



Lifecycle, generational, and period effects on emancipative values in Serbia

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyse the lifecycle, generational, and period effects on emancipative value preferences in Serbia. The data used in the analysis was collected in the World Values Survey (WVS), conducted in Serbia in 1996 (N = 1,280), 2006 (N = 1,220), and 2017 (N = 1,046), respectively. As a proxy measure of the respondents' lifecycle stage, the recoded age variable (young/middle-aged/elderly) was used. Based on the age period during which a person spent their formative years (15–24 years of age), a sixfold typology of political generation membership was constructed. The year in which the survey was conducted was used as a measure of period effects. The results indicate that emancipative values were more likely to be embraced by younger respondents ($r = .22^{**}$) and in survey waves after 2000 ($r = .17^{**}$), and less by the members of the socialist generation ($p < .01$) than by those generations who spent their formative years after 2000, omnibus $F(5, 3440) = 58.19^{**}$. The results reveal a complex relationship between lifecycle, generational, and period effects on emancipative values and call into question the exclusive importance that is usually attributed to generational differences in theory. The conclusion outlines possible implications for the theory of human empowerment and practical implications for the possibility of value change in Serbian society.

KEYWORDS

emancipative values, generational effects, lifecycle effects, period effects, WVS, Serbia

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1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of age plays a very important role in the social psychology of values. Understood as abstract ideals that serve as guiding principles in people's lives (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992; Maio 2017), values are considered to be shaped by a number of individual, social, and cultural forces and, above all, they develop and take time to structure and become a part of people's personalities. As such, analysing age differences in value preferences is an inherent part of any systematic value research, and conceptualising the role of age is an inevitable aspect of their theorising.

Empirical evidence on age differences in value priorities is abundant. The seminal research on values by Milton Rokeach (1973) showed that age differences were evident in 30 out of 36 values in his value model. Different values showed different patterns of relationship with age – some gained importance with age, while others lost it – but the relevance of age was unquestionable. One of the most influential value theories these days, proposed by Schwartz (1992, 2017), argues that there are 10 basic human values. A study conducted in 20 states showed that almost all of them were significantly related to age: security, tradition, benevolence, and universalism values were more important for older respondents, while younger people placed more importance on stimulation, hedonism, and achievement (Schwartz 2017; Pavlović 2021). Numerous other studies with different theoretical value models and value operationalisation show pronounced age differences in, for example, intrinsic and prosocial (Van Lange et al. 1997; Maio 2017; Vilar et al. 2020), postmaterialist (Inglehart 1990), self-expression

(Inglehart and Welzel 2005), and emancipative values (Welzel 2013).

The threefold interpretation of age-related differences in values is well-established in the literature (Hofstede 1980; Inglehart 1990; Welzel 2013; Pavlović 2021).

Value priorities can be determined via lifecycle. People in different positions in lifecycle trajectories differ in terms of biological, emotional, psychological, and social development, as well as in terms of their related needs, skills, knowledge, expectations, and roles, and consequently when it comes to their guiding principles in life, i.e. values (Erickson 1959; Hofstede 1980; O'Rand and Krecker 1990). Thus, individual psychological changes, life positions, and roles shape value priorities. This reasoning fits quite well with the overarching view that people adapt their values to life circumstances (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992), which change during the course of life.

However, people of different chronological age differ not just in terms of stages in their lifecycle. They are born and mature during different socio-political circumstances and belong to different (political) generations, all of which could have influenced their development and their value priorities. The focus here is not on the common position in individual lifecycles, but on a specific social and historical process (Mannheim 1952), which could have shaped value priorities. Generational effects imply that values are acquired during formative, usually pre-adult experiences and remain relatively stable in adulthood (Hofstede 1980; Jennings and Niemi 1981). In terms of value research, this line of reasoning is most strongly elaborated in the work of Ronald Inglehart and his associates (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Welzel 2013).

A very important implication of these assumptions is that individual value change during the lifecycle is unlikely, and that values on the societal level change only in the long run and by generational replacement.

Finally, period or zeitgeist effects imply that some major crises (such as economic depression or the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic) could hugely disrupt society's functioning and individual lives, so that a temporary shift in value priorities in all age groups (albeit with different intensity) may be possible (Beck and Jennings 1979; Hofstede 1980; Inglehart 1990). Taking into account the possible effects of profound societal changes on value priorities is of utmost importance in analysing lifecycle and generational differences and changes in value priorities. The explanation of period effects can account for shifts in values in a relatively short time span, which cannot be accounted by lifecycle and/or generational explanations (Pavlović 2018, 2021).

Disentangling the lifecycle, generational, and period effects on values is rarely possible due to the cross-sectional survey methodology typically used to survey values. Luckily, the growing evidence acquired in large comparative projects, such as the World Values Survey (WVS), offers at least some preliminary insights. Leading scholars of the WVS project, using massive empirical evidence collected from numerous countries around the world from the 1980s onwards, argued for several value concepts and theoretical models. The human empowerment framework has been developed more recently (Welzel 2006, 2013; Welzel and Inglehart 2009) and is described as the "evolutionary theory of emancipation" (Welzel 2013: 24). Its main focus is the utility of universal freedoms – when they are recognised as useful and when

they aren't – and the evolutionary origins of this utility. People's capabilities to exercise freedoms are, according to the proposed model, resource-based and dependent on the availability of intellectual, connective, and material resources (Welzel 2013). When resources are scarce, people have more pressing concerns on their mind, while universal freedoms have little utility and, consequently, are of little value. As ordinary people gain control over action resources (tools, skills, and opportunities), i.e. become existentially empowered, their capabilities to exercise freedoms and comprehend their utility grow as well.

