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Cover page

Contemporary Social Science

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Guest editors: Fran Bennett, Julia Brannen and Linda Hantrais (corresponding guest editor)

Changing family values across the generations in twentieth-century Lithuania

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Changing family values across the generations in twentieth-century Lithuania

Abstract

Lithuanian society experienced several tumultuous upheavals during the twentieth century. Drawing on the findings from two series of biographical interviews, this article analyses changes in family values and intergenerational relations across three different generations of Lithuanians. The authors examine how traditional family values were transmitted between generations in twentieth-century Lithuanian society during the periods of independence before 1945, incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991, and the newly independent Lithuania after 1991. Particular attention is paid to the Soviet generations, their accommodation within the Soviet system and their adaptation to social and political changes in Lithuania after 1991. Analysis of these life histories illuminates the impact of the Soviet regime and the Sovietisation process on family values, family practices and intergenerational relations. The authors explore the role of families in resisting, accommodating and adapting to these systemic transformations, and they assess the indelible imprint of the processes involved on Lithuanian family life, which is still evident more than a quarter of a century after the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991. The study explores how the different periods of the Soviet regime shaped Lithuanian generations in the twentieth century and the legacy of these experiences during the Soviet era for Lithuanian society in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Soviet Lithuania, biographical interviews, family histories, generation, memory, intergenerational relations

Introduction

One way to examine families is to consider them as microcosms: small worlds, each worth exploring in its own right and deserving description for its own sociographic sake (Bertaux & Delcroix, 2000, p. 83). Every family is capable of revealing a sociological pearl, providing vivid evidence of a given process, awareness of which may serve to illuminate thousands of other cases. Family history consists of narrative accounts of persons belonging to several generations of the same family or kinship group (Bertaux & Delcroix, 2000, p. 71). Focussing on the lives and experiences of family members reveals family relationships from a generational perspective. Family history also demonstrates how family memory is constructed, and which communication channels and contexts are significant. Historical changes and systemic transformations are reflected in individual life histories.

In this article, we draw on 180 biographical interviews with three generations in Lithuanian society carried out for projects studying memories of Soviet times in life histories. The aims of the studies were to elicit and examine the lived experiences of different generations of Lithuanians before, during and after the Soviet era, and to assess the impact of these historical periods on family values, family practices, life scenarios, adaptation models and generational identity formation. The article analyses the influence of different sub-periods of the Soviet era on intergenerational family relationships. We examine how this influence was manifested in family practice, the extent to which family memory influenced the process and the importance of internal (inner-directed) and external (other-directed) adapters, as suggested by Riesman, Glazer, & Denney (1989). We explore how the different periods of the Soviet regime shaped Lithuanian generations in the twentieth century and consider the legacy of these experiences during the Soviet era for Lithuanian society in the twenty-first century.

Conceptual background

Generation as ‘cohort’ emphasises not only demographic factors (similar age) but also wider historical and social experiences that have an impact on the behaviours that distinguish one generation from another. According to Mannheim (1952), the identity of a generation and of generation units is formed within specific socio-political contexts, often referred to as political generations, by collective experience of significant historical events. Such events experienced during active socialisation appear to have important implications for the formation of shared worldviews and of a generation’s self-consciousness, thereby distinguishing it from other generations.

Academic research has shown that socio-political contexts can affect intergenerational family relationships both at the micro family level and the broader societal macro level (Albert & Ferring, 2013; Albertini, Kohli, & Vogel, 2007). Morgan (2013) argues that intergenerational family relations are created through shared family practices, which could be roughly equated with ‘strategies’ depending on historical and cultural contexts. Intergenerational family practices can also have an impact on adaptive behaviour models. Riesman et al. (1989) named these ‘inner-directed’ adapters; ‘other-directed adapters’ are agents outside the family (institutions, rules). External adapters seek behavioural patterns that are in line with the social, political and cultural context of their time. External and internal adapters may focus on common goals or be in conflict. The intergenerational relationship paradigm used by Silverstein & Bengston (1997) provides a comprehensive scheme for describing sentiments, behaviours, attitudes, values and structural arrangements in adult intergenerational relationships. Hillmert (2005), who analysed the impact of two modernisation processes – Western and Socialist – on the formation of generations and intergenerational relationships, found for example that differences in living standards in the two Germanies (before reunification) were determined by different country management systems.

