Article

Values and Solidarity of Young Finnish Millennials and Generation X

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Abstract: It has been claimed that, in many countries and societies, there has been a generational change in youth values towards postmodern values that indicate postmaterialism. This paper tests that proposition by comparing youth values and solidarity attitudes in the Nordic welfare state of Finland among Generation X (born in the 1960s and 1970s) and Millennials (born in the 1980s and 1990s). The data were gathered from young people in 1992, 1995, 2011, and 2015 by same attitude scales relating to solidarity, environmental issues, gender, work, science and technology, immigration, economic well-being, and politics. Factor analysis was used to identify the value structures of young people. Common to the value structures of both generations were humanism, traditionalism, individualism, and globalism. The findings indicate a decline in postmaterialist values during the periods of economic recession, which affected solidarity attitudes. It was easier, for example, to show solidarity towards people of one's own country than to people of foreign countries. Generation X youth presented a more socio-democratic type of solidarity towards citizens, while Millennials showed liberal solidarity towards the poor. Young females of both generations were more likely to support postmaterialistic values, such as gender equality, tolerance of different ethnic groups, globalization, and environmentalism. By contrast, young males had more materialist values and greater faith in science and technology. Positive attitudes towards the future were found among young Millennials, which could support the broad identity horizon. Young people of Millennials showed greater variety in their value structures than the young people of Generation X. They revealed neoliberal attitudes in their value structures, which came closer to the ideology of economic liberalization. Nationalist values were also found among the young people of Millennials. The research findings and implication will be critically discussed.

Keywords: youth; solidarity; attitudes and values; Generation X; millennials

1. Introduction

1.1. Value Changes and Solidarity

In many countries and societies, wide-ranging studies have demonstrated a change in intergenerational values towards postmodern values that indicate postmaterialism [1–4]. Ronald Inglehart has raised the question of value shifts among people living in highly developed countries, such as Finland. Inglehart and Welzel [5] have examined changes in religious beliefs, work motivation, political conflict, attitudes towards children and families, and attitudes towards divorce, abortion, and homosexuality, drawing on evidence from societies containing 85 per cent of the world's population. According to the World Value Survey, Inglehart [1,2] showed that economic development and cultural and political change go hand in hand, leading to changes that take place with a generational time lag. His theory on *generational replacement* from materialist to postmaterialist values is based on his *modernization theory*, which argues that economic development, welfare state institutions, and the long peace between major powers have reshaped gender roles, sexual norms, the role of religion, economic behaviour, and the spread of democracy. According to this theory, economic development is conducive to the spread of postmaterialist values, which prioritize non-material attitudes, individual autonomy, self-expression, freedom of speech,

and political participation, and are linked with the emergence of relatively high levels of subjective well-being.

In the course of time, economic development tends to bring about cultural changes that are beneficial to democracy. These changes are part of a broader process linked with the emergence of postmodern values. Prolonged periods of prosperity tend to encourage the spread of postmaterialist values; economic decline tends to have the opposite effect. *A scarcity hypothesis* explains the changing priorities of individuals, which reflect the socioeconomic environment. Individuals place the greatest subjective value on those things that are relatively difficult to reach. The *socialization hypothesis* explains the relationship between socioeconomic environment and value priorities, and the substantial time lag involved in one's basic values, which are reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's youth. Fundamental value change takes place as younger birth cohorts replace older ones in the adult population of a society. The value priorities of older and younger generations are shaped by the different experiences in their youth [1,2,5–8].

As part of the classic theory of the development of societies, Durkheim presents two types of social solidarity: mechanical and organic [9] (pp. 39, 60, 108). In modern societies, Durkheimian organic solidarity derives from the interdependence that arises from the specialization of work and the complementarities between people. The solidarity of society depends on people's reliance on each other to perform their specified tasks. We can interpret this as meaning that this form of solidarity is social cohesion based upon the mutual dependence of individuals. The solidarity in a modern society (e.g., the Northern welfare state Finland) is based on growing industrialization with a great degree of differentiation and heterogeneity in social roles and the specialization of social functions. However, there is a risk that 'social solidarity' will disintegrate. Thus, solidarity can unify and include some people, while excluding others. Three types of solidarity have been identified at the national level of traditional European Welfare States: the socio-democratic type towards citizens, the corporatist type towards workers and the liberal type towards the poor [10,11].

