When the Family Occupies the Future – Self-Processes and Well-Being of Kyrgyz Children and Young People

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the question of how young people in the post-Soviet country of Kyrgyzstan deal with the structural and cultural demands of a society characterized by strong obligations of intergenerational solidarity and the normative pattern of submission under the authority of elders. Based on three preponderantly qualitative empirical studies on kindergarten children, teenagers and young adults, young people's commitment to that order is mapped out, defining their reasons for acceptance on the one hand and the limits of their acceptance on the other hand. Concerning the latter, a special focus is laid on processes of the "self" as well as notions of a "generation gap". We can then deduce what the hierarchical age order means for the well-being of young people.

Keywords Generational order · Independence and interdependence model of solidarity · Generation gap · Post-soviet society · Childhood and youth · Well-being

1 Introduction – Parent generation's Authority

In Kyrgyzstan, children are expected to follow the guidelines of their parents. Parents want to have a say in which course of study, which profession and even which partner their children choose. There are, however, some differences between ethnic groups: parental dominance is strongest for ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz and weakest for ethnic Russians (Möller-Slawinski & Calmbach, 2015). The solutions suggested to the children may include expecting the adult young people to live in the vicinity or even in the parents' house in order to be

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available for care tasks, or may be focused on using the daughter-in-law's labor. In a report on Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF complained that: "Some parents raise their children from an early age without taking into account wishes of the child as well as perspectives of child development in order to serve family interests. Over time these children fail to learn how to make decisions on their own..." (2007, p. 63). The country's youth policy has not been able to counteract this. Few of the policies did "genuinely improve young people's access to rights, information and opportunities" argue Esengul et al. (2014, p. 2), stressing the problematic character of this "tradition of dutiful submissiveness" (p. 37) of young people.

The parents' generation bases its claim on the understanding of family as it is socially practiced in Kyrgyzstan. Multi-generational families are the ideal (Reynolds, 2012) and a statistically proven reality. They come about because adult sons in particular remain living in their parents' household. More than half of adult children still live in their parents' household at the end of their twenties; many of them married, as almost 90% of young Kyrgyz are at this age (The Ministry of Youth Affairs in the Kyrgyz Republic & UNICEF, 2011, p. 7–8). Relatively large numbers of children, the young age of marriage, early transition to parenthood and a high percentage of married people in society (UN Women Country Office, 2017) underline the importance attached to the family.

Such importance is not simply due to tradition. In recent decades, the family has taken on additional functions and thus the younger generation's dependence on the older generation has even increased. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, families are required to compensate for the lack of kindergarten and childcare services (UNICEF, n.d.), and to supplement insufficient public schooling with shadow education (Abdoubaetova, 2019). They are increasingly financing private schools of different quality and with very different financial requirements. They also have to cover the fees that public schools increasingly demand as "voluntary" services, e.g. to carry out renovations (Abdoubaetova, 2019). Families are important as well when it comes to paying for private universities, and also for covering the sometimes considerable fees of state universities (Braunmiller, 2016; Sabzalieva, 2015). Young people are also extremely poorly integrated into the labor market and no support is available for job placement or career counseling except at best through family members (The Ministry of Youth Affairs in the Kyrgyz Republic & UNICEF, 2011, p. 36). While young people largely adopt this view of the family as a highly important source of support, several studies show that they would like to have more of a life of their own (e.g. Möller-Slawinski & Calmbach, 2015; UNDP, 2010).

In the strong position of the older generation, we assume two problems. Firstly, defining oneself as a person in one's own right and developing one's own future perspective is an important challenge for young people. Developmental psychologists call it a developmental task (cf. Erikson, 1995; Havighurst, 1974). In the tradition of the sociological pragmatism of George Herbert Mead (1934) and Anselm Strauss (1996), we may speak of a "working out" of a "self" (Strauss, 1993, p. 88) as a challenge that always accompanies an individual. Such a self is as much a social as an individual matter, and thus even in

so-called "collectivist" societies well-being depends on the successful constitution of a self, as Sharma and Sharma (2010) show in a comprehensive overview of research in different societies. It must therefore be investigated to what extent this working out of a self might be difficult or unsatisfying for young people in Kyrgyzstan due to parental authority interrupting this process or preempting its result. Secondly, the society we are dealing with is in a state of rapid change: demands and inputs from outside, forms and techniques of production, and social values as a whole have changed dramatically in recent decades. It is therefore problematic when a generation that has grown up under different conditions sets the standards for the future.

We rely here on three predominantly qualitative studies that we have conducted on young children, adolescents and young adults in Kyrgyzstan. The studies show that there is no mere submissiveness in any age group. However, they also show that there is an overwhelming influence from the parents' side on young people's attempts to find their way. Theoretically, we choose an approach that focuses on the obligations and commitments between age groups as fundamentally variable social solutions. Such solutions must be seen in the context of social change and other structural features of a society and ultimately affect the well-being of the young people.

2 Theoretical Approach and Guiding Questions

2.1 The Concept of Generational Order

Article 37 of the Kyrgyz Constitution states firstly that folk customs and traditions which do not infringe upon human rights and freedoms shall be supported by the State. A second point states that: "Respect for the elderly and caring for family and close relatives shall be the obligation of everyone". In this combination, the commitment to the older generation is therefore also presented as something which is owed to tradition.[1] All societies regulate relationships between age groups. They do so by declaring normative guidelines when they define parental duties on the one hand and duties towards the elderly on the other hand at constitutional level. In Western societies the latter is rare, while parental duties and rights vis-à-vis underage children are certainly regulated at constitutional level.[2]

Taken together with aspects such as informal rules of obedience, forms of address and holiday customs – all of which are much underresearched topics – societies provide guidelines for what we can call a "generational order". By this we mean the relationship between members of different age groups, in the sense of the distribution of entitlements, obligations, and material and immaterial resources. The term

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[1] Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010; retrieved October 4, 2021 from http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=254747.

[2] The Kyrgyz Constitution regulates both aspects, cf. Article 36 (cf. footnote 1)

was coined by Alanen (2009) to refer to the relationship between adults and (non-adult) children. However, it can be applied more widely to refer to the relationship between all age groups (Bühler-Niederberger, 2020). In light of the theoretical concept thus defined, age is an important socio-structural dimension which determines a considerable part of the individuals' social position. While this is relevant in all societies, the definition of age categories and their relationships varies considerably between societies.