In our study, we considered family practices not solely as activities. They also include forms of communication that create, maintain and transmit a family's collective memory, seen as a memory archive operating within a family, which promotes a sense of family togetherness and plays a role in creating it. We took account of Pomian's (2014) proposition that the process through which individuals communicate their experiences forms a feedback loop with their own memories. Assmann (2006) associates this form of communicative memory directly with reminiscing about events from the recent past, referring to it as 'living memory'. Communicative memory covers at least three generations. Halbwachs (1992, p. 63) has identified the distinctive features of family memory compared to other types of social group by its aspiration to generate loyalty. He distinguishes the family by its personalisation and idiosyncrasy resulting from the emotional dimensions of power that lie within it. From this perspective, a family is a differentiated group of individuals in which the memory of each member influences the interrelationships in that family. The family's collective memory can therefore be seen as an important player in bringing about a sense of togetherness or lack of it.

This article draws on Miller's (2000) concept of 'real' behaviour to demonstrate how changing historical contexts provide different models of social adaptation, and how uniformity and discrepancy can co-exist among generations. One concept in generation formation is associated with the teacher–student model of knowledge transfer. In a period of transformation, differences between generations result not only from education, professional activity and values, but also from the ability to face new challenges and adapt to them. Merton (1968) distinguished five models of adaptation that exist in any radical social transformation: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. Only their relative importance differs, depending on what type of social transformation is taking place. Arguably, systemic changes make it necessary for older generations to deploy re-adaptive strategies.

In Lithuania during the twentieth century, the most radical long-lasting social transformation began with the Soviet occupation after the Second World War. Lithuania was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, but from 1941 to 1944 Soviet occupation was replaced by German occupation. From 1944 Lithuania was again reoccupied and incorporated into the Soviet Union. The years from 1944 to 1990 can be divided into four historic sub-periods: the first period (1944–1953) covers the years of late 'Stalinism'; the second period (1953–1964) coincides with Khrushchev's 'thaw'; the third period (1964–1984) was one of 'stagnation' (under Brezhnev); and the fourth period (1985–1990) was marked by perestroika (under Gorbachev). This extended period in Lithuanian history witnessed the Sovietisation of all spheres of life. We use this historic backdrop to analyse the life stories of three generations of Lithuanians.

Different components of Soviet modernisation have been found to determine each generation's experience and its adaptation to changing political circumstances (Hoffmann, 2000; Leonavičius & Keturakis, 2002). The destruction of stable societal contexts during major political and social upheavals often results in the loss of accumulated resources and social status, and disrupts the usual models for transmitting resources from one generation to the next. Momentous disruptions, such as occurred during the Soviet era, can cause changes in values, norms and lifestyles, as well as bringing about the emergence of new mobility factors and pathways. Our study explored how the dramatic changes that took place in Lithuania during the twentieth century determined generational and individual experiences of people, family practices and family memory.

Research design and methods

From 2010 to 2012, we conducted 180 life history interviews with Lithuanians born before 1944, between 1945 and 1969, and between 1970 and 1990. Here, we draw on 99 of these biographical interviews. In 2017 and 2018, we conducted a further 81 life history interviews

