

NEED FOR VALUE EDUCATION AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

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Abstract. *For a peaceful world and society, it is essential for cultures to be developed and transformed through common values, and value education is one of the main ways to do that since core values are formed from an early age. But when society is going through a radical transformation process as it is in the case of Latvia, it is difficult to avoid anomie when different and conflicting ideas, memories and norms exist in society.*

The aim of the research is to explore and analyse the tendencies of the main values in the society of Latvia across different age groups, to see how the situation has developed and what are the main values that need to be stressed through value education in the ongoing educational reform process. To reach the aim of the research, a literature review as well as the analysis of the European Social Survey (2008 and 2018) data was conducted.

The research results show some shift in values of the society in Latvia mainly due to priorities of younger generation in the period from 2008 to 2018: universal values have replaced self-direction values as the third most common value in the society of Latvia. In the case of younger generations value perception is indefinite. Partly this is due to the lack of focus on values in our education system since the restoration of independence. There is a need to strengthen the motivational values connected with conformity, self-direction, stimulation and universalism (tolerance) through value education. It is desirable to highlight the values of achievement such as creativity and desire to succeed, as they are essential for the knowledge society and stimulate motivation for entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *achievement values, anomie, education for citizenship, generation gap, Schwarz value module, value education.*

Introduction

Currently the Latvian education system is undergoing reforms through the programme School2030 (González, 2019). It is important to look at the situation regarding common values in the society in order to see the appropriateness of these reforms. An in-depth understanding of the society's value orientation reveals the causal links that exist between human attitudes and actions and allows for a

more precise formulation of public policy goals and the choice of appropriate means to achieve them (Zobena, 2018).

The aim of the research is to identify dominant values in the society of Latvia by analysing the European Social Survey (hereafter ESS) data (2018 and 2008) in accordance with Schwarz motivational value module, as well as the School2030, the EU and UNESCO outlined common values. In that way, the researchers were able to describe the value hierarchy and tendencies (in the 10-year period) in the Latvian society and identify the differences among age groups, as well as to clarify which values need to be more emphasized through value education in Latvia to prepare people for a life in the knowledge society, to be creative and ready to take risk and start new entrepreneurial activity.

To reach the aim of the research, a literature review and the analysis of the ESS (2018, 2008) data was conducted.

Literature Review

The definition of values states that these are the principles that help a person decide what is right and wrong, what is important to them, and how to act in various situations. Values are basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions (Cambridge Dictionary, homepage) (Mintz, 2018).

Famous researcher Shalom Schwarz looks at basic values by describing their central motivational goal and combines these values in two orthogonal dimensions. “(1) Self-enhancement vs self-transcendence dimension juxtaposes power and achievement to universalism and benevolence. The dimension demonstrates whether values motivate individuals to pursue their self-interest or to be concerned for the welfare and interests of others. (2) Openness to change vs conservation dimension juxtaposes self-direction and stimulation to security, conformity and tradition. In the former case, values motivate to independent action, thought and feeling and readiness for a new experience; in the latter case, self-restriction, order and resistance to change are stressed. Hedonism shares elements of both openness and self-enhancement” (Zobena, 2018).

Turkish researcher Türkkahraman (Akdeniz University) has a rather normative approach to teaching values. He considers that increasing the gap between the ways of thinking and behaviour of an ideal society and the actual world can be an indicator and an ignition for a number of social problems. Therefore, it is important that the values of the real world and the ideal world should be overlapped (Türkkahraman, 2014). When identification with community values does not accrue, anomie can be detected in society. Anomie creates a sense of chaos and danger, contributing to the atomization of society, the spread of feelings of disorientation, helplessness and meaninglessness in

individuals, and makes it difficult for society to function. The risk of anomie is traditionally high in transition societies like Latvia (Zobena, 2018).

The importance of common values has been acknowledged not only at the national level through the reform project “School2030” (hereafter - School2030), but at the European Union (hereafter – EU) and global level through global networks such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereafter – UNESCO) as well. The EU was founded on such values as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, tolerance, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights of people belonging to minorities (Article 2 of the Treaty on the EU) (Veugelers, Groot, & Stolk, 2017; EU, 2012; EP, homepage). In addition, UNESCO represents values and attitudes such as justice, equality, inclusion, respect for human rights, solidarity, cultural diversity, democratic principles, values of care and respect for ourselves, others and our environment, creativity, innovation, commitment to peace and sustainable development, social justice, tolerance, empathy, etc. (Dutt, 2009; UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO, homepage).