2.2 Structural Aspects of Generational Order – Independence/Interdependence Model

With regard to relationships between age groups over the life course, we can distinguish two types of solutions: an *independence model* and an *interdependence model* of generational relations. The first model is represented by many of the solutions found in Western countries, while the second model is represented by many of the solutions found in Asia, Latin America and Africa. However, the distinction can be no more than a construction of ideal types, serving as conceptual tools (Bühler-Niederberger, 2020). The distinction and its designation are formulated in a recognizable proximity to the distinction between rather individualistically and rather collectivistically oriented societies, as we find it in cultural psychology (Triandis, 2001). However, the designation might be in part misleading, suggesting a stronger binding nature of the interdependence model. But the distribution rules and practices, as they can be thought of in the two models, create obligations equally, and they also imply injustices and limits to solidarity for both models (Bühler-Niederberger, 2020). We highlight this bias, but use the terminology nevertheless because of its catchiness.

The first model implies a childhood in which the adults are required to promote the individual characteristics of the children. Studies on parental socialization in Western countries provide evidence for this (De Singly, 2005; Lareau, 2003; Vincent & Ball, 2007). They show the parents' commitment to supporting the child to "become him/herself and have the means to do so" (de Singly, 2005, p. 108). This individualized parenting style places high demands on parental resources and therefore, in the above-mentioned studies, it is found particularly in the middle class. As for the relationship between parents and adult children, according to the rules of the first model the children are expected to leave home in early adulthood. In empirical reality, this has become difficult because of longer periods of education and growing problems of integration into the labor market. Hence, they may receive financial support from their parents until middle adulthood and may not be able to leave the parental home within the expected time frame. For their part, they provide for their parents' generation primarily indirectly through state-regulated pay-as-you-go systems. This has been demonstrated by studies on the exchange of material and immaterial benefits between adult children and their parents in Western countries. As far as financial support is concerned, it is mainly payments from parents to adult children and grandchildren; such support thus depends on the financial strength of the parents. Payments from adult children

to parents are rare; the benefits are mainly non-financial and include supporting parents when they have become frail (Attias-Donfut & Wolff, 2000; Kohli et al., 2000; Segalen, 2019).

The second model envisages a close-knit integration of children into the family: from birth and throughout their whole lives, they are expected to be committed and grateful to the family and align themselves with family interests. Many studies from Asian and Latin American countries show this tight incorporation into the family. Particularly in rural contexts, this is also reflected in the strong integration of young children into the family economy (e.g. Cole & Durham, 2007; Coppens et al., 2018; Punch, 2001; Woronow, 2007). As donors of life, parents deserve lifelong gratitude; children are born into a "state of indebtedness" (Magazine & Areli Ramirez Sanchez, 2007, p. 62; Gu, 2021). Hence, obedience can also be expected from adult children: according to the rules of the second model, one of the adult and married children should remain in the parents' household and assume responsibility for it. Material support can be expected from all adult children. Studies show that adult children provide a considerable amount of material and immaterial support (e.g. Crivello & Espinoza-Revollo, 2018; Ko & Chapman, 2017; Sharma & Kemp, 2012). This provision of material and immaterial benefits by the adult children and the accompanying obedience to the parents is often called "filial piety" (Chou, 2011; Qi, 2015; Sharma & Kemp, 2012; Yeh et al., 2013).

There are correlations between generational relations and the extent to which welfare state measures have been established. In countries that largely correspond to the model of independence, it is apparent that the expansion of welfare state benefits favors mutual transfers in accordance with these distributional rules, and indeed also in the sense that parents can provide greater support for their adult children and grandchildren (Attias-Donfut & Lapierre, 1997; Attias-Donfut & Wolff, 2000a; Gulbrandsen & Langsether, 2000). In countries where the interdependent model is applied, however, welfare state services for elderly people are often inadequate. While these states are now increasingly addressing the expansion of the welfare state, this is mostly limited to establishing or improving old-age pension systems, while further old-age policy measures are yet to be seen (Kim, 2008; Leisering, 2011; Shin & Shaw, 2003; Williamson et al., 2011).

2.3 Cultural Aspects of Generational Relations

The ideal-typical contrasting of two types of generational obligations we have sketched out here concerns the *structural aspect of generational relations*. Another approach can now be added: a distinction of societies that Margaret Mead made in 1969 regarding generational relations, namely with regard to the question "who learns from whom?" This concerns the *cultural aspect of generational relations*: the constitution and transmission of socially accepted knowledge. Of course, these cultural and structural aspects cannot always be separated from each other. If, for example, a certain profession is imposed on young people

by parents, then this demand claims some knowledge about what will be successful in the future, but the demand might also be linked to claims by the older generation for more generous financial support. On the basis of her research in different societies, Mead (1969) has made a distinction regarding the extent to which the younger generation takes over its view and knowledge of the world from (1) the older generations, parents and grandparents, or (2) uses (additionally) its peers as models, or (3) even develops this knowledge together with peers. Accordingly, she calls the cultures postfigurative, cofigurative or prefigurative. In her view, these different types of figurations relate to the extent of social change affecting a society. The postfigurative society is based on the assumption that all that is to come is an eternally recurring same. A cofigurative culture emerges where at least the younger people are confronted with new challenges, such as migration to the city or to another country. The younger people then take the peers of the new context as their model, while the postfigurative knowledge transmission remains relevant, too. Margaret Mead recognizes the prefigurative society in (especially Western) societies after World War II with their rapid technological development, and we can assume such figuration even more in the present, which is sometimes called the "digital age"; under these circumstances, the young generation must work out its orientation together with peers with regard to a future that is considered new and uncertain. The different figurations thus adapt to societal change to varying degrees.

2.4 Generational Relations and Well-Being

Against the background of this structural *and* cultural approach of intergenerational transfers, we will be able to classify the generational obligations perceived by young Kyrgyzstanis. In the same way, we can then distinguish between obligations which they accept or reject. None of the solutions presented in the two theoretical approaches of generational relations is a priori superior, in the sense of being more just or adequate for serving individual and social demands. Why one or the other model is valid in a society is, on the one hand, a question that has to be answered historically. The interdependence model with its filial piety can be traced back to Confucius (Qi, 2015). In the case of the independence model, the structural similarities to the European Marriage Pattern, the dominant pattern of family formation in Western and Northern Europe since centuries, are striking (Hajnal, 1965). With a view to the present, however, it is also a question of welfare state structures.