focussing on people born in the 1970s and the 1980s. The sample was identified using biographical methods, and our interviewees were selected with the assistance of local non-governmental organisations in six administrative divisions, covering generational and geographical (urban, rural areas) characteristics. Profiles of the interviewee's characteristics are provided in Table 1. We used a life histories methodology (Bertaux, 1981; Thompson, 2000) that allowed us to cover the events of the respondent's life course up to the time of the interview. The biographical perspective made it possible to focus on a social actor in a particular social structure during a certain historical period. We followed Bertaux & Thompson (1993) and Miller's (2000) suggestions for biographical interviewing, enabling us to analyse the socialisation of generations, their behavioural models, intergenerational relationships, lifestyles and identities.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The project leaders conducted the biographical interviews. The interviewers' personal experience of life in Soviet Lithuania was important, since the collection of life stories covering three generations required knowledge of historical context and the ability to communicate directly with respondents belonging to different generations. The interviews explored the following topics: the respondent's life history, household, relations with parents, siblings, grandparents, family celebrations, cultural environment, politics, religion, leisure activities and migration history. Each interview lasted between one and three hours and followed a common schedule, leaving room for additional questions. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using the MAXQDA programme.

The context of the case study of Sovietisation in Lithuania

Wagner (1994, p. 13) used spatial comparisons to identify three major twentieth-century types of 'actually existing modernities' in the United States, Western Europe and the Soviet Union. He regarded the expansion of the Soviet system as a unique type of modernity extending across a large

territory. Lithuania was part of this process for 50 years from the 1940s to the 1990s. Most elements of the Soviet system of modernisation can be found in Lithuania: intensive industrialisation, accompanied by extensive urbanisation, professional specialisation, mass education and different levels of higher education, bureaucratisation and communication processes (Leonavičius & Keturakis, 2002, p. 42).

Our analysis of Lithuanian biographies employs a division into generations based on life experiences in different historical periods of the Soviet era (see Table 1). The oldest, our first, generation, born before the first Soviet occupation in 1940, lived through several years of Nazi rule before Soviet occupation was re-established from 1944. They experienced the Soviet takeover of power and the period of late Stalinism. This generation constructed life scenarios during the war and in the postwar period. The middle, our second, generation was born in the period from the end of the Second World War and the 1960s. Their socialisation in childhood took place during the period of the 'thaw' in Cold War relations under Khrushchev, when a new Lithuanian nomenclature was created. This period saw a partial liberalisation of the communist regime, the beginnings of the rehabilitation process and the return of political prisoners and deportees. Lithuania gained some independence in the management of its economy. The integration of the Lithuanian economy into that of the Soviet Union was ongoing. Special attention was paid to the increasing use of communist propaganda. The last, our third, generation was born in the period of late Soviet modernisation.

Family memory in Lithuanian generations

In the interviews, representatives of the three generations gave us their interpretation of historical events and processes and described their participation in them. Analysis of the

biographical memories reveals that they are constructed on the one hand by the specific historical context, and, on the other, by personal experiences and specific life-course events.

The first generation's memories

Our first generation comprises those born before 1944. Following the Soviet occupation after 1945, Lithuanians adopted a conformity model. Changes were brought about not only by various acts of Soviet political repression, but also by the Second World War and postwar repatriation and emigration. In Lithuanian memories, the postwar years of the Stalin regime are closely associated with the destruction of family groups, the loss of close family members and friends as well as property, forcible Sovietisation, fear, the impending threat of political repression and social polarisation. For the generation that lived through this period, the memories of such traumatic experiences often came to shape their memories of the later period during which the Soviet system became stabilised and internally disruptive.

The generation born in the Stalin period describe themselves as a generation of the Second World War or postwar period. During their childhood and adolescence they faced fear, persecution and exile. Their life stories of Soviet times place emphasis on the feeling of fear arising from their own individual experiences and those of other survivors, which left them feeling insecure. As one participant observed:

> …the years of occupation weren't without consequences (for me and my generation). There's some kind of internal anxiety: the fear of disclosure, distrust of yourself and of others. (female, aged 85, rural, university education)

It was not only the traumatic experiences of their own family, but also the trauma of their neighbours that had an impact on the interviewees' future life course. The process of stabilising the Soviet system commenced after Stalin's death in 1953. The steady return of deportees to Lithuania began, and a new social structure gradually developed. During this period, the Soviet authorities employed propaganda and extensive financial and human resources as well as a variety of social policies to impose their political power. Ideological pressures pervaded all spheres of Soviet life, both public and private, via the education system and mass media.