The importance of value education has driven European schools to introduce subjects such as Education for Citizenship. By 2017 this subject was already part of the national curriculum in the EU countries. Within UNESCO programmes, such projects as Citizenship Education (Iberdrola, homepage) and Associated Schools Project Network (Latvia has been a member of this network since early 1990’s) have been established (UNESCO, homepage).

At the national level, the reform project “School2030” has been carried out since the end of 2016. The aim of the project is modernization of the educational process so that it could promote the learners’ understanding, responsible attitude and behaviour corresponding to the following values: life, human dignity, freedom, family, marriage, work, nature, culture, the Latvian language and the Latvian State. The virtues that allow testifying and implementing these values are: responsibility, diligence, courage, honesty, wisdom, kindness, compassion, moderation, self-control, solidarity, justice and tolerance (González, 2019; School2030, homepage).

Baiba Martinsone (University of Latvia) emphasizes that values are strengthened when both knowledge about them and application of them are combined. Values need to be cultivated and fostered amongst people, in particular amongst newcomers in society, and value education is one of the main ways to do that (Iberdrola, homepage) (Laganovskis, 2019).

The value education concept is about the education process that instils moral standards to create more civil and democratic societies. The education systems thus hold an important role in cultivating these common values (Veugelers, Groot, & Stolk, 2017). As social psychologist Ģirts Dimdiņš (University of Latvia) stated: “Only public education at all levels can be a lasting solution.

Starting with a school where a social norm is created: being socially and politically active is good and commendable. People brought up in this way will create a demand for both modern politics and socially active literature” (Domuzimes, 2017).

The restoration of Latvian independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the radical change of values and producing a certain moral vacuum in the society. Only around the turn of the millennium and with Latvia joining the EU (2004), the question of the moral values the country should function on became topical (González, 2019). Therefor the assumption of the authors is that there is a slow speed of changes in the area of value perception in the society of Latvia.

The value education content in Latvia is based on the values specified in the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (Laganovskis, 2019). The recent “Guidelines for virtue education in Latvian schools” define the main directions for character and virtue education of learners at schools (González, 2019). The approach different states take towards teaching of common values can vary. Studies show that teaching of common values can be incorporated in the curriculum in different ways (Veugelers, Groot, & Stolk, 2017):

- as a separate subject, for example, moral or value education, or citizenship education;
- as part of other subjects, such as history, geography, social sciences and religion/world view studies, as well as arts, biology and languages; and
- in cross-curricular activities, like projects both in and out of school.

In Latvia the values and virtues that need to be acquired by students in the new curriculum are included in practically all fields of study and are fixed in the educational standard (Laganovskis, 2019). However, due to the current educational reforms, teachers are overloaded with new information and they rarely have the necessary time and support for implementing character and virtue education at school (González, 2019).

The society value background is of great importance for the implementation of policies in all areas. The collective monograph “Lost in Freedom: Anomy in Contemporary Latvia” summarizes the main findings of the research project “Value Orientations and Reproduction of Society”, carried out within the framework of State Research Program “Innovative and Sustainable Development: Latvia’s post-crisis experience in a global context”. This project was implemented at the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute, University of Latvia Faculty of Social Sciences from 2014 to 2018. The research findings show that there is an extensive manifestation of alienation and anomy in Latvia. The authors emphasize that it is the lack of norms, clear convictions, as well as long-term goals

and vision that can be considered as the most problematic aspects characterizing the Latvian society. They identify the social fragmentation of the society and note that young people feel more socially and culturally alienated, while older people feel more politically alienated (Zobena, 2018).

Researchers Ritma Rungule and Silva Seņkane (Rīga Stradins University) in the article "Values of Latvians Across Socio-Demographic Groups" discuss the values using the data collected by the World Values Survey (WVS), the European Values Study (EVS) and the ESS (2014), and the opinion poll agency SKDS data (2015). The researchers summarised that security and benevolence were the dominant motivational values among Latvians in 2014. Universalism outranked self-direction as the third most important value from 2008 (until 2014). Conformity and traditions gained in importance while achievement value became less pronounced. The least diffused motivational values were the ones of stimulation, hedonism and power. Thus, self-transcendence dominated over self-enhancement, and conservation dominated over openness to change values in Latvia in 2014. That means that people in Latvia associated themselves more with collectivism rather than individualism, and unselfishness dominated over selfishness values. But at the same time the researchers outline that a generational gap can be detected. The researchers conclude that "positive correlation with age was found for the following motivational values: security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism; their corresponding mean indexes increase with age. The motivational values related to self-enhancement, -stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and power correlate negatively with age. These indexes are decreasing in the older age group" (Rungule & Seņkāne, 2018).

