution of secondary education	Education level at time of interview	Place of residence at time of interview	Occupation at time of interview
Female	Estonian	General	General secondary education	Countryside	Medical orderly
Female	Estonian	General	Specialised secondary education	Countryside	Store manager
Male	Estonian	General	General secondary education	Small town	Sales manager
Male	Estonian	General	Higher education	Other city	Engineer
Male	Estonian	General	Higher education	Capital	Scientist
Male	Estonian	General	Higher education	Small town	Farmer
Female	Estonian	General	Higher education	Capital	Librarian
Female	Estonian	General	Higher education	Small town	IT specialist
Female	Estonian	General	Higher education	Countryside	Teacher
Female	Estonian	General (with a language bias)	General secondary education	Small town	Housewife
Female	Estonian	General (with a language bias)	Higher education	Capital	Translator
Male	Estonian	General (with a mathematics bias)	Higher education	Small town	Judge
Male	Estonian	Vocational	Vocational secondary education	Countryside	Tractor driver
Male	Estonian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Capital	Electrician
Male	Estonian	Vocational	Higher education	Countryside	Businessman
Male	Estonian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Countryside	Self-employed
Female	Estonian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Other city	Sales manager
Male	Estonian	Specialised	Higher education	Capital	Manager
Male	Estonian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Small town	Self-employed
Female	Estonian	Specialised	Higher education	Small town	Teacher
Male	Estonian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Capital	Businessman
Female	Estonian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Small town	Nurse

Sex	Language of interview	Type of institu- tion of second- ary education	Education level at time of interview	Place of resi- dence at time of interview	Occupation at time of interview
Male	Russian	Vocational	Vocational secondary education	Small town	Bulldozer driver
Female	Russian	Vocational	Vocational secondary education	Other city	Seamstress
Male	Russian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Small town	Mine worker
Female	Russian	Specialised	Specialised secondary education	Small town	Controller in a factory
Female	Russian	General	General secondary education	Other city	Seamstress
Male	Russian	General	Higher education	Capital	Unemployed
Female	Russian	General	Higher education	Capital	Unemployed
Female	Russian	General	General secondary education	Small town	Laboratory assistant
Male	Russian	General (with a language bias)	Higher education	Capital	Businessman
Female	Russian	General	Higher education	Other city	Scientist

Constructing a transition generation: the 1970s cohort

Raili Nugin

Abstract. This chapter explores whether the cohort of people born in the 1970s in Estonia constitutes a 'generation'. Spending their childhood during the Soviet era, this cohort's transition to adulthood coincided with the turbulent times of the social and political changes of the 1990s: they were the first to become employed, get educated, and create families under the circumstances of newly regained independence. In this chapter, a double portrait of this age group is offered: (a) quantitative data about the socialisation processes of the cohort, complemented by (b) data from qualitative in-depth and focus group interviews (N=47). It will be argued that there is a mismatch between the structural influences on their generational identity, as shown by demographic and social patterns on the one hand, and the discursive construction of their generational identity on the other. While being the first to deviate from linear patterns of coming of age, leading to the prolonging of adulthood (postponement of the completion of education, partnership and childbearing, fragmented transitions), the reflexive generational identity of the 1970s cohort is tied to previous age groups, as they base this identity on memories of the Soviet period and the national awakening and social change of the 1990s. Thus, they make an interesting example of a generation in-between.

In 1992, in the wake of newly regained independence, Mart Laar (b. 1960), aged 32, stepped into office as the winner of the first official elections after the collapse of the Soviet Union. He remains the youngest prime minister to take office in Estonia. The period of his first term in office[1] coincided with an overall restructuring of society. At the time, youth became sort of a symbolic capital (as defined in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005) of its own as many strategic positions in various spheres of Estonian society were occupied by young people. The young were seen as more capable of reconstructing society as they did not bear the ideological taint of collaboration nor the responsibility for the wrongdoings of the previous regime (Marada 2004). Soon the term the "winners' generation"

gained support in discursive fields and was adopted by sociologists (e.g. Titma 1999), who applied sociological data to illustrate the upward social mobility of the generation born in the 1960s.[2]

In 2014, twenty-two years later, in a far more stable economic and social situation, Taavi Rõivas (b. 1979), aged 34, stepped into the office as prime minister. One could say that in this case, his youth as symbolic capital worked somewhat differently than it did for Mart Laar. Unlike Laar, Rõivas' rise to power was not a result of an electoral win at the head of his party (although Rõivas did lead his party to an election win already as a prime minister a year later). Rather, Rõivas was more of a replacement for Siim Kallas (b. 1948), who gave up his ambitions to replace the sitting prime minister Andrus Ansip (b. 1956) because of media accusations against him. Thus, Rõivas was sometimes treated in the public media as being a replacement from the substitute's bench.

One thing, however, was similar in both cases: young prime ministers in power triggered discourses regarding the 'new generation'. In Laar's case, the new generation was defined by its purity, having not been tainted by the Soviet system; in Rõivas' case, the new generation, which gradually replaced the politicians who rose to power in the 1990s, was a generation whose transition to adulthood occurred at the time of the regained Estonian Republic. However, powerful positions were held by other people born in the 1970s even before Rõivas' premiership. In the spring of 2014, the leaders of three out of the four parties represented in parliament were born in the 1970s (1973, 1975, and 1979, to be precise). Furthermore, all parliamentary factions were led by people born in the 1970s.

Although Rõivas is treated as a member of a different generation than Laar, who was born nearly 20 years prior to him, what about those who were born in between them? How can a boundary be drawn between generations? Can we talk about a generational phenomenon in the case of people born in the 1970s? And if so, what are the characteristics of this generation and what distinguishes it from the previous generation, and the next generation? This chapter examines the construction of a generation from two perspectives. Drawing on quantitative statistics, the structural differences between the 1970s cohort and its predecessor and successor cohorts are examined. Based on qualitative interviews, differences in the discursive self-identification of the cohort as a separate generation are examined. An analysis then evaluates whether people born in the 1970s constitute a separate generation or a cohort within some broader generation.

Some theoretical implications: why generations matter

Contemporary theorists suggest that people tend to be more conscious of their generational identity than of their belonging to other social groups (see Marada 2004, 152). The rise in generational consciousness may be caused by swift and wide changes in society (Eisenstadt 1988, 102; Misztal 2003, 85). In stable societies, cultural knowledge and values are passed from generation to generation, thereby strengthening class-consciousness or religious identity. Under periods of overwhelming social change, previous cultural knowledge and values no longer apply to the new social conditions. Thus, quick change can create generational conflicts or even traumas, leaving new generations cut off from the past because they find knowledge gained from their parents useless. They can also be separated from the present as they lack people who would guide them in the contemporary world (Eisenstadt 1988, 91; Sztompka 2000; Edmunds & Turner 2002, 7). Thus, people whose formative years are spent under great social change tend to emphasise their generational identity over their class or religious identities. New birth cohorts create their own socialising patterns, and the quicker the pace of social development, the more often novel socialisation patterns emerge. The appearance of new socialising patterns among youth has in turn inspired researchers to generate numerous generation labels, which may coexist and overlap.[3] However, the barriers between the generations tend to be levelled through intergenerational contact in everyday communication (Giesen 2004, 38).

According to Mannheim (1952 [1927/1928]), generations emerge when the socialisation years of young people coincide with turbulent social change. In sociology the term 'socialisation years' is used to indicate the transition from childhood into adulthood. Particular transitions are considered crucial in young people's maturation to adulthood, such as the transition to employment, to an independent household, into a partnership, and to becoming a parent (Cook & Furstenberg 2002; Katus et al 2005). These are biographical events during an individual's life, yet social structures and environment have a significant effect on the timing and order of these demographic markers. The period of these transitions has been extended during recent decades in post-industrial cultures. Instead of normative linear transitions from one stage of the transition period to the next, young people in these cultures are described as negotiating their transitions rather than completing them, bouncing back and forth between various choices (Holdsworth & Morgan 2005; Pais 2000). Age ranges for these transitions vary from country to country. One of the processes causing the extension of the transition period is the increase in access to higher education and the practice of simultaneous work and study. Postponement of parenthood and steady

partnership is also common, as well as the widespread increase in cohabitation at the expense of marriage. These changes started in Western societies around the 1970s, therefore young people who have come of age since then are sometimes called the "post-1970 generation" (Wyn & Woodman 2006).

In Estonia, the structural and institutional conditions relating to the transition from school to work changed substantially after the change of regime. During the Soviet period, the transitions were rather smooth, although institutionalised – jobs were allocated after graduation and unemployment was virtually non-existent. When this system collapsed, state-owned enterprises were privatised and sometimes abolished. Certain types of education and professions[4] that were appropriate for a socialist economy based on planning were no longer relevant. However, a new institutional system supporting young people's transitions was not yet established. Negotiating one's transition to adulthood under these new conditions needed some new answers, a new habitus, and new biographical paths.

Generally speaking, there are two approaches to the conceptualisation of generation (see introduction for discussion). The first concentrates on the intangible features that carry the generational consciousness such as memories, biographies, discourse, etc. (see Corsten 1999; Misztal 2003; Marada 2004; Jõesalu 2005; Weisbrod 2007; Kõresaar 2008; Grünberg 2009). The second focuses on the shared social and demographic features that define the generation (studies on demographic behaviour, career opportunity structures, income, social transitions, etc.: Titma 1999; Turner 2002; Katus et al 2005; Chauvel 2006; Thane 2007). This chapter aims to shed light on both approaches. First, using the structural approach of 'generation as location', the chapter examines the statistical data on the socialisation of the 1970s cohort. This reveals some demographic patterns, but also touches on the structural social conditions at the time of transition (unemployment rates, education, and income data). The aim of this part of the chapter is to see if the 1970s cohort forms a coherent unit in terms of their transition to adulthood. Secondly, relying on qualitative interview data, the chapter will explore the self-reflexive construction of a generation by those born in the 1970s to see if there is a unifying 'generational consciousness' that would enable us to talk about them as a generation. Rather than relying on generalisations made on the basis of respondent memories or discourse, I directly asked respondents to reflect on their own generational identity. Interviewing representatives of one specific cohort in this way gives them the chance to reflect on the topic, but may at the same time influence them to construct a generation that they would not perceive if not specifically asked. On the other hand, constructing a generation by examining common discourses would overlook the data to be found in the cohort's self-definition.

Statistical analysis

Education patterns

After the establishment of an independent state, education in Estonia went through several reforms. Gradually, starting with the abolition of school uniforms and the addition of optional courses, the institutions began to de-standardise the Soviet system of education. Largely as a reaction to that system, in which students had little or no say in the direction of their study programs, a number of decisions were relocated to the level of the individual student (which subjects to choose when studying at secondary school, how to compose their own university program). Such developments probably gave students a sense of control over their own education and the feeling of being part of the larger societal changes. Without a doubt, the era of educational reform also involved much confusion, lack of organisation, and even chaos.

One of the most remarkable changes in terms of the transition to adulthood is the expansion of tertiary education, also common in other post-socialist countries (Kogan & Unt 2005, 226). Not only did the state universities expand, enabling them to enrol those who could pay for their education, but also a number of new higher education institutions emerged. While until 1996 the number of vocational schools also rose, they started to decline quickly thereafter. The number of higher education institutions rose until 2001,[5] peaking at 80 tertiary schools, which is a rather high number considering the population of Estonia (1.3 million). As one would expect, the university market soon started to be regulated and standardised. Thus, the number of higher education institutions also started to fall in 2004. However, the number of students did not fall at a corresponding pace during this period. Therefore, rather than being closed, these schools merged with others.

During the Soviet period, the number of people who acquired higher education was approximately 20% of the cohorts (the numbers differ between males and females, see Katus et al 2008), with approximately 70% of enrolled graduating. This model started to change in the 1990s, starting with the sudden rise in the number of enrolled students. From 1990 to 2000, the annual number of students enrolling at universities grew by 223% in total, while the number of graduates did not change significantly (probably because many students worked simultaneously and postponed their graduation). The growth in matriculation from 2000 to 2008 slowed to 12%. After 2008, the enrolment numbers started to decline, reaching the same level as in 2000 by the year 2012 (this had probably to do with the decline in cohort numbers of those born in 1990s as well). The overall number of

Figure 1. Acquiring tertiary education, 1980–2012

Enrolled students and tertiary education graduates
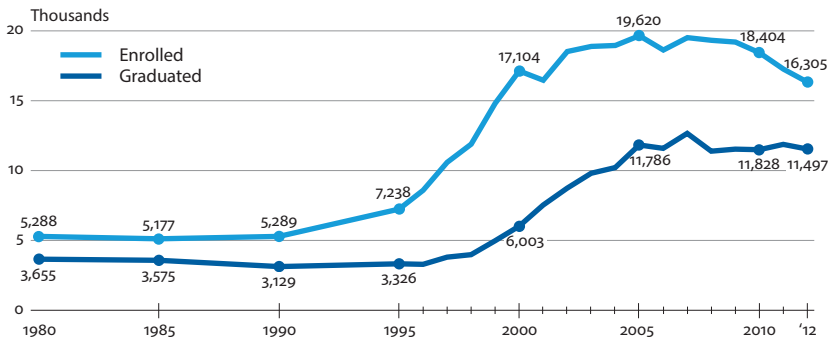
graduates of tertiary education in proportion to the number of students enrolled was approximately 60% in 1990; 35% in 2000 and reached the 60% again in 2005.

