

# Time and History in the Memories of Soviet Generations

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**Abstract.** This article aims to reconsider how and where the boundaries within Soviet generations as differentiable memory communities could be established. On the basis of Mannheimian theory of generational units and the theory of narration, as based on the conceptual metaphors of container, a method to identify the boundaries between generations was devised. The method was applied to biographical narratives, collected during the summer of 2017, and revealed the existence of different history-related calendars to structure time in the biographical past.

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## Introduction

Cultural memory is not static. Over time, hegemonic narratives from the past are replaced with new ones, and memory sites acquire new meanings and interpretations (Birth, 2006; Kansteiner, 2002; Onken, 2010). Changes in collective memory do not necessarily imply pluralization – memory agents can be successful in establishing a dominant narrative. However, sooner or later, the dominant narrative is supplanted with competing narratives.

Generational transition contributes to changes in collective memory. In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a boom began, rather unexpectedly, in the commemoration of German sufferings and sacrifices at the end of the WWII. According to Assman (2006), generational transition explains the breaking of old taboos, which had previously regulated the understanding of the German past. Every generation has its specific memory profile and demands on identity (Assman, 2008); in the German case, the new generation supplemented the former perspective of guilt with the perspective of victimhood (Assman, 2006; on how the how younger generations renarrate the past see Welzer, 2010). At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Estonia, as well, new voices challenged the previously dominant national narrative, which had reflected mainly the voices of those, who were born in the 1920s. New generations acquire their voice, which brings changes to the perception

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of the Soviet past and 'mature Socialism' (Jõesalu and Kõresaar, 2013; see also Čėpaitienė, 2007 on the controversies and challenges in appropriation of the Soviet heritage of elder generations).

The hypothesized connection between generational demands on identity and the transformation of memory narratives draws the attention of researchers to the very concept of 'generation' and motivates inquiries into the profiles of various generations. Research on political attitudes proves that some politically relevant differences can be observed among generations in Lithuania (Ramonaitė et al., 2014, pp.79-84). This type of research usually tends to verify (theoretical) predictions that the youngest generation of independent Lithuania will differ essentially from the older 'Soviet' generations. There is also a growing interest in the differences among various Soviet generations in Lithuania, in particular, in the attitudes and memory profiles of those, born in the 1930s and 1940s (Šutinienė, 2016b). Joesealu (2016) calls them a 'silent generation', i.e. generation whose experiences have not yet been publicly heard, but whose memory is predicted to shape the outlook of the future national narrative.

One of the biggest challenges in researching Soviet generations is to identify the chronological boundaries of these fuzzy groups (Kraniauskienė, 2004). Drawing a strict demarcation line between generations is impossible; instead, varying degrees of membership within a described set, such as the Stalinist generation, have to be assumed<sup>1</sup>. Year of birth does not fully determine membership in a generation, though it can increase or decrease the probability of belonging to a certain generation, sharing its profile, and one's inclination to identify with it.

This article explores whether those born in the 1930s and 1940s, who have been expected to shape the public narrative in the near future, comprise a separate shared memory group. Further the article asks: If they do not, how many generations are within that birth cohort, and which events or dates provide a basis for the provisional demarcation of these generations? Qualitative researchers tend to assume the existence of generations: in order to describe the consciousness and memory of different generations, these researchers pre-assign individuals to a certain generation and then look for commonalities among them. The differences observed are treated as idiosyncracies, and not as a falsification of the presupposed grouping. However, this article argues that narrative analysis could confirm or refute the assumed criteria of grouping into generations, too.

Analysis is based on the results of the analyses of interviews conducted in the summer of 2017 in four regions of Lithuania: Varėna, Kėdainiai, Naujoji Akmenė, and Rokiškis (town and district)<sup>2</sup>. Interview participants were told that researchers wanted to collect memories of life during the Soviet times, participants were asked to begin by telling about themselves and their life story. When some aspects of the story were not clear and needed elaboration, an interviewer asked additional questions. In other words, each interview combined several methods: life stories, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews. To avoid confusion, in this article I will refer to this material as 'interview', 'memory narrative,' and 'story', with each of these terms

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in her article on the Soviet memory of the older generation (generational cohort of 1920-1945), Šutinienė (2016b) ascribed those born from 1930 to 1944 to the Stalinist generation and those, born from 1945 to 1949 to a transitory period.