1.2. Finland as the Study Context

Finland experienced a great recession in the 1990s caused by the collapse of the former Soviet Union, one of its largest trade partners at that time. In 1995, Finland joined the European Union and, at the same time, the country witnessed the explosive growth of the Nokia Corporation and other information technology (IT) businesses. In 2008, Finland experienced financial troubles with the emergence of the global economic recession [12–14]. The Finnish youth of Generation X grew up among increasing numbers of unemployed people, state cuts in education and other savings, which became a key experience for their generation, also called the depression generation by researchers [15]. This generation faced a competitive labour market and growing youth unemployment rates that were a shared condition for individuals. The economic downturn of 2008 experienced by Millennials in their childhood and youth was global and not national, unlike the deep recession of the 1990s experienced by Generation X. Millennials form a generation of individual choice at a time when IT developed globally; it took higher education to be a self-evident part of their life course. Millennials have also been characterized in Finland in terms of consumerism and competition [15–20].

2. Research Design

2.1. Research Questions

The hypothesis of this study is that Finnish Millennials and Generation X shared different economic and social experiences in their youth and transition to adulthood, and that this can be seen in the attitudes and value structures of their solidarity. Empirically, this article sought to give a descriptive picture of attitudes of youth solidarity among Millennials and Generation X in Finland. As a theoretical aim, it sought to find different dimensions of solidarity in the attitudes and value structures, and the ideologies behind

the youth individual attitudes. This article illustrates the attitudes of Finnish Millennials and Generation X youths relating to solidarity, including social solidarity in helping poor and sick people at the national level, and giving development aid to foreign countries, and concern about environmental issues, democracy, and equality of family and work. In this study, the young people in the two generations were targeted at the age of 16 to 24, in the period of transition to adulthood. The aim was to compare the values of Millennials born in the 1980s and 1990s with Generation X, born in the 1960s and 1970s in Finland, which is one of the five Nordic states. (The five Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.) The study includes youth in secondary and postsecondary education in rural and urban areas in Finland, with a focus on solidarity in terms of the similarities and differences in the attitudes and values of the two youth generations. This article answers the following research questions:

(1) What dimensions of value worlds/structures appear among youth in Generation X and Millennials in Finland?
(2) How similar or different are they?
(3) How does social solidarity differ among young people in Generation X and Millennials?
(4) What kinds of ideologies are found behind the intergenerational attitudes and value worlds?

2.2. Data and Methods

To investigate the intergenerational impact on youth attitudes, values, and solidarity, four data sets from young Finns were gathered from 1992 (T1), 1995 (T2), 2011 (T3), and 2015 (T4) [21–25]. The present analysis is based on the same attitude scales used in all four phases of the study, which were developed for studies of young people's attitudes and values (cf. Report of attitudes of Finns [26,27]). The attitude scales related to solidarity in helping other people in own country and outside, environmental issues, gender, family, work life, science, and technology, economic well-being, and politics. (Appendix A: Table A1. The phases and methods of the research).

The study included 622 respondents from Generation X. In 1992 (T1) and 1995 (T2), detailed datasets about the attitudes and values of 16- to 22-year-old young people born in the 1960s and 1970s were gathered by questionnaires, including word association, and sentence completion tests and attitude statements [21] (pp. 22–28), [22] (pp. 93–94), [23]. In total, 1130 Millennials born in 1980s and 1990s responded to the online survey of attitude scales in 2011 (T3) and 2015 (T4). The participants were 18- to 24-year-old postsecondary students. Invitations were distributed through the student union mailing lists. Young females were significantly more interested than same age males in taking part in the online survey. However, the online surveys of Millennials worked well because students in education are experienced Internet users, and, in this case, they were very conscientious when filling in the questionnaire variables and attitude scales. (See Appendix A. Ref. [14] (pp. 125–126) [28] (p. 110).

The essential features and differences in the attitudes, and attitude structures and values of Generation X and Millennials were analysed using statistical Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify interrelationships, which form from the large number of different attitude statements (variables) into fewer number of unified concepts as factors. It was assumed that the views and opinions about the attitude statements would reveal different attitude structures (factors) and that, although these could not be gauged directly, the attitudes of an individual were dependent on the underlying set of values. The Factor analysis was running by SPSS programme (see more https://www.spss-tutorials.com/spss-factor-analysis-tutorial/ accessed on 1 January 2023). Factors were used to summarize the attitude scale data. Using the same variables (the attitude statements) to measure intergenerational attitudes, principal components followed by Varimax rotation produced comparable results for the two youth generations. The key concept in factor analysis is that multiple variables have similar patterns of responses because they are all associated with a latent (e.g., not directly measured) variable [29].