Thus, it can be assumed that none of the solutions is a priori unsuitable with regard to the well-being of young people. However, there may be limits to the extent of suitability, which shall be theoretically elaborated upon more precisely now. The *first limit* we may assume is the working out of a "self". To what extent is this still possible when the adolescents are as committed as the interdependence model may require and when their parents give them a view of the world, excluding young people's perspectives? "Self" may be defined here as a "general sense of oneself"

(Strauss, 1993, p. 26), or an answer to the question: "Who am I?" (cf. Sharma & Sharma, 2010, p. 118). George Herbert Mead (1934) described the constitution of the self on a social-philosophical level as the interaction process of an "I" and a "Me" (1934). Strauss (1996), based on Mead, dealt intensively with the constitution of self, its provisional results, its failure and success, in a symbolic-interactionist way and hence empirically grounded. According to Strauss, there is no doubt that this self is not an instance, but a *process* of constant mirroring and redesigning of oneself, in the course of interactions with others as well as with oneself. This process has an experimental character, including reversals, surprising leaps and decisions that a person may afterwards identify as "mistakes"; yet it is indispensable for the evaluation and further shaping of one's own actions and person.

We have already referred to the overview of a large number of studies by Sharma and Sharma (2010) which stated the necessity of successful self-definition in different cultures for individual well-being. Psychologists who have empirically linked the constitution of the self with well-being have also been able to show in studies that what they call the "authenticity" of the elaborated self-aspects is essentially related to well-being in the sense of a self that is consistent with one's own values and convictions, and not imposed by external influences (Neff & Suizzo, 2006; Ryan et al., 2005; Wood et al., 2008). Again, this is a finding that could be made in different societies, not only in so-called "individualistic" ones. This understanding of the self by psychological researchers insists somewhat more exclusively on the self as subject than symbolic interactionists do. In symbolic interactionism social expectations, the reflection in the perceptions of others, play an important role. However, it is still the self as subject that performs constant "self-appraisals" (Strauss, 1996 pp. 33–45) and engages in actively "negotiating a concept of self" (Lundgren, 2004, p. 267). Such adjusting between other and own expectations can result in "pride or mortification" (Cooley, 1902, p. 184). Given the strong dominance of family interests, it can be doubted that there is always the individual space and also the time available that is needed for such self-processes which lead to satisfactory outcomes.

A *second limit* may be seen in dealing with a generational gap (Bühler-Niederberger, 2020a). In situations of major social change, young people grow up with different experiences than their parents did. Mannheim (1952) believed social events in a given historical moment were crucial influences on young people and hence provoked new orientations in the younger generation, resulting in (further) social change. According to Mannheim, the latter would be the result under the condition that a consciousness of generational unity – we may call it a collective identity, linked to the individual self (Strauss, 1996, p. 7) – would develop among young people and, in this way, liberate the younger generation to bring about social change. If, however, the postfigurative solution of knowledge transfer remains valid – as it may be expected for Kyrgyzstan – the generational gap is closed authoritatively. The attachment to a collective identity of a young generation is limited: only that of the family is conceded. Again, we may consider this as a social condition undermining processes of self and hence affecting well-being.

3 Three Empirical Studies – Methodological Approach

3.1 Study Questions

Against our theoretical background, the following questions arise:

(1)   Which obligations to material and immaterial transfers among generations in the present and future are imposed on children and young people? This is the question concerning the *structural aspect* of generational relations.
(2)   What knowledge dominance of parents can be seen, i.e. at which points do parents give authoritatively pronounced advice or even make prescriptions with far-reaching implications for the future of their children and society: profession, choice of partner, future lifestyle? This is the question concerning the *cultural aspect* of generational relations.
(3)   Are such guidelines corroborated or invalidated by the young people? Which ones are corroborated or invalidated and what are young people's arguments for doing so? Of interest are young people's arguments that a) concern the *self*, especially the process of working out one's self, and b) that address the social changes that need to be considered from the perspective of young people and hence the perspective of a younger generation. 3a and b imply questions about the *limits of generational domination*, as they arise with regard to the well-being of young people.

3.2 The Qualitative Approach

All three studies were of a qualitative nature. The starting point was the quite open search for qualities and problems of growing up in Kyrgyzstan and special consideration of the perspective of children and young people themselves on generational relations. In keeping with the possibilities of a qualitative approach, these studies cannot determine the effects of these relations in a strict sense, but focus on the interpretations of individuals: how do they perceive these relations and how do they connect them to their well-being?

3.3 Study I: Young Children

Study I was conducted from 2010 to 2013 with the support of the Aga Khan Foundation, UNICEF and our exchange students from Kyrgyz universities.[3] The study asked for children's views on themselves and their contexts, their joys, sorrows and wishes for the future. Central to data collection were sessions in kindergartens with 117 children aged 3–6 years in 15 different kindergartens. This was a convenience sample: the decisive factor was whether the two supporting aid organizations had

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contacts with these kindergartens and the parents. Advantages of this sampling strategy were, on the one hand, easier access including transport and accommodation possibilities for the research team and, on the other hand, that the different geographical and cultural regions of the country as well as urban and rural and even remote regions were included. As far as something like social class is concerned – a problematic concept in a country with massive social upheaval and where many inhabitants earn their living beyond a formal labor market – the sample was mixed. In principle, children from families with higher incomes attend kindergarten more often (National Statistical Committee & UNICEF, 2019). However, the additional home visits showed that there were definitely children from poor families in our sample. With regard to generational orders, there were no hints of relevant differences in terms of income or "class". Thus, children and parents from poor households expressed the same ambitions for the future.

With these children, we conducted several exercises according to the ideas of participatory research (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Exercises were conducted in groups of four children, in an effort to make them feel comfortable. We refer here mainly to four exercises. (1) "Helpful bug": In this exercise a drawing of a bug was handed out to each child. The children were told that the bug had legs to help it move forward and that we human beings needed other people just like the bug needed legs. As the children colored in the bug, a research assistant went around the group and asked each child about the people who helped them "move forward". For each leg, the children mentioned a person and their support. (2) "Future wishes": A "lucky charm" was handed around and each child was invited to speak about his/her wishes for the future, what they wanted to be when they grew up, etc. (3) "Smileys": Children were shown wooden smileys depicting various emotional states. They were asked to describe the emotions, whether they had experienced similar emotions and in what situations. (4) "Dollhouse": In this exercise the children were given a dollhouse, furniture and toy figures to furnish it. While they were busy in this way, each child was invited to talk about daily routines, their duties and tasks.[4] The study included half-standardized interviews with 60 parents and 30 home visits.