Methodology

To analyse values in Latvia, the ESS results of year 2008 and 2018 were used in the current report. The ESS uses the methodology developed by Shalom Schwarz (described in section – Literature review). In the survey, respondents were asked to evaluate 21 statements connected to the motivational values by rating the degree of similarity of each characteristic (6-point scale: 1 – very much like me; 2 – like me; 3 – somewhat like me; 4 – a little like me; 5 – not like me; 6 – not like me at all) (Schwartz, 2014).

Since the previous research in Latvia did not concentrate much on value perception tendencies in different age groups, the researchers decided to carry out in-depth research precisely in this area to see how value perception differs between age groups. Two main age groups were selected – respondents in the age group 15/16-24 and 65+, and data were filtered accordingly using SPSS Statistics. Within the ESS 1980 respondents were surveyed in 2008, 270 of which were in the age group 15-24 and 427 were in the age group 65+, while in 2018 918

respondents were surveyed (43 in the age group 16-24 and 323 in the age group 65+). Using the ESS data, the researchers were able to analyse which of the values are more present in the Latvian society, what are the tendencies in the 10-year period, and how these values meet the common values defined by the School2030, UNESCO and the EU. Since the School2030, UNESCO and the EU values are more coordinated with the following motivational values (Schwartz, 2014): achievement (wisdom, diligence), stimulation (courage); self-direction (freedom, creativity, innovation); universalism (justice, equality, respect for human rights, cultural diversity, respect for ourselves, others and our environment, commitment to peace and sustainable development, social justice, tolerance, human dignity, life); benevolence (solidarity, empathy, family, marriage, responsibility, honesty, kindness, compassion); conformity (moderation, composure, diligence); security (the rule of law), these were the motivational values that were outlined in the research.

Since researchers Ritma Rungule and Silva Senkane in their study used the EES results of year 2014 (the data is not available in the ESS homepage right now), the results and conclusions of this study were also used to analyse the tendencies of value perception in the Latvian society in the period from 2008 to 2018.

To see how the values of the society in Latvia have changed over time, also a literature review of the relevant previous research was carried out.

Results and Discussion

UNIVERSALISM. Universal values can be considered as highly common in the Latvian society. Only the question about understanding different people raises concerns since less than a half of the respondents in the youngest age group considered it very important or important to them (chose answers “very much like me” or “like me”). A decrease can be observed in the numbers from the older generation to the younger one: 66.4% in age group 65+, 55.9% in age group 25-64 and only 44.2% in the age group 16-24. However, compared to 2008 data there has been an increase of importance in this statement by 8.9 p.p. The importance of this value has increased in all age groups, but mostly in the age group 65+ – plus 9.6 p.p. (25-64 – plus 5.9 p.p.; 16-24 – plus 4.9 p.p.). You can see data about self-identification of Latvian population with S. Schwartz defined motivational values in 2008 and 2018 by age groups in Table 1.

Taking care of the environment and nature was outlined as the most important value in the Latvian society in 2018 (77.8% of the respondents in 2008 chose answers “very much like me” or “like me”), and this might be due to the fact that the environmental topic was very popular during that time, especially among the youth, due to beginning of the movement Fridays For Future (Greta

Thunberg) (Fridays for future, homepage). In the period from 2008 to 2018, environmental values became more important to respondents - 8.1 p.p increase. This increase was mainly due to the answers of the youngest (plus 15.3 p.p. in the age group 16-24) and the oldest respondents (plus 9.6 p.p. in the age group 65+).

The only universal value that lost its position was equality – if in 2008 61.2% of the respondents chose answers “very much like me” or “like me” regarding the statement representing this value, then in 2018 only 55.5% did. The importance of this value has decreased in all age groups, but mainly in 65+ group by 13.6 p.p. (25-64 – minus 4.4 p.p.; 16-24 – minus 2.1 p.p.).

BENEVOLENCE. Benevolence values were common among all age groups in the Latvian society in 2018. More than half of the respondents (56,5%) in Latvia answered that it is important to help people and care for others' well-being. Unexpectedly, these answers were the most popular among the younger generation (65.1%) and the older age group (61%). The data show that for the youngest respondents this value has become more important (plus 17.3 p.p in the age group 16-24), while for older respondents the importance has decreased (minus 4.1 p.p. in the age group 25-64, and minus 2 p.p. in the age group 65+).