In short, the 1970s cohort had a specific response to the social conditions in Estonia – they gladly welcomed the new universities and enrolled in them, though few finished their schooling on time. Another important trend at that time was the prolonging of the period of education. If we look at the percentages that display the age of students, we can see that while in 1993 only 9.5% of 24 year olds were enrolled in tertiary education (born in 1969), by 2000 the proportion doubled to 22% (born in 1976) and grown further by 2012, when the proportion was 31%. This indicates that the 1970s cohort was not entirely involved in the trend of prolonging the education period, which started in the 1990s; rather, this trend mostly involved people born in the second half of the 1970s. While 73.6% of people born in the period 1969–1973 pursued no further education after the age of 21, the numbers in subsequent cohorts (1974–1978 and 1979–1983) were 72.3% and 58.1% respectively (Katus et al 2008).[6]

All these figures seem to suggest that those born in the 1970s are significantly more educated than the previous cohorts. Yet, the numbers of the 2011 census indicate that the sudden growth in enrolment at universities in the 1990s did not result in a similar growth in the number of tertiary education graduates. The proportion of the latter starts to rise again among those born in the second half of the 1970s, rising only slightly higher than among those born between 1957 and 1961.[7]

In conclusion, the 1970s cohort witnessed a significant transformation in the landscape of education, especially in the spread of tertiary education, the

Figure 2. Tertiary education attainment, 2011

By birth year

Source: Statistics Estonia, the 2011 census
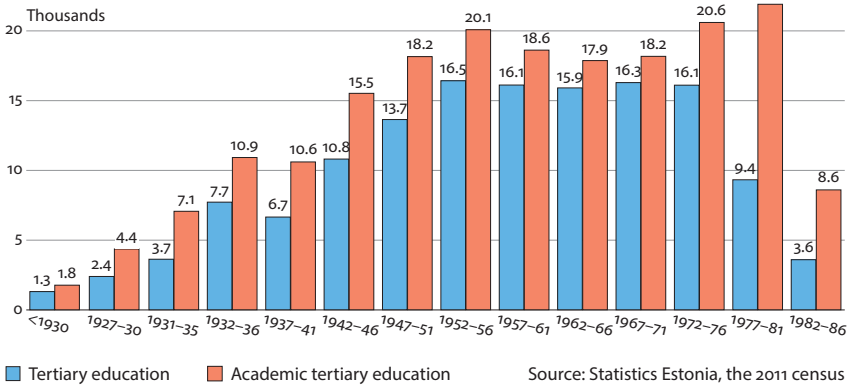
extension of education paths, and the practice of simultaneous work and study, examples of which will be given in the next sub-chapter.

Transition to work

Estonia adopted a liberal economic model that has been called "shock therapy" and thereby Estonia itself a "reform laboratory" (Saar & Helemäe 2006). The liberal market economy reforms were rather sharp and overwhelming. The ongoing changes in the labour market provide explanations for the discrepancies described in the sub-chapter about education. Paradoxically enough, even though enrolment at universities started growing at an unprecedented pace, the link between education and the social status of jobs began to weaken, and during the most turbulent times was almost non-existent (Kogan & Unt 2005, 225). In fact, Saar and Helemäe (2006) suggest that between 1995 and 1997 education did not show any effect on upward or downward mobility. In other words, during the restructuring of the economy, the social hierarchies and their stratification mechanisms lost their importance: entering the labour market undereducated was a common reality (Kogan & Unt 2005). That means that although the 1970s cohort was enrolled in universities in greater numbers compared to previous cohorts, not all of them completed their tertiary education, as labour market possibilities tended to be favourable for them.

Although Estonian economic development after regaining independence has sometimes been described as a success story, in the 1990s overall conditions

Figure 3. Unemployment rate by age group, 1993–2013

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15–24	11.2	11.7	14.4	16.1	14.5	15.8	19.7	23.0	21.1	17.9	20.9	23.9	15.1	12.1	10.1	12.0	27.4	32.9	22.4	20.9	18.7
25–49	6.5	7.6	9.7	9.6	10.0	10.0	12.3	14.1	12.3	10.2	8.7	8.9	7.7	5.7	4.3	4.7	12.8	15.3	11.6	9.4	8.1
50–69	4.2	5.1	6.9	7.3	6.1	6.2	8.5	12.0	11.1	11.4	9.9	7.6	6.2	4.2	3.3	4.5	10.5	14.6	10.7	8.0	7.0
15–74	6.6	7.6	9.7	9.9	9.6	9.8	12.2	14.6	13.0	11.2	10.3	10.1	8.0	5.9	4.6	5.5	13.5	16.7	12.3	10.0	8.6
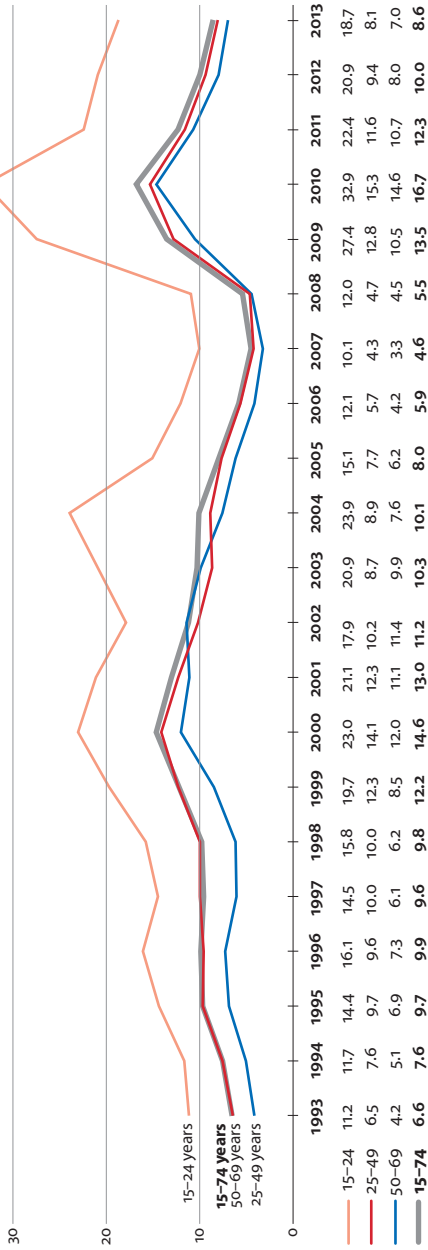
were rather turbulent. Shortly after establishing its own state, Estonian GDP fell 22% with consumer price inflation reaching 1069% (Saar & Unt 2008, 327). The fall in economic activity was caused by the sudden establishment of a liberal economy, which implied the breakdown of economic relations with the former Soviet Union and the abolition of several subsidies, which in turn resulted in the closure of many facilities causing a decline in labour demand. Unemployment rates started to rise. As shown in Figure 3, the most unfortunate age group in terms of unemployment is the youngest. However, the chart also shows that those entering the labour market in the first half of the 1990s had a lower probability of being unemployed compared to those entering it later. This means that the cohort born in the 1970s is not homogeneous in this respect. Those born at the beginning of the 1970s had better labour market conditions compared to those born in the second half. Yet, none of the 1970s cohort belonged to the 15–24 age group when the unemployment rate started to rise yet again in 2008, reaching its peak in 2010.

Even though many young people were having difficulties coping during times of economic scarcity, a great deal of them were excited about the possibilities of the changing society (Vogt 2005) and seized the opportunities that had emerged in the new liberal economy (Helemäe et al 2000, 38; Tallo & Terk 1998, 15; Titma 1999, 10). The institutional structure for transitions from school to work changed remarkably during the social change of the 1990s. The claim of favourable employment conditions for the 1970s cohort is well exemplified in the data collected by Mari Toomse (2004), with which she explored the transition from school to work among young people. According to her data, the first jobs of 23% of young people leaving school between 1992 and 1994, and 19% of those leaving school between 1995 and 2002, were higher managerial and professional posts.

One of the indicators of this age group's economic status is the income data. If we look at the income statistics per household during the 2003–2011 period (Figure 4), we see that the 25–34 age group had the highest yearly income and the income that grew proportionally the most during the 2003–2008 period.[8] During the economic crisis (2008–2010), however, the age group who proportionally lost the most was the 16–24-year-olds. By 2010, the 1970s birth cohort had entered the next two age groups (25–34 and 35–44). The figure also indicates that these age groups recovered quite quickly after the crisis. The fact that the 25–34 age group has the highest income can perhaps be explained by the life stage of the young people: some of them have possibly not settled yet (no other household members). Research conducted in 2005 (Katus et al 2008) asked respondents about their satisfaction with their income. While among the cohorts born in 1959–1963 37.3% and in 1964–1968 43.3% claimed to be "very satisfied" with their income,

Figure 4. Net income by age group, 2003–2011

Kroons per month
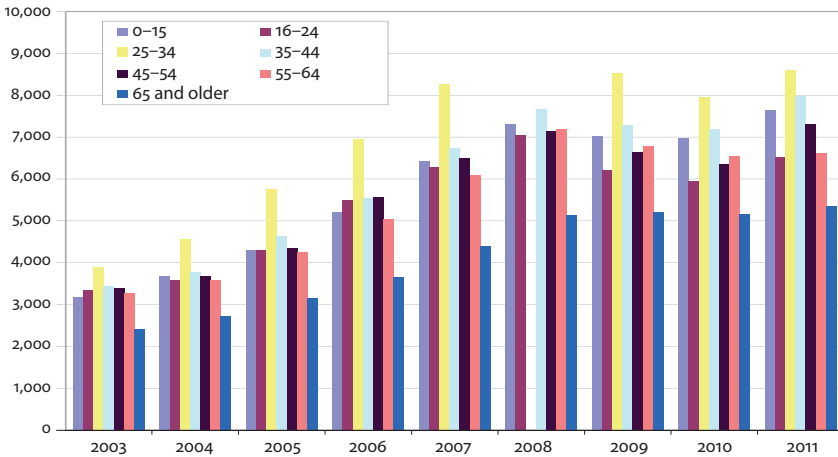
Source: Statistics Estonia

among the 1969–1973 and 1974–1978 birth cohorts the numbers were 47.2% and 49.6%, respectively. Among the next cohort, born in the 1979–1983 period, the number was slightly smaller, 46.9%.

These statistics reflect the well-noted pattern: when their socialisation years occur during a period of economic growth, the cohort tends to enter and retain better positions in the labour market compared to those who make their transition during economic recession (Chauvel 2006, 5, 7). Since their years of sociali-sation are longer (transitions from school to work tend to stretch over a longer period, family formation tends to be postponed), the 1970s cohort has witnessed both a harsh decline as well as a sharp rise in economic development (at the beginning of this century). However, this decline coincided with a restructur-ing of the economy when opportunities to participate in the re-building were available. Since those who took advantage of these opportunities occupied good positions at the start of the economic rise, this cohort may be defined as a "stra-tegic generation", to use Brian S. Turner's term (2002, 13–14). Their transition to adulthood coincided with the time of economic growth and they made use of the strategic opportunities that society had to offer.

Figure 5. Cumulative percentage of women who had started their sexual lives by the age of 18–20, 2008

By birth year

Source: after Katus et al 2008, 86

☐ 20 years old
☐ 19 years old
☐ 18 years old
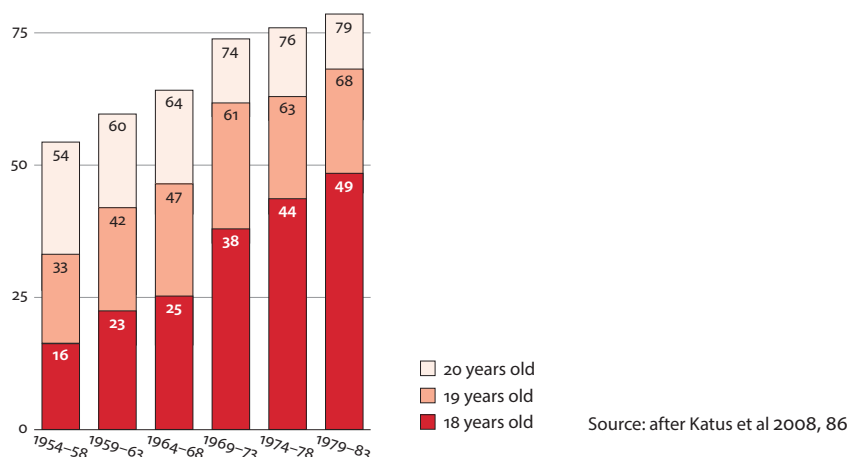
Demographic transitions

The 1970s cohort was also on the threshold of the new demographic patterns concerning sexual behaviour, marriage, and reproduction. As expected, the first to change was sexual behaviour. In terms of sexual morals, the Soviet Union's official stance represented a rather conservative model. Implied reference to sexuality was sometimes considered a result of Western capitalism, and thus was to be avoided. Pre-marital and extramarital sex was officially not approved and contraceptives were not always available. Perhaps these circumstances were among the reasons why throughout the Soviet period the age of marriage and having children got younger.[9] The moral atmosphere was loosening in the second half of the 1980s, especially after the start of Gorbachev's reign. Starting with those born at the end of the 1960s, the median age of first intercourse decreased. However, looking at Figure 5 we can see that although every successive cohort began its sex life earlier, those born in the beginning of the 1970s stand out as significantly different. Thus one can assume that this generation started the (r)evolution in sexual behaviour. It must be noted that subsequent cohorts started their sexual lives even earlier, but the difference is not as marked.