This has prominent psychological consequences and leads to a sort of psychological empowerment – people place greater emphasis on valuation of independent choice and equal opportunities, which give rise to emancipative values (Welzel 2006, 2013). These consist of two broad orientations – a liberating and egalitarian one – and cover emphasis on autonomy, freedom of choice, equality, and a voice for the people. As such, holding emancipative values has broad individual and societal consequences. Emancipative values, on the individual level, nurture greater trust and humanism and encourage social movement, support for democracy, environmental activism etc. (Welzel 2006, 2013; Welzel and Inglehart 2009; Welzel and Moreno Alvarez 2014). On a societal level, social pressures to institutionalise freedoms (if there were no such pre-existing guarantees) or to make them more effective (if guarantees were already in place) become prominent (Welzel 2013). This leads to institutional empowerment – the introduction or strengthening of personal autonomy and political participation rights and guarantees to exercise universal freedoms in a society where

emancipative values are on the rise (Welzel and Inglehart 2009; Welzel 2013).

The rising trend in emancipative values is registered throughout the world: people everywhere nowadays value them more and more (Welzel 2013). Although societal and individual sources of emancipative values are numerous, one of the most important mechanisms in their growth is, in theory, generational replacement. Younger cohorts embrace emancipative values more than older cohorts (Welzel 2013). Similar to the so-called socialisation hypothesis (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Welzel 2005), individuals' value preferences are supposedly determined by existential conditions during the formative period of one's development, when value priorities are finally set and after which they become relatively unchangeable. Younger cohorts in recent decades spent their formative years in more and more abundance, which makes them more susceptible to accepting emancipative values (Welzel 2013). Cohort replacement eventually brings a prominent emancipative shift at a societal level.

The main aspect of the post-materialist (Pavlović 2006, 2009a), self-expression (Pavlović 2008, 2009b), and emancipative values in Serbia (Pavlović 2018) has already been studied. One of the theoretically most important findings is the presence of between-cohort differences in the absence of their prerequisites that theoretical models posit, as well as the need for alternative explanations of both the age differences in values and their main sources. At least some of the registered value patterns in Serbia and other Eastern European countries after the fall of communism can be well explained under the life-learning model or individual rationality framework (Pavlović 2014,

2015), which puts much more emphasis on the relevance of recent experiences, including both individual lifecycle and societal changes (Muller and Seligson 1994; Jackman and Miller 1996; Mishler and Rose 2002). Furthermore, studying changes in emancipative values in a society that has undergone revolutionary changes is quite fertile ground for additional debate on the adequacy of the dominant paradigms and significant period effects (Nikolayenko 2008; Pavlović 2018). Finally, emancipative values could still be, as originally proposed, based on resources, but these could be gained during the individual's lifecycle, e.g. by getting employed or obtaining a university degree, and not necessarily through generational or early life experiences.

All said, the main aim of this study is to analyse the lifecycle, generational, and period effects on emancipative values in Serbia. Serbian data available from the WVS project so far includes five waves of surveys, conducted between 1996 and 2017. Individual surveys enable the analysis of cohort differences in values and the relevance of a number of life events that represent a marker of significant life transitions, such as getting married, having children, getting employed, or retiring. In a theory based on generational reasoning, all these are irrelevant, but could signal the significance of lifecycle effects on values. In addition, the relatively long period covered by the data enables not just the analysis of age differences in values at one time point – capturing the inseparable cohort and generational effects – but also a comparison of people at the same lifecycle stage across different points in time. Consequently, it is possible to obtain insights into the relevance of lifecycle and generational interpretations. Comparing the overall

population changes in emancipative values over 20 years enables us to take into account changes in values that could be treated as period effects.

2 METHOD

2.1 DATA

Version V3.0 of the WVS time-series dataset for 1981 to 2022 was used in the analysis (Inglehart et al. 2022). This dataset combines the WVS surveys completed in waves 1 (1981–1983), 2 (1990–1992), 3 (1995–1998), 4 (2000–2004), 5 (2005–2008), 6 (2010–2014), and 7 (2017–2022). The WVS dataset includes a large number of national surveys, covering seven waves of WVS from 1981 to 2022, with data from 106 countries and almost 440,000 respondents. For the present purposes, data collected during the third, fifth, and seventh waves of the WVS – conducted in Serbia in 1996, 2006, and 2017 respectively – was used. Data was collected by face-to-face interviews.

2.2 VARIABLES AND MEASURES

Emancipative values. In the human empowerment model (Welzel 2013), emancipative values are defined as an orientation covering an emphasis on autonomy, choice, equality, and voice and operationalised by average values of four sub-indices; a more detailed description of the sub-indices of emancipative values and how they are operationalised is available elsewhere (Welzel 2013; Pavlović 2018). The index of emancipative values already a forms part of the WVS dataset (Inglehart et al. 2022) and is, as such, used in the present analysis. It ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values implying more prominent emancipative values.

Lifecycle. This is a convention to distinguish three life stages or phases based on chronological age: youth, middle age, and elderly. The age spans that these phases cover are arbitrary and vary across different studies. Here we relied on the age groupings already available in the WVS dataset, which was quite meaningful. Respondents aged 18–29 were treated as young, 30–49 as middle aged, and those aged 50 years or above as elderly.

Political generation. In operationalising the construct of political generations, we depart from the existing research (Nikolayenko 2008). Taking into account the general psychological assumptions regarding late adolescence as a formative period of value development (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 2017; Pavlović 2021), as well as individual educational and life trajectories (the time when secondary and tertiary educational cycles in Serbia start and, typically, end), this study treats middle and late adolescence (15–24 years of age) as a formative period of value stabilisation. We also take into account the specific socio-political development of Serbia during most of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century by (arbitrarily) demarcating crucial historical periods in light of the main political ‘events’: WWII (up to 1945), socialism and the rule of Josip Broz Tito (1946–1979), the post-socialist era (1980–1989), the 1990s (1990–1999), democracy (2000–2012), and post-democracy (2013–2022). By combining the formative period and historical time during which it was experienced, each respondent was assigned to a specific generation based upon their position in the historical period for at least five years of the formative 10-year span (Nikolayenko 2008). For example, an individual born

Table 1. Classification of respondents by political generations

Political generation	Matured (15–24 years old)	Year born
WWII generation	< 1945	< 1925
Socialist generation	1946–1979	1926–1959
Post-socialist generation	1980–1989	1960–1969
1990s generation	1990–1999	1970–1979
Democracy generation	2000–2012	1980–1992
Post-democracy generation	2013–2022	1993–2002

1982 turned 15 in 1997, but lived only two years during the 1990s and the rest in the following decade; hence, s/he was assigned to the democracy generation. The classification overview is given in Table 1.