3. Findings: Dimensions of the Value Worlds

3.1. Value Structures of Generation X

The attitude statements (see Table 1) produced in factor analysis a three-factor solution in T1 (1992) and T2 (1995) for Generation X. According to the findings, it is possible to divide young people's attitudes into three different groups of value worlds based on their attitude structures: Factor 1, *Humanists*; Factor 2, *Individualists;* and Factor 3, *Traditionalists* [21–23,30].

Table 1. Generation X: Factors and loadings in the three-factor solution in 1992 (T1) and 1995 (T2). How to read the tables: Factors are interpreted as different attitude structures (e.g., in Table 1 F1 Humanists, F2 Individualists, and F3 Traditionalists). The loadings close to 1 or −1 indicate that the factor is strongly influenced by the statement (variable). In Table 1, in research phase T2, loading −0.81 in the statement "The building of a fifth nuclear power plant in Finland is supported" means that this statement (variable number 4) has loaded strongest in the Humanist factor, but negatively. This can be interpreted so that Humanists were very strongly against the building of nuclear power station. Factor 1 was comprised of 9 items reported on a 3-point Likert scale (I agree, Difficult to say and Disagree) that explained 20% of the total variance with factor loadings from 0.56 to 0.81. Factor 2 comprised three items that explained 11% of total variance with high loadings from 0.65 to 0.88, and Factor 3 comprised four items from loadings 0.47 to 0.68 explaining 11% of total variance.

F1 = Humanists; F2 = Individualists; F3 = Traditionalists	F1 T1	F1 T2	F2 T1	F2 T2	F3 T1	F3 T2
1. Development aid to foreign countries should not be increased as long as there are people in need of help in Finland.	−0.56	−0.60				
2. We should have more respect for the convictions of a conscientious objector.	0.58	0.57				
3. Economic growth is the only possible basis for continuous social welfare.	−0.66	−0.69				
4. The building of a fifth nuclear power plant in Finland is supported.	−0.57	−0.81				
5. I am willing to lower my standard of living to decrease pollution and environmental problems.	0.61	0.71				
6. Our standard of living is so high that we must have the means to care for the unemployed, the sick, the disabled and other people who are badly off.	0.56	0.68				
7. Science and technology are beginning to control people instead of serving them.	0.66	0.77				
8. In the future, science and technology will solve most of today's problems.	−0.56	−0.70				
9. Developing economic welfare even further will result in an ill fare state.	0.60	0.72				
10. If more foreign people come to Finland, it would be useful for international influence.	—	—				
11. People's opinions don't have much influence on social and political decisions.			0.74	0.88		
12. The political parties have become estranged from ordinary people and their problems.			0.72	0.84		
13. None of the political parties advocate things that are important for me.			0.65	0.72		
14. In modern society you have to be bold if you want to succeed.			—	—		
15. It is a privilege to be Finnish.					0.57	0.74
16. Migration to Greater Helsinki should be controlled so that the whole country remains populated and inhabitable.					0.63	0.68
17. Guest workers should be employed to do the jobs the Finnish people no longer want to do themselves.					−0.53	−0.66
18. You will always find a job if you are skilled and hard−working.					0.47	—
19. People who take unfair advantage of social services, idlers and spongers are treated far too well.					—	—

Factor 1 included attitudes which were *Humanistic* in structure (see Table 1). They included many humanist ideas involving attitudes of solidarity, such as "I am willing to lower my standard of living to decrease pollution and environmental problems" (in T1 0.61 and T2 0.71). This statement showed a readiness to suffer a lower standard of living

to reduce pollution and environmental problems. In Finland, during the 1990s, it was discussed about building a new nuclear power plant. The attitudes of humanist young people were strongly against this (in T1 −0.57 and T2 −0.81). The attitudes of humanistic factor gave evidence of Generation X youth concern for the unemployed, sick, disabled, and other disadvantaged groups with the attitude "Our standard of living is so high that we must have the means to care for the unemployed, the sick, the disabled and other people who are badly off" (T1 0.56 and T2 0.68). The humanists were critical of economic growth as the only possible basis for continuous social welfare (T1 −0.66 and T2 −0.69). They believed that "Developing economic welfare even further will result in an ill fare state" (T1 0.60 and T2 0.72). The belief, that the Finnish standard of living is so high, that better care should be taken of the underprivileged in society, gave evidence of solidarity.