3.4 Study II: Teens

Study II was an essay which was written in two English courses in a private school in Bishkek. The 20 students (11 girls and 9 boys) – from families with middle or higher incomes – were between 15 and 17 years old. The essay topic was "Parents know what is best for their children" and was given to the students by their teacher during class.[5] According to the teacher, the sentence that formed the subject of the essay is a common and generally approved statement. This assessment by the teacher was also confirmed by the content of the essays: all the students understood the sentence in the same way, namely as a statement that parents know

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[4] About half of the children spoke about their daily routines during this exercise; the other half was too absorbed by the new toy and refrained from engaging in further conversation with the researchers.

[5] We thank Aikerim Nazaralieva for her cooperation.

better than children. They wrote about one page on average. Their predominantly expressed agreement could be interpreted as a response in the direction of social desirability. However, the teacher herself was critical of the country's traditions and encouraged discussion in her classroom. Thus, the opportunity for critical statements was definitely given.

3.5 Study III: Young Adults

Study III focused on the views of young Kyrgyzstanis aged 21–31, their retrospective views on growing up, and their future plans and decision-making processes concerning their professional and private life (e.g. choice of study subject and future profession, having their own family, their hopes and dreams for the future). In-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 23 young adults according to a theoretical sampling strategy and including different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. Data collection took place in Germany and Kyrgyzstan at the young adult's private accommodation or in a public space. Data was collected in German or English between April 2010 and September 2012, with periods of data analysis in between. The analysis was informed by reflections on the research setting and the relationalities (e.g. differences in social status, gender, ethnic affiliation, etc.) within the interview situations. Ten interviews were re-analyzed for this contribution (four male and six female participants). The young adults held scholarships from German or American agencies at the time of the interview or in the recent past. They can therefore be regarded as a rather privileged group in terms of (professional) future perspectives, though their social backgrounds were very diverse (from children of farmers to political/intellectual elite, rural and urban residence, different ethnic groups). The interviews were of an explorative character, giving ample freedom to the interviewees to choose issues of their preference within the thematic frame. The interviews had an average duration of about two hours.

3.6 Data Analysis

The analytical logic of interpretation was the same for all the studies: the collected material required processing in a coding process. Coding means assigning a certain meaning to chunks of text: the transcribed interviews, the essays and the statements produced by the children. Coding was conducted first in a very open and intuitive way (open coding) and then, at a more advanced stage of the process, focused on the connections between the concepts which allowed their content to be described and delimited in more detail (axial coding) (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 423). We may speak of the researcher's "ongoing, developmental dialogue between his roles as discoverer and as social analyst" (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 9) to describe (1) the selection of relevant passages of material and (2) the elaboration of concepts. The research team strove to ensure the quality of the interpretation process using discursive validation, i.e. continuous

questioning of whether relevant material had been adequately processed and whether the elaborated concepts took into account the variations of their empirical occurrence (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The third step of the coding process is the coining of the "core category", which ultimately sums up the insights gained, and the linking of all other categories to this theoretical core (selective coding) (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 424). The core category (or core categories) answers the question "What does all the action/interaction seem to be about?" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 424) or, in other words, it "tells the story". We elaborated the idea of a generational order and its structural and cultural aspects – in the way we exposed it in the theoretical deliberations above – and made it the core of our theoretical interpretation for all three studies. This category was then related to the children's and young people's views on generational relations and on themselves with regard to these relations. (For the definition of the concepts by exemplary items see table 1, appendix.)

Material out of two of these studies has already been published with the guiding question about agency and negotiation strategies of children and young people (for study I cf. Bühler-Niederberger & Schwittek, 2014; for study III cf. Schwittek, 2017, 2021). Meanwhile, it is the first time that we have analyzed the various aspects of the generational order and the subjective reasons for its (non-) acceptance and have taken a quasi-longitudinal view of the material of the three studies. An ample number of conversations with Kyrgyz exchange students and scientists have been included in this analysis, enabling a diversity of perspectives and reflection of standpoints.

In all three studies, participants were informed about the subject of the respective study and assured about confidential data handling. Consent declarations were given by parents or participants, depending on the age of those studied. All names of people we use are pseudonyms.

4 Results

4.1 Study I: Young Children – Proudly Integrated into the Generational Order of Interdependence

When I come home, I change my clothes, do my homework, then I do some helping. I carry bricks. Then I have dinner, and then I go to bed with father. – *Researcher: Do you ever not want to help but to play instead?* – No, I feel I have to help my father, I'm used to helping. I'm too old to play games. I'll work hard to be the president (Muratbek, 6, Jany-Bak village).

Muratbek is growing up in a poor and remote village in the politically troubled South of the country. There is no doubt that he takes the obligations that apply to a child in the generational order of interdependence seriously. He devotes himself to them as soon as he returns from kindergarten, taking care not to dirty his preschool clothes. Conversely, his self-appraisal turns out to be more than positive and he sets his professional goal high: president.

4.1.1 Gratitude and Pride by Own Work Contribution

When the children in the *helpful bug exercise* are asked to name a person who is important to them and why for each of the bug's legs, they name older family members in most cases and mention their functional contributions. 57% of the answers concern merely functional contributions, like "mother washes my clothes", "older brother takes me to kindergarten", "sister cleans the house". 33% concern functional contributions with a rewarding content: "father buys me clothes", "sister plays with me". The remaining 10% of answers have a more emotional character. All these services are existentially important to the children and the fact that they mention them – considering the young age of the children we might take them very much for granted – allows us to speak of gratitude.