Those who did not accept Soviet ideology tried to maintain their pre-Soviet traditions, particularly in the private sphere of the family. Our research supports the idea that a dual consciousness emerged, whereby family members behaved differently in private from how they behaved in public. New forms of social relationships gradually developed in Soviet Lithuania, resulting in the accumulation of different types of social capital resources, routine patterns of everyday life, and adjustments to the mechanisms of social control. Simultaneous modernisation and Soviet stagnation, occurring in parallel, had a detrimental impact on the traditional Lithuanian way of life and produced traumatic experiences for many people. As one representative of the first (Stalin) generation, born in 1933, observed:

> We're war and postwar children. … Deportation to Siberia also took place. It was hard for the government at that time.… Moscow wasn't satisfied that young people were slowly and hardly re-educated. People who sought a career, like today, had to join the party. Whoever wanted to study joined the Komsomol. The worst period was before Stalin's death. Later on, the situation changed slightly (female, aged 77, urban, university educated).

Lithuanians in this first generation suffered the double trauma of Soviet occupation and, in the 1990s, the transformation of post-communist societies. Those who grew up in this period perceived the beginning of the Soviet occupation as a cultural trauma (Šutinienė, 2014, pp. 222–226). The self-awareness of this generation was largely shaped by the experience of the period of occupation, war, and Stalinism. However, this generation also lived through the earlier experience of the interwar period in the Republic of Lithuania. One interviewee, a former political prisoner, pointed out:

> I remember when the war began. When I started going to the second class, we had to flee from home. Life was over. We had to hide, we changed our names. We're one of those families that actively participated in the opposition. My brother was born in 1924. Every year I studied at a different school. That learning was like ... I had to graze the cows. My sister had a different surname. That was my childhood. And my youth was spent in a camp. I was a political prisoner for ten years (male, aged 74, rural, seven years of education).

Other studies have gone back further and sub-divided our first generation into the 'Republic generation' (born in the 1920s) and the 'Stalin generation' (born 1931–1944) (Aarelaid-Tart, 2006, pp. 29, 124–126). Young people of the Republic generation attended school during the interwar period. Those who were born in the years from 1920 to 1940 had reached retirement age by the time Lithuania regained its independence in the 1990s.Their memories reflect both their experiences of cultural trauma during the Soviet occupation and their successful adaptation in the post-Soviet period. Members of the Stalin generation, unlike the Republic generation, were educated and started their careers under the Soviet regime. They experienced

war and Stalinism during their childhood and adolescence. Our research indicates that the families of this generation that did not suffer trauma perceived the Stalin period as less dramatic than the Republic generation. Moreover, the narratives of individuals from the Stalin generation who experienced the repressions reflect not only the trauma suffered, but also their successful later adaptation in the 1990s. A female interviewee, who was deported to Siberia with her parents and, after returning to Lithuania, worked in 'easy' jobs as a conductor, recounted:

> Everything's in the past. My father told me that when we return to Lithuania, if we return, we'll be very happy. He liked to say, 'You're not a gentleman if you don't feed pigs'… And now you have Lithuania, its beautiful nature (woman, aged 79, urban, below secondary education).

The age of an individual during the years of transformation is significant. For most of our first generation respondents, the restoration of independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union is identified as a very important event. The years of the Lithuanian Republic were heavily criticised under the Soviet regime, but this negative stigma was removed after the restoration of independence.

Biographical data for this generation suggests that the change of 'system' created the phenomenon of 'double consciousness' resulting from different sets of behaviours in the private and public spheres. In private, it was possible to adhere to former pre-Soviet values and, in public, it was necessary to act according to the rules of the Soviet regime, using behavioural models such as cooperation, opposition or opportunism. This is typical of the older respondents from our first generation. Those who evaluated the Soviet system

negatively tried to maintain the intergenerational relations and family practices that had emerged during the pre-Soviet period.

