### Cleavages in basic values across age groups of Russians: dynamics and determinants

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In this study, we aimed to describe the gaps between older and younger Russians in terms of their values, examine their dynamics, as well as to identify the factors influencing these gaps across countries. Using Schwartz’s theory of basic values we focused on generalized model containing four values, namelyOpenness to change, Self-Transcendence, as well as Conservation and Self-Enhancement.

Based on previous research, we hypothesized, first, that older Russians compared to younger are more committed to the values of Conservation and less committed to Openness to Change. Secondly, we put forward a hypothesis about the value convergence of different age categories: during the period of study (2006-2018), there was a decrease in the share of generations who socialized in the Soviet era, while the share of generations who received post-Soviet secondary socialization, which led to a decrease in the differences between older and younger respondents. Third, since the value differences across age groups can be seen as a country-level construct, we turned to international comparisons. We hypothesized that in post-communist countries, in comparison with countries that did not experience sociopolitical revolutions of 1989–1991, the higher commitment of older people to Conservation values, as well as their lower commitment to Openness to Change values, is more pronounced.

To test the hypotheses, we used data from the European Social Survey (ESS), which is conducted every two years in dozens of European countries (and since 2006 in Russia as well). We used Russian data from rounds 3 to 9 of the ESS collected in 2006–2018 (the total number of interviewed respondents was 17.068). In the ESS, values are measured Portraite Values Questionnaire, which consists of 21 value portraits, which then can be converted into indices of different dimensions. We useed the 4-values model, since the invariance of measurement for this model was demonstrated, that is, values can be compared between different countries at different time points. To analyze age gaps, we identified four age groups: 15-24 years old, 25-49 years old, 50-64 years old, and 65 years and older (category 25-49 became the control group).

To answer the research question, we described the gaps in values between age groups, then we ran regression models which allowed checking the direction of the dynamics of these gaps in Russia over 12 years. To assess the determinants of these gaps at the country level, we conducted multilevel regressions where the key parameter was the interaction between the effect of age and characteristics of a country.

Results demonstrated that the main age-related differences in Russia apply to the values of Openness to change and Conservation. Older groups attach higher importance to the values of Conservation and Self-transcendence, while the younger groups emphasize Openness to change and Self-enhancement. This supported our first hypothesis. Value gaps across age groups turned out to be unstable. Regression analysis showed that age differences in Openness to change and Conservation decreased significantly over the period from 2006 to 2018. The strongest changes were observed in the older groups: the importance of the Openness to change increased here over time, while the importance of Conservation, on the contrary, decreased. This fully confirmed our second hypothesis. Interestingly, we have not seen the dynamics of gaps in the values of Self-transcendence and Self-enhancement.

In terms of differences between countries, the gaps in Openness to change and Conservation values across age groups are noticeably larger than the gaps in Self-transcendence and Self-enhancement values. Russia does not occupy extreme positions in terms of these gaps, yet it is among the predominantly Eastern European countries, where these gaps are larger than in the other European countries. This confirmed our third hypothesis. In further analysis, we examined the effects of other country characteristics that could potentially influence these differences between Eastern and non-Eastern European countries. The results showed that a higher level of socio-economic development of a country is associated with smaller age gaps in the Openness to change, Conservation and Self-transcendence values. While the growth of socio-economic development rate is associated with larger all value differences across age groups, an increase in the proportion of the elderly population increases the cleavage in Conservation and Self-enhancement.

This study has some limitations, which, however, do not contradict the conclusions drawn. First, considering the dynamics, we checked only the linear dynamics of value gaps across age groups. Second, when talking about the determinants of these gaps, we used cross-sectional data, that is, we draw conclusions on correlations rather than on causal relationships. Third, due to the limited sample size, it was not possible to simultaneously trace the specific effects of different country characteristics, and therefore it is not yet clear which characteristics of Eastern European countries are lying behind the value gaps. Finally, in the study we used the concept of "age differences", which includes trends associated with both life course and differences between generations, as well as changes in the time of measurement. Our hypotheses were based on a certain understanding of the relationship between these components, and the hypotheses, in general, were confirmed. Disentangling the specific contribution of each of these factors to the value gap across age groups is an important topic for further research.