The children make their own contributions to this functional network. In the *dollhouse exercise,* 61 children talked about their daily routines. Only 15% declared they had no household chores; these were mostly very young children with elder siblings. The rest mentioned the following duties in order of frequency: fetching water, cleaning in and around the house, bringing firewood, taking care of little siblings, helping in the kitchen or serving tea. In particular, the continuous collection of field notes alongside the data collection exercises drew attention to the pride children gained by performing useful work and fitting into the network of functional relationships. Several children approached the researchers between or after the exercises and started their statements with the words "I am a good boy/a good girl...":

> I'm a good girl, when mother says something, I listen to her. I get water, I must listen, that's a good girl. (Girl, 5, Bujum village, Batken)
> I'm a good boy. – *Researcher: What is a good boy?* – A good boy works, is tidy. (Boy, 4, Bujum village, Batken)
> It's good to do work, to earn money, to wash dishes … (Boy, 5, Ak-Schol, Bishkek suburb)
> One girl speaks about 'bad children' – *Researcher: What are bad children?* – They are naughty, they do not obey their mother, they do not eat up their rice, they go out of the house without asking their mother … – *Researcher: And a good child?* – A good child brings water without her parents telling her, washes dishes. I wash dishes and I bring water. (Girl, 5, Naryn town)

4.1.2 The Obligation for the Future – Success and Obligation to the Family

In accordance with the rules of an interdependence model of generational obligations, children accept the duties they will have in the future. While parents stated in the semi-structured interview that they expect their children to be a sustainer of the family (more than two thirds of the 60 parents attached great importance to this supportive function) they also expected their children to be in prestigious academic professions; most often they expected them to become a medical doctor, engineer, lawyer or banker. None of the parents mentioned traditional Kyrgyz professions such as farmer, hunter or shepherd, and only two parents mentioned professions that do

Diagram 1 Generational order-acceptance and limits of acceptance by young children
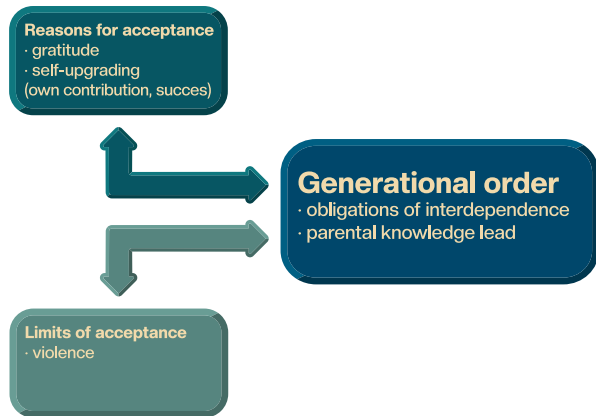
not require a university degree. These parental concerns were followed by the children's statements in the *future wishes exercise*.

> I will be a big girl. I want to be a bank officer. – *Researcher: Why bank officer?* – I will give money to my mother and father, I will buy a car, a Russian car. (Girl, 3, Naryn town)
> I want to be a doctor. I can take care of my mother. (Girl, 6, Bozadyr village, Batken)
> I will be a doctor. I'll treat parents, relatives, other people. (Girl, 6, Bujum village, Batken)

Children adopt their parents' worldview: an academic profession and above all that of a medical doctor will be the key to success. Just as clearly, this is seen as a service to the parents which one wants to provide. Labor market experts have been contradicting this view for several years, pointing out that the labor market would need qualified craftsmen and experts in agriculture above all. From the families' point of view, however, success for the future should also involve a gain in prestige.

4.1.3 Limits of Commitment – Violence

There are also limits to children's compliance, however. More than half of the children mentioned violence from family members and/or peers, although we never addressed violence explicitly. In the *smiley exercise*, sad or angry facial expressions of a smiley were most often associated with the experience of physical violence. It is interesting that the children, as compliant as they were in other ways, in these cases often showed no recognizable repentance or willingness to submit, as the following examples show. They are rather upset or angry, or devaluate the aggressors who may deny them the small amount of freedom they have claimed.

> He (the smiley) is crying, I cry when someone hits me, takes my things. – *Researcher: Who hits you?* – My father, grandmother, brother, my mother doesn't hit me, she loves me. (Girl, 6, Bozadyr village, Batken)

I am angry, when my sister beats me. When I don't listen to her. He (the smiley) is angry, when someone beats me I beat back. (Boy, 5, Bujum village, Batken)

He (the smiley) is crying. Because he is not allowed to play. – *Researcher: Do you cry?* – Yes, when somebody beats me. For example, when I wanted to sleep with my mom, my dad beat me, and when I wanted to watch cartoons. (Boy, 4, Bishkek centre)

Overall, the young children prove to be firmly anchored in the functional and hierarchical network of their family. In their narrations, gratifications outweigh the disadvantages: their own contributions in the present and the almost self-evidently expected future success allow them to make a more than positive self-appraisal, for which during our analysis we developed the category of "self-upgrading". Diagram 1 outlines the situation of young children.

4.2 Study II – Teens: "Parents know what is best for their children, but…" – The Desire to Make one's Own Mistakes

Every mom/dad wishes to his/her child all the best. They always try to support and help their children. Parents know what is best for their children. First of all, parents give life to children, which is the most precious thing for the child. […] Secondly, parents raise a child to adulthood. They try to find different schools depending on their ability. […] Thirdly, most parents try to make the child find their way. For example the father of the Olympic champion whose daughter took first place in Olympic game, said, that he led his daughter to figure skating. He knew what is best for his daughter. (Altynai, 15, Bishkek)

Altynai's essay in response to the essay topic contains the important elements that parents can expect from a child in the generational arrangement which corresponds to the interdependence model. She acknowledges what she owes to her parents: they gave birth to her, so the child owes them gratitude. They also compensate for the weaknesses of the public education system. Altynai takes this into account as she attends a private school with not too bad a reputation. Accordingly, she accepts that the child finds its future direction – "its own way", as she (nevertheless) calls it – just not by itself, but by being led by the parents. And as with little Muratbek who wanted to become president – with whom we introduced the report on young children –, we find the mention of success: a dazzling career path might open up to a child who adopts the rules of interdependence.

4.2.1 Gratitude to Parents and their Right to Be Right

All 20 teenagers understand the sentence – which is linguistically ambiguous, as it could also mean the superior knowledge of parents in relation to teachers or advisors – in such a way as to mean that parents have knowledge that is superior

to that of the children. They can thus better decide what the children are to do and not to do. Apart from two teenagers, all others agree with this sentence, but half of them do so with restrictive "ifs" and "buts". The reason for consent, whether unconditional or somewhat limited, is primarily the gratitude they owe to their parents because they have given them life, and also because parents want the best for their children and do so much for them. Four teenagers even speak of parents' "sacrifice". Parents would give their lives for the children, says a girl who agrees with the statement in her essay without reservation and therefore regrets the fact that: "Nowadays children want to be free and not dependent". Taken together: if the parents are right, then it is – this is the argumentation – above all because, as life-giving and caring parents, they have the right to be right. Everyone confirms this, except for the two teenagers who clearly deny that the parents would "know best".