There has been a little decrease (minus 2.4 p.p.) in the importance of the statement “Important to be loyal to friends and devoted to people close”, if in 2008 77.1% of respondents evaluated it as important or very important to them, then in 2018 the percentage was 74.7%. A considerable decrease of importance regarding this statement has been among the youngest age groups– minus 14.6 p.p., while, for example, in the age group 65+ this value has become more important (plus 4.3 p.p.).

SELF DIRECTION. Rather unexpected were the close figures concerning person's autonomy for different age groups in 2018. For the majority of respondents (72.8%) it is important to make their own decisions and be free. The positions of the younger group and the older group were almost identical (76.7% & 76.5%). If we look at the data of 2008, we can see that the importance has decreased by 5.7 p.p.

However, the situation is considerably worse when it comes to respondents' attitudes towards producing new ideas and being creative – only 43% identified themselves with this position in 2018, and the percentage has dropped from 50.1% in 2008 (minus 7.1 p.p.). The decline is the highest among the youngest group– minus 12.4 p.p. A good and hopeful indication is that the majority of the age group 16-24 (53.5%) respondents still supported such approach in 2018.

STIMULATION. Stimulation values have relatively weak positions in the Latvian society, especially among older people. When we compare the situation in 2008 with the situation in 2018, we can see that these values have become less important in the 10-year period. The importance of the stimulation statement has decreased by 4.2 p.p. in the case of trying new and different things (from 49,8%

in 2008 to 45.6% in 2018) and by 9.6 p.p. in the case of seeking adventures and having an exciting life (from 28.6% in 2008 to 19% in 2018). The biggest decrease can be observed in the age group 16-24 – minus 19 p.p. and minus 13.3 p.p., while in the age group 65+ we can observe an increase by 18.8 p.p. and 1.5 p.p.

ACHIEVEMENTS. Achievement values are weakly expressed among respondents in Latvia, and in the 10-year period the importance of these values has decreased. Only 29.5% answered that it was very important/ important to them to be successful and have achievements that people recognize, 34.8% of the respondents considered important to show their abilities and be admired in 2018. Although the importance of these statements decreased with age, still these values were not common in any age group. The situation has considerably worsened since 2008, especially when we look at the data of the youngest age group– if in 2008 76,3% of the respondents thought that it was important to be successful and have achievements that people recognize, then in 2018 only 32.9% of the respondents in the age group 16/15-24 did (minus 43.4 p.p.). When it comes to the statement “Important to show abilities and be admired”, the decrease has been 38.4%. In all the other age groups, the decrease has not been so enormous, but it has accrued as well – in the age group 25-64 – 28.5 p.p. and 21.8 p.p., and in the age group 65+ minus 12.6 p.p. and minus 5.5 p.p. Such a sharp decrease in the importance of achievement value requires special investigation and is very unfavourable for the sustainability and future of our society. The assumptions of the authors is as following: a large share of those people with an active position who were used to relying on themselves chose emigration and fulfilled their dreams in other countries.

CONFORMITY. Conformity values have relatively moderate positions in the Latvian society, especially among younger people: 42.7% of all the respondents considered that it was important to behave properly (16-24 –27.9%; 25-64 – 37.3%; 65+ - 53.9%), and 32.1% of the respondents considered that it was important to do what is told and follow rules (16-24 –13.9%; 25-64 – 26.6%; 65+ – 43.6%). While in the 10-year period the average attitude towards the statement “Important to do what is told and follow rules” practically has not changed (decrease 0.2 p.p.), the importance of it has considerably decreased within the youngest age group – minus 19.5 p.p. However, behaving properly has become less important for all age groups. The biggest decrease can be observed in the age group 25-64 – minus 13.8 p.p., while in the age group 16-24 it was minus 5.8 p.p. and in the age group 65+ - minus 9.3 p.p.

SECURITY. The position “Important that the government is strong and ensures safety” was the forth in the top list for all the respondents (72.5%) demonstrating an increase with the ageing. The same tendency appeared in the position “Important to live in secure and safe surroundings” (65.1%). But considerably fewer respondents in the youngest age group considered it important

or very important to them– 39.5% for the age group 16-24, 60.7% for the age group 25-64, and 76.2% for those aged 65+. Comparing the situation with 2008, we can see a decrease in the importance in both positions. The position “Important that government is strong and ensures safety” has decreased by 9.6 p.p. on average (age group 16-24 – minus 10.3 p.p., age group 25-64 – minus 15.5 p.p., and age group 65+ - minus 7 p.p.), while the position “Important to live in secure and safe surroundings” has decreased by 13 p.p (age group 16-24 – minus 24.5 p.p., age group 25-64 – minus 17.9 p.p., and age group 65+ - minus 8.3 p.p). A decrease in both statements can be observed in all age groups, but for the oldest age group it has changed the least.