By applying this typology, we deviate from the typical reasoning of the relevance of political generations in two ways. First, the defining criterion for cohort membership is not the year (i.e. time span) in which one was born but the year one achieved political maturity. In this way, we aim to give much more weight to late adolescence than early adolescence in terms of the development of values. Second, we take into account local circumstances that make more sense for defining and labelling political generations (Nikolayenko 2008), rather than simply applying the well-known generation classification (e.g. generation X, millennials). These historical periods are marked by stark differences in socio-political-economic circumstances, so it could be expected that these coloured people's formative experiences and moulded their value preferences in different ways. Finally, by defining generation over longer time spans, we introduce more age/cohort variability within members of the same generations, preventing possible multicollinearity problems during later analyses.

Periods. Year of survey/wave of WVS, as a time variable, was also included in the analysis. This was coded so that higher values indicate a more recent point in time (1 – 1996, 2 – 2006, 3 – 2017). Dummy year variables were used in regression analysis.

Socio-demographics. Several socio-demographic variables were used in the analysis as well: education (primary/secondary/higher), income level (an 11-point scale based on household monthly incomes), employment status (employed/unemployed/retired/other), marital/relationship status (married or living together/divorced or separated/single/widowed) and parental status (no children/has children). These are relevant as well-known correlates (e.g. income level) of emancipative values (Welzel 2013) or markers of lifecycle stages (e.g. getting married), which could be of importance but are understudied.

2.3 SAMPLE

The three waves of WVS surveys in Serbia used in the analysis were all conducted on nationally representative samples of voting age-citizens. The samples for the third, fifth, and seventh waves included 1,280, 1,220, and 1,046 respondents respectively. The unweighted sample structures by wave of survey, gender,

Table 2. Sample structure by gender, age, education, and wave of survey (unweighted data)

		Year of survey			
		1996 (n = 1,280)	2006 (n = 1,220)	2017 (n = 1,046)	Total (N = 3,546)
Gender	Male	49.2%	50.7%	47.8%	49.3%
	Female	50.8%	49.3%	52.2%	50.7%
Age	15–29 years	20.8%	25.5%	22.1%	22.8%
	30–49 years	38.5%	41.4%	36%	38.8%
	50 and more years	40.7%	33.1%	41.8%	38.4%
Education	Lower	34.7%	21.8%	9.5%	22.9%
	Middle	44.3%	49.2%	48.9%	47.3%
	Upper	21.0%	29%	41.7%	29.8%

Source: Inglehart et al. 2022.

Table 3. Inter-correlations between the main variables in the analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	M	SD
1. Emancipative values											.45	.00
2. Lifecycle	-.22**										2.16	.01
3. Education level	.34**	-.30**									2.07	.01
4. Scale of incomes	.09**	-.18**	.34**								4.90	.04
5. WVS wave	.17**	-.01	.26**	-.09**							4.87	.03
6. Married	-.07**	.30**	-.09**	.01	-.09**						.62	.01
7. Parent	-.06**	.35**	-.17**	-.05**	-.08**	.38**					.71	.01
8. Employed	.12**	-.16**	.22**	.22**	-.02	.17**	.01				.51	.01
9. Socialist generation	-.20**	.68**	-.29**	-.12**	-.24**	.21**	.23**	-.17**			.43	.01
10. 1990s generation	.09**	-.36**	.10**	.07**	.02	-.11**	-.00	.11**	-.42**		.18	.01
11. Democracy generation	.14**	-.45**	.25**	.04*	.31**	-.21**	-.35**	.03	-.36**	-.19**	.14	.01

Source: Inglehart et al. 2022.

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Variables 6 to 11 are dummy variables contrasting the groups labelled in the table and all other respondents on that measure (e.g. those married versus those of any other relationship status).

age, and education level are presented in Table 2. The data was weighted during analysis to correct for population parameters by the weight variable (S007), which had already been included in the WVS dataset.

3 RESULTS

The results of the analysis are presented in several subsections. The inter-correlations between the main variables in the study are presented first. A detailed analysis of the lifecycle and generational differences in emancipative values

follows. After that, the results of the multiple regression analysis predicting emancipative values from several relevant predictors are presented. The materials needed for the reproduction of the analysis presented here can be accessed at Pavlović (2022).

3.1 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients of the main variables in the study. We are primarily interested in the correlates of emancipative values, and it can be seen that they show some expected

patterns of a relationship with measures of lifecycle and exemplar generational memberships. Emancipative values are, overall, more prominent among younger than older respondents. This is similar for the respondents who belong to the 1990s and democracy generations (who are, by definition, younger respondents), while those who matured during socialism, as compared to other respondents, voice emancipation to a lesser degree. Finally, the emphasis on emancipative values is more prominent among respondents in the more recent waves of the WVS survey.

Besides these, the relationship between the acceptance of emancipative values and other demographic and lifecycle variables is illustrative. Emancipative values correlate positively with educational and income levels as well as

employment status (i.e. being employed vs. unemployed), and negatively correlated with relationship and parenting status, i.e. being married and having kids. These pieces of evidence suggest not just that significant life events play an important role in emancipative value preferences, but that these variables, since inter-correlated, should be carefully taken into account in further analyses.