The recognition of parents' right to be right goes hand in hand with the devaluation of adolescents, who are judged incapable of making decisions and need protection.

> In the teen years, children cannot think in a sound way (teenage boy). Everybody should do what parents say, the world is very complex and dangerous (teenage boy). When I was 13, I thought I knew better – then my parents helped me (teenage girl). Children don't know what is good and what is bad (teenage girl).

Adolescents who want to be involved in decision-making nevertheless demonstrate insight into their own incompetence. For instance, two girls argue that they have to learn from their mistakes:

> Children must make mistakes and learn from them (teenage girl). You should learn from your own mistakes (teenage girl).

While it is mainly the adolescents who are told to be unable to make own decisions, the superiority of parents does not really have an expiration date. Several essays say very generally "we should always listen to our parents" or "we should always appreciate our parents", in the sense of an obligation unlimited in time.

4.2.2 Success Promise

The blatantly asymmetrical parent-child relationship is also in the interest of success. The teenagers make this connection, whether they approve without reservation or also criticize parental dominance. What this success is supposed to be and whom it is supposed to benefit remains open. The expression that parents want to see their children be the "best" or "better than all others" appears several times, with almost identical wording, and indicates that this success orientation is the result of common and competitive thinking.

> Parents want to see their children be better than all others (teenage girl). Parents are the key to their children's success ... they want to see their chil-

dren be the best of all the children (teenage boy). Parents want the best: best kindergarten, best school, pass exams to the best universities (teenage boy).

4.2.3 Limits of Commitment – Self-Reduction and Generational Gap

There are, however, also arguments that young people should have the right to decide, hence parental dominance is not undisputed. The most common argument is that a "self" has to be worked out by oneself too; this process must not be withheld. The adolescents recognize this process as an attempt which can also be laborious.

> Each person draws a picture of his life, it is the child's life (teenage boy). Finding our happiness and satisfying our own needs is in our hands and of course not everyone will be happy with our choices (teenage girl). Everyone is the hero of his life, even if parents' advice is needed (teenage girl).

If we include the three other young people who speak of "own interests" that have to be taken into account and of "own decisions" that should be made when it is about one's own life, there are a total of six adolescents in our sample who argue against unlimited parental authority on the basis of such claims for a "self as subject". It is the most frequent argumentation if parental claims are rejected.

Four adolescents speak about a generation conflict when rejecting (complete) parental dominance:

> Parents are the most important persons, but there is an age gap, they should not blindly drag the children (teenage girl). It is not always true, because every new generation is not the same (teenage boy). Parents are children of an older generation; we are another generation (teenage boy). Parents are old fashioned, especially in families where parents are old and you are the youngest child (teenage girl).

The generational argument is thus rather rare and if one considers how much the adolescents differ in their view of parental dominance, one can also doubt whether there is anything like a shared generational experience in the sense of Mannheim (1952) for young people in Kyrgyzstan.

4.2.4 Momentous Dissent

In two essays, it was mentioned that one cannot actually afford disagreement. So the young people do not dare to contradict, says one of the boys:

> In most cases, parents choose a future profession and make them (children) accept it, and children accept it because, for example, they are afraid to offend their parents.
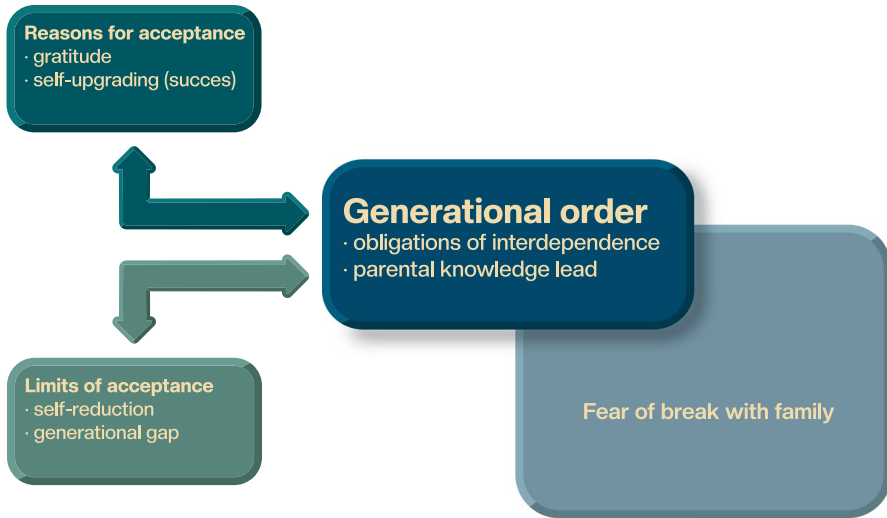
Reasons for acceptance
· gratitude
· self-upgrading (succes)

Generational order
· obligations of interdependence
· parental knowledge lead

Limits of acceptance
· self-reduction
· generational gap

Fear of break with family

Diagram 2   Generational order- acceptance and limits of acceptance by adolescents

And if young people continue to disagree with the decisions made by parents, it can lead even to a breakup with the family, as a girl explains:

> Children who are forced to do things that they do not like either rebel and break off relations with their parents or they live the life they are forced to and hate their work, hate themselves.

Such a breakup is a hard blow, given the value of the family, as is also invoked in the essays: "Parents are the best thing in our life" (teenage boy) or "Family is the greatest wealth we have" (teenage girl).

Overall, we can say that teenagers – like young children – clearly perceive the hierarchy and obligations of the generational order. For the most part, they accept this out of gratitude, which they now express differently according to their age, and also because they perceive the promise of success that comes with it: a great self is in prospect. Again, we can speak of a "self-upgrading", into which the appraising of one's own person results. But approval is no longer unbroken: some see the self as a subject being curtailed, and this affects them individually and also as a generation. Now the serious consequences of a breakup with the family (which could be considered an "exit" from this order) are pointed out – suggesting that teenagers become more aware of both their possibilities and their limitations. Diagram 2 summarizes the constellation in this age phase.

4.3   Study III: Young Adults – The Short Path to Adulthood

> Because you can't survive in Kyrgyzstan without relations with your relatives. […] I think that even the other relatives will say at holidays or other events

'Where are your brothers and sisters?' And I think that's important too, that connection. (Alimbek, 23)

More than the children and teenagers, young adults voice their existential dependence on family and kinship networks, like Alimbek does with this statement. This may be due to the fact that they have had several experiences where they relied on family members for support with educational choices, job market opportunities, etc. However, not only the benefits of a close-knit and supportive family unit become more noticeable in this age group; also the expectations to fulfill (gendered) filial duties and to submit to parent's demands are now put forward with more pressure. Both sides of this dependence are addressed by young adults in the interviews.