As for marriage and having children, the 1970s age group initiated the pattern of postponing childbirth and favouring cohabitation over marriage. Despite the

Figure 6. The number of marriages among women by age group, 1927–2012

Source: Statistics Estonia
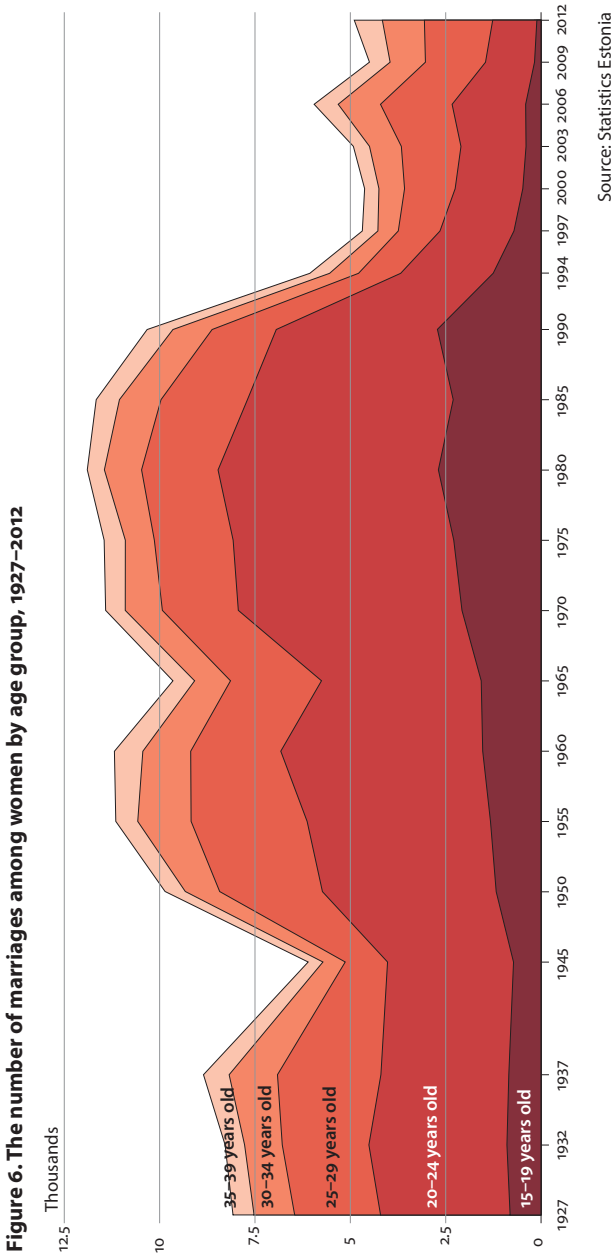
age of first intercourse declining, marriage and cohabitation patterns did not change so suddenly. Figure 6 shows that for women, the age of getting married did not rise significantly in 1990. Rather the opposite: the majority of the 15–19 age group who married, did so in this decade. By 2000 the change is obvious: not only has the number of marriages declined, but the age of marriage has increased and continues to grow. Although the behaviour of men and women differ slightly, as men tend to marry and have children a little later, the general direction is the same among both genders.

The decline in the number of marriages reflects the spread of cohabitation as a practice. Those born at the beginning of the 1970s were more likely to get married before having children compared to those born in the second half of the 1970s. The proportion of births to married couples was rather high during the Soviet period – 86% in 1970 – although it started to decline at the end of the era (73% in 1990), falling to 40.3% by 2011 and rising to 41% by 2013 (Statistics Estonia).

So far the numbers have indicated that in terms of demographic behaviour, the 1970s cohort is not homogeneous. The demographic changes are rarely sudden and although those born in the first half of the decade may show some new patterns, in other respects they tend to follow the same trends of those born in the 1960s. This claim is especially relevant with reference to giving birth. During the Soviet era the age of giving birth decreased continually. The median age to give birth after WWII was 25. However, 25% of the women born in the 1969–1973 cohort had given birth to their first child by the age of 20, thereby making them the youngest parents since European marriage patterns were adopted in Estonia in the 18th century (Katus et al 2005). Yet this demographic behaviour has shifted at a pace that can be characteristic only to periods of vast social change. If we look at the age at childbirth among those born in the 1970–1980 period (see Figure 7)[10] a trend is apparent – giving birth is postponed and those born in the second half of the decade are more likely to have children later.

The gradual spread of contraception, especially the contraceptive pill which became more commonly available at the beginning of the 1990s, may have influenced the postponement of having children. The hypothesis of the loosening of conservative attitudes towards sexual relations is supported by the numbers of teenage mothers. While the cohorts born at the beginning of the 1970s generally gave birth earlier, the number of teenage mothers was higher among those born in the middle of the decade. Among those born later, the number of teenage mothers decreased, which indicates perhaps better access to birth control and better sex education.[11]

Figure 7. The age of women at childbirth, the 1970s cohort

17   18   19   20   21   22   23   24   25   26   27   28   29   30   31   32
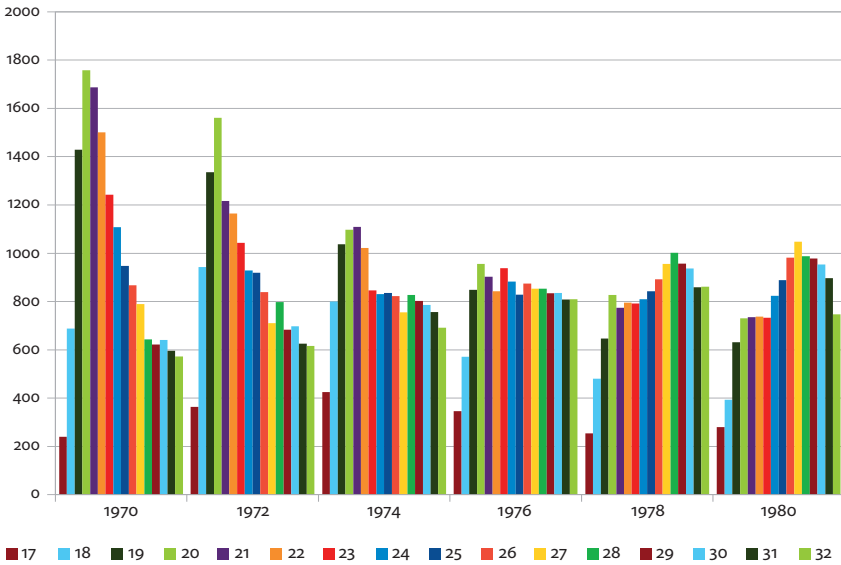
Source: Statistics Estonia

To sum up, many turning points in the demographic behaviour of contemporary Estonia can be traced back to the 1970s cohort. However, the demographic shifts are rarely sudden. In addition, not all developments are followed by subsequent cohorts (as in the case of teenage motherhood) and perhaps reflect the experimental means by which new cultural patterns are sought. Nevertheless, these numbers reveal visible trends that have occurred during the coming of age of this cohort.

Interview data

The interview data discussed herein was collected throughout a period of ten years involving six stages and 47 respondents.[12] All of the stages had somewhat different agendas or focuses, but all the interviews concentrated on retrospectively talking about respondents' plans after secondary school and their coming of age during the turbulent times of the 1990s. Except the first ten interviews, all the interviewees were also directly asked about their opinions about generational identity (in the first ten, these topics might have been touched upon indirectly).

The main criterion of the sample was age; the precondition was of being born in the 1970s (for details, see Appendix). The sample was compiled using the snowball method, starting with recruiting some of the author's acquaintances, then contacting their friends, and then friends of friends. All respondents were ethnic Estonians. The crucial criteria when choosing respondents were a Soviet childhood and transitioning to adulthood in Estonia during its hectic times of social transformation. I chose respondents who were what I considered 'advanced' in one sense or another: they had acquired economic, cultural, social, or symbolic capital, or had a voice in society in the fields in which they were involved. The sample was thus, as with much qualitative research, not representative of all the social layers in society born within this time frame. Most of the sample can be described conditionally as middle-class.

Although aware that I was dealing with a rather homogeneous sample, I still aimed for diversity in it. One of the criteria I chose for diversification was the geographical location where respondents graduated from secondary school to find out if locality mattered during the transformation period. My respondents graduated from secondary schools in larger as well as smaller towns and villages all over Estonia. However, many of them had moved to Tallinn or Tartu by the time of the interview. Another criterion I considered important was their fields of occupation and specialities. Therefore respondents were chosen from creative fields, politics, economics, education, medicine, state offices, law, and media. The diversity of the respondents' professional and geographical areas was meant to ensure variety in the fields within which the respondents operated. In addition, different operating fields implied that the proportion and mobilisation of their cultural, social, symbolic, and economic capital (as defined by Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005) would be different. This gives a stronger foundation to any conclusions based on a particular sample.

Estonia's small population size determines the character of its social networks. Being of a certain age, living in a certain town, and having a certain profession often means knowing the majority of the people in the same age group, in the same town (or who studied at the same university), or in the same profession. Furthermore, certain social circles overlap and, having talked to a person of a similar age and background, Estonians often find within minutes that they have many common acquaintances. From the point of view of this research, one could speculate that small networks also mean less diversity in opinion, giving more credence to my research results.

Analysis – reflexive generation construction

There is no clear definition of the length of a generation (Kelly 2007, 172; Lovell 2007, 5, 7). Mannheim states that a generation can embrace 15–30 years (Mannheim 1993 [1952], 24), but these parameters are never strict – in any age cohort there may be forerunners of the next generation who are marginalised by their contemporaries (op cit, 50). Some theorists tend to count generations using reproduction cycles (Katus et al 2005) or reduce the interval between generations to only 10 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics in Wyn & Woodman 2006).

Subjective generation lines are problematic as they depend not only on time period but also on the ages and current life stages of respondents.[13] I asked the interviewees to define the borders for their own generation and distinguish themselves from older and younger cohorts by pointing out the differences between them. Without much thought they often spaced the borders only 5 years apart from their age, both forward and backward. While explaining their answers, some shifted the borders further and others closer. In many cases, especially during the focus group interviews, the parameters kept shifting depending on the context of reasoning. This confirms the previously stated phenomenon that in different life situations different characteristics of a generation become important. However, not all respondents had clear opinions on the generation consciousness or its borders. While some respondents seemed to have expected these questions and claimed that the borders of the generations were very clear for them, the others found the questions difficult to answer or even irrelevant. As Katrin (b. 1975) put it: "I don't believe in generations!" She insisted that political views, as well as similar education backgrounds and interests, are more important than generations. Discussing the topic further, she admitted that there actually are some features that distinguish her generation. In other words, although many interviewees saw some differences between their own reflexive generation and others, the need for the concept of generation was sometimes questioned:

> Ketlin (b. 1973):[14] I don't even know. I don't know. I don't know how to answer that. In a sense that … as I said … for me the type of person matters, if you have this contact, if you have a mutual understanding of principles, dispositions, main truths, values. Something like that. Rather than identifying with a generation …

The interviewees' recurrent first reaction was to deny the relevance of generations in their lives because of the lack of generational conflict. Receiving such answers, I usually asked if generation as a concept signified conflict for them. In most cases,

after thinking further on the subject, the respondents said that actually this was not the case and recognised several characteristics that distinguished their age cohort from others. In addition, many acknowledged that thinking about one's generation depends on the age. For instance, Sven (b. 1978) reasoned that being 35 and having become a father recently had got him thinking about his age group and the fact that contemporary youth may be different.

These excerpts show that lines between generations are not only highly subjective, but also subjectively contextual. They depend on the life phase as well as on specific everyday situations, the angle of a particular line of thinking, or questions asked. People do not often think about the markers in generational conceptualisation; however, when starting to discuss different life situations they come up with clear borders to distinguish their generation. In the following I will endeavour to show how my respondents construct their generation and on what basis. Somewhat arbitrarily I have distinguished their type of reasoning, dividing it into markers based on (a) structural and social network features; (b) features based on discursive patterns (stories, understanding things); and (c) features based on value-orientations. This categorisation is by no means conclusive as all of the aforementioned features are interdependent and it is always difficult to decide which feature is the most critical in a specific case.

Structural and social network features

As pointed out before, when social change coincides with a cohort's coming of age, it can become crucial in forming a generational consciousness. Therefore the changes that took place shortly before and during the 1990s are expected to result in the formation of generational identity (i.e. the feeling of belonging to a generation). Many of my respondents confirmed that this is the case. As I have mentioned repeatedly, they form an interesting example of being in between: partly socialised during the Soviet era, partly in the period of transition. This in-between feeling can become for some a defining feature of their generation:

> Interviewer: Have you ever thought about … do you feel you are part of some generation?
> Tarmo (b. 1976): Yes, but I … Rather I … of course I, I don't know, sort of Hemingway background … who thought of himself as, what was it then … a dead …
> Interviewer: … lost …
> Tarmo: Yes, lost souls, right. That I am not like … that this generation emerged because it was a time of war, even two wars, that somehow this

generation that gets in between, they don't know how to be … so that something … And like empty and senseless …

Tarmo continued with saying how his generation follows some of the ideals and traditions that have been relevant for a long time among Estonians, while at the same time they have experienced the 'cowboy capitalism' of the 1990s when the social rules were in flux, allowing many to follow the principle of 'winner takes all'. In his view, this generation can be simultaneously sentimentally patriotic as well as cynically brutal.

While Tarmo sees his position of witnessing an 'interregnum' between the old and the new systems as a source of emptiness or lack of meaning, generally others do not share his view. Rather, when sensing their in-between position they tend to consider this a resource. Sven, at first not regarding himself as part of a generation, reconsidered and after thinking it over stressed that because he had the experience of being in between, he now had something that others did not:

> Sven (b. 1978): This … perhaps our generation … well, there has been a lot of talk about it also in the media, just that we are so to say the ones who … in a way have seen both times, right, that maybe those who are older than us, they are in a way in this … how do I put this … they are … when you were adult already during the Soviet period, then perhaps you were already somehow … somehow you saw this thing from a different perspective than us, since we were in a relative childhood or in our youth and got away, so to say … Or … well, we actually *did* get away … So I think that those who live today and have not seen that at all, those perhaps are not able to value these things, the way our generation can. You know, having an independent state and being a patriot.

Thus, Sven, along with other interviewees, mentioned the political turn as a defining force for their generation (see also Eisenstadt 1988, 91), something that is, one way or another, a source of distinction between this generation and other age cohorts (note his awareness of how media depictions have had an influence on his opinion as well). Several respondents were aware that this "inventory experience" (Mannheim 1993 [1952], 42–44; Misztal 2003, 85) was crucial in forming their social and generational identities (Lovell 2007, 8).