Factor 2 included *Individualist* values. The attitude structure represented by this factor was highly pessimistic concerning traditional party politics. The statement "People's opinions don't have much influence on social and political decisions" and "The political parties have become estranged from ordinary people and their problems" had high loadings (0.72 in T1, 1992, and 0.84 in T2, 1995). The mistrust seemed to rise in T2 (1995), when the loadings for the statement "People's opinions don't have much influence on social and political decisions" became higher (0.88). The attitudes belonging to this factor are based on an individualistic set of values. According to this, an individual cannot have faith in the fundamental institutions of society, because they have no regard for the opinions of ordinary citizens: political parties have drifted further and further from the problems facing ordinary people. People with this attitude structure feel that no political party stands for matters of importance to them. Such values presumably imply that the person can only trust in theirself, because the institutions of society are too far removed.

Factor 3 includes *Traditionalist-Conservative* attitudes. It comprised traditional Finnish attitudes, behind which lay a conservative attitude structure. Examples of the loaded statements included a desire to prevent the depopulation of the countryside. The statement "Migration to greater Helsinki should be controlled so that the whole country will remain populated and inhabitable" (0.63 in T1 and 0.68 in T2). A high regard for the Finnish homeland, manifested in the belief that one is fortunate and privileged to be a Finn (T1 0.57 and T2 0.74). The higher value in T2 (1995) must be understood as the economic growth caused by growth of the Nokia mobile company [12–14]. The traditional belief that the able and industrious will always find work loaded in the statement "You will always find a job if you are skilled and hardworking" (T1 0.47). This attitude has much in common with the Weberian Protestant work ethic [31]. These attitudes were evident among those Generation X young people for whom the homeland still constituted important values [22,23].

Factor 1, showing values of humanism, presented the biggest percentage of the total variance and its loadings were also the highest. Generation X, in their youth, placed more emphasis on soft postmaterialistic values about development aid, the unemployed, the sick, the disabled, and other people who are badly off.

3.2. Value Structures of Millennials

The research on Millennials in 2011 (T3) and 2015 (T4) produced a more scattered picture of the value structures. The factor analysis produced six groups, which can be interpreted thus: Factor 1, Neoliberalists; Factor 2, Individualists; Factor 3, Traditionalists; Factor 4, Nationalists; Factor 5, Globalists; and Factor 6, Futurists (Table 2) [23,32].

Factor 1, *Neoliberalists*, represented attitudes accepting differences in people's social status as an indicator of how well people had taken advantage of their own opportunities. The statement "Differences are acceptable in people's social status because they indicate that people are taking advantage of their opportunities" loaded strongest in this factor (T3 0.81 and T4 0.69). Those in this value group were against the idea of income redistribution by the state and local government. They believed that "The skilled and hard-working always find a job" (T3 0.59 and T4 0.58). This group comes close to the ideology of economic liberalization, which fits badly with the ideology of the Nordic welfare state and social solidarity.

Table 2. Millennials: Factors and loadings in the six-factor solution in 2011 (T3) and 2015 (T4). The factor analysis comprised for Millennials six factors (see Table 2). F1 Neoliberals contained five items that explained 23% of the total variance with factor loadings from −0.42 to 0.81. F2 Individualists comprised six items that explained 11% of total variance in T3 and 10% in T4 with loadings from 0.40 to 0.79. F 3 included seven items from loadings 0.43 to 0.74 explaining 9% of total variance in T3 and 8% in T4. F4 Nationalists comprised five items with loadings from 0.44 to 0.79 that explained 7% of the total variance in T3 and T4. F5 Globalists accounted for 7% of the total variance in T3 and T4 from 0.52 to 77 loadings. F6 Futurists comprised three items with loadings from −0.55 to 0.82 explaining 6% of the total variance in T3 and 5% in T4.