<sup>2</sup> The collection comprises 102 biographical interviews. The results, which are presented in this article, are based on the analysis of 42 interviews. 34 interviews in the sample were with participants, born until in 1940s (9 men and 25 women), and 8 – after 1950 (5 men and 3 women).

denoting the story a participant told during the interview either 'to tell about oneself' or in reply to a particular questions.

I begin this article with a conceptualization of the links between generation, memory, and time perception. Next, I present modes of time perception used among participants, and argue that the distribution of these perceptions could be interpreted as generational differences. I conclude by discussing how and where the boundaries between Soviet generations as differentiable memory communities might be established.

## Memory, time, and generations

German sociologist Karl Mannheim (1952) observed that individuals, born around the same time, share a similar outlook, values and behavior. Having been born at the same time, individuals enter the period of adolescence at the same time. The first significant events that individuals encounter as adolescents shape their understanding of the world and their orientation within it: "early impressions tend to coalesce into a *natural view* of the world" (Mannheim, 1952, p.177). Therefore, those, who were born at around the same time, form an identifiable group, called a 'generation'. In belonging to the same generation, individuals share not only a common world view, but each generation is distinguishable by its memory. Though every individual is a sum of his or her experiences, these experiences are not of the same significance and importance. The "differential sampling" hypothesis states that when individuals are asked to identify the most important historical events, individuals tend to select events that occurred during their adolescence (Belli et al., 1997; Schuman and Corning, 2012). Generations vary in how they rank historical meaning and significance.

A prominent narrative theorist, Marianne Horsdal (2012), claims that narration employs the conceptual metaphor of a container. "Our experiences of moving from one place to another (...) makes up the embodied foundation for our cognitive understanding of the temporal space of time, and, thus, of the format of narrative" (Horsdal, 2012: 12). Individuals experience themselves as moving not only in space, but also in time: instead of perceiving time as a meaningless continuum, they experience it as divided into meaningful intervals. Life narratives take listeners from one time interval to another, each defined by its particular characteristics. On the basis of 'differential sampling hypothesis', it is reasonable to conjure that generations will differ in how they structure time. In other words, there will be variation in the number and type of 'temporal containers' in their life stories.

In the narratives of the past, the time circumstances reflect the narrator's understanding and structure of time. In order to tell a story, the narrator has to indicate when the events of the story took place. These time circumstances were retrieved from the interviews and coded into meaningful groupings. For example, narrator might say that life improved 'after my marriage', 'at the end of Soviet times', 'after Stalin died' etc. All of these time circumstances imply different criteria for dividing time into meaningful intervals (change of social status, change of political regime, etc.) and are categorized accordingly (see Brown et al., 2009 and their method to identify 'historically defined autobiographical periods', though in the material, generated by different methods). When interviewees repeated the time indications used by the interviewer<sup>3</sup>, these indications were not included for further analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, an interviewer might have asked a question to specify whether certain event happened 'after independence', and the narrator might reply using the same indicator.

Typically, generations are identified and described by their perception of public political events. However, generational consciousness could be defined through everyday private experiences and their narratives. Different genders are culturally predisposed to experience the world in different ways (Budrytė, 2010; Joesalu, 2016). Contrary to men, women are more affected by what they experience in their daily lives. In other words, historical events and processes are not the only reference points cognitively demarcating time into meaningful containers; people divide time both into historically meaningful intervals and into personally meaningful intervals (childhood, university, before or after a marriage, etc.). Notwithstanding possible gender differences, this paper analyses only those time circumstances, which refer to public historical events. In these cases, general historical knowledge is sufficient to date events in the narrator's life. When interviewees say that event X happened when their first child was born, when they married, etc., dating this event requires knowledge of the history of these particular individuals. Even though they reveal a perception of the world, personal history based time structures are not analysed due to the theoretical prediction that generations differ in their attitude towards public historical, not personal, events.

## Modes of time perception

### *Time as a sequence of political regimes*

In the analysed memory narratives, the most common way to structure time was to divide it into broad periods demarcated by the beginning and end of a particular political regime. Each political regime that the narrators lived under was a configuration of specific and distinguishable social, political, and economic circumstances; and regime changes radically transformed these circumstances. In recalling their past, narrators found it easy to date events by referencing political regimes, because, in their memory, a particular event is associated with other events and circumstances, recognized without hesitation as pertaining to a particular political regime.