4.3.1 Fulfilling Filial Duties out of Gratitude

I can't imagine living apart from my mom. Because this is a reward for my mom, she had a child, carried it under her heart for nine months, and she almost died, and this child grows up and abandons her, I think that would be unfair. (Kasim, 23)

In the same way as for the teenagers, gratitude is a central factor for young adults' acceptance of the generational order. Not living up to it is considered shameful and "unfair", as Kasim puts it. Showing gratitude is strongly connected to the central life choices young adults make, for example regarding their educational and professional career, the choice of a spouse or place of residence. Parents play a key role in such choices, as in Meriam's case, for example: originally, she had wanted to be a doctor, she says, like her favorite aunt, whom she calls her role model. During her school years, she spent several years volunteering passionately for an NGO that promoted women's health. Although she passed the challenging entrance exam for medical school, she ultimately decided to pursue a different major because of the lower cost. Asked if she has ever regretted that decision, she replies:

No, not at all. Now I don't see myself in this profession at all. I really like what I'm doing now, which is media technology. And I'm very grateful to my father for showing me the right way in time. He brought me down a bit from my dream to reality. He showed me what I could do to have a future. Had I become a doctor, I don't think I would be as attractive or creative. These things don't suit me, I think. I am very good with people, that's why I found the profession of a doctor suitable for me, but as a doctor you need more than just to get along with people. (Meriam, 22)

Meriam adapts her choice of study subject to her father's advice, reproducing the credo of "Parents know what is best for their children" which was discussed in study II. The example also shows how precisely the submission to her father's wish generates even more reasons for her gratitude. However, she had to deliberately abandon her first career choice of becoming a doctor, towards which she had already taken active steps. Meriam's explanation also hints at the fact that adapting one's choices

to parents' wishes is a more complex and time-consuming process and is not as readily done as could be seen with the younger age groups.

4.3.2 Upgrading the Self – Drawing Pride from Being Dutiful

However, living up to generational expectations and actively supporting parents offers opportunities for positive self-appraisal. One's own potential and competences are presented proudly, for example by Leona and Kasim:

> I help them with money, because my dad doesn't earn a lot. My mum doesn't work at all. I don't earn for myself only, I earn for them as well. It's my duty you know. […] It's something that I know that I have to do you know. (Leona, 31)
> Every semester break I went home, prepared everything, the food for the animals, for the winter, so that the parents wouldn't have any difficulties. My father always said, 'Without you this house would be upside down'. (Kasim, 23)

Growing scopes of action and age-related status are inherently realized by performing (filial) duties. Status acquisition on the basis of professional accomplishments (the "success promise" which was pointed out for the teenagers and young children) are not talked about much by the young adults interviewed here, although they can be considered a rather privileged group with good professional opportunities. Some of the respondents – despite their prestigious university degrees from abroad – are even confronted with the pitfalls of a desolate labor market, which means they have to draw on their parents' or (extended) family's networks.

4.3.3 Limits for Acceptance – Reduction of Time and Space for Self-Appraisal

The working out of a self, as sketched out in the theoretical frame for this analysis, is inherently a *process*, and as such a time-consuming endeavor. In the interviews for this study, young adults gave ample accounts of their negotiations with parents about the priorities of activities and goals and the amounts of time they are allowed or required to invest. Bargaining for "own" time in daily routines is what one of the young women recalls:

> Or when we had the dinner once, I just went and was doing my homework, and my brother said 'When the whole family is having a dinner you have to be with us.' And I said 'No. Because you're having too long dinners and it's taking my time'. (Manipa, 23)

The temporal dimension, however, is not only relevant at the level of daily routines where especially young women negotiate for "free time" to pursue their individual plans against the expectations of others. It also plays out on a long-term level of planning the future and is strongly intertwined with notions of the "social clock" (Neugarten et al., 1965), a concept referring to the normative expectations about the right time to realize central (reproductive) status passages. The ticking of this clock seems to be a lot louder for the female interviewees, who talked much about the high social pressure they felt concerning marriage; for example, Nurkhan:

They force me. They always say 'You have to get married', and grandma and grandpa and everybody says 'You have to get married'. They say 'She and she is already engaged, she and she is getting married now, she just turned 18 and she is getting married, and you?' […]. But I don't want that. Mum said 'Yes, you do what you want', but dad says 'Yes you have to get married! When you are 50, 60 who will take care of you?' (Nurkhan, 21)

Nurkhan's father explicitly brings up the generational dimension of getting married; by suggesting that there may be nobody to look after her when she is elderly, he refers to the functional necessity of familial support. The women interviewed discuss the topic of marriage not so much as a matter of marrying a man, but as a status passage which is primarily framed in terms of intergenerational hierarchies. Getting married means having even more older people around oneself who claim their right to decide over you, as Jamila puts it:

Oh, I'm 26 and I'm already getting over the age, the usual age is like 24. Most of my classmates are married and with children already. […] I mean I'm just getting older and older and I'm not even planning to get married. […] You have already enough people that are trying to push and pull you towards different directions. […] Everybody who is elder thinks that he or she has the right to advise you or to direct you. (Jamila, 24)

Marriage, as Jamila's quote can be interpreted, implies that more people will claim their right to make decisions about the young woman's time, and she then may not be able to pursue self-related trajectories any longer.

4.3.4 The Threat of Domestic Violence and Force

Young women mention the potential to experience violence; a limit of commitment which is not voiced by the young men interviewed for this study. The following sequence from Jamila's interview stands for the perceived "normality" and social acceptance of domestic violence:

Uhm, beating wives is like a very common thing. Once I was cleaning something at home and stood up suddenly and got my eye kicked on the corner of the windowsill, and then I had a bruise which I couldn't cover up and everybody was like – what happened, you are not – are you married or what? [laughter] […] No one will ever think that you got accidentally kicked. Everyone will think you got beaten up. It's very normal. (Jamila, 24)

Besides the threatening "normality" of falling victim to domestic violence after marriage, young women mention the oftentimes conflictive constellation between husband, wife and mother-in-law, which they are either experiencing themselves, observing in their surroundings or remembering from their own childhood in multigenerational households. They recall ongoing tensions between parents and the grandmother/grandparents, who held powerful positions and made ample use of their authority over their children (the respondents' parents) and themselves, the

grandchildren. The reluctance of re-entering a potentially similar constellation is another reason for postponing or refusing marriage. The threat of experiencing violence and of being forced into overly authoritarian arrangements sets a limit to young adults' (especially young women's) commitment to the interdependent generational order.