During an inventory experience, an individual's personality becomes crystallised in the process of maturation and the social circumstances of his or her incorporation into social structures are essential to this process (Eisenstadt 1988, 94). Several respondents stated that (what many defined as) the chaotic

1990s defined the 1970s generation as creative and flexible enough to adjust to new social contexts. In contrast, the younger generations were said to be prone to take things for granted, leading an organised life path and have the tendency to be more passive with less initiative and ability to plan ahead. Toomas (b. 1975) recalled that during the transitional period it was easy to establish a company and "do just about anything" if only one had the initiative. In his view, people are today more apt to choose structurally established routes by finishing university, studying abroad, and coming back to paid jobs while, "during our time it was like … be yourself, be proactive, and then you can achieve … like … just about anything". Toomas started his own business during high school and although he enrolled at university several times, he never managed to graduate. The socially structured markers of the available opportunities were very common features on which to base one's generational construction. Society was opening, and alternative choices that never existed before emerged, and thus the age group that was born in the 1970s was exposed to many possibilities that were unavailable to previous age cohorts. Yet, even if more opportunities were available for the younger generations, many respondents claimed that the latter do not know how to appreciate this. Anneli, who was the third child in a family of seven and had two older siblings (six and eight years older) and four younger siblings, defined herself as different from her siblings:

> Anneli (b. 1976): You know, actually I *am* different. Take for instance the possibilities. I already had possibilities, the two elder ones did not, and the younger ones do not understand that, well, they have *always* had them.

The conceptualisation of possibilities is rather broad among the respondents. Many have in mind the structural options of studying abroad, travelling, and having the freedom to consume, along with the material resources and goods that they could not afford as children. Structural conditions provided by technology were also referred to (see also Siibak 2009; Kalmus in this volume). Young people have more information via Internet sources and are less likely to visit libraries or buy books, and their social networks are based more on virtual networks compared to older age cohorts. While some indicated that the younger generations take the welfare society for granted and do not know how to appreciate these possibilities, therefore making them more passive, others suggested that the younger ones tend to be more open and active because of the possibilities the welfare society offers. For instance, Ave (b. 1973) admitted that she clearly envies the younger people for their openness. Thus, interestingly enough, many respondents gave ambiguous constructions of the younger generation. Several respondents

admitted that the younger generation has fewer opportunities to achieve the upward social mobility of the 1970s cohort because the situation in the labour market is tougher, unemployment is higher, and fewer positions are available. Many respondents believed that this has also influenced the younger generation to be less inspired by work and more interested in leisure.

In Kristjan's (b. 1973) view, the younger cohort often treated work as a particular project that has technical details rather than giving it a broader social context. Such lines of thought also illustrate well the construction of a generation on the principle of age. The young usually seem to the older people as more superficial and less experienced in appreciating contexts. However, in case of the interviewees, there seems to be more differences between the cohorts than can be attributed to differences in age. Many of the respondents started their work lives during the period of restructuring the institutions and markets and felt enthusiastic about the changes (see also Vogt 2005). In addition, most of them 'happened' to achieve senior level positions directly after graduation or during their university years, which gave them the feeling of participating in the restructuring of the new society. This line of thought is also expressed by Karin (b. 1976), who stated:

> Perhaps this enormous belief in one's abilities comes from the period we lived in, as you put yourself to the test a lot. And for the contemporary youth this is only possible to a certain extent; they can't put themselves to the test everywhere and always. We were often given such tasks that were obviously beyond our abilities, since there was nobody else to give them to. This self-confidence, and actually a kind of preparedness to take risks, I think, these characterise the people born in the 1960s and 1970s.

In this excerpt, Karin refers to the similarities to the older cohort in terms of structural opportunities in the labour market. However, she also makes a clear distinction between herself and those born in the 1960s based on structural criteria. The older generation was, according to her and other respondents, those who had rearranged society, fought to regain independence, and participated (more) in the restructuring of the economy. While some refer to those setting up businesses, others point to the politicians born in the 1960s who took the lead in political life, mentioning Mart Laar.

In a sense, they refer to the older cohort as the 'strategic' generation because they had structural chances to privatise Soviet enterprises and start businesses that did not exist before. The respondent group was still in their formative years as the system started to change, while the 1960s cohort was socialised under

the Soviet regime. "We didn't function as adults during the Soviet period", as Kristi (b. 1974) pointed out. The experience of functioning as adults in the system enables the older generation to know the 'true face' of the Soviet regime. The experiences of the Soviet period for those born in the 1970s is the one of a happy and playful childhood. They never felt real fear, nor experienced repressions, nor had to worry about managing everyday food supplies or build up social networks order to supply the family with household essentials or create the opportunity to have a holiday abroad. In contrast, the older generation had to deal with all the downsides of the occupation regime.

A dominant theme of the structural conditions influencing the generation-formation was the Soviet army.

> Peeter (b. 1974) … the generational line is very clear. The generation before us … me … this I can say about boys … men … they were the ones who, for instance, struggled with [conscription into the][15] Russian army. I didn't any more. I was called to the army, but these papers went straight into the dustbin, you see.[16]

Here, the respondent hints at a repressive system that he no longer had to fear. Conscription into the Soviet Army was greatly feared and in order to avoid being called up, young men were prepared to fake illnesses or even insanity. Hence, as some respondents concluded, the older generation regarded the new regime with different values and was, as a result of their Soviet experiences, even more patriotic, as they knew the downsides of the old regime and therefore valued the new one.

Thus, both structural and social network features are considered important in shaping the generations. The respondents felt that the changing social structures had an impact on their developments as adults, as the society that was reconstructed offered them specific opportunities (some of these were not available to the older cohorts in their youth, some were no longer available to the younger cohorts). But they also sensed that social networks and their character had changed. Social networks of the Soviet period were thematised in the interviews as vital in order to arrange adult lives (for example, getting access to certain commodities in times of scarcity), thus social networks were considered a feature that shaped the character of the older generation. The respondents stressed the importance of social networks during their transitional period from a different perspective: in terms of upward social mobility, as most of them advanced in their career rather by chance (a contact made at a sauna party, a person met in the street suggesting a business idea, etc.). This feature of social networks

is used as a basis of their generation and the younger cohorts are judged against this background: the latter rely more on institutional development (education credentials) than on social networks. It is suggested that digital social networks are also shaping the younger generation to be different from previous generations.

However, several indicators measured and considered important by social scientists and youth researchers constructing the 1970s generation were left unnoticed by this respondent group. They mentioned the situation in the labour market and upward social mobility, yet completely left out the demographic markers of marriage or having children. Only one respondent (Martin, b. 1976) mentioned the increased access to tertiary education, stating that his generation was actually the last to receive a "non-mass university education", as he put it, that enabled a more individual approach to students. With this statement, Martin linked his generation to older cohorts rather than younger. Some interviewees mentioned the change in family relations, saying that gender roles have been changing and men are more apt to do domestic work traditionally ascribed to women. This observation links the 1970s cohort more closely to the younger ones.

Features based on discursive patterns:
perspective of time in stories and memories

One of the crucial features determining the border that separates generations is the understanding of time. To create generational consciousness, common experiences in their formative years alone may not be enough; the age group must also share a perspective on time, both future and past. Generations share certain interpretative principles or "discursive practices" (Corsten 1999, 258–259) that validate the mutual experience in discourses (op cit, 261; Misztal 2003, 62; Weisbrod 2007, 22). In other words, different generations consider different aspects of the past important and tend to treat the past and future according to similar narrative principles (i.e. they treat some time periods ironically and others seriously, they use similar keys and cultural symbols when interpreting the past). Generational habitus, which is the foundation of generational memory and therefore identity, can be seen as a system of practice-generating schemes rooted in the uniqueness of the socio-historical location of a particular generation (Misztal 2003, 90).

Memories of the Soviet period, and of the subsequent political and social upheaval is a powerful meaning-making apparatus for the respondents. In most cases, remembering the Soviet period or the Singing Revolution[17] were the first themes mentioned by interviewees that define them and their generation. A general trend of the 1970s cohort is to distinguish the younger generation as the one that does not remember, who cannot (and would not) talk about or understand

the Soviet period. The respondents' understanding of the Soviet period and its structural order, which shaped their childhood and adolescence experiences and, moreover, the retroactive remembering and valuing of this period (Kelly 2007), are seen as the key characteristic distinguishing them from the following generation. To them, the Soviet era is seen in a fairly nostalgic way and as a cultural resource for discursive practices (Corsten 1999; Grünberg 2009; Kõresaar 2008, 761; Jõesalu & Nugin 2012). The 1970s cohort is sometimes included in the so-called Russian cartoon generation[18] and they use their collectively understood childhood cultural codes to generate "generalised others" (Kelly 2007; Grünberg 2009). Indeed the leitmotifs the respondents used to refer to their childhoods were Russian cartoons, the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and the successive deaths of the General Secretaries of the Communist Party. Several noted that mutual understanding of certain things generates a bond:

> Ketlin (b. 1973): Say, with people from the same context you talk about something and they understand why you talk about this or what you are talking about. I don't know, like, we say that there were no bananas in the store, well, we all know what it means and we all have some kind of story about that.

Several respondents expressed nostalgia towards the mutual memories and stories and the things that everyone of them remembered. The attitude of nostalgia did not necessarily mean that the respondents valued the Soviet regime positively. As Ene Kõresaar (2008, 769) explains, in any group several nostalgias can be simultaneously active. The interviewees emphasised that those who experienced the Soviet period can tell the difference between the things to condemn and those to be nostalgic about. In other words, they felt entitled to nostalgia because they claimed to know how to recognise 'right' and 'wrong' nostalgia. In their view, lacking the Soviet context and experience, the younger generation tends to have a simplified version of the Soviet period, while the respondents of this research perceived themselves as possessing the necessary intellectual and cultural capital to give appropriate evaluation according to the contexts (positive to cartoons, negative to political opportunism).

A number of respondents pointed out that living during the Soviet era provided a certain understanding of the historical context and instilled the need to accomplish and value things in the present day, like joining NATO or the principles of citizenship policy. Liisa (b. 1974) pointed out that a different attitude to history influences the behaviour of the younger generation:

Oh, I just remember one specific case this summer [2004] at a[n archaeological] dig … that … it was this … re- … you know, the one in August. This Estonian … What the hell was it called? Re-Independence Day … or whatever. Anyway, the day Estonian Independence was re-established [in 1991]. Well, the celebration of this day … There were quite a few older people who had lived through the Singing Revolution. It hadn't even occurred to us that we had to celebrate it somehow … This is something that is within us. It doesn't have to be … We absolutely don't feel any need to exhibit this. But young people, they were sincere … Listened to the National Anthem in the morning … A national flag stood at the excavation and in the evening a cake was bought and a celebration took place. This is … terribly lovely and all … But I feel like … this is …this is like atheists celebrating Christmas. Like there is a certain shift. They wouldn't understand why we don't celebrate it, although we lived during that time. And we didn't understand what the hell they were celebrating.

The official celebration of the re-independence day has grown gradually. It was announced as a national holiday in 1998, but it took several years before certain memorial practices were established. Thus, at the time of the interview (2005) those practices had not yet taken root in society and these circumstances might play a part in Liisa's narrative.

Apart from the political setting, the overall social context of their childhood is often used to distinguish between the younger cohorts and the respondent group. One such repeatedly brought up phenomenon is the somewhat romantic attitude towards nature and the natural surroundings. Respondents often started talking about their childhood from the point of view of freedom and mobility in wild nature or in the (urban or rural) environment around their homes. The interviewed group emphasised that during their childhood they spent a lot of time outside, in natural surroundings or in neighbourhood gardens, running, cycling, building shelters, hiking along riverbanks, etc. This is frequently juxtaposed with the image of contemporary youth, who allegedly spend too much time in front of different screens. Taavi's excerpt is illustrative in this respect:

Interviewer: How did you spend your time?
Taavi (b. 1972): With something that contemporary youth deals very little. With mechanics, what else? Motorbikes … Running away from the militia … riding around on motorcycles … Went to the woods … Lived like a child of nature. All days revolved around fishing on the riverbank or building a hut or something like that. Well, that kind of stuff.

It is noteworthy that in this particular interview the topic of generation was not brought up and Taavi positioned his experiences against the backdrop of contemporary youth by picking up the topic himself.

Another habit regularly thematised is reading practice (for example, "we read a lot"). Although the developments that are causing this comparison are no doubt structural (technological progress), I chose to elaborate on this under the discursive section. This is because this distinction is often made at the discursive level, romanticising an experience that is actually accessible to contemporary young people as well. In these accounts, young people are generalised as lacking that experience regardless of the fact that some of them actually have it. Experiences such as walking on the riverbank instead of skating in a skate park today, or reading a book instead of watching a film on the internet, are evaluated as being comparatively more enriching in discursive fields, but this is not necessarily the case.

The differentiation with the older generation in terms of discourse is more ambiguous. On the one hand, the 1970s birth cohort has a childhood context similar to that of older generations. The context of Russian cartoons can be traced back to the 1950s birth cohort (see Kelly 2007). On the other hand, distinctions on the basis of discourse were still often made. Many respondents mentioned that the older generation had stories that the 1970s age group did not have or even did not understand. Among the themes mentioned were summer student working camps, kolkhozes, and the experiences of how to cope with and cheat the Soviet regime. Again, one of the common leitmotifs that emerged was serving in the Soviet Army.

A critical issue is how generations value and interpret the stories of other generations. The childhood innocence of the 1970s birth cohort enables them to legitimately value some things positively, since these are simply childhood memories. In a similar vein, as the repressions were not part of their lives, the interviewees sometimes note that they do not *know* how different life was when lived in fear of (Stalinist) repressions. In these cases, they have much older cohorts in mind (not those born in the 1960s). As for those generations who did not directly confront fears that threatened their physical existence, the attitude towards them varies. Those individuals who did participate in the system as adults are occasionally condemned for being nostalgic about the Soviet period, as the younger generations view them as collaborators in the ideological regime that suppressed the Estonian national identity (see also Grünberg 2009, 6–7; Marada 2004, 165). In other words, the respondents tend to differentiate between those who collaborated because of a threat to their physical existence and those who collaborated for better material advantages. However, these dispositions are not always clear. The boundaries of the accusations are blurred and contextual.