F1 = Neoliberals; F2 = Individualists; F3 = Traditionalists; F4 = Nationalists; F5 = Globalists; F6 = Futurists.	F1 T3	F1 T4	F2 T3	F2 T4	F3 T3	F3 T4	F4 T3	F4 T4	F5 T3	F5 T4	F6 T3	F6 T4
1. Differences in people's social status are acceptable because they indicate people are taking advantage of their own opportunities.	0.81	0.69										
2. People who take unfair advantage of social services, idlers and spongers are treated far too well.	64	0.70					0.48					
3. The skilled and hard-working always find a job.	0.59	0.58				0.43						
4. Our country needs strong leaders who can restore order and discipline and the respect for the right values.					0.74	0.57						
5. Private human activities and actions do not have any significant impact on the environment and nature.			−0.48	−0.58								
6. It is a privilege to be Finnish.			−0.65	−0.70		0.47			−0.71			
7. I would not want a woman to be my boss.					0.45							
8. Young people today don't respect traditional values enough.					0.71	0.74						
9. I think that every person must have the freedom to live as they wish.										0.57		
10. It is less important for a woman to go to work than it is for a man.			−0.46	−0.65	0.51							
11. Development aid to foreign countries should not be increased so long as there are people in need in Finland.							0.79	0.44				
12. Marriage is for life.					0.68	0.72						
13. "East west home is best" is an obsolete phrase.									0.77	0.74		
14. For me, it is important to live in harmony with my conscience.			0.79	0.55								
15. If more foreign people came to Finland, we would benefit from their influence.			0.41				−0.65			0.52		
16. Science and technology in the future will be able to solve most of the problems encountered today.											0.70	0.82
17. There should be more women bosses in important jobs in business and industry.				0.64							−0.55	
18. The continued development of economic well-being only increases mental ill being.								0.49	0.54			−0.40
19. The political parties have become estranged from ordinary people and their problems.							0.54	0.82				
20. Our standard of living is so high that we have the means to care for the sick and other people who are badly off.	−0.58	−0.42	0.48	0.40								
21. State and local governments should distribute tax revenues from the rich to the poorest ones.	−0.74	−0.79										

Factor 2, *Individualists*, valued living in harmony with their conscience (T3 0.79 and T4 0.55). For example, this group thought that there should be more women bosses in important jobs in business and industry, that having a female boss is desirable, and that it is just as important for a woman to go to work as it is for a man. For example, the statement "It is less important for a woman to go to work than it is for a man" was loaded negatively (T3 −0.46 and T4 −0.65). The picture of the Millennial youth Individualists was close to

that of Generation X humanists in the statement "Our standard of living is so high that we have the means to care for the sick and other people who are badly off" (T3 0.48 and T4 0.40). We can assume that Individualists among Millennials value the equality of all people—men and women, young and old, black, and white—and that those who have this value structure can also support intergenerational solidarity.

Factor 3, *Traditionalists*, were near to the Traditionalist Conservatives of Generation X. For example, the statement "Marriage is for life" produced the highest loadings (T3 0.68 and T4 0.72). However, there were differences: for example, in T3, when Finnish GDP growth was negative [33], the statement, "Our country needs strong leaders who can restore order and discipline and respect for the right values" got a very high loadings (T1 0.74 and T4 0.57). Additionally, in T4 there was a very high loading for the statement "Young people today don't respect traditional values enough" (0.74). It seems so that the Traditionalists of Millennials were supporting in their youth even more than the Traditionalist-Conservatives of Generation X for the established customs and beliefs of the Finnish society and would not like to change them.

Factor 4, *Nationalists*, were against development aid to foreign countries so long as there were people in need of help in their own country (0.79 in T3). In T4, this factor may be related to increasing rates of immigrants supported by state social services, because the highest loading of this factor was for the statement "The political parties have become estranged from ordinary people and their problems" (0.82). In this value world, the statement "If more foreign people came to Finland we would benefit from their influence" also gave a high negative value in T3 (−0.65). This kind of right-wing nationalist populism is an expression of opposition to immigration and to increasing support for the own country.

Factor 5, *Globalists*, was represented in T3 by the statement that it is not a privilege to be a Finnish citizen (−0.71); in T4, the statements "I think that every person must have the freedom to live as they wish" (0.57), and that Finland needs more foreign people to benefit the country with their influence (0.52) were supported. They thought that "'East west home best' is an obsolete phrase" (T3 0.77 and T4 0.74. The Globalists young people among Millennials were more likely engaged with the world beyond their home country and, for example, to use social media. They have also had more opportunities to become acquainted with other countries and cultures abroad with Erasmus student exchange programmes (for more information see https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/opportunities-for-individuals/students/studying-abroad, accessed on 1 January 2023).

Factor 6, *Futurists*, represented a positive orientation to the future by supporting the statement "Science and technology in the future will be able to solve most of the problems encountered today". The factor loading of this statement increased from T3 (0.70) to T4 (0.82), which was the highest loading in the factor analysis for Millennials.

Millennials in their youth were showing hard values in Neoliberalists factor, which presented the biggest percentage of the total variance, and its loadings were also very high. It is possible to interpret this as meaning that Millennials experienced the transition to adulthood in a world of globalization, digitalization, social media, and multiple choices, and their future is overshadowed by the risks of ecological catastrophes, the collapse of global economic mechanisms, terrorism, and war [34,35]. It seems that they have constructed neoliberal and nationalist value worlds reflexively from the ideas of neoliberalism, nationalism, and traditionalism. Their multiple value worlds may help them to navigate todays worlds of truth and falsity in the different contexts of our time.