The middle generation's memories

The middle generation (born 1945–1969) went through the most intensive Soviet socialisation and a reformed education system in which ideological institutions such as the Pioneers and the Komsomol (Communist Youth) were an integral part. Some authors have referred to this generation as the 'first' Soviet generation (Kraniauskiene, 2016) because the important external adapter during Khrushchev's 'thaw' was the education system with the incorporated ideological organisations of children and youth. They experienced the most active phase of their socialisation under Brezhnev's 'stagnation'.

Members of this generation adapted to the Soviet system early in their lives, which meant following the 'low-profile principle' (Schwartz & Bardi, 1997, p. 391) from childhood. Their adaptation strategies were facilitated by the standardisation and institutionalisation of everyday life. The Soviet system's paternalistic policies placed individuals in a variety of structures (education, work) and did so in a planned manner; it narrowed the scope of their interests to the very basic needs of personal economic and material capital. When enforcing its policies, the Soviet regime sought to implement what Schwartz & Bardi (1997, p. 393) have described as 'moral dissociation from reality'. It also strengthened dependency on the system.

This generation experienced mass education introduced in Soviet Lithuania after 1945. As Kraniauskienė (2016) has shown, the education of these cohorts, unlike that of the older age groups, was extended, thereby delaying the beginning of their working lives. The prolongation of education also brought about shifts in basic life schedules: education, work and family. Completion of

education had to be combined with starting a family and getting a job. Many of those born between 1945 and 1969 married and began having children before they had completed their education and started a career.

Significant influences on this generation's life scenarios were the attitudes of their parents towards the Soviet system, their everyday practices and institutional pressures. According to Riesman et al. (1989), family values, attitudes and practices can be identified as inner-directed, with institutional pressures serving as other-directed adaptors. The education system and other institutions that created Soviet values operated to provide examples of acceptable behavioural patterns. These examples of behaviour were adopted by the middle generation in which family members responded to institutional pressures neutrally, negatively or positively. Family members who responded to the Soviet system negatively valorised the family memories of pre-Soviet Lithuania and dwelt on the trauma and repression of the early Soviet occupation. A neutral or positive approach by family members to the Soviet system strengthened the influence of institutional pressure in this generation, thereby limiting their life goals and interests to the 'low profile'. According to one respondent in the middle generation, 'We weren't very interested in what was happening beyond the borders of the Soviet Union' (female, aged 51, urban, vocational education).

By contrast, those who demonstrated a neutral approach to the Soviet system referred to their parents' concern to protect them from the potentially negative consequences of social control by not speaking 'about problems'. Another participant from the middle generation observed:

> My parents were civil servants and lived like most people in Lithuania. Parents didn't talk about problems, such as long queues for bread. Parents didn't talk about problems;

> they tried to protect children from information that could've led to a family disaster. (female, aged 48, urban, university/college educated)

Active conformist parenting behaviour structured the life scenarios in this generation. The traumatic experience of our first generation was less often mentioned by the middle generations in their choices and values. They downplayed the experiences of their grandparents and demonstrated loyalty to the Soviet system. According to another participant in our middle generation:

> My parents, for example, really hid [information]. Teachers taught me that our system was good, and I sincerely believed this. … And everything was acceptable to me. (female, aged 66, rural, vocational education)

A negative attitude on the part of this generation's parents towards the Soviet system and the continuation of pre-Soviet Lithuanian traditions in the private sphere also influenced members of the middle generation (born 1945–1969) who maintained a traditional way of family life. They celebrated Christmas and Easter; they chose jobs that were not closely associated with implementing Soviet ideology; and they did not join the Communist Party. Memories passed down from the first generation about their experiences, such as the preservation of pre-Soviet values and traditions, had an influence on the middle generation's life scenarios and can be seen as evidence of intergenerational solidarity based on shared values. However, interview accounts also suggest elements of cynical conformity to the system. One participant from the middle generation noted:

> When I started work, I joined the Komsomol. We were ordered to report on who went to church. So we went to church, enjoyed confession, left and reported that we hadn't seen anything and we didn't know anything. (female, aged 62, rural when growing up, university education)

The younger members of the middle Soviet generation were born in the 1960s. A distinctive feature of their socialisation into Soviet ideology is that it was a smooth process. Their biographies clearly demonstrate their reconciliation with the Soviet system and participation in Soviet public life by their acceptance of most of its official and unofficial rules as unavoidable, normal and self-evident. However, in their private life, people identified with the system to varying degrees.