The same goes for judgements regarding resistance to the Soviet system. Marko (b. 1974) mentions that he does not always understand why stories about cheating and dishonesty are presented in the framework of heroic narratives. All this can be attributed to the privilege of their birth date: they were not old enough to take sides in these ideological battles.

Another difference with the older generation at the discursive level is the memories of being political dissidents in the Soviet system or participating in the Singing Revolution. A common theme in the interviews is being a bystander as events unfolded. Anna (b. 1977): "We watched the putsch on TV. The older ones were actually there."

Many of the respondents concluded that drawing a line between themselves and the older generation is more difficult than it is between themselves and the younger ones, since on the communicative level there seemed to be fewer misunderstandings.

Features based on value-orientations

The distinctions and construction of the 'other' based on value orientations are inevitably closely correlated to both the structural and discursive features described before. Value distinctions with older as well as with younger generations are influenced by the structural conditions of their formative years, and discursive and mnemonic practices (what is remembered and how) are determined by those values.

Having experienced the hypocritical Soviet society, the 1970s birth cohort claim to have learned how to be critical of public discourse and ready-made truths and be capable of expressing irony towards whatever comes their way. They perceive the subsequent generations as each respectively less capable of critical thinking:

> Kaido (b. 1970): Society asked a lot of questions at that time [during the political changes of the 1990s]. We may not have participated, but questions were asked. The difference between generations is that they [the younger ones] do not pose questions anymore … I sense that this generation [born in the second half of the 1980s] does not have any doubts if the independent state will stand, and does not fear that anyone might come to deport you [to Siberia]. They will sympathise with the fact that you were born during the Soviet period.

According to the respondents, "their" lack of critical thinking may also lead to a lack of patriotic feelings and of undervaluing the importance of working to maintain the independent statehood of the regained republic. This is accompanied by little interest in politics and society.

This is in a way concomitant with values that sociologists attribute to young people in late modern society in the Western European cultural context. The youth of today are characterised as having flexible multiple identities and hedonistic values. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2009, 33) contend that there are emerging global generations that are united in "increasing insecurity". These new generations, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim suggest, cannot be constituted *politically*, but can be defined by "cosmopolitan experiences and events" instead (op cit). Compared to the older cohorts, the young are more individualistic (op cit, 34). Indeed several respondents mentioned some of these traits among the younger generation. The fluidity of their value base, these respondents argue, makes them a passive generation, which is not apt to actively question or change things. Following this logic, their naivety makes them absorb whatever values come their way. The respondent group attached values that are typical of young people globally to the generation following theirs and linked these values to the specific social changes in Estonia.

Another value that is attributed to the younger generation is consumerism. Contemporary society, with its massive consumption habits, is sometimes seen in a negative light. As indicated before, the respondents often referred to the possibilities young people have and do not know how to value. One aspect here is the absence of commodities during the Soviet era. Paradoxically enough, this characteristic is seen as a resource in a contemporary world:

> Hannes (b. 1973): It seems to me that … mmm … this experience of the Soviet Union is a bit similar to the experience described in history textbooks, in the sense that you see, like, what kind of life can be … in economic sense and … and … when you see that you can very successfully live without all this bling-bling … then … well, I did not have this kind of magpie complex when things opened up, that let's buy now and fool around … I have this same … reluctance.

In other words, the absence of things as such has made these people value things differently from subsequent cohorts, who have been socialised in the world with access to material wealth. At the same time, they admit that longing for things and material goods was something that greatly shaped their lives. Merje (b. 1977) recalls that every single candy wrapping paper was sniffed, saved, and collected

if it originated from a Western country, thus the relation to the material world was different. According to many respondents, this absence was more meaningful than the things themselves and it influenced them to value things accordingly (thus, consume more conservatively, as Merike (b. 1974) put it). However, strangely enough, often the same attitude among the older generation is looked upon and judged negatively. Urmo (b. 1977), for instance, described how elderly people are still hoarders due to their conviction that acquiring things is difficult. So they accumulate more things than they actually need.

The value differences with the older generation, as previously mentioned, are not seen as so crucial and therefore the border between the generations here is not very well defined. The borderline with the previous generation shifted throughout the interviews by up to almost twenty years (from 1970 to 1950). The values attributed to the older generation thus also depended on where the border was drawn.

One of the most often stated values, in the context of the older 1960s birth cohort, was that of pragmatism. This was grounded in the older generation's formative years during the 1980s, when the Soviet system and people in it were cynical and ideology was a learned façade of a regime which nobody really believed. People had acquired certain behavioural patterns to survive and had to distinguish their private lives from their public image. Hence they developed a playful attitude towards the system and were more apt to value pragmatic goals and more easily adapted rules or principles in order to achieve these goals. Kristjan (b. 1973) said that the attitudes of this older generation towards different kinds of rules could be summarised thus: we made these laws and rules and built this state, we have the right to be creative at times in remodelling them towards our purposes.

Another thing that was often brought up was the conservatism of the older generation. Despite being something that is probably universally demarcated between generations, this kind of conservatism was frequently attributed to the realities of that time in Estonian history. For instance, Ketlin (b. 1973) pondered on the lack of tolerance towards different ethnic groups among the older generations:

> I think that in a certain sense the society has influenced us, the fact that we are Estonians, that the Estonian as a person is withdrawn … I think society has had its impact on this, and the era. And the kind of … racist is probably not accurate, but nevertheless … as a child I remember a kind of … in a way disdainful … well attitude is not accurate, but like [towards] Ukrainians, Georgians, or Russians who lived in Estonia back then. Of course it has a lot

to do with the fact that we [Estonians] were so-to-say violently deported and they [foreigners] were violently imported [as a result of Stalinist repressions and the immigration policies of the Soviet Union] and so on. But I think the attitude towards blacks or Pakistani, this attitude, negative attitude in particular towards people of other skin colours, it dominates more in the older generation. A lot more. And I think, in a certain way, it is connected to the society and time period.

While talking about these trends, Ketlin had in mind her parents' generation and not those who were born in the 1960s. Those interviews in which the border with the older generation shifted to the 1950s or earlier mentioned neither political change nor the Soviet regime as reasons for the value differences. Rather, these respondents felt that the differences seemed to indicate the normal discrepancies that emerge due to age, but also reflect the change in gender roles. As Merike (b. 1974) pointed out, for the older generation it is unthinkable that a woman pours a glass of wine for herself when a man is present: "For me it is normal that I do it myself, I do not expect such support from men."

Again, the Soviet era seems to be one of the strongest factors that shape the perception of values of previous and subsequent cohorts. This period is used creatively as a resource for moulding the same conditions into one's own identity, at the same time enabling somewhat negative evaluation of others (for example, behaviours attributed to differences in the access to material resources).

Conclusion

Looking at the statistical data, those born in the 1970s, such as Taavi Rõivas, indeed seem quite distinctive. Their socialisation experience and demographic transitions are quite different from those who were born in the same year as Mart Laar (b. 1960). However, the question of how to draw the borderlines of Rõivas' generation is trickier. Quite probably it does not have a straightforward answer. The 1970s are a sort of transitional, in-between generation: they began new demographic patterns, although not all of these clearly belong only to those born in the 1970s. The group of people born in the 1970s form a heterogeneous cohort. It seems however that there is some kind of reflexive generational consciousness among them, although the borders keep shifting. Or perhaps Taavi Rõivas is not part of the 1970s generation but the start of a new one? Or perhaps he is not a typical example of his generation at all?

One thing is quite clear – compared to the previous cohorts, the transitions considered crucial in becoming an adult were prolonged and the initiators of

this trend were mainly born between 1970 and 1980. Yet, this involves a number of processes that have wider implications than just a line or a column on a chart would indicate. In fact, some of the charts included above are even contradictory: the growing number of enrolled students in the universities is not reflected in the charts of the highly educated among the cohort, although even this tendency is meaningful in a broader sense. Those enrolled at universities started the pattern of non-linear transitions: they worked simultaneously with their studies, and many among them were too busy to complete their studies so they jumped back and forth between education and employment. The increasingly widespread pattern of cohabitation was another trend that gave rise to what have been called the yo-yo transitions (Pais 2000) because cohabiting also means fewer commitments.

All in all, the change was structural as much as it was cultural since the change in structural conditions forced the cohort to search for new routes during the period of transition to adulthood; however, the change in values initiated some structural developments as well. Structural change and changing values are thus interconnected. While the emergence of generations and generational consciousness depends mainly on structural changes in society, it seems that the reflexive generation construction in discursive fields is less concerned with the structural processes that many sociologists seem to be keen on. Therefore, although the change in social structures and socialisation practices may have created a basis for a new generational consciousness, the borderlines that are drawn when constructing one's own generation are often based on more intangible grounds. As for subjective generation markers in the case of researched individuals, the defining base for the generation seems to be their memories of the political changes and their feelings toward the Soviet period. In Western societies, where there have not been such remarkable political transformations for some time, politics has ceased to be a source of generational identity and has been replaced by social solidarity (Lovell 2007, 11). The 1970s age group, however, seems (and may well be the last) to relate their generational identity to political memory, which was also defined by Mannheim as the basis for "generational consciousness" (Mannheim 1993 [1952], 33). Even though the statistics show many traits in which the birth cohort of the 1970s could be considered closer to the 1980s birth cohort, in their subjective interpretation, the 1970s cohort feels closer to those born earlier, in the 1960s. Thus, their generation's shared subjective perspective on time seems to be more important than the structural conditions of socialising. The reason for this might also be that the respondents are perhaps inclined to identify with the older generation at their particular life stage (in their 30s), especially because in Estonia many of those born in the 1960s are the ones holding strategic positions in society. Yet, they also feel distinctive generational differences with the 1960s birth cohort.

Generations are constructed contextually, using several discursive fields; these constructions may be subject to reconstruction later. Thus, one can interpret the data presented in this chapter in two possible ways. On the one hand, the 1970s constitute a separate generation, differing from the 1960s by structural features and from the 1980s by discursive ones. On the other hand, it is possible to treat the 1970s cohort as an in-between generation, a sort of twilight zone between the generations of Mart Laar and Taavi Rõivas. Generation borderlines are never strict or straightforward – thus, the buffer zone can reach up to 10 years, depending on the viewpoint one takes.

Rather than being used to identify a distinct generation, this chapter might be useful in posing questions about generational theorising instead. This study has explained that the formation and grouping of a generation can be achieved differently, depending on the questions asked and the methods used in research. One way to detect a generation would thus be to measure quantitative statistical data, the other by qualitative data on self-perception and generational consciousness. Neither of these methods is superior, although sometimes they might contradict each other (and at times, complement). Both approaches are equally viable depending on the aim of the research and how the concept of generation is operationalised as an analytical tool. The quantitative approach is beneficial in understanding the social conditions of young people and developing adequate social policies. The subjective self-reflexive approach helps us to understand the cohesion of a society (how different age groups value each other), how crucial political and social events during a person's development years shape his or her identity, and whether (and how) certain age groups are potentially mobilised during the times of crisis (Nehring 2007, 58). According to some of the respondents, social networks often function on the basis of this type of generational identity.

This research has shown that generational identity is dynamic and contextual. Thus, the generational characteristics of the age group in question may still be in the process of developing and perhaps it would be interesting to return to this question in a decade. The picture would be further complemented if similar research were to be conducted among older and younger age groups.

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Notes

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1 Laar had a second term as prime minister between 1999 and 2002.

2 The sociological research that gave rise to this term, however, is based on the cohort born in 1965.

3 For example "Generation X, C or Y", "digital generation", "computer generation", "Generation Me", etc. (Giesen 2004, 37–38; Bruns 2006; Wyn & Woodman 2006, 496; Siibak 2009, 10; Twenge 2006).

4 To name a few, one can mention political posts – many institutions had instructors of political Marxist education. In addition, the economy system was different and many jobs that dealt with communication with ministries and local authorities turned out to be unnecessary.

5 The statistical data given in this chapter are based on the data of Statistics Estonia, if not stated otherwise.

6 Among men the contrasts were less pronounced, indicating that women were more capable of reacting to the changes in education.

7 The reason why these cohorts seem to be more educated may be because compulsory secondary education was introduced in the 1970s.

8 The 25–34 age group was not solely those born in the 1970–1980 period. In fact, people reflected in these numbers were born roughly between 1969 and 1982.

9 The reasons were perhaps more complex, involving the housing policies of the Soviet Union, which stated that marriage and children gave a better position in the queue for flats.

10 These numbers are appropriate and reflect the numbers given on the homepage of the Estonian Bureau of Statistics (Statistics Estonia), which indicate the age of those giving birth at certain years and not their birth data. However, the numbers roughly show the trends. It is also noteworthy that here the age of giving birth to any child is marked, not the age of giving birth to the first child.

11 For instance, while there were 62 mothers born in 1970 who gave birth at the age of 16, among those born in the 1975 there were 151, while among those born in 1980 it had fallen to 103.

12 The first period of interview collection was December 2003–March 2004 (11 interviews), the second March–May 2005 (9 interviews), the third April 2008 (one biographical interview), the fourth November–December 2009 (four focus group interviews, 13 people; one focus group was conducted by Kirsti Jõesalu), the fifth July–August 2010 (6 respondents, 2 group interviews; the interviews were conducted together with Kirsti Jõesalu), and the sixth December 2012–August 2013 (8 interviews).

13 For instance, as some respondents pointed out, someone aged 26 who does not yet have children may see those who have children as being in the previous generation, and those still studying as being in the next generation. Younger people who want to be treated as adults may need to identify themselves with the older generation (with 'adults'), which occupies strategic positions in society, while sometimes older generations may prefer to be identified with younger, more active generations.