3.2 LIFECYCLE AND GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN EMANCIPATIVE VALUES

Having descriptively inspected the correlates of emancipative values, we then analysed the lifecycle, generational, and period effects on emancipative values in more detail. Figure 1 shows mean emancipative values by lifecycle, i.e. three age

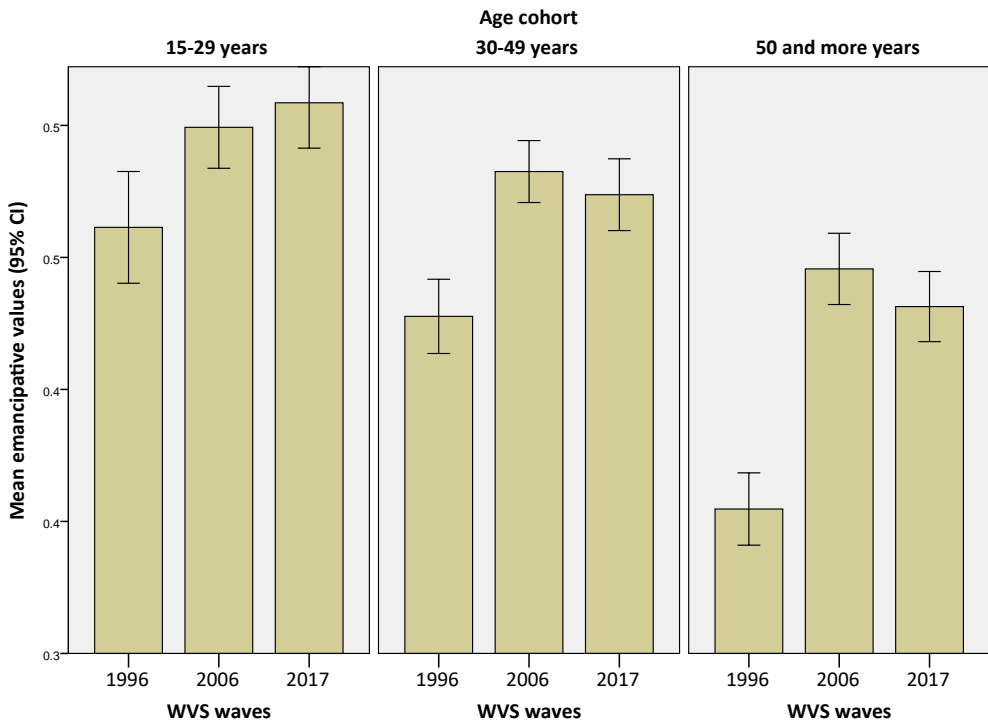


Figure 1. Mean emancipative values by lifecycle and waves of survey
 Source: Inglehart et al. 2022.

groups within three waves of survey. Several important pieces of information are easily visible.

Firstly, there is a significant emancipative shift within each lifecycle group between the waves of survey. Young respondents in 1996 were less supportive of emancipation than those in the young group in 2006 ($p < .05$)¹ and/or 2017 ($p < .01$), omnibus $F(2, 786) = 7.20$, $p < .01$. The same goes for between-wave changes within the middle-aged group, omnibus $F(2, 1349) = 20.48$, $p < .01$, and the elderly group, omnibus $F(2, 1302) = 52.83$, $p < .01$, although the main value shift is visible between the first two waves of survey ($p < .01$); post-hoc tests (Scheffe) show significant pair comparisons between the first two waves of survey in each age cohort (at least $p < .01$), and none of the comparisons between the second and the third waves of survey were significant.

Secondly, and only indirectly visible in Figure 1, the differences in emancipative values between-lifecycle groups within a specific wave of survey are significant in 1996, omnibus $F(2, 1263) = 45.64$, $p < .01$, 2006, omnibus $F(2, 1172) = 14.81$, $p < .01$, and 2017, omnibus $F(2, 1002) = 25.66$, $p < .01$. As already shown in Table 2, older respondents attach less importance to emancipative values in each wave of the survey and all post-hoc pair comparisons are significant in each wave.

Finally, those who were young in 1996 were, hypothetically, predominantly in the group of middle aged respondents in 2006 (10 years after the first survey) and all of them were middle-aged in 2017; we can, rather loosely, “track”

¹ p values given in parentheses denote Scheffe post-hoc test comparisons. Full ANOVA output documenting post-hoc tests and all other analysis results outputs can be found at Pavlović (2022).

the “same” group of respondents in time as they go through different life stages. Applying this quasi-longitudinal logic, we could say that, overall, the level of emancipative values seems to decrease from young to middle age, although, as in previous cases, there is a significant increase between the survey waves in 1996 and 2006 and our comparisons are only for the sake of illustration.

A similar analysis can be performed using generational membership as a determinant of emancipative values. Figure 2 shows mean emancipative values by generational membership, i.e. four generation groups within three waves of survey.²

The most obvious finding is a significant emancipative shift between the first two waves of survey in each generation. Emancipative values are more prominent in 2006 in comparison to 1996 ($p < .01$) in the socialist, omnibus $F(2, 1486) = 26.40$, $p < .01$, and post-socialist generations ($p < .05$), omnibus $F(2, 631) = 4.10$, $p < .05$ (all pairs of post-hoc comparisons are significant³). Among these, the rise of emancipative values is followed by a significant decline between 2006 and 2017 ($p < .05$). But the importance of emancipative values for the democracy, omnibus $F(1, 489) = 1.05$, $p = .31$, and 1990s generations, omnibus $F(2, 631) = .08$, $p = .43$, does not significantly vary between the waves of survey.

If we look at the data from a different angle, within each specific wave of survey, generational membership makes

² Two generational groups were not included in this analysis. The WWII generation group was excluded due to a small number of respondents in individual waves of survey, while the post-democracy generation was present only in the last wave of the survey.

³ For more information see analysis output at Pavlović (2022).