Their own parents' attitudes towards the Soviet system and their practices had an impact on the attitudes to life of the younger members of the middle generation. If parents demonstrated a neutral stance towards the Soviet system, their children tended to follow the regulations and the expectations of the time. A neutral stance towards the present and the past demonstrated by their parents and grandparents resulted in a passive approach to adapting to the system for the middle generation through a tendency to comply with formal regulations without questioning the Soviet system, because 'that's the way it has to be'.

The younger members of the middle generation who had little material and social capital tended to adopt an active conformist approach. They chose this approach because they believed they could build a better life and future under the Soviet regime than that of their parents. Active conformist conduct was also evident when their parents themselves had practised such behaviour. By contrast, in cases where their parents had access to greater material resources and social capital, they sought to replicate the success of their parents. Negative attitudes of parents towards the Soviet system led

to adjustments by their children, including some resistance to the system, whilst maintaining expected behaviour in the public sphere. Such disparities were made possible because innovative practices for improving everyday life were developed in private.

In the 1990s the change of regime following the collapse of the Soviet system brought about a breakdown of values, ideological configurations and societal practices. One of the characteristics forming the collective identity of the younger members of the middle generation is the significant gap between the ideology and values of their parents' generation and their own ideology and values. Yet not all those in this middle generation distanced themselves from the experiences of the older generations, even though they displayed more or less conformist behaviour in the public sphere. This evidence of an indirect link to pre-Soviet Lithuania by some of the post-1945 (middle) generation distinguishes this generation from younger generations. The diversity in forms of adaptation in the middle generation, educated under the Soviet system, was affected not only by the collapse of the Soviet regime but also by the experiences of their families, who had to re-adapt to the restoration of their country's independence.

The younger members of the middle generation also participated in the Soviet educational process from the very beginning. After graduation, they found jobs that corresponded to their professional qualifications. After the restoration of independence, a free labour market system was introduced that stimulated competition. From the 1990s, however, with the transformation from a centrally planned to a market economy, some of the middle generation lost their jobs and had to retrain. Economic and labour market changes created uncertainty, tension and fear. Some who lost their jobs forged new careers, but others could not.

The third generation's memories

The third generation, born in the 1970s, can be described as the last Soviet generation. They experienced the Soviet system only during their childhood and youth when transformation to a market economy was underway, along with the development of new institutional structures and legal regulations. The third Soviet generation was aged between 22 and 31 in 2001, when new structures of social and labour relations were introduced alongside social security institutions characteristic of a market economy. The memories of the late Soviet period in this age group have more in common with the memories of those born between 1945 and 1959, the older middle generation, than they do with the independent Lithuanian generation born in the 1930s, the younger members of our first generation who adjusted to a 'low profile'.

Those belonging to the third Soviet generation only participated to a limited degree in the Soviet educational system or the Soviet children's and youth organisations. Not every member of this generation joined the Komsomol. Their life stories do, however, reflect their active participation in the 'Singing Revolution' that took place in the Baltic States in 1988–1991 when they were liberated from Soviet rule without recourse to violence. Their life course was influenced by their parents' attitudes and behaviours to social and political change as well as by the move away from a centrally planned economy.