14 All the names of the respondents have been changed and pseudonyms used.

15 The notes in brackets in interview extracts have been added by the author.

16 The last conscripts to the Red Army were born in 1971–1972.

17 The Singing Revolution refers to the events occurring between 1987 and 1990 that led to Estonia regaining independence from the Soviet Union. The phrase comes mainly from a series of events called the Night Song Festival in 1988, when Estonians gathered at the Estonian Song Festival Grounds and sang patriotic songs.

18 The "Russian-cartoon-generation" is a widespread cultural concept used by many theorists. It indicates the people who were raised during a period in which similar cartoons were shown throughout the Soviet Union. Thus, the borderlines of this generation are rather broad. For instance, Catriona Kelly (2007) draws the border at 1955.

Appendix. Interviews

Charts describing the sample and time of conducting the interviews.
Pseudonym of the respondent • Gender • Year of birth.

December 2003 – March 2004

Meelis	M	1973
Mari-Liis	F	1973
Kristel	F	1973
Taavi	M	1972
Merle	F	1973
Tanel	M	1973
Ülo	M	1974
Marek	M	1973
Natalia	F	1974
Maria	F	1974
Olev	M	1973

March–May 2005

Kristi	F	1974
Mart	M	1972
Harri	M	1973
Mihkel	M	1974
Liisa	F	1974
Merike	F	1974
Riina	F	1973
Tiina	F	1973
Peeter	M	1974

April 2008

Toomas	M	1975

July–August 2010

Janek	M	1970
Urmo	M	1977

December 2012 – August 2013

Karin	F	1976
Anneli	F	1976
Ave	F	1973
Hannes	M	1973
Sven	M	1978
Tarmo	M	1976
Ketlin	F	1973
Merje	F	1977

December 2009

Focus Group I

Meelis	M	1973
Kristo	M	1973
Henri	M	1975

Focus Group II*

Alina	F	1971
Kati	F	1970
Tanel	M	1975

Focus Group III*

Anna	F	1977
Kaido	M	1970
Kaisa	F	1975
Tauno	M	1976

Focus Group IV

Kristjan	M	1973
Marko	M	1974
Martin	M	1976

Focus Group V*

Katrin	F	1975
Kaja	F	1975

Focus Group VI*

Kalle	M	1975
Juhan	M	1973

* The interviews were conducted together with Kirsti Jõesalu.

The emergence of the 'digital generation' in Estonia's transition period

Veronika Kalmus

Abstract. This chapter examines Estonian transition society from the perspective of media use and 'media generations'. The focus lies on the younger cohorts born between 1978 and 1996, with their formative years falling in the period after Estonia regained its independence in 1991. By applying a cultural, multi-dimensional perspective to digital stratification and media generations, the chapter aims to reveal how Estonian young people, according to their media use characteristics, are positioned in the socio-cultural field vis-à-vis older generation groups. Bourdieu's concepts of multiple forms of capital, 'taste', and 'habitus' are applied to contemplate the extent to which structural versus lifestyle-related aspects of media use justify the discursive construction of the young as the 'digital generation'. The chapter also deals with the reflexive aspect of constructing generations by analysing how the perception of intergenerational differences is related to media use preferences and attitudes towards new media technologies. The analysis is based on quantitative data from representative population surveys conducted in 2002 and 2011, enabling us to observe the dynamics of media use across a period of almost ten years.

The characteristics of media use and the related cognitive aspects outlined in the chapter allow us to interpret the crucial distinctions between the age groups as referring to different 'media generations'. The findings, particularly the structural aspects of new media use, justify the discursive construction of the young as the 'digital generation'. The boundary of the 'digital generation' remains vague, extending, according to some criteria, to those born in the late 1960s. The chapter describes the unfolding process as the 'digitisation' of media generations, most clearly observable among those born between 1982 and 1996. Furthermore, media experiences shared with members of another media generation are shown to be related to a weaker perception of intergeneration gaps.

Introduction

The post-socialist transition in Estonia is often viewed as a special case among Central and East European countries. Specifically, economic reform in Estonia has been radical, particularly in its highly liberal transformation policies, sometimes highlighted as the key component in Estonia's success. Closely related to the economic aspects of the socio-cultural field, technological change has been a crucial component in the Estonian transition. 'Internetisation' has become one of the central symbols of the rapidly changing society, leading to a widely held perception of Estonia as a leading e-state (Runnel et al 2009). It can be argued that the speed of the adoption of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), both on the institutional and individual levels, and the prominence of the celebratory discourses legitimating this process, have led to the acceleration of social time (cf Adam 2003; Spurk 2004) and further intensification of transformation.

The speed of social and technological changes, however, has affected different social groups to a varying degree, bringing about emergent patterns of social distinction and stratification. The category of 'social generations' (Pilcher 1994), undoubtedly, deserves a prominent position in sociological analyses of transformation: generations differ because events occur at dissimilar locations on the lifespan; their speed of adapting to rapid social changes has become one of the most significant markers of social inequality. For example, it is argued that Estonia experienced a change from a gerontocracy to a 'youth-oriented' society (Tallo & Terk 1998). Studies of perceived social status (for example, Lauristin 2004; Lindemann 2011) have, indeed, shown significant differences from Western countries, with Estonian young people estimating their social position to be higher compared to other age groups, regardless of education and income, and notwithstanding the fact that the youth unemployment rate in Estonia is one of the highest in Europe.

The paradox of the youth-dominated Estonian society can be explained by taking into account the distinction between class-based and status-based social stratification (Weber 1978 [1922]). While social classes are groups of people who have the same economic position, status groups are formed on the basis of social esteem, which is typically practiced as well as expressed through a specific lifestyle. Status may depend on class position; however, it is not solely determined by it. In a similar vein, Pierre Bourdieu (1984 [1979]) emphasises the role of multiple forms of capital, which are increasingly becoming a new basis of social inequality. Although economic capital remains the main principle of domination in capitalist society, its efficacy as a principle of stratification is constantly

challenged by factions of the dominant class (for example professionals, academics, etc.) and other social groups who are relatively poor in economic capital, but who strive to enhance their cultural and/or other forms of capital as a rivalling principle. Furthermore, Bourdieu argues that members of a social class share the same objective structures, which give them the same objective meanings of collective practices. These common practices include similarities in lifestyle or a certain 'taste' that is reflected in 'habitus'.

In contemporary societies, where ICTs are becoming increasingly important in almost all spheres of life, differences in taste, habitus, and capital manifest more and more in distinctive consumption patterns, self-expression, and cultural practices based upon unequal access to and socially variable use of ICT products and digital services. Such digital stratification, in turn, creates and reproduces social stratification, particularly in the context of rapidly developing information societies in which both public- and private-sphere services are increasingly available exclusively online (Kalmus et al 2013b). As digital skills tend to be most rapidly adopted by younger generations, more technologically inert elderly people may experience a decline in social status. Distinctive patterns of new media use, thus, acquire growing significance in the sociology of generations. Media technology – and its dominant uses, which an individual gets socialised into during his or her childhood and youth – becomes that which "one keeps a special relation with for the balance of one's life" (Bolin & Westlund 2009, 109). Based on this assumption, the concept of 'media generations' appears, differentiating for instance between the radio generation, the black and white television generation, and the Internet generation (Volkmer 2006). Moreover, contemporary children and young people are often defined by their relationship to the media technology they embrace from their childhood, with a variety of labels such as the "digital generation" (Papert 1996), the "Net generation" (Tapscott 1998) and "digital natives" (Prensky 2001) used to signify supposedly common characteristics of this age cohort.

This kind of labelling, often criticised for attributing too powerful a role to technology or a particular medium, brings us to the socially constructed nature of generations. The discursive and reflexive dimensions of generation construction are highly significant with regard to intergenerational relationships and the process of socialisation: when the younger generation is constructed as more competent in an area deemed as a central innovation of society (for example, ICTs), and when they internalise this quality as a mainstay of their generational identity and consciousness, the older generations face a considerable challenge in fulfilling their socialising role (cf Kalmus & Roosalu 2012).

This chapter examines social generations of the transition period in Estonia from the perspective of media use and media generations. The focus lies on the younger cohorts born between 1978 and 1996, whose formative years fell in the period after Estonia regained independence in 1991. Furthermore, media sociali-sation of this age group largely took place in the late 1990s when the diffusion rate of new media technologies accelerated in Estonia (Runnel 2009); thus, even the oldest segment of this generation became acquainted with computers and the Internet at a young age. The analysis is based on quantitative data from repre-sentative population surveys conducted in 2002 and 2011, enabling a comparison of the younger generation with other age groups and observation of the dynamics of media use over a period of almost ten years.

This chapter proceeds from a cultural approach to social and digital strati-fication which focuses attention on the multi-dimensional nature of inequality, viewing it as being related to class position as well as status differences, and raises the issue of lifestyle and consumption (Witte & Mannon 2010). In line with this, the chapter draws upon a cultural conception of 'media generations' (Aroldi & Colombo 2007; Vittadini et al 2013), according to which neither the development of media technologies, nor people's ages, are relevant in themselves. 'Media generations', too, are treated as a multi-dimensional category that needs to be analysed as closely related to different factors, such as lifespan phase, the development of the media system, the phases of technological innovation, pro-cesses of domestication and incorporation of technologies and media products, and broader structural changes that affect the social and cultural system (Aroldi & Colombo 2007). Membership of a media generation is defined by "the fact of having the same age and having to confront the same cultural panorama" (op cit, 36). Accordingly, in addition to media technologies and their dominant uses as experienced during one's formative years, a more nuanced picture of "media repertoires" (Hasebrink & Popp 2006) or "media diets" (Aroldi & Colombo 2007) is needed to conceptualise and describe media generations.

By applying the cultural, multi-dimensional perspective on digital strati-fication and media generations, this chapter aims to reveal how Estonian youth, according to their media use characteristics, is positioned in the socio-cultural field vis-à-vis older generation groups. Bourdieu's concepts of multiple forms of capital, 'taste' and 'habitus' are applied to contemplate the extent to which structural versus lifestyle-related aspects of media use justify the discursive con-struction of the young as the 'digital generation'. The chapter also deals with the reflexive aspect of constructing generations by analysing how perception of intergenerational differences is related to media use preferences and attitudes towards new media technologies.

Conceptualising media generations

'Generation' as a social construct and a sociological category

The concept of 'generation' has several different meanings in the social sciences. While demographers define generations in terms of reproduction cycles, and family sociologists tend to study individuals as members of generations in the kinship sense, sociologists of youth and generations focus on generations in the cohort sense, or as social generations (Pilcher 1994), linking the concept with social time and chronological consciousness (Nugin 2010). According to Karl Mannheim's (1952 [1927/1928]) conception of the socially constructed nature of generations, the very notion of a generation depends on the existence of a shared generational identity and self-consciousness. Although an objective prerequisite for generations to emerge is that members were born within the same structural and social conditions (or "generational location" in Mannheim's terms), a generation as a social construct comes into being "when a formative historical experience coincides with a formative period of people's lives" (Marada 2004, 153). New generations, in Mannheim's sense, form during sudden and significant societal changes, after which young people have to adjust and develop their habitus in a new social context. The young are the first age cohort to experience and negotiate new social conditions during their socialisation years (according to Mannheim, they have 'fresh contacts' with the emerging phenomena). This makes young people interpret their common social experiences in a way that differs from that of previous cohorts and provides them with their own shared orientations, principles of evaluation, and discursive practices (Corsten 1999), all of which create a "generation as an actuality" in Mannheim's terms.

As formative historical events and social changes may unfold at a different pace and cover various time spans, the definition of the length of a generation remains vague (Lovell 2007). Mannheim (1952 [1927/1928]) states that a generation can embrace fifteen to thirty years, but such parameters are never strict. Whilst a generation is a social entity in which members have a certain 'bond' and 'generational consciousness', the connection between the members is not as tight as it is in groups, where the members depend on each other. A generation, thus, does not have to be a homogeneous concept, but rather consists of 'generational units' – people who "work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways" (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928], 304). Radim Marada (2004) also argues that people filter a shared experience of historical periods or events through their respective socio-economic classes, gender orientations, geographical locations, etc., which supports the concept of 'generation'

as a multi-dimensional category (Aroldi & Colombo 2007). The Mannheimian generation approach, thus, can serve as a viable and palimpsestic alternative, or a compliment, to Marxism for the understanding of social stratification (cf Eyerman & Turner 1998). While Marx's social class is primarily distinguished in terms of group interests and access to resources, generations are constituted according to their relation to social, cultural, and historical time (Corsten 2011), and to the respective lifestyles underlying status-based social stratification.

Generational construction and the media

Relationships between generation construction and the media are meaningful in a broad sense, representing structural changes in the cultural system as well as social divisions. Elsewhere (Kalmus et al 2013a), we have delineated three main ways the media may contribute to forming generational consciousness and constructing borders or bridges between generations.

First, age cohorts differ in how media technologies and specific 'news cultures' perform distinctive roles as mediators of the world for them (Volkmer 2006). According to Steve Anderson's (2001) framework, memories of the media as specific technologies as well as their meaning in the construction of the life-world, experienced during one's formative years, have relevance for today's media usage and world perception. We suggest that since they perform as mediators of the world during childhood and youth, media technologies are related to Mannheim's definition of "generational location", providing an age group's "specific range of potential experience, predisposing them to a certain characteristic mode of thought" (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928], 291), in other words, the cohort's "mental opportunities" (Corsten 1999).

Second, different media technologies provide distinctive "communicative affordances" (Hutchby 2001) that influence the patterns and habits of media consumption, including the extent to which the media are used for participation and creative activities, or "produsage" in Axel Bruns' (2006) terms. This aspect of the media parallels Mannheim's notion of "generation as an actuality", in the sense of participation "in the characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period" (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928], 304). Moreover, the media offer an inventory of both symbolic resources and spaces where people can share their habitus in terms of "the collection of practices through which generational experiences are manifest" (Edmunds & Turner 2002, 16), thus serving as a powerful channel in constructing and reinforcing generational identity.