However, in their stories, different narrators identify various numbers of historical periods: two, three, or more. Some narrators divided their lives into 'Soviet times' and 'Lithuanian times' (a typical reference to the years after 1990). In their memory narratives, some participants mentioned only one time circumstance, which referred not to a particular regime but to the moment that separates these regimes:

Well, I would say that by the end, (*in pabaigu*) life was very good. Very good (woman, born in 1938, interviewed in Varėna district).<sup>4</sup>

Other narrators divided time into the wartime era (WWII), the Soviet era, and independent Lithuania. What explains the presence or absence of war as a distinguishable period in life-narrative timelines? Why do some participants express an awareness of the differences between the wartime years and the subsequent Soviet era, yet others do not? In not talking about the war, narrators

<sup>4</sup> This particular narrator did not use any other regime-related time circumstance, like 'under the Soviets' or 'times of Lithuania'. However, the time circumstances, which she used ('by the end') allows concluding that she differentiates time into two regime-related periods.

might be expressing their interpretation of the interview's purposes and relating information that they believe is relevant to the interviewers. Having been informed of the interviewers' intention to collect memories related to life before the 1990s (e.g. during the previous regime), participants might have decided not to talk about the wartime years, because these times are clearly demarcated from the time of the Soviet regime. However, a more plausible interpretation is that the war did not appear in their stories simply because participants had been born after the war, or they were too young to remember anything about the war.

A lack of specific references to the war as a context for past experiences shows how intergenerational memory worked in the Soviet times, i.e. whether parents shared their memories with children or kept those memories to themselves. In some stories, narrators related events, which they personally could not have experienced, and they date these events as having happening during the war, which they did not witness:

When Germans came [*užėjo*]... I remember how the Germans came, the Russians came, the Poles came [*ajo*]. Well, the Poles were running [*tie bėgo*]. And I remember how the Poles came to us for bread. And mother... mother spoke Russian well, and my father, too. My father, during the war (...), he was sixteen years old then, and, on a horse, he even reached Russia (a woman, born in 1930, interviewed in Varėna town)<sup>5</sup>

Well, they had their land. They worked on it in order to survive, because when the family is so large... And now their house stands untouched. (...) There was a large cellar. It was a hiding place during the war (a woman, born in 1947, interviewed in Varėna district).

In the excerpts above, both participants speak of events that they date specifically as wartime events, (father went to Russia during the war; the cellar was a hiding place during the war). They can indicate these time circumstances not because they have personally-experienced context for these events; they date these events as having occurred during a specific time period, because they heard about them from their parents.

One might expect that those born before WWII (at least up until 1935) should relate at least some events of their life with Smetona's regime<sup>6</sup>; in other words, they should add another period to the timescale. Instead, such events are specified as events, experienced in childhood, and not during Smetona's regime. Perhaps even the oldest participants were still too young to perceive regime change; therefore, the prewar regime is not a meaningful time reference for them. Narrators mention Smetona's regime not to date personal experiences, but to talk about their parents' experiences of or to indicate the origins of a particular object (as in the expression 'a bridge stood from the Smetona era'). Informants do not use references to Smetona's regime to identify the timing of remembered events either because parents did not tell to their children about the prewar republic at all, or because whatever they told failed to impress the minds of their children. Impressions of this period are vague and almost do not differ from the textbook knowledge, as in the interview quoted below:

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<sup>5</sup> The war, mentioned in this extract, is the WWII, even though the story is about events, which the narrator experienced during the WWII.

<sup>6</sup> Antanas Smetona was the president of the Republic of Lithuania from 1926 till 1940.

Interviewer: Did your parents use to tell you about life under Smetona? (...) Interviewee: They told us that everything was very expensive ... Everything was expensive, but litas had a very high value. You could buy a lot for one litas (...) they compared litas to the price of food. It was possible to buy one kilo of butter and maybe some bread, too, and maybe some ring-shaped rolls. For one litas! So they used to say, in a word, that everything was expensive, but litas were expensive, too... And that life was difficult during these times, too (a woman, born in 1948, interviewed in Varėna district).