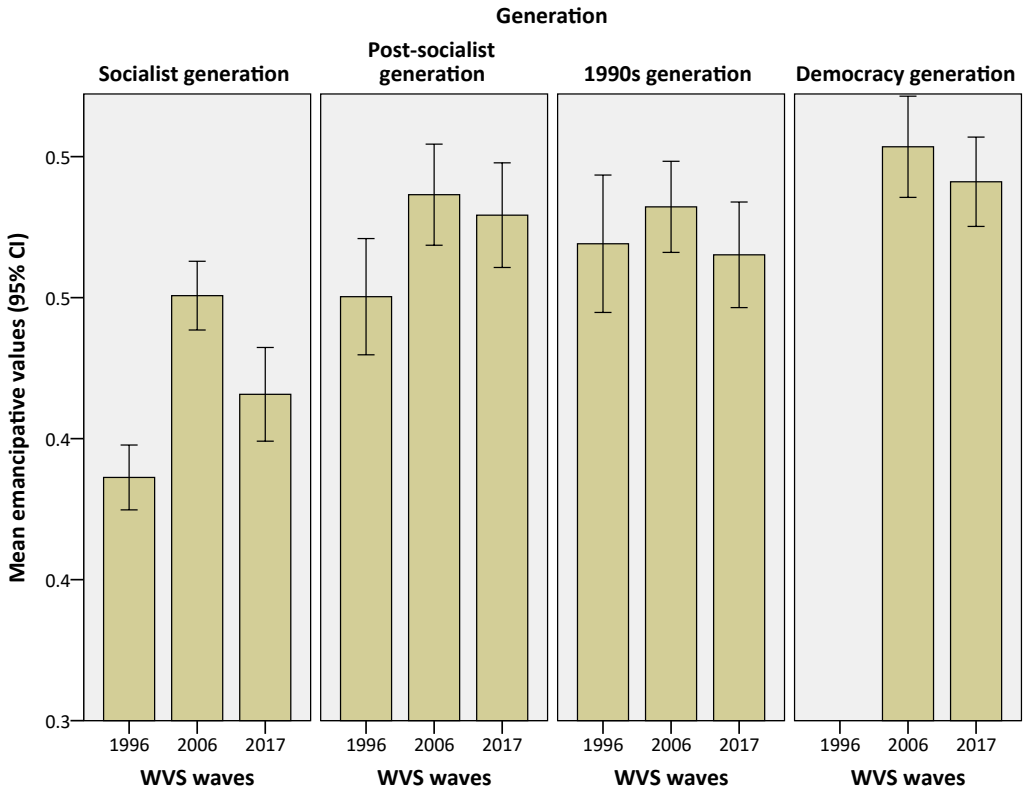


Figure 2. Mean emancipative values by generation and waves of survey
Source: Inglehart et al. 2022.

a difference in the importance attributed to emancipative values. In 1996, omnibus $F(2, 1184) = 28.07, p < .01$, the respondents who matured during socialism were less likely to attach great importance to emancipative values, while these were most intensely held by those who matured during the 1990s or during the first decade of the 21st century (the post-hoc comparison of the 1990s and democracy generations show no significant differences). Similarly, in 2006, between-generation differences were significant, omnibus $F(3, 1167) = 9.09, p < .01$, but mainly due to the distinctiveness of the members of the socialist generation, who were less inclined to accept these values (the differences between

the remaining three generations were not significant). Once again, in 2017 the generational differences in mean emancipative values were significant, omnibus $F(4, 999) = 15.11, p < .01$, but the only comparisons of all other generations with the socialist generation were significant (all comparisons significant at the .01 level).

Finally, we can plot the data combining all three 'time' variables. Figure 3 shows mean age cohort emancipative values by generation and wave of survey.

This analysis is rather exploratory and descriptive, but also limited by the fact that only some lifecycle groups and generation comparisons in specific waves are possible. Of special relevance

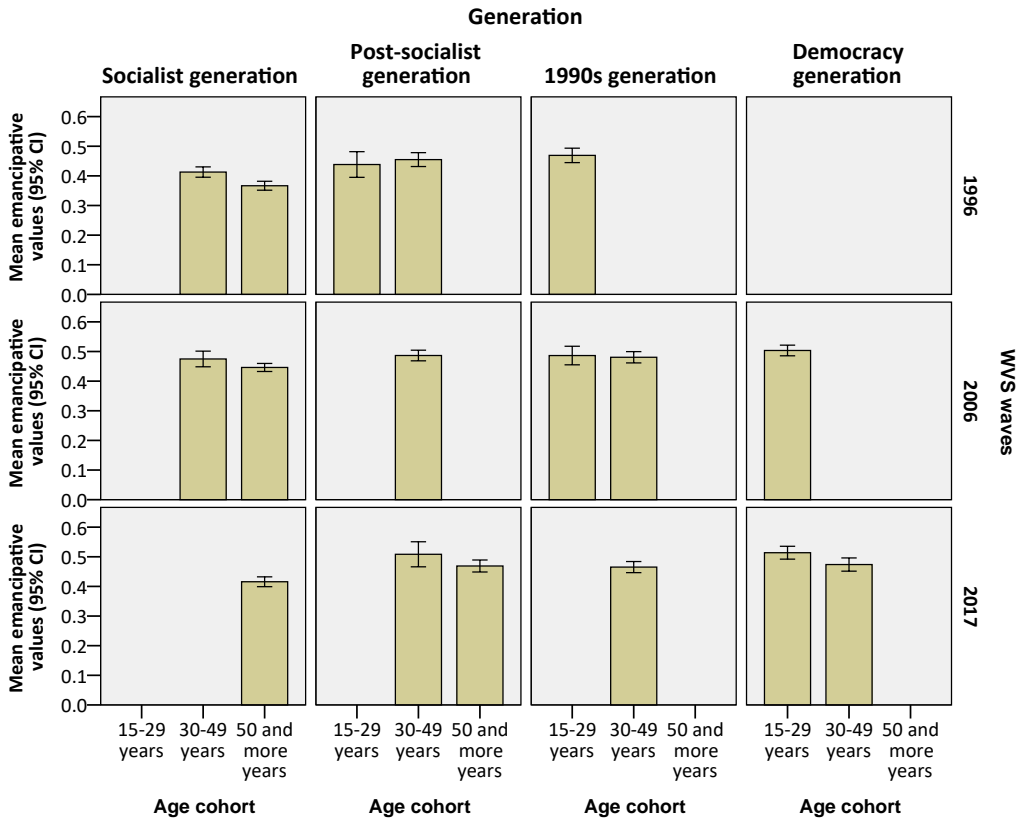


Figure 3. Mean emancipative values by lifecycle, generation, and waves of survey
Source: Inglehart et al. 2022.

are those cases that allow the comparison of respondents of the same generation and different lifecycle stage (e.g. the socialist generation in 1996). There are six comparisons of this kind. Although there is a visible trend showing that, within the same generations, the younger members are typically more supportive of emancipation, the minority of these comparisons are indeed significant (the socialist generation comparison in 1996, $p < .01$, and the democracy generation comparison in 2017, $p < .05$).⁴

⁴ For the full post-hoc output comparison, see analysis output at Pavlović (2022).