Third, the media may function to provide 'bonds' or construct borders between generations and 'generational units' in Mannheim's sense. As 'objects'

and as 'things' the media are "deeply embedded in the symbolic territory of the family" (Volkmer 2006, 15), providing "actively, interactively, or passively, links between households, and individual members of households […], and do this (or fail to do this) in complex and often contradictory ways" (Silverstone et al 1992, 15). According to the logic of the concept of 'media generations', similar and shared experiences with the media during formative years bring people together (Bolin & Westlund 2009), serving as a basis for generational identity. Conversely, different media experiences and "particular media consciousness produce media gaps which separate people" (Gumpert & Cathcart 1985, 23). Shared 'discursive practices' among members of a generation establish 'generational semantics' and a generational 'generalised other' (Corsten 1999), creating distance between people of different generations. However, common ground still exists: "the exchange between the generations also takes place through the sharing of these different semantics" (Aroldi & Colombo 2007, 39). Thus, it can be assumed that media experiences and media consciousness shared with members of another media generation may reduce perceived distances between generation groups, and vice versa, a weaker perception of generation gaps may foster the use of the media more common to another media generation (Kalmus et al 2013a).

'Digital generation' as a heuristic concept

In the age of digital media, the acceleration of technological and social change and the need to emphasise a firm break with the past have contributed to the elevation of the concept of 'generation' to newfound popularity in academic and media discourses (cf Aroldi & Colombo 2013). The idea of a new generation gap has fed narratives ranging from superficial labelling to more or less sophisticated analytical descriptions of "the first generation to grow up with the new digital technology" (Prensky 2001, 1). The advocates of the concept of the 'digital generation' commonly regard new media technologies as a liberating force for young people, which, in line with the very nature of the Internet medium, helps to create a generation that is more independent, investigative, immediate and innovative than any other generation before it (Tapscott 1998; Buckingham 2008). Furthermore, Internet culture in general arguably contributes to the formation of other features of the digital generation, such as openness, inclusion, free expression and sensitivity to cooperative interest (Tapscott 1998).

The classifications of the digital generation and the accompanying rhetoric have been questioned on the basis of both critical reflection on technological determinism underlying the excessive emphasis on growing up in a digital habitat, and empirical research evidencing much heterogeneity in the media lives of

contemporary youth (for example, Buckingham 2006; Herring 2008; Helsper & Eynon 2010). Furthermore, it is questionable whether much of the current research on 'digital youth' can be defined as studies of generations. As Oscar Westlund and Lennart Weibull (2013, 149) point out, "there is no longitudinal approach, no cross-generational comparison, no historical reflections on the relations between media and society, and sociology of generations is typically absent in their theoretical frameworks". Nevertheless, in line with several others, Westlund and Weibull acknowledge that the concept of generation as such is worthwhile in media studies, although, "comparing the media use of different generations over time must be given precedence" (op cit). This chapter, similarly, employs the concept of media generations and the problematic label of the 'digital generation' as a heuristic base to measure media use characteristics of Estonian youth against those of other generation groups.

Data and methods

The analysis is based on data from two waves of a representative survey called Me. The World. The Media, carried out every third year by the Institute of Journalism and Communication, University of Tartu, in cooperation with market research companies (Faktum and Saar Poll). The survey (a self-administered questionnaire, combined with an interview) covers the Estonian population aged between 15 and 74. A proportional model of the general population and multi-step probability random sampling is used. The first wave took place from December 2002 to January 2003 with a total sample size of 1470. To analyse changes over the period of almost ten years, data from the fourth wave of the survey, conducted in September–October 2011 (N=1510), are used. In order to alleviate the differences between the representativeness of the sample model (based on demographic statistics data) and the survey outcome, the collected data were weighted by the main socio-demographic attributes.

Generational dynamics of the structural characteristics of new media use

This section explores the aspects of new media use that are more or less directly related to positioning in the economic and political field, i.e., digital stratification that originates mainly from socially diverse access to technological resources. 'Access', however, includes several dimensions. In addition to economic capital, education, social resources, and cognitive resources help individuals know which hardware and digital services to purchase and update, and how to 'domesticate'

them, that is, how to fit them meaningfully into one's life (Livingstone 2009). Thus, material resources and economic capacity, socialisation into the dominant culture, technical skills, and awareness of the prevalent techno-culture, as well as social networks, are all relevant factors that shape digital gaps (Selwyn 2004).

Representative population data gathered in 2002 and 2011 allow us to compare the pace of different generations' domestication and appropriation of new media technologies and the opportunities they provide for participation in the economic and political spheres. To fit this purpose, the sample was cut into six age groups, each covering ten years. The six groups represent age cohorts rather than delineating social generations in Mannheim's sense: the groups are large and internally heterogeneous, and the cut-off points in the continuum of birth years were chosen for statistical reasons. The age groups are of comparable size and, as the distance between two measurements is almost nine years, it is possible to observe how nearly the same birth cohorts' positioning vis-à-vis each other has changed in this period (see Figure 1). Furthermore, in following Spitzer's (1973) advice, we assume that, if age specific differences are historically significant, they will reveal themselves wherever the cut-offs are made in the continuum.

Media use characteristics were measured by a number of original single indicators, on the basis of which several cumulative media use indexes were calculated. To compare age groups, this chapter mainly employs the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine statistically significant differences in the mean values of these indicators and indexes.

In terms of the most basic indicator of a digital divide – Internet use versus non-use – gaps between generation groups appear in a linear fashion, with 15–24-year-olds being in first position in both years. By 2011, however, differences between the three youngest age groups had reduced to the minimum. The growth of Internet users in the 1938–1947 birth cohort was the slowest in absolute terms; proportionally, however, the increase was largest among the two oldest groups.

Quite similar patterns manifest in home access to the Internet, with younger cohorts tending to be better equipped than older ones. The exception is that in 2002, both the youngest generation and that of their parents, 35–44-year-olds, were better equipped than young adults aged 25–34; similarly, the latter had fewer media technologies at home than other two generations. Most probably this is a life cycle effect: while teenagers tend to take a lead in appropriating the newest media technologies in their daily lives, urging their parents to provide resources to purchase media equipment for home use, young adults may have somewhat different consumption priorities associated with starting and maintaining a household and family.

Figure 1. Structural characteristics of new media use by age group in 2002 and 2011

Differences between the age groups are statistically significant at p<.001.
To observe dynamics, the data cells of the same birth cohort are coloured with the same shade of blue. In each row, the two highest figures are in bold.

	All	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74
Years of birth							
2002	1928–87	1978–87	1968–77	1958–67	1948–57	1938–47	1928–37
2011	1937–96	1987-96	1977–86	1967–76	1957–66	1947–56	1937–46
N							
2002	1470	268	304	264	232	213	189
2011	1510	261	259	273	285	251	181
Users of the Internet (%)							
2002	43.1	**78**	**55.7**	46.4	36.8	18.3	4.4
2011	84.7	**99.6**	**98.2**	96	86	72	39.7
Home access to the Internet (%)							
2002	24.4	**37**	26.1	**32.9**	25.2	13.6	2.7
2011	82.1	**95.3**	**94.1**	93.5	82.3	71.3	40.8
Access to media technologies at home (index; maximum 5)							
2002	3.18	**3.55**	3.33	**3.51**	3.17	2.81	2.36
2011	3.07	**3.57**	3.27	**3.36**	3.02	2.71	2.12
Self-evaluated computer skills (1 = no skills; 5 = very good)							
2002	3.2	**3.51**	3.13	**3.15**	2.88	2.95	2.32
2011	3.12	**3.99**	**3.8**	3.35	2.87	2.39	1.78
Using the Internet for study- and work-related information*							
2002	0	**0.65**	**0.23**	0.05	-0.22	-0.4	-0.62
2011	0	**0.55**	**0.36**	0.26	-0.06	-0.53	-0.97
Using the Internet for political and economic information*							
2002	0	**0.25**	**0.33**	0.19	-0.14	-0.34	-0.56
2011	0	0.04	**0.33**	**0.44**	0.04	-0.33	-0.85
Using the Internet for political and economic participation*							
2002	0	**0.32**	**0.34**	0.18	-0.13	-0.39	-0.62
2011	0	**0.34**	**0.44**	**0.34**	-0.02	-0.45	-1.07

* Values of the index Z-scores (means).

With regard to home access to media technologies, the gaps between 15–24-year-olds and all other age groups had noticeably widened by 2011; moreover, the index score of the cohorts born in the 1958–1967 period and earlier had significantly dropped in the nine year gap. Such quickly developing generational

differentiation is probably due to the very fast changes in the media technological environment and the corresponding adjustments of measurement: in 2011, the list of questionnaire items in the index included more new media devices, such as the DVD player, MP3 player/iPod, smart phone, laptop, tablet, e-book reader, and scanner.

When it comes to self-reported computer skills, the youngest age group leads in both years, with older cohorts following in a nearly linear way (with minor fluctuations in 2002). It is notable that the 1978–1987 and 1968–1977 birth cohorts believed that their cognitive resources in this field had improved in nine years, while all older generation groups evaluated their computer skills considerably lower than they did in 2002.

The generation pattern of using the Internet to search for information related to one's studies and work follows a linear trend in both years. Remarkably, the differences between the youngest respondents and three previous generation groups had diminished by 2011. The relative disadvantage of the two oldest groups, on the contrary, had increased.

When it comes to searching for online information more directly related to the fields of politics and economics (such as looking for jobs, a place to live, and legal or political information), the lead, both in 2002 and 2011, was taken by the 1968–1977 birth cohort, followed by that of 1978–1987. The youngest respondents, born between 1987 and 1996, showed an index score only slightly above the sample average in 2011, which is partly due to a lesser need for that type of information during this life phase. The relative handicap of the 1958–1967 and earlier birth cohorts had amplified in nine years.

Somewhat similar patterns unfold with regard to using the Internet for political and economic participation (for forums, purchases, bank transactions, and e-services). Here, too, the 1978–1987 and 1968–1977 cohorts showed the highest activity levels in both years. The young people born between 1987 and 1996, however, shared the second position with their parents' generation.

In short, the youngest generation group, born in the 1987–1996 period, was best equipped with technology and its related cognitive resources in 2011, and made the most active use of this capital to meet information needs related to their studies and/or work. This cohort, however, ranked only second or third in terms of using the Internet for more direct participation in the political and economic fields, which is partly a life phase effect. The birth cohort of 1978–1987 displayed a very similar pattern in 2002. In nine years, this group of young people enhanced in their levels of most of the observed resources and online activities, and maintained a privileged position in the political and economic fields, being most active in using the Internet for political and economic participation. Nearly the

same holds with regard to the cohort of 1968–1977, whose resources and activity levels were far above the sample average in 2011, and who remained among the top players in the field. Although the share of Internet users and those with home access increased considerably among the cohorts born in 1958–1967 and earlier, their relative handicap in terms of perceived cognitive resources and observed online activities increased over nine years.

Generational habitus and life-worlds as reflected in media usage

This section examines the aspects of media use that are related to 'habitus', 'taste', symbolic capital and life-worlds – specifically, the usage of media technologies and channels, the viewing preferences of TV formats, attitudes towards the advantages and risks of the Internet, and the spatial reach of media use (measured by the self-evaluated level of how well they were informed about events in their local (i.e., city or regional) environment, in Estonia, and abroad in different countries or areas). In addition, findings on more nuanced "media repertoires" (Hasebrink & Popp 2006) in terms of topic preferences and spatial orientations in media use, presented in detail elsewhere (Kalmus et al 2013a), are re-interpreted as representing generational habitus and life-worlds. This section draws, due to the lack of comparable indicators in different waves of the survey, only on the data from 2011. In taking into account life course phase and socio-historical context during their formative years, the sample was split into four age groups, each covering 14 years:

• 15–29 year olds (n=424, born between 1982 and 1996, with their formative years falling in the period after Estonia regained independence in 1991; mainly pupils and students or those who had recently entered the labour market at the time of the survey);

• 30–44 year olds (n=398, born between 1967 and 1981; people who had experienced diverse social circumstances during their formative years; mainly engaged in work and raising children);

• 45–59 year olds (n=399, born between 1952 and 1966 with their formative years falling in the Soviet period; mainly engaged in work);

• 60–74 year olds (n=289, born between 1937 and 1951 with their formative years in the Soviet period; many of them pensioners).

An analysis of patterns in media technology adoption, media channel and programme preferences, and in the perceptions of the advantages and risks of the Internet, reveals significant differences between age groups with regard to their media-related generational habitus (Figure 2). The number of different newspapers read regularly increases linearly with age, being particularly low among

Figure 2. Use of media channels and TV formats, attitudes towards the Internet, and the spatial reach of media use by age group, 2011

Mean values of the indexes
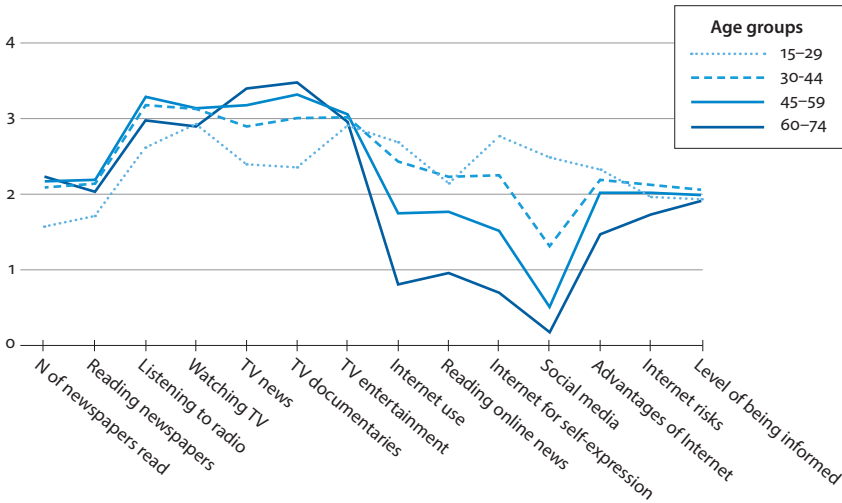
the youngest generation group (15–29-year-olds). Similarly, the frequency of watching more serious TV formats (news broadcasts as well as talk shows and documentaries) increases linearly with increasing age. Television entertainment appears to be the only format that bridges the gaps between generation groups, probably due to its versatility and appeal to a wide range of audience groups.