The longest time-span, covered by the stories of interviewees, starts at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continues to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In these rare cases, narrators told their family history in detail. This rarity supports Joerasalu's (2016) observation that family history is no longer very relevant to individual identity, unless this history was exceptional. Usually, if it was related at all, family histories began with the birth of the narrator (or around these times) and included events that significantly affected the narrator (for example, when family members were deported, imprisoned, or joined post-war resistance movement).

To summarize, the interviews reveal two dominant timescales: a binary 'Soviet era – Lithuanian era' scale and a ternary 'war – Soviet era – Lithuanian era' scale. For some narrators, the Soviet era is a continuous unit of time lacking internal breaking points; for other narrators, the Soviet era has at least two separate identifiable periods: the Soviet era proper and the post-war period (*pokarj*). As a rule, those, who identified the post-war years as a distinguishable period, suitable for dating personal life events, were already six-years old, or older, by the end of the war. For younger people, the Soviet era appears internally undifferentiated, at least initially.

In very rare cases, the Soviet era is divided into smaller intervals, associated with the different general secretaries who led the Soviet Union (Stalin, Brezhnev etc.). A closer look at these memory narratives reveals that the transition between regimes is remembered when it is linked to significant changes in one's personal life (actually, the regime change is often not only a time circumstance, but also a cause of certain personal-life events). In the story below, the death of a leader (and the end of his regime) brought about the change of the narrator's place of residence; therefore, the differences between these two regimes are full of personal meaning and memorized<sup>7</sup>:

We did not stay in Panevėžys for a long time. When Stalin died, [my father?] hired a driver, and the driver took us home (a woman, born in 1936, interviewed in Varėna district).

Narrators vary not only by the precision of their timescales (how many intervals they identify), but also by the richness of their vocabularies used to characterize each interval. Some periods are referred to with the same terms by all of the narrators. For example, there are only two ways narrators described the period 'after the war' (*pokaris* and *po karo*); and the difference between these two expressions is not meaningful. In the case of other periods, the vocabulary used in references to these periods is quite rich by comparison. For example, events during WWII are described as having occurred either 'during the war'<sup>8</sup>, 'under German occupation' ('under the German army'), 'under the Nazis', 'when the Germans and the Russians were chasing each other, etc.:

<sup>7</sup> When national events change the "fabric of daily life" for most of a population, as in the case of a major earthquake or a civil war, they play a special role in organizing personal or "autobiographical" memory

<sup>8</sup> Narrators do not find it necessary to clarify which war they have in mind; in cases when they talk about the WWI they indicate this. As mentioned above, these are rare cases of telling a comprehensive family history.

Interviewer: So, you must remember post-war times very well, and your childhood, too. It seems these were turbulent times.

Interviewee: That's right, very turbulent times they were... I remember, by the way, that during the war [*kai karas buvo*], we had dug a bunker, as it was earlier called, and we lived in that bunker during the war (a woman, born in 1934, interviewed in Varėna district).

Well, and then the war started, and obviously, three years of German occupation. We did not see Germans in our village at that time. I was in the fourth or fifth class [*skyriuje*] in school, and in the fifth class we had German language courses. So we knew "Guten Tag", "Guten Morgen", and so on. And one day our teacher said that today the Germans would come to the village and when you come back from school, you can meet them (a woman, born in 1931, interviewed in Naujoji Akmenė town).

My oldest brother served three years and seven months in the army. Under the Nazis [*per naciūs*] they used to recruit for the army, for three years (a woman, born in 1936, interviewed in Varėna district).

The war... I was not yet married during the war. I remember how we sat in the hole. There were such holes. And we sat there when a German (vokietys)... It is difficult to say whether the German were chased (vokietį varė) or whether the Germans chased the Russians away... (a woman born in 1932, interviewed in Varėna district)

These slight changes in terminology might be the effects of different memory regimes. Learned in school, 'Nazi' was a commonplace term during the Soviet era. Born before WWII, and having not attended a Soviet school, the women preferred the label 'German times', which indicates a relative immunity to the post-war vocabulary. To summarize, terminology varies by time of birth and education.

References to the Soviet era exhibit terminological variation, too. Three typical references can be identified: the un-translated word 'Soviet' (*sovietiniai laikai*), the translated word 'Soviet' (*tarybiniai laikai*), or the expression 'Russian times' (*prie rusų*). The connotations of these terms are not synonymous, yet explainable patterns of terminological usage could not be identified.