Table 1 Self-identification of Latvian Population with S. Schwartz Defined Motivational Values in 2008 and 2018 by Age Groups (the share of respondents (in %) that chose answers “very much like me” and “like me” (ESS, 2008; ESS, 2018)

Value questions	Average answer 2008	Average answer 2018	2008		2018		Motivational value
			16-24	65+	16-24	65+	
Important to care for nature and environment	69.7	77.8	54.5	77.4	69.8	87	Universalism
Important to be loyal to friends and devoted to close people	77.1	74.7	77.4	79.1	62.8	82.1	Benevolence.
Important to make own decisions and be free	78.5	72.8	79.3	72.2	76.7	76.5	Self-direction
Important that government is strong and ensures safety	82.1	72.5	68.5	89.9	58.2	82.9	Security
Important to live in secure and safe surroundings	78.1	65.1	64	84.5	39.5	76.2	Security
Important to understand different people	50.2	59.1	39.3	57	44.2	66.6	Universalism

Important to help people and care for others' well-being	57.4	56.5	47.8	63	65.1	61	Benevolence.
Important that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities	61.2	55.5	55.6	71.8	53.5	58.2	Universalism
Important to produce new ideas and be creative	50.1	43	65.9	36.3	53.5	37.8	Self-direction
Important to behave properly	51.6	42.7	33.7	63.2	27.9	53.9	Conformity
Important to do what is told and follow rules	32.3	32.1	33.4	42.8	13.9	43.6	Conformity
Important to be successful and that have achievements that people recognise	56.8	29.5	76.3	39.8	32.9	27.2	Achievement
Important to show abilities and be admired	48.3	28	66.3	32.4	27.9	26.9	Achievement

Source: *European Social Survey data of year 2008 and 2018.*

The ESS data of 2018 show that based on Schwarz value identification module the following motivational values can be viewed as common: 1) security, 2) benevolence, 3) universalism, 4) self-direction and 5) tradition. In 2008, the following value hierarchy was actual in the society: 1) security, 2) benevolence, 3) self-direction, 4) universalism, 5) tradition and 6) achievement. In 2018, self-transcendence values dominated over self-enhancement values and conservation values dominated over openness to change values. The data show that since 2014 the top three values have remained unchanged thus approving the thesis of slow speed of changes in this area (Rungule & Senkane, 2018).

Looking at the ESS data (2018) through the age perspective, we can see that for the youngest age group (16-24) the motivational values such as 1) self-direction, 2) benevolence, 3) universalism and 4) stimulation can be viewed as common, since the majority of the respondents considered them as very important or important. In the case of younger people, self-transcendence values dominate over self-enhancement values, and openness to change values dominate over conservation values. Comparing the situation with the data from 2008, we can notice some changes. The most common values in 2008 were 1) self-direction, 2) achievement, 3) hedonism, 4) stimulation, 5) security, 6) benevolence and 7) power. In 2008, self-enhancement values dominated over self-transcendence values and openness to change values dominated over conservation values.

In the age group 65+, the following motivational values can be outlined as the most common in 2018: 1) security, 2) benevolence; 3) universalism; 4) tradition and 5) self-direction. At this age group, self-transcendence values dominated over self-enhancement values, and conservation values strongly dominated over openness to change values. The same tendency accrued in 2008 as well, but conformity values back then were the 6th most common value.

The results show that younger people outline less values as important or very important to them – only eight statements were highly common for the youngest age group, while for age group 25-64 – nine, and for age group 65+ – 12 statements in 2018. However, in 2008 15 statements were evaluated as very important or important by the age group 15-24 (16 by the age group 25-64; 12 by the age group 65+). On the one hand, such different figures in the youngest age group just indicate that the process of learning values takes place throughout person's life, but, on the other hand, it can be the indicator of anomia and alienation of common values.