When it comes to consuming traditional media (newspapers, radio, and TV) in terms of use frequency and the versatility of channels followed, the linear pattern is broken, with the oldest group being somewhat less active compared to the two preceding age cohorts. In this respect, people aged 30–44 and 45–59 form a rather coherent group. In addition, these two cohorts have similar assessments of the level of risk introduced by the Internet.

Another, completely opposite, linear tendency unfolds with regard to use of new media for various purposes. In this respect, the two youngest groups (15–29 and 30–44-year-olds) show figures considerably higher than the sample average, confirming "an often held claim that young people are more inclined to explore and use new media technologies" (Bolin & Westlund 2009, 109). Not surprisingly, the two youngest cohorts are also most eager to celebrate the advantages of the Internet.

The only exception to fully linear patterns of new media use across age groups has to do with reading online newspapers and news portals: 30–44-year-olds are more active than the youngest group in this respect.

When it comes to the spatial reach of media use, the two middle-aged groups display a somewhat higher level of being informed about events in various parts of the world. The differences between cohorts, however, are statistically insignificant.

These trends allow composite sketches to be made to compare the younger generations of Estonia against older age groups. In line with the findings about digital stratification presented in the previous section, the youngest age group (15–29-year-olds, born between 1982 and 1996) has been highly successful in their swift domestication of new media technologies: they are the most active and multifaceted in using computers and the Internet, and they demonstrate the strongest attitudes of the advantages of this medium. The intensity and functional versatility of using the newest platform – social media –, together with creative and communicative uses of the Internet, is the aspect of new media use where the youngest cohort's head start, compared to 30–44-year-olds and older groups, is greatest. Conversely, this generation is most passive in consuming traditional media, particularly in news, talk shows, and documentary formats.

When it comes to a more nuanced picture of "media repertoires" (Hasebrink & Popp 2006), the youngest cohort is, most remarkably, characterised by a low interest in media topics related to the natural environment, history, and rural life as well as politics and society, and high enthusiasm with regard to cultural activities and leisure time, celebrities and scandals, and economic and technological matters (Kalmus et al 2013a). Furthermore, the youngest generation, together with the 30–44-year-old cohort, has the strongest orientation towards using Western media channels, which can partly be explained by their better knowledge of English (and Finnish), but may also indicate a decrease of the 'ideological' perception of social space among younger age groups, found in previous studies (for example, Masso 2011).

The group of 30–44-year-olds (born between 1967 and 1981) stands out by virtue of very active and versatile consumption of both traditional and new media. They are the keenest readers of online newspapers and news portals, which probably explains the lower frequency of watching TV news in this cohort, compared to the two older groups. At the same time, 30–44-year-olds demonstrate high reflexivity with respect to new media, as shown by high assessments of the advantages as well as risks of the Internet. An explanation probably lies in a large proportion of parents in this age cohort who are facing the challenge of mediating, that is, guiding and/or regulating, their children's online activities (Kalmus 2012).

In terms of thematic interests, the specific "media diet" (Aroldi & Colombo 2007) of 30–44-year-olds resembles, with minor variation, that of the youngest generation, demonstrating very clearly the divergence of topical preferences between people aged below 45 and above 45 (Kalmus et al 2013a). The spatial orientation of 30–44-year-olds bears similarities with the youngest generation in regard of active use of Western media, while their high interest in local media channels reveals affinity with the cohort of 45–59-year-olds (op cit).

Perception of intergenerational differences – a reflexive aspect of constructing generations

Perception of intergenerational differences was measured in 2011 with an index formed of four pairs of oppositional assertions about the phenomenon (for example "Young and old people usually have nothing to talk with each other about" versus "Young and old people generally find common conversation topics quite easily"). The index value (on a scale ranging from 0 to 4) was highest (1.96) among 60–74 year-olds and lowest in the group of 30–44 year-old people (1.79). These differences, however, were not statistically significant, indicating that generation groups share quite a common understanding of the extent of the generation gap.

To test a theory-driven assumption postulated in the conceptual framework of this chapter, that media experiences and media consciousness shared with members of another media generation may reduce perceived distances between generation groups (cf Gumpert & Cathcart 1985; Corsten 1999; Aroldi & Colombo 2007), we conducted a linear regression analysis. We used various indicators of media use and media consciousness, such as the above-described indexes of media use, attitudes towards the Internet and the spatial reach of media use, and the factor scores of the factors of media topic preferences (measured with 38 questionnaire items, representing all spheres of media content from politics to family life; see Kalmus et al 2013a for details) as predictors. First we ran a correlation analysis including all indicators of media use and media consciousness that could be considered significant based on the theoretical assumptions. Subsequently, the variables that were significantly correlated with the index of perception of intergenerational differences were entered as predictors in linear regression models (run on the whole sample and separately on the four age groups). The final best-fitting models include only those variables that turned out to be statistically significant predictors in at least one of the five models (Figure 3).

In general, a weaker perception of intergenerational gaps is related to more active and versatile media consumption, except for the use of social media.

Figure 3. Perception of intergenerational differences as predicted by media use preferences, attitudes towards new media technologies and spatial reach

Linear regression models; statistically significant regression coefficients (ß) are in bold

	All		15–29		30–44		45–59		60–74	
	ß	P	ß	p	ß	p	ß	p	ß	p
Watching TV (frequency and versatility)	**-0.06**	0.02	**-0.12**	0.03	**-0.11**	0.03	-0.03	NS	0.02	NS
Reading online newspapers and news portals	**-0.08**	0.03	0.02	NS	-0.06	NS	**-0.20**	0.01	0.06	NS
Internet use (versatility)	-0.07	NS	0.05	NS	-0.01	NS	-0.03	NS	**-0.28**	0.00
Frequency of using different social media	0.02	NS	-0.02	NS	-0.07	NS	**0.11**	0.05	**0.16**	0.02
Perception of the advantages of the Internet	**0.11**	0.00	0.09	NS	**0.17**	0.00	**0.15**	0.01	0.01	NS
Perception of Internet risks	**0.08**	0.01	0.06	NS	0.05	NS	**0.14**	0.01	0.11	NS
Self-evaluated level of being informed	**-0.09**	0.00	-0.08	NS	-0.07	NS	-0.07	NS	**-0.19**	0.00
Interest in politics, society	**0.09**	0.00	0.04	NS	0.09	NS	**0.14**	0.01	0.05	NS
Model fit: R^2	0.05		0.04		0.07		0.09		0.08	

Particularly, in the case of the two younger age groups, more frequent and versatile TV watching is associated with a smaller perceived distance from other generations. Furthermore, middle-aged people (45–59 years old) tend to feel themselves to be more similar to other generations when they read more news online. In the case of the oldest age group, versatile Internet use is soundly related to stronger feelings of having a common ground with younger generations. In addition, the wider the self-evaluated spatial reach among the oldest respondents, the more they feel they have in common with younger people.

Interestingly, a more frequent use of social media is related to a stronger perception of intergenerational differences among the two older age groups. This may be explained by the astonishment or even annoyance experienced by members of the parents' and grandparents' generations when following their children's or grandchildren's postings on social media, and the subsequent realisation of how different young people's discursive practices are from their own (for a qualitative description of this phenomenon see Tamme & Siibak 2012).

The perception of the different aspects of the Internet's uses is positively correlated with the perceived distance between generations. This association manifests

significantly among two middle age groups who stand between the youngest and the oldest generation with regard to the extent of incorporating the Internet into daily practices. The very fact of being located in such an intermediary zone of domesticating new technology may foster a mental pattern according to which heightened perception of the advantages and/or risks of the Internet is related to a sharpened feeling of gaps between generations, reflecting the social constructions of generation groups as highly different in their Internet usage.

A deeper interest in media topics related to politics and society is also positively correlated with the perception of intergenerational differences, being statistically significant in the group of 45–59-year-olds. Here a higher sensitivity towards social issues apparently goes hand in hand with a finer perception of gaps between generations as social groups.

Conclusions

The characteristics of media use and perception of the related cognitive aspects outlined in this chapter allow us to interpret the crucial distinctions between age groups as indicating different 'media generations'. The youngest age groups have welcomed their 'fresh contacts' (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928]) with digital media much more enthusiastically. In particular, the cohort born in 1982–1996 displays a number of media use features attributed to the "digital generation" (Papert 1996; Siibak 2009), such as using the Internet extensively for social networking, self-expression, and communication. Furthermore, their media use patterns correspond to their self-characterisation as the "Facebook generation", which came to light in a focus group interview with young Estonian people born between 1990 and 1995 (see Opermann 2013).

The oldest age groups in Estonia have remained faithful to the traditional media they consumed during their childhood or youth, and demonstrate a certain reluctance to adopt new media forms. For that matter, the cohorts born in the 1937–1951 and 1952–1966 periods possess several traits characteristic to the "radio/print generation" and the "TV generation" (Bolin & Westlund 2009), respectively. As people born between 1967 and 1981 display – compared to the youngest age group – a greater inclination towards traditional news media and lesser intensity and versatility of social media use, they seem to form an "intermediary or buffer generation" (cf Pilcher 1994) between the "TV generation" and the "digital generation".

In terms of vertical digital stratification and active online participation in the political and economic fields, a division line seems to run between the cohorts born in the 1968–1996 period and the older age groups. The younger generations,

well equipped with technological and cognitive resources, have made active use of this capital to meet the information needs related to their studies and/or work and to become and remain top players in online political and economic participation. The younger cohorts, thus, have actively responded to the opportunities and affordances provided by their "generational location" on the unfolding developmental track of information and communication technologies, thus acquiring features of "generation as an actuality" (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928]). Despite the cohorts born in the 1958–1967 period and earlier having increased their technological capital considerably within the decade under observation, their relative handicap in terms of cognitive resources and online activities has amplified.

When it comes to horizontal differentiation in terms of lifestyle-related aspects of media use, membership of a generation, again, plays a significant role. Differences in media-related generation habitus tend to manifest in linear patterns: use of traditional media channels and more serious TV formats increases with increasing age while using new media for various purposes shows the opposite tendency. Furthermore, the analysis presented in detail elsewhere (Kalmus et al 2013a) revealed very clearly the divergence of topic preferences between people born before or after the mid-1960s, that is, the younger generations' lower interest in political, historical, and environmental issues, as well as the cross-generational trends in changing spatial orientations of media use – following the age-bound trajectory from Russian media across local media towards global media. Quite remarkably, generation distinctions in channel and topic preferences and spatial orientations do not result in significant differences in the spatial reach of media use, measured by the self-evaluated level of being informed about events in various parts of the world. If we treat the latter as an indicator of the amount of cultural capital, we can argue that horizontal differentiation in generation 'media diets' and media 'tastes' does not imply inequality in terms of this form of capital.

The findings presented in this chapter, particularly the structural characteristics of new media use, rather justify the discursive construction of the young as the 'digital generation'. Nevertheless, the boundary of the 'digital generation' remains vague, extending, according to some qualities, to as far as those born in the late 1960s. A probable cause, on top of lifespan position (being still young enough to 'learn new tricks'), may lie in the fact that the cohorts born in the late 1960s and in the 1970s experienced very rapid changes and different social conditions during their formative years, which may have fostered their adaptability to all kinds of innovation. Similarly, several respondents in a qualitative study of Estonian people born in the 1970s stated that the chaotic 1990s defined their generation as "creative, adaptable to changes and adjustable to new social contexts"

(Nugin 2010, 353). Furthermore, it may be fruitful to abandon the view of the role of the media in 'generationing' – defining the identity and self-consciousness of generations (Alanen 2001) – "as a kind of technological imprinting that took place in a precise, defined moment" and see it "rather as a diachronic, cultural process" (Aroldi & Colombo 2013, 180). By the same token, I suggest describing the unfolding process outlined in this chapter as the digitisation of media generations, which is most clearly observable among the young born between 1982 and 1996.

It is also important to reckon with the theoretical postulate that digital stratification and social stratification are dialectically related: not only does digital differentiation create and reproduce social stratification, but social inequalities also shape digital distinction, including variation within the very 'digital generation'. The focus of this chapter did not cover empirical checks on the homogeneity of the 'digital generation' or possible 'generational units' (Mannheim 1952 [1927/1928]) in it. Our previous analyses (Kalmus et al 2011; 2013b), nevertheless, warn against overlooking individual variation in younger generations. Although age variables tend to be the strongest predictors of the Internet use frequency and the main use motives, other socio-demographic characteristics (such as gender, ethnicity, education, income, and social status) also contribute to predicting the intensity of and/or motives for Internet use.

The chapter touched upon the reflexive aspect of constructing generations by analysing perception of intergenerational differences as related to media use preferences and attitudes towards new media technologies. The assumption about the relationship between media-related experiences and consciousness, shared with members of another media generation, and perception of intergenerational differences was partially confirmed. In the two younger age groups, more active TV watching, as a shared media experience with older cohorts, was associated with weaker perception of generational gaps. Among the oldest respondents, analogous relationships appeared with respect to versatile Internet use and a wide spatial horizon. Unforeseen, though easily interpretable, findings came to light in the case of social media use that seems to make younger cohorts' distinctive "generational semantics" (Corsten 1999) particularly evident for older age groups, contributing to a stronger perception of intergenerational differences. In other words, discursive practices on social media apparently epitomise conflicting socialisation practices, expectations, and tastes of generational cohorts (cf Bourdieu 1993), creating intergenerational misunderstanding. Interestingly, this interpretive nuance binds together the discursive and reflexive aspects of constructing generations, and supports the thesis about a crucial role of ever-emerging new media channels as discursive sites in the process of 'generationing'.

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