When referring to independent Lithuania, interview participants' descriptive vocabulary is very rich reveals the current diversity of perceptions. At least two dimensions of variation can be identified. Some narrators spoke of these times as something that happened to them (it might also be that by "we" they mean all Lithuanians and not personally themselves): 'when we became free' (*išsilaisvinom*), 'when independence came, which we waited for' (*kai sulaukėm nepriklausomybės*). Other narrators refer to this era as something that happened to Lithuania: "when Lithuania gained freedom". So one difference in how the present times are described is evident in whether people perceive change as something that happened to Lithuania or to the people (including themselves). Another dimension is related to how this change is conceptualized, in other words, how the difference between the Soviet era and the present day is perceived (non-freedom/freedom; dependence/independence etc.); though sometimes only the change is indicated without conceptualising the nature of the change (as is the case when people say something happened: when 'everything collapsed in the Soviet Union' or when 'Lithuania turned back' (*atsivertė*)). The richness of vocabulary indicates the absence of a dominant mode of under-

standing and evaluating certain period as well as a complicated memory of post-socialist change (on the later see Klumbytė, 2004; 2010).

Can these variations in perceptions of time as a sequence of political regimes be linked to variations in generational consciousness? Exploratory analysis leads to a positive answer. Individuals born from 1930 to 1945 (49) differ among themselves in the span of their timescales (older people have a longer span, as they add wartime to the timescale) as well as in the precision of their time scales (older people are more precise when talking about the early years of the Soviet era, because their time scale has more sections, which divide the Soviet era into a sequence of shorter time intervals). Assuming the link between generational consciousness and the characteristics of a calendar for dating events of personal life, it can be concluded that the following events and experiences define the boundaries of generations: experience and memory of the Second World War<sup>9</sup> and (or) memory of the post-war era.

### ***Time as a sequence of political-social processes***

In some cases, in order to date recalled events, participants also referred to particular political-social processes. The perception of time as a sequence of political-social processes allows individuals to date events more precisely. When narrators say that something happened to them during the Soviet era, the margin of error (or efficiency) of dating these events is almost 50 years. When narrators say that something happened when collectivization began, efficiency increases to approximately 5 to 10 years.

The division of time into intervals, characterized by the dominant social-political process, has several variations. One way to perceive time is to use the existence of the kolkhoz as a reference point: time is divided into the time before the kolkhoz, kolkhoz era and the time after the kolkhoz. The following narration illustrates this time perception:

[Interviewer says that she did not understand whether attending church was allowed during the kolkhoz era or not, and the interviewer replies:] yes, we were allowed [to go to church] in kolkhoz times (*kaip jau buvo kolūkis*). Earlier, we celebrated church festivals on common days (*prastom dienom*). Before the kolkhoz, we celebrated these festivals on their proper time. And when the kolkhoz appeared, celebrating was not allowed on common days, and the priest did not celebrate on these days either. He used to start the celebration on Sundays. (...) And when kolkhoz crumbled (*kaip pabyrėjo kolūkis*), we were pensioners. We were free and no one interfered with us (woman, born in 1938, interviewed in Varėna district)

Some narrators add the years of the post-war resistance movement to this scale, and refer to them as the time of partisans, forest brothers (*miškiniai*), night men (*naktiniai*), etc. Dividing time into such intervals resonates with personal experiences related to daily life and work. The difference among various intervals depends on differences in quality of life: there are times, characterized by fear and hardship, and there are times of security, comfort and predictability. The embodied nature of this scale is revealed by how these time periods are described and by the specificity of

<sup>9</sup> See Corning et al. (2013), where they present data showing that percent of mentions of WWII as an especially important event from about 1930 decreases dramatically in birth cohorts for which the WWII did not coincide with the so called 'critical years' (Corning at al., 2013, pp.387-389).



memories related to them. Older people tend to use the aforementioned scale more often, while those born in the late 1940s use it less often. For the latter group, the Soviet era appears internally undifferentiated, though ‘times of boredom’ (Vaiseta, 2014) would not be a proper description of that perception – personal events made life in the Soviet times into a dynamic journey through diverse chronologically identifiable ‘containers’.

Political-social processes, described above, are the properties of the whole social system; however, time can be perceived as a sequence of social processes, which are closely connected to a particular locality (a particular kolkhoz, factory or town). Time is measured by the ups and downs of a particular locality (before, during, after): accidents that occurred in a factory; the kolkhoz’s acquisition of more technical equipment; the start of construction work in a town, etc. If a participant spent a considerable amount of time of his or her life in the same locality, then both older and younger narrators date recalled events by referencing social processes in their particular locality.