The life stories of this generation tend to emphasise their careers, and their opportunities for labour market mobility. Like the first generation, they had to face the problem of adaptation. They needed not only the ability to adapt to the new economic conditions, but also to rethink their life scenarios according to the new challenges of the time. When our interviews were conducted in 2010–2012, this generation had lived through not only the collapse of the Soviet Union but also the process of accession to European Union membership in 2004 and the economic crisis of 2008. Like the younger members of the middle Soviet generation (born in the 1960s), they experienced economic migration, typically working in construction and factories, on farms and as nurses or relocating to

other EU countries. According to our findings, successful adaptation scenarios are reflected in short-term migration as a way to increase income, to ensure financial well-being and stability, and to create social capital. Not all adaptation scenarios during the transformation period, however, ensured financial well-being. Those who did not manage to integrate or reintegrate into the labour market chose jobs without a contract or that required short-term emigration.

Social capital and intergenerational relations

Analysis of the Soviet-era memories of three Soviet generations reveals a disparate range of practices and strategies at different stages of the Soviet period. One of the most obvious of these relates to the use of social capital, in which social networks are central. In the Soviet period, the degree of social capital available to a family was evident in the resources of trusted networks of social relationships, which determined norms of behaviour and generated both obligations and expectations. Social capital proved to be one of the key resources that enabled individuals and families to survive, adapt and improve their social status in the transformation period from the late 1980s. As one participant from the third generation noted:

> I can't now specify the profession of my great-grandmother; I can only say that all the children graduated from their studies in the inter-war period. I also think they were quite well-to-do. My great-grandfather also owned a lot of land. Speaking more about my grandparents: on my father's side both were doctors, and on my mother's side a teacher and a banker. My parents (an engineer and a doctor): both are now about 70 years old, and both are still working. Both are pensioners, but still working. My father still has two jobs, so I'm really surprised. (male, aged 44, urban, university education).

A comparison of the use of social capital in the postwar years (first generation) with the later Soviet period (second and third generations) reveals different practices and strategies in its deployment. The Second World War and postwar Soviet occupation brought about the loss of accumulated financial resources and former social status, and presented a challenge to the usual models of transmitting resources from one generation to the next, as well as influencing changes in values and norms for many people. After 1945, the former structures of social capital and the mechanisms for its deployment were largely destroyed. From one perspective, the Second World War, emigration to the West, and postwar political repressions divided families and undermined relationships with other relatives, friends and colleagues. From another perspective, former relationships that the new regime discouraged had to be concealed and suppressed for fear of the political repercussions. People mainly relied on their immediate family members and next of kin. The social networks of this period were primarily directed inwards and tended to be close, strong and binding. The biographical interviews suggest that deployment of these social networks was based on mutual trust and the need to adapt to Soviet reality, especially in its early stages.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the threat of Soviet political repression abated, and people started gradually re-establishing their former social relationships and creating new ones. Many Lithuanians were now able to extend their existing social networks, based on more inclusive and uniting elements, including people from outside the family group. Although these relationships were weaker when compared to the former narrow network of closely-associated family members in the Stalin period, they nonetheless provided greater opportunities to access information, jobs and scarce Soviet resources. Changes in social capital networks were also facilitated by generational change because it was much easier for people born during the war or later to accept the Soviet system and to become integrated into it.

The interviews with the first generation indicate that social capital was important for survival and adaptation as well as for the improvement of social status during the Soviet era. Close relationships with family members and next of kin provided essential material and emotional support, and influenced attitudes, values and norms, such as assiduousness and educational aspirations. Some interviewees in our first generation had failed to build social capital. When family members disappeared, for example, those who remained were restricted in their life choices. As one informant for our first generation observed:

> My father was one of the first Communists in our village. He went out for a drink and didn't return. People found him in the woods. He left when I was three years old. My mother was left with three children. The (Communist) party buried him. We weren't even at the funeral because we didn't have shoes. (female, aged 80, rural when growing up, secondary or less)

Political connections created economic as well as social inequality in the Soviet period. Affiliation to the Komsomol or the Communist Party was the most important factor in determining upward social mobility: members of these organisations were assigned to the best jobs after graduation, had better career advancement opportunities and had access to a range of elite privileges. Analysis of biographical interviews suggests that some people considered the use of social networks to be the norm in the Soviet period, while others rejected it as morally abhorrent. These different positions did not necessarily ensure successful adaptation during the years of social transformation. For those with social networks established during the Soviet period, the starting point for successful adaptation was in place. For others, however, a critical attitude to the Soviet regime and conduct consistent with this approach did

not prove to have a positive outcome in adapting to new political, economic and social conditions.