3.3. Ideologies behind the Value Structures

The nationalist and populist Finns Party "Perussuomalaiset" established in 1995. This party won 20% of the votes in 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections, and this study supports the ideas that the party began to interest young people. Focusing on the ideologies behind the intergenerational attitudes and value worlds makes it possible to see the interpretation that the neoliberal and nationalist ideological backgrounds of the values are not a Durkheimian "social cement" [36] that could stabilize the Millennials in the Finnish welfare

society. It seems that Finnish society is no longer binding generations together by providing them collectively shared values and norms, as could be found among the humanistic values of the youth in Generation X. Of course, this study cannot give evidence that the value structures of Finnish youth could be shared by young people in other global industrial societies. It is even difficult to suppose that the stability of complex postmodern societies depends upon a consensus in values. It might be that the diversity of the ideological backgrounds for the beliefs and multiple value worlds of Finnish Millennials, compared to Generation X, makes it easier to be activated into use for the politics of today, thus helping them to understand different social contexts that emerge from neoliberalism and nationalism. Of course, understanding intergenerational ideological differences requires much deeper analysis of the social-historical context of Finland than is possible in this article.

3.4. Solidarity Attitudes

In this section, the similarities and differences in the attitudes towards solidarity of Generation X and Millennials are presented in terms of the statements "Development aid to foreign countries should not be increased so long as there are people in need in Finland" and "Our standard of living is so high that we have the means to care for the sick and other people who are badly off". The answers were scored according to a Likert-type fixed choice response formats from "I agree", "difficult to say", and "I disagree", with the statement assuming that these statements measure solidarity attitudes.

The deteriorating economic situation in Finland in T1 (1992) was reflected in Generation X's more rigid attitudes towards development aid for foreign countries. In 1992, Finland was in its deepest economic recession, and 51 per cent agreed with the statement "Development aid to foreign countries should not be increased so long as there are people in need in Finland"; almost every second female (40 per cent) and a clear majority of males (66 per cent) held this opinion. This had not changed in 2015 (T4), when half of Millennials (49 per cent) agreed with this statement (40 per cent of females and 57 per cent of males). Only about one third of the studied Millennials (32 per cent) agreed with this statement in T3 (2011). Millennials have come of age in international and global Finland, which was also seen in the findings. Their opinions were more positive towards development aid to foreign countries than the opinions of youth in Generation X during the deepest Finnish economic recession in 1992. It can also be assumed that the global recession experienced by the Millennials is assessed with this statement (Figure 1). In both generations, the answers from males were more strongly against increasing development aid to foreign countries so long as there are people in need in Finland.
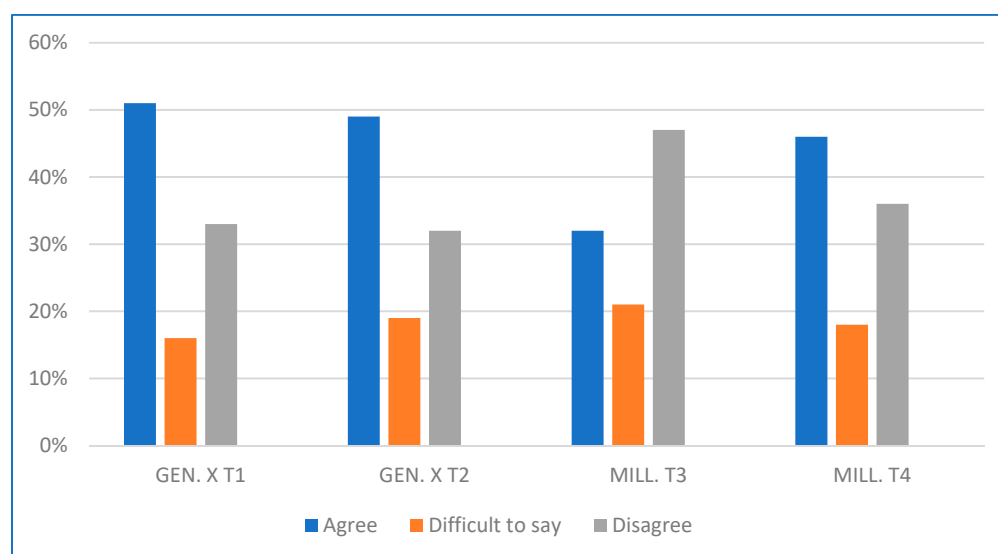

Figure 1. Development aid to foreign countries should not be increased so long as there are people in need in Finland.