The precision of individual or social calendars varies (i.e. in the duration of time units – the shorter the duration, the more precise calendar is). The time units of individual calendars, which divide time into a sequence of different social situations in a particular locality, are not of equal duration. Measured in ordinary calendar like 1950s, 1960s etc., some decades have more unit equivalents in individual calendars than other decades. Which decade will be measured with greater precision does not express generational consciousness with the exception of one period. If people were not yet retired when the democratic transition began, they employ precise scales (rather short time intervals) to date events which occurred during that time. For example, they talk of the year(s) of crisis (when the supply of materials from Russia ceased), the year(s) of privatisation, the year(s) of different owners of the factory. For those, who were already retired, the transition years appear to be internally undifferentiated (see also Štutnienė, 2016b).

Theoretically at least, political events with short durations (lasting a day or a couple though of high historical significance) could also serve as a basis for breaking time into meaningful intervals. However, the perception of time as a sequence of political events was rare in the narratives shared by interview participants in the summer of 2017. This could be due to the participants’ social origins, positions in the social structure, or to life trajectories, which made them indifferent to events that did not affect them personally. Despite limited data, the list of identified events conforms to the Mannheimian understanding of political generations: political events tend to be mentioned as a time reference if they happened during the adolescence of the narrator. For example, none of the narrators born before 1948 or 1949 referred to Kalanta’s self-immolation in 1972 to date events in their personal lives (though a few younger narrators did).

## Conclusions

The goal of this article was to reconsider how and where the boundaries of distinct Soviet generations as differentiable memory communities might be established. A generation is a group of people who, due to shared experiences during adolescence, tend to have shared memories of the past. According to Karl Mannheim and later sociological-psychological explication of his theory, the political events individuals experience as adolescents determine which historical events they will consider most significant, how they look at the world, and which schemes of perception, interpretation, and evaluation they apply to their reality.

A Mannheimian understanding of generation and theory of narration, based on the conceptual metaphors of the container, provided the background for a method of identifying the boundaries between generations. This method relies on the theoretical assumption that different generations must have different perception of time, i.e. they will structure time in different meaningful intervals. An analysis of biographical narratives, collected in the summer of 2017, reveals that differences in structuring time could be linked to generational differences. Individuals, born from 1930 to 1945(49), did not use identical historical calendars to structure their life narratives. These calendars differ in both span and precision.

One way to perceive time is to think of it as a sequence of political regimes: to measure time by either a binary 'Soviet era – Lithuanian era' scale or a ternary 'wartime – Soviet era – Lithuanian era scale (these two scales were dominant in the sample). A shared memory of the war characterizes an identifiable generation and provides criterion for deciding where to draw generational boundaries: to belong to the 'war generation', a person must have been old enough (at least six-years old) during World War Two in Lithuania. Another criterion can be found in how members of this cohort recall the post-war years (in that they were old enough to understand, at least to some extent, what was going on). Depending on where participants lived during their childhood and their family's circumstances, participants have different memories of the post-war years (and sometimes, they have no memory at all of this era); their degree of membership in the post-war generation varies not only by date of birth (and the age at which they experienced the post-war events), but also by position in the social space.

Another widespread way to draw boundaries between meaningful time intervals is to perceive time as a sequence of social-political processes (anti-Soviet resistance, collectivization, etc.). The division of time into these intervals resonates with personal experiences and is embodied; i.e. the difference between various intervals relates to the differences in quality of life. Those born in the late 1940s perceive the Soviet era as less differentiated in comparison to how it is perceived by those born in the 1930s. Still, the Soviet era has an internal structure and meaningful intervals, based on the narrator's experiences and locality, such as the place of employment or the town, in which the narrator lived. An analysis of these calendars, based on a sequence of social-political processes reveals that experiencing the early years of collectivisation is another important criterion for identifying various memory communities.

The findings presented in this article are explorative in nature. They should not be treated as a 'final' confirmation of a hypothesis concerning the existence of several Soviet generations; but these findings could be used by qualitative researchers who want to describe generational consciousness among different Soviet generations, yet lack sufficient criteria to differentiate among them.

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