Conclusions

This article has examined the lived experiences of different Lithuanian generations before, during and after the Soviet era. It has explored the impact of the historical changes and systemic transformations during these periods on family values and practices, and intergenerational family relationships. The analysis has shown how the loss of independence, war, the Soviet system and the restoration of independence in 1990 are reflected in the life stories of three generations. Analysis of the experiences of Lithuanians who lived through these events identifies different patterns of behaviour and transmission and methods of adaptation and shows how older family generations influence the actions and behaviour of their children

The behavioural patterns of the oldest age cohort (Republican and Stalinist generations) were influenced by the traumatic experiences of repression, war and deportations to Siberia. They remembered the 'struggle' for survival and how parents tried to protect their children from such experiences. The developmental relations of this generation were formed during the introduction of Soviet political structures, the period of nationalisation of industry and collectivisation of agriculture, and the restructuring of society. This period is remembered as involving the loss of relatives and of accumulated assets.

During the period of the stabilisation of the Soviet system, which began after Stalin's death, a new social structure was formed. New social relationships were created that affected the relationship between generations and family values. The first Soviet generation adopted a variety of patterns of behaviour depending on their response to inner-directed or other-directed adapters. Some

respondents acted in the public sphere in accordance with the rules promulgated by the Soviet system, while in the private sphere they focussed on the values transmitted by parents and grandparents, thus preserving intergenerational solidarity. Other respondents adapted and pursued careers while ignoring the values and experiences of parents and grandparents. Yet others who had close relationships with family members and wider kin were influenced by the life experiences, values and norms of previous generations.

Solidarity between the youngest Soviet generation and their parents was facilitated by the parents' adaptation skills in an independent Lithuania. The economic capital accumulated by parents provided the starting point for the life trajectories of the last Soviet generation. Their ways of adapting were less problematic. Their life scenarios depended on flexible employment, and the search for ways to realise their objectives.

By focussing on how the different periods of the Soviet regime shaped Lithuanian generations in the twentieth century, and created a legacy for Lithuanian society in the twenty-first century, we identified evidence of de-standardisation, de-institutionalisation and individualisation processes affecting life scenarios. The fundamental changes in society constructed new norms, values and attitudes in the transition to the market economy requiring initiative and relevant professional knowledge. The biographical material used in this study demonstrated that intergenerational solidarity or conflict is shaped not only by family practices but also by the historical context.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Lithuanian interviewees in 2010–2012 and 2017–2018

No. of respondents	Year of birth	Generation	Age	Gender	Rural/Urban when growing up	Education
33	1925–1930	First / Oldest / Republican	80–86	F-20 M-13	U-21 R-11	University, college-10 Vocational-10 Secondary education or lower -13
36	1931–1944	First / Oldest / Stalin	66–79	F-20 M-16	U-25 R-11	University, college-15 Vocational-10 Secondary education or lower -11
30	1945–1959	Second / Older Middle / First Soviet	5165	F-17 M-13	U-20 R-10	University, college-12 Vocational-10 Secondary education or lower-8
20	1960–1969	Second / Younger Middle / ‘Thaw’	48–57	F-13 M-7	U-11 R-9	University, college–8 Vocational-8 Secondary education or lower-4
41	1970–1979	Third / Last Soviet / Late Socialist	38–47	F-23 M-18	U-27 R-14	University, college–20 Vocational-15 Secondary education or lower-6
20	1980–1990	Third / Last / Pre-independence	27–37	F-11 M-8	U-12 R-8	University, college-17 Vocational-2 Secondary education or lower-1