A similar tendency could be found with the statement "Our standard of living is so high that we have the means to care for the sick and other people who are badly of" (Figure 2). The attitudes of Generation X were more negative towards the disadvantaged groups in 1992 (T1), although well over half (70 per cent) agreed with the statement (78 per cent of females and 59 per cent of males). In 1995 (T2), 60 per cent of respondents in Generation X agreed with this statement. Millennials showed more solidarity towards the unemployed and other disadvantaged population groups in 2011 (T3): 82 per cent agreed with this statement. In 2015 (T4), the number of those Millennials who agreed with this statement decreased to 67 per cent, and the number of those who disagreed increased from 6 to 14 per cent (Figure 2).
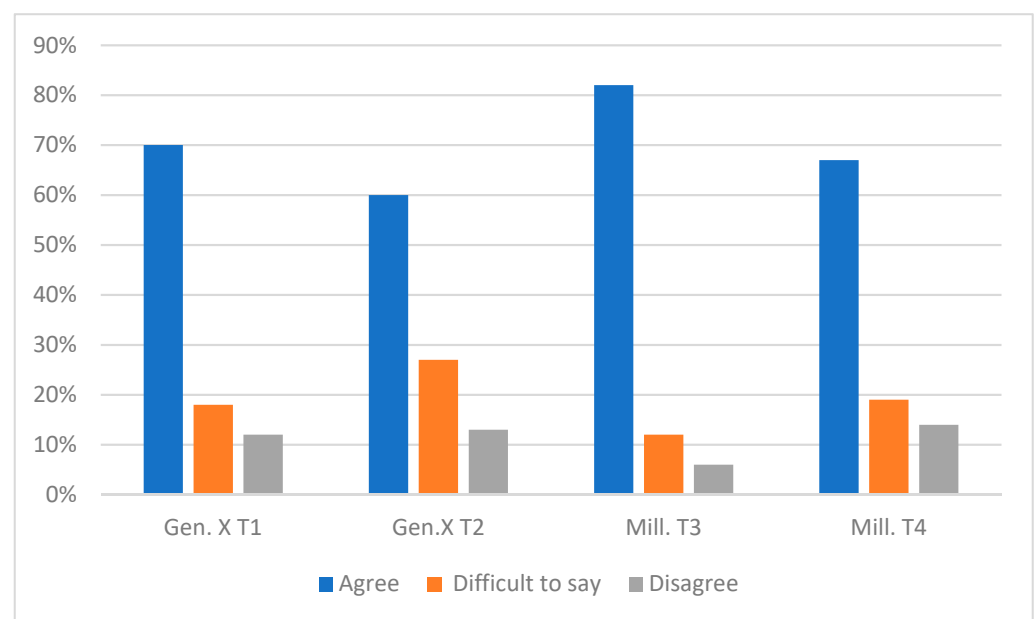

Figure 2. Our standard of living is so high that we have the means to care for the sick and other people who are badly off.

4. Summary and Conclusions

The results indicate that, for both generations, it was easier to show attitudes of solidarity towards people of one's own country, especially during economically hard times, than to people of foreign countries. This recalls solidarity at the national level, which is seen among Generation X youth as the socio-democratic type to help the country's own citizens and, among Millennials, as the more liberal type towards the poor cf. [10,11]. The results support the hypothesis that the deep recession in Finland in 1992, experienced by Generation X in their youth, could be seen in their more rigid opinions towards development aid. During that time, postmaterialist values fit the critical worldviews of the young people of Generation X: they were interested in Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and different animal protection movements. The values were not anchored to any clear ideology, but the ideological background of their home country was seen in their overall worldviews [24].

This research about solidarity values shows that there is a gap between Generation X and Millennials in terms of their attitudes towards solidarity, which could reflect the different economic and political environments they experienced, with life cycle effects and the combination of new technology, and the influence of mass media. Many members of the Millennial generation are simply not yet grown up in the traditional linear sense. Instead, they pursue personal goals and individual fulfilment, and emerge from an ambiguous and prolonged youth into an unclear and insecure adulthood [37–39].