3.3 PREDICTING EMANCIPATIVE VALUES BY LIFECYCLE, GENERATIONAL MEMBERSHIP, AND PERIOD

Since lifecycle and generational differences could “mask” the effects of numerous other relevant factors (such as educational level), we additionally analysed their relevance when other important variables were statistically controlled. Table 4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis predicting emancipative values by generational membership, lifecycle, set of demographic variables, and year of survey. Special attention was given to

Table 4. The results of the multiple regression analysis predicting emancipative values

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	Collinearity statistics	
	B	S.E.	Beta	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.34	.01			
Generation ^a					
WWII generation	-.07	.02	-.07***	.89	1.12
Post-socialist	.02	.01	.06**	.55	1.82
1990s	.01	.01	.02	.35	2.88
Democracy	.01	.01	.01	.25	3.98
Post-democracy	.01	.02	.01	.44	2.26
Education level	.06	.00	.28***	.72	1.38
Scale of incomes	-.00	.00	-.02	.82	1.22
Lifecycle ^b					
Young	.02	.01	.06*	.39	2.55
Elderly	-.02	.01	-.05	.36	2.74
Married ^c	-.01	.01	-.04	.75	1.34
Parent ^c	.01	.01	.04*	.72	1.39
Employed ^c	.01	.01	.03	.74	1.35
Period ^d					
1996 survey	-.05	.01	-.15***	.59	1.69
2017 survey	-.02	.01	-.07**	.60	1.67
F test			42.56***		
Adj. R ²			.15		

Source: Inglehart et al. 2022.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; entries are standardised regression coefficients; a) the reference group is the socialist generation; b) the reference group is the middle-aged cohort; c) dummy variables contrasting the labelled group and all other groups on that measure; d) the reference group is 2006 wave survey.

possible multicollinearity problems in the regression model and collinearity statistics were tested and reported. The tested regression model is significant and accounts for approximately 15% of individual variations in emancipative values. No multicollinearity problems were identified.⁵

Several pieces of evidence presented in Table 4 are of special importance. First of all, generational membership is of little relevance for the acceptance of emancipative values when other potential sources of variations are controlled. Based on the previous analysis,

the socialist generation was selected as a reference group; when compared to this reference group, membership of another generation is only weakly negatively (WWII generation) or positively (post-socialist generation) related to the acceptance of emancipative values.

Lifecycle effects are significant, implying that emancipative values are more likely to be embraced by younger respondents than middle-aged people, controlling for all other predictors. Other lifecycle stage marker variables are of little importance. Relationship and employment status seems to be of no relevance, while being a parent significantly and positively predicts emancipative values, but the coefficient is rather low.

⁵ As a rule of thumb, tolerance values $< .10$ and VIF > 10 are treated as cut-off points that suggest multicollinearity.

Period effects are robustly important and significant, additionally confirming the trends already described in the previous analysis. In comparison to 2006, the overall levels of emancipative values were significantly lower in 1996 and 2017.

But by far the most important predictor of the acceptance of emancipative values is the person's level of education. These values are much more readily embraced by those with a higher level of education. For example, educational effects are four times the size of lifecycle effects (i.e. being young). The main cause of emancipative values in Serbia seems to be education.

4 DISCUSSION

Age-related variables are well-known determinants of value preferences (Rokeach 1973; Inglehart 1990; Schwartz 2017) and their effects have long been interpreted and treated differently in theory. The aim of this study was to analyse lifestyle, generational, and period effects on emancipative values in Serbia over a two-decade time period. The findings of this research clearly show that age-related differences are very prominent. But their alternative interpretation must be treated as complementary rather than exclusive; each interpretative framework has at least some relevance.

The results indicate that Serbian citizens across different stages of their lives place differing levels of importance on emancipative values; across each wave of the survey (i.e. point in 'historical' time) and even among the members of the same political generations (when such comparisons were possible), younger respondents were more supportive of emancipative values than older

ones. Bearing in mind their nature and content – autonomy and the pursuit of liberty – the lifecycle effects interpretation seems reasonable. The anecdotal belief that young people are idealistic, rebellious, and strive for independence accurately captures the essence of the registered patterns of the relationship between lifecycle and preferences for emancipative values. The young cohort age span in this survey largely corresponds to the fifth and sixth stages of Erickson's (1959) psycho-social identity development theory. The identity stage (approximately 12–20 years of age) is characterised by a sort of psychological turmoil and quest for identity. The need for independence, self-direction, being true to one's own values and ideals, and being critical of authority is very intense. Placing relatively high importance on emancipative values seems to naturally accompany these. The intimacy stage (approximately 20–25 years of age) is marked by the forming of deep and intimate interpersonal relationships, true care and respect for other people (Erickson 1959), an expression of deeply altruistic and humanistic tendencies that, in theory, are captured by emancipative values and often described as a benign form of individualism, as well as nurturing greater trust and humanism (Welzel 2013). In brief, psycho-social development in these life stages seems to be especially 'attuned' to the acceptance of emancipative values.

Additionally, Welzel's (2013) theory of emancipative values predicts that younger people should be more prone to accepting these values. Still, in theory, age differences are almost exclusively treated as a measure of generational effects and, as such, an indication of differences in formative experiences and more control over resources, which

younger generations who grow up in increasing abundance gain. But the trouble with such explanation in the case of Serbia is that its young citizens are nowhere near the generational cohort that spent their formative years in (relative) abundance. Quite the contrary, they were born during the decades of the most severe crisis in modern Serbian history (1980–1990) and, if we follow the assumptions of the human empowerment model, a younger cohort should, in fact, present a less emancipative outlook (Pavlović 2009a, 2009b, 2018). Or when age differences are found, as in this survey, they ask for a different kind of interpretation and alternative explanations. Significant differences in emancipative values among members of the same age cohort at a different time would, at first, suggest the generational effect explanation. But either generational effects are caused by factors different from those postulated in theory (which cannot be discredited by the findings of this survey) or we have witnessed lifecycle and/or period effects, and/or a value shift (across all age groups) induced by temporary significant societal changes (both of which the results of this study do indeed support).