The greatest generation gap in 2018 can be observed when we look at the motivational values of 1) tradition; 2) security; 3) conformity; 4) power; 5) stimulation. Similarly, as Rungule and Senkane concluded in 2014, the ESS data (2018) showed that tradition, security and conformity values are much more important to the oldest age group, while stimulation and achievement values are more important to younger respondents (Rungule & Senkane, 2018).

Since 2008 the generation gap has increased the most when it comes to the importance of following rules (conformity – plus 20.3 p.p. in 2018), importance of being loyal to friends and devoted to close people (benevolence – plus 17.6 p.p.), importance of getting respect from others (power – plus 17.2 p.p.) importance of living in secure and safe surroundings (security – plus 16.2 p.p.), importance of showing abilities and being admired (achievement – plus 15.4 p.p) and importance of being successful and have achievements that people recognize (achievement – plus 10.5 p.p.). The generation gap has decreased the most when it comes to importance of seeking fun and things that give pleasure (hedonism –

minus 24.4 p.p.), importance of seeking adventures and having an exciting life (stimulation – minus 14.8 p.p.), importance of producing new ideas and being creative (self-direction – minus 13.9 p.p.), importance of the fact that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities (universalism – minus 11,5 p.p.). Both decreases and increases of the gaps have mainly happened due to the fact that these values have become less important to the younger people. This can be viewed as an indicator that younger people have rather unstable and undeveloped value system, and the situation has worsened since 2008.

As we can see, the data analysis show some changes in value perception in the Latvian society over the 10-year period, and there are many reasons for that, such as the financial crisis of 2008 and changes in communication patters due to the arrival of new smart devices and the popularity of social networks, etc.

Conclusions

There are different ways of teaching values and all of them are valid, but the best way would be to strengthen both knowledge and application of them. For the value education to become an integral part of sustainable education, we need to talk more about it as well as about its importance.

In general, the research results show that altogether there has been some shift in the motivation values in the Latvian society from 2008 to 2018. Still self-transcendence values dominate over self-enhancement values and conservation values dominate over openness to change values, but compared to 2008 the leading motivational value hierarchy has changed from 1) security, 2) benevolence and 3) self-direction in 2008 to 1) security, 2) benevolence and 3) universalism in 2014 and 2018. Understanding, appreciation and protection for the welfare of all people and, especially, for nature has become more important for people of Latvia, while self-direction values have become less important.

Biggest changes in value perception can be observed within the youngest age group (15/16-24) results. In the period from 2008 to 2018, the younger generation has become more concerned for the welfare and interests of others than pursuing their self-interests. In 2008, self-enhancement dominated over self-transcendence values, but in 2018 self-transcendence values became more important to the youth. The leading motivational value hierarchy has changed from 1) self-direction, 2) achievement, 3) hedonism in 2008, to 1) self-direction, 2) benevolence, 3) universalism in 2018. Such significant changes were not observed in other age groups.

Within the youngest age group, openness to change values dominate over conservation values. However, a smaller number of values were evaluated as important or very important by the youngest age group in 2018 – a trend of alienation from the common values can be observed.

During the period from 2008 to 2018, there has been a significant decrease in the importance of values connected with achievement and power, but also the statements regarding security, benevolence, stimulation, conformity, self-direction and equality (universalism) were rated as less important in 2018 than in 2008. Only the values of tolerance and respect for the nature (universalism), as well as the value of being modest and not drawing attention (tradition) has increased its importance among respondents in Latvia.

Despite their importance at the national and at the international level, values that are connected with achievements, self-direction (creativity), conformity, stimulation, universalism (tolerance – understanding different people) and security are not considered as very important among the respondents of the youngest age group, and the situation has become worse since 2008. Therefore, value education should put more emphasis on these values. However, a special emphasis should be placed on self-direction and achievement values, such as creativity and desire for success, since they are not common in the society of Latvia and they have become considerably weaker in the 10-year period, especially among the youngsters. These values are essential for the knowledge society and can stimulate entrepreneurship.

In 2018, anomie can still be detected in the Latvian society. The greatest generation gap can be observed when we look at the motivational values of 1) tradition, 2) security, 3) conformity, 4) power, 5) stimulation and 6) achievement. Over the 10-year period, the generation gap has decreased when it comes to statements connected to values of creativity (self-direction), equality (universalism) and stimulation, but it has happened due to the fact that these values have become less important to younger respondents.

Almost all motivational values have undergone a decrease of importance among the society, especially youth, and this has increased insecurity and uncertainty. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the isolation, it has also shown that we depend on and need each other.

Further research is needed in the area of value perception, especially among the youngest members the society.

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