In summary, we can suggest that, behind the different values of Millennials and Generation X, there are different value worlds with their own ideologies as the result of different generational experiences. The attitudes and value worlds of Generation X and

Millennials were partly similar; common to the value structures of both generations were humanism, traditionalism, individualism, and globalism. The Millennials showed more heterogeneity in their value worlds and differentiation in the ideologies behind them than Generation X, who showed more postmaterialist attitudes and weaker solidarity attitudes towards development aid to foreign people than those of Millennials. However, there seems to not be a direct link to social solidarity. The types of solidarity were different: Generation X youth tended to show the socio-democratic type towards citizens of their own country, while Millennials tended to show the liberal type towards sick and poor people. One reason for the intergenerational differences in the types of solidarity might be that the Millennials lived their youth in the European Union, where the principle of solidarity should be based on the equal sharing of prosperity by all of the Member States.

5. Critical Discussion and Implications for Further Research

As expected, there were differences between the values of young people among Generation X and Millennials, which could indicate an intergenerational value shift. Perhaps more surprisingly, the youth values of Generation X were more postmaterialist than the values of Millennials. According to this study, Inglehart's theory seems to be oversimplified. In this study, the youth value structures of Millennials appeared to be far more complex than anything that Inglehart described as part of the category of postmaterialist values. It would be interesting to compare if values will change later within Generation X and Millennials adulthood. Theoretically, the life-course perspective could give more support to Inglehart's theory on generational replacement from materialist to postmaterialist values when age differences and life-cycle effects would be noted. The results of this study did not support Inglehart's modernization theory. The value types of young Millennials and Generations X included postmaterialistic and materialistic values [2,5]. The results of this study gave evidence that females of both generations were more likely to support postmaterialist values, such as gender equality, tolerance of foreign people and different ethnic groups, globalization, and environmentalism. By contrast, males had more materialist values and a greater belief in science and technology being able to solve most of the problems that would be encountered in the future. There were more males than females among Traditionalists in both generations. Additionally, other studies of differences in gender values support these results [7,40,41]. However, more research about the youth gender values, roles, and stereotypes of the value groups is required.

This study indicates a decline in postmaterialist values in both generations during the period of economic recession, which supports Inglehart's scarcity hypothesis. Economic scarcity can thus be seen as generating materialistic "hard" values. However, the same young people could value issues other than material goods. For example, most youths were ready to compromise their own standard of living to protect the environment and to help the less fortunate [23,31,32]. The intergenerational findings for Generation X and Millennials validate a postmodern phenomenon that suggests emerging individualism and the development of multiple value worlds.

Positive attitudes towards the future were found among Millennials, which could enable and support their broad identity horizon [25]. The findings for Generation X reflected the core humanistic values of equality and solidarity, but also individualist, pessimistic concerns, and critics towards the institutions of society, which could be a base for the development of neoliberalist values of Millennials. However, it is very difficult to associate the values of young Millennials with the neoliberal and nationalist value worlds, and to find the means for intergenerational coherence or social cohesion based on the interdependence of individuals in developed societies by Durkheimian solidarity types. The neoliberal and nationalist values are not "social cement" [34] that could stabilize youth into the Finnish welfare society. The meaning of values and solidarity needs rethinking. It seems that solidarity has not bound the Millennial generation to Finnish society by providing them collectively shared values and norms, as could be found in the humanistic values of the youth in Generation X. This suggest that further research is needed to identify those factors,

which construct different values of generations, and how these are including or excluding young people in the society and world. Even the concept of generation has been identified confusing but it is important to future sociological youth research [42]. Comparative youth research is needed about values and solidarity of younger generations of Z and C.

The quantitative data of this study was collected and analysed from young people in Finland. This study gives evidence about the value structures of Generation X and Millennial youth, based on which is difficult to suppose that the stability of complex post-modern societies depends upon a consensus in values. In Finland, like in other "modern" and "industrial" societies, generations have different values and interests, and we must ask if the Durkheimian organic solidarity is maintaining the complex and global societies through the value interdependence of its parts. Without further qualitative research, we can only assume how neoliberal and nationalist value structures of Millennials are fitting into the contemporary Finnish welfare society, and how the intergenerational youth values are changing Finnish society and its economic and political environment.

Appendix A

Table A1. The phases and methods of the research.

1992	T 1. Generation X 19–22-year-olds	93 girls, 72 boys (n = 165) - Questionnaires - Word association and sentence completion tests - Attitude scales
1995	T 2. Generation X Comparative study 16–19-year-olds	228 female, 229 male (n = 457) - Questionnaires - Word association and sentence completion tests - Attitude scales
2011	T 3. Millennials Comparative study 18–24-year-olds	560 female, 129 male (n = 689) - Online survey - Attitude scales
2015	T 4. Millennials Comparative study 18–24-year-olds	Gender-balanced random sample 250 female, 191 male (n = 441) - Online survey - Attitude scales

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