Furthermore, we have also seen that members of specific generations, as defined in this survey, are consistently more or less oriented towards emancipation. For example, those who matured during the socialist era seem to be the least likely to embrace emancipative values, and that seems to be important for several reasons. Firstly, it suggests that generational effects, however small or specific, cannot be discredited. Further, this data has theoretical relevance. Members of the socialist generation, at least compared to generations of people who matured later, represent

those who spent their formative years in relative security (material and economic), which has a profound theoretical significance in the set of culturalist value models (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Welzel 2013). If the acceptance of emancipative values is dependent on early formative experiences of socialisation, then expectations regarding the members of the socialist generation are quite clear – they should give a lot of importance to emancipative values. Yet the results show just the opposite patterns (at least when bivariate analyses were conducted).

Two possible explanations for these patterns seem obvious. Members of the socialist generation are predominantly in the elderly cohort in each wave of survey, and have therefore become less emancipative with age. Or, the promotion of values that bear little resemblance to emancipative ones during the socialist, politically authoritarian system (e.g. for the most part of their life) led to their adoption of value priorities that are incompatible with aspirations of liberty (Schwartz and Bardi 1997; Jackman and Miller 1998; Mishler and Pollack 2003; Pavlović 2014, 2015, 2018). Still, either way, these explanations are not compatible with the theory of emancipative values that discredits the validity of lifecycle effects or institutional learning sources of values (Welzel 2013).

Finally, period effects are unequivocal and prominent. Data from 2006, in comparison to 1996, showed a significant emancipative shift at a population level. Such a change in such a short period of time cannot be accounted for by lifecycle or generational effects, so it is safe to assume that this is a clear indication of historical events influencing value priorities in all Serbian citizens, irrespective of their lifecycle stage and

the generation they belong to. In 2000, Serbian society experienced so-called democratic changes when, after decades of authoritarian and totalitarian rule, a democratic political system was introduced. Socioeconomic circumstances and political freedoms improved, and democratic values and norms were openly and intensely promoted. Emancipative values are, by definition, a psychological equivalent of democratic institutional arrangements and their stronger upholding in these years is quite understandable. By the same token, we can understand the setback in emancipative values between 2006 and 2017, during which Serbian society experienced great transitional turmoil. Weakly established and inefficient democratic institutions could have caused great disillusionment with those values that are essential for democracy among Serbian citizens. Opportunities to practise democratic values and acknowledge their utility were limited and democratic norms were not institutionally protected. As a result, Serbian guarantees of freedom deteriorated (in 2019, Serbia lost its status of 'free' country according to Freedom House, having gained that status back in 2006) and, consequently, emancipative values lost their adaptive values (Pavlović 2018).

All said, variations in emancipative values in Serbia seem to be far better explained by period and lifecycle than generation effects, both of which have not been greatly elaborated upon in the theory of human empowerment. The relevance of lifecycle is further supported by the presented data. The importance attributed to emancipative values is significantly and positively (although weakly) predicted by parenting status. This piece of evidence is a puzzle that needs to be answered by further

research. Still, we can hypothesise that becoming a parent can cause a shift in interpersonal or social focus, making one more oriented towards others. The functional significance of pro-sociality could increase, as well as interdependence with others (Van Lange et al. 1997), all of which fuel those psychological processes that form the essence of emancipative values. Furthermore, being a parent brings additional life responsibilities and, possibly, increased sensitivity for the general state of the affairs in society at large, making one eager to place more importance on greater opportunities for individual wellbeing and growth. This corresponds well with the core features of emancipative values (Welzel 2013).

Still, no other piece of empirical evidence speaks more vocally against the notion of the relevance of the pre-adult or early adolescence stage of life for value priorities than the importance of education. By far the most important predictor of variations in emancipative values in Serbia is people's level of education. These results show that, just as Welzel's theory argues (Welzel 2013), value priorities are determined by cognitive, social, and material resources, as long as one's education level is a good proxy for these. But being more or less educated is not a generational issue *per se*; no one gets a university degree due to specific historical circumstances and/or in early adolescence. It is a matter of lifelong learning and experiences dependent on and collected during specific (later) stages in an individual's lifecycle.

The relevance of education has one additional theoretical implication. Rather than the expression of primary ungratified needs from early adolescence, emancipative values seem better conceptualised as a measure of political liberalism that can be learned

and influenced by prolonged life experiences and social circumstances (Pavlović 2018). The rising opportunity to exercise freedoms that accompanied the introduction of democracy back in 2000 showed a clear impact on value priorities and, by educating people, the level of emancipative values across the population can be boosted.

It goes beyond the scope of this paper, but the present findings suggest a possible different model of how emancipative value priorities can form. Instead of insisting on the socialisation hypothesis and deprivation logic (Inglehart 1990; Welzel 2013), the possibility of the lifelong learning model for explaining value patterns in Serbia seems well suited (Mishler and Pollack 2003; Pavlović 2015). The presented results are well accounted for by a broad theoretical framework of institutional learning, rational choice, or lifelong learning models. The main focuses of their theoretical reconsiderations are experiences and evaluations in a more recent socio-political context. Personal experiences with the performance of the system, in economic and political terms, are far more important for shaping value priorities and political attitudes than early socialisation (Muller and Seligson 1994; Jackman and Miller 1996; Mishler and Rose 2002). These reconsiderations are nothing but assumptions that value priorities are adaptable across all stages of life and can be sensitive and changeable during the course of life – early and late adolescence and adult life – when significant individual and social ‘events’ occur.

Limitations and recommendations for future research. This study relied on the cross-sectional research design, which requires caution regarding any conclusion about the (quasi)longitudinal patterns of changes in values.

The ultimate test of lifecycle effects can be found in longitudinal research data, which is not the case with WVS data. Conceptualisation of the political generation was specific, novel, and adapted to the local context. Future research should try to address different or well-known generation classifications, especially those that focus on the year of birth (i.e. early socialisation experiences). The focus of this study was one illustrative case specific to one country; a multi-country analysis, for which data is already available in the WVS dataset, would replicate the findings presented here and add to their validity and robustness.

5 CONCLUSION

This study examined the influences of lifecycle, generational, and historical periods on Serbian citizens’ preferences for emancipatory values from 1996 to 2017. The large cross-sectional time-series dataset produced by the World Values Survey (WVS), which was performed in Serbia in 1996 (N=1,280), 2006 (N=1,220), and 2017 (N=1,046), was used in the analysis. The results showed that age differences in emancipative values were prominent and that their interpretation must be nuanced and complementary. Younger respondents embraced emancipatory values more than older respondents, and the socialist generation less than those who matured after the break-up of socialism in Serbia. Emancipative values were generally higher in survey waves after 2000, demonstrating significant period effects.

When such tests were possible, it was shown that younger respondents within the same generation were nearly always more supportive of emancipatory

ideals than older members of the same generation. Similarly, those in the same lifecycle stages and political generations, at different times, i.e. between the three waves of the survey, differ in emancipative values, which generally gain prominence over time in almost all lifecycle stages and generation groups, particularly when comparing the surveys before and after the introduction of democracy in 2000.

The findings demonstrate a somewhat complicated interplay between lifecycle, generational, and period effects on the one hand, and emancipative ideals on the other, calling into doubt the theory's exclusive focus on interpretations of generational effects. It looks as

though lifecycle and period effects could serve as a more relevant interpretation of age-related differences in emancipative values than generational effects.

People's level of education proved to be by far the most important predictor of the acceptance of emancipative values in Serbia, which additionally stresses the theoretically neglected role of lifecycle transitions and lifelong learning experiences for value development. This evidence, in combination with documented period effects, suggests that the population level of emancipative values could, under the right conditions, change at a relatively faster rate (in comparison to the changes that come with generational replacement).

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Efekti životnog ciklusa, generacijske pripadnosti i perioda istraživanja na emancipativne vrednosti u Srbiji

REZIME

Serijska istraživanja u novije vreme ukazuju na to da emancipativne vrednosti, davanje važnosti slobodi izbora i jednakim mogućnostima predstavljaju ključnu komponentu šireg istorijskog procesa ljudskog osnaživanja. Navodno posledica procesa modernizacije, koja uvećava dostupnost resursa i sposobnosti za ostvarivanje sloboda, emancipativne vrednosti jedna su od njenih glavnih sociokulturnih manifestacija i imaju veoma izražene „posledice“ u društveno-političkom smislu. Glavni mehanizam njihovog širenja je, u teoriji, smena generacija, ali su sve glasnjiji i alternativni pogledi koji naglašavaju važnost efekata životnog ciklusa i tzv. period efekata u njihovoj izraženoosti. Cilj ovog rada je analiza efekata životnog ciklusa, generacijske pripadnosti i perioda istraživanja na preferenciju emancipativnih vrednosti u Srbiji, u periodu od 1996. do 2017. godine. Podaci korišćeni u analizi prikupljeni su tokom trećeg, petog i sedmog talasa Svetske studije vrednosti (engl. World Values Survey, WVS), sprovedenih u Srbiji 1996. (N=1.280), 2006. (N=1.220), odnosno 2017. godine (N=1.046). Podaci su prikupljeni intervjuima „licem u lice“ na reprezentativnim uzorcima punoletnih građana/ki Srbije. U analizi su korišćene mere emancipativnih vrednosti koje čine sastavni deo originalnih WVS baza podataka. Kao posredna mera faze životnog ciklusa osoba korišćena je rekodirana varijabla uzrasta (mladi/srednjih godina/stariji). Na osnovu starosnog perioda tokom kojeg je osoba proživela svoje formativne godine (uzrast 15–24 godine), konstruisana je tipologija generacijske pripadnosti (npr. socijalistička generacija, politički sazrela između 1946. i 1979. godine). Kao mera efekata perioda korišćena je godina u kojoj je sprovedeno istraživanje. Rezultati pokazuju da emancipativne vrednosti više prihvataju mlađe nego starije osobe ($r = .22^{**}$), kao i u talasima istraživanja posle 2000. godine ($r = .17^{**}$), a manje pripadnici/e socijalističke generacije ($p < .01$) nego onih generacija koje su svoje formativne godine provele posle 2000. godine, omnibus $F(5, 3440) = 58,19^{**}$. Kada su takve analize bile moguće, pokazalo se da u okviru iste generacije mlađe osobe gotovo uvek izraženije prihvataju emancipativne vrednosti nego starije. Slično, oni/e u istim fazama životnog ciklusa i pripadnici/e iste političke generacije, u različito vreme odnosno između tri talasa istraživanja, razlikuju se u stepenu prihvatanja ovih vrednosti, koje generalno dobijaju na značaju tokom vremena u skoro svim starosnim i generacijskim grupama, posebno kada se uporede istraživanje sredinom devedesetih godina XX veka i kasnija istraživanja, nakon demokratskih promena 2000. Rezultati ukazuju na složen odnos između efekata životnog ciklusa, generacijske pripadnosti i period efekata, s jedne strane, i emancipativnih vrednosti, s druge strane, i dovode u pitanje isključivi značaj koji se obično pripisuje generacijskim razlikama u teoriji. U završnim delovima diskutovane su moguće implikacije dobijenih nalaza za teoriju vrednosti, kao i praktične implikacije koje se odnose na mogućnost promene vrednosti u srpskom društvu.

KLJUČNE REČI

emancipativne vrednosti, efekti generacijske pripadnosti, efekti životnog ciklusa, period efekti, WVS, Srbija