4.3.5 The Threat of a Family Breakup

While young adults more frequently oppose generational and gendered obligations and some even reveal their personal suffering, they nevertheless go to great lengths to avoid a breakup with the family. Given the family's existential importance, they consider this step a fundamental threat and frown upon friends and relatives who have abandoned their families (of origin). The interviews contain hints that young people apply "reparation strategies" in cases where they do not approve of their parents' dominance but nevertheless wish to maintain family cohesion. One strategy can be called "doing authenticity"; it is a process of appropriating parents' wishes and expectations in a way that they appear to originally match one's own preferences. The following quote is drawn from the interview with Mirlan, who explains how his father's opinion and his own become "the same":

> Because when my father says something, I always think it's important. Like, my father has his own opinion, right? And then, when he says something, then I think about it. He said like this and my mother said like this. And then, on the whole, that's exactly the same as I think. So, my decision would be the same! And that's why I would never say, 'Yeah, I'm doing it this way because that was my father's decision', but because (...) maybe I think like my father or something. (Mirlan, 26)

Explicitly stating that he would "never say" he did something just because his father said so, Mirlan instead engages in a seemingly open-ended weighing of his own and parents' opinions, which ultimately results in the father's recommendation. Also, the explanations by Meriam on her choice of profession according to her father's advice (which we presented above) can be interpreted in this way. Such narratives take ample space in many of the interviews; they can be regarded as deliberately turning away from a personal wish or preference but nevertheless presenting it as a process of self-appraisal.

Another "reparation strategy" of young adults is to shift negotiation and change processes into the future, i.e. to accept their limited position in the generational hierarchy with reference to shaping relations with the next generation, their own children, differently:

> I also want to bring up my children socially. […] That they become relaxed. In our country, in Kyrgyz families, children are mostly not social. The parents are strict. (Alimbek, 23)
> I think it also has to do with tradition, that the parents play a role. But I'm a bit more European there, a bit more democratic, so I wouldn't say 'My son, you have to be a lawyer, you have to study law or diplomacy'. (Mirlan, 26)
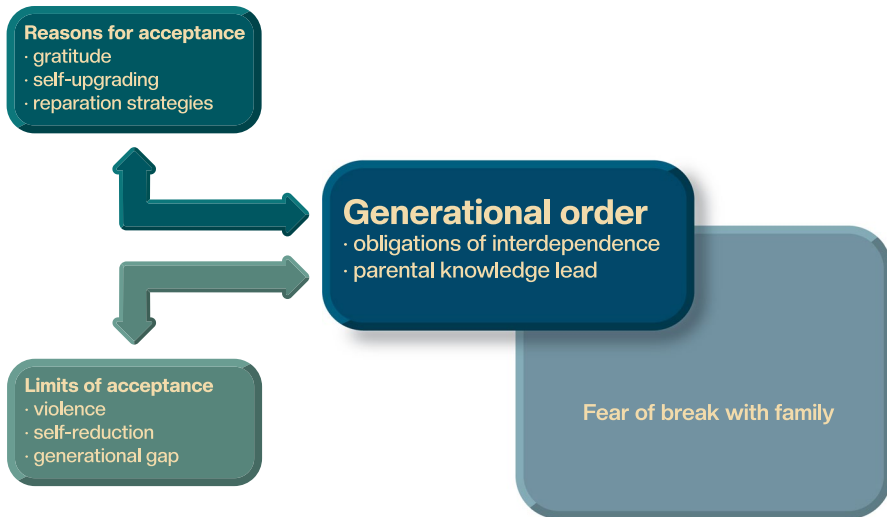
Diagram 3 Generational order- acceptance and limits of acceptance by young adults

In this way, young adults rather implicitly bring notions of a "generational gap" into play, distinguishing themselves from "traditional" practices and contrasting their own ideas against them. Diagram 3 captures the constellation of reasons of acceptance and reasons of rejection of generational obligations as we identified them for young adults.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The three studies show that generational relations are perceived by children and young people as a network of mutual obligations, a structural solution that corresponds to the interdependence model. In this generational order, children have significant material and immaterial obligations to their parents at any age. The older generation also defines what is right and what is wrong and which way the descendants have to go. The transmission of knowledge thus occurs primarily in a post-figurative manner, whereas divergent views of the younger generation have limited chances of being accepted. This generational order is by no means produced by the older generation alone, but is co-produced by the young with their behavior and views; mostly confirming and (only) occasionally modifying it. In principle, young people are prepared to show special appreciation for their parents throughout their lives, an attitude of "filial piety", with the corresponding contributions of material and immaterial support.

The studies have revealed interpretations as cited by the younger generation at different age levels to justify their cooperation. If we generalize across the three studies, we can identify three patterns of interpretation. (1) It is an attitude of *gratitude*, a recognition of all that parents do or have done, even where these

contributions may seem all too self-evident from a Western perspective, such as washing and buying clothes and taking the child to kindergarten or – in the case of teenagers and young adults – where we might as well see parents' contribution as merely patronizing. (2) It is *an upgrading of the self* that young people experience. The young children and the teenagers believe in the promise of success made to them by their parents: dreamlike careers if they follow their parents' guidance. Meanwhile, the young adults appear to be more realistic regarding their future plans. While the ones we interviewed in our study are a group with quite promising educational prospects, they realize that the poverty of the country sets limits to their careers. From young children to young adults, they also experience such self-upgrading through their own contributions to the functional network; indeed, through their mere adaptation to it. "I am a good boy/a good girl" young children say when they fetch water, and young adults present themselves not much differently when they proudly talk about supporting parents. (3) Finally, the young adults in particular develop "reparation strategies", allowing them to submit to generational expectations at – or even beyond – their limits, "doing authenticity" we may call them, and "shifting negotiation and change processes into the future".

Young children, teens, and even more so young adults, however, want freedoms, and in certain situations they partly withdraw their compliance and cooperation. They justify this in various ways, and four patterns of interpretation can be identified on this rejecting side. (1) It is the *violence* inherent in the generational relationship, which may already fail to achieve obedience in the case of young children. The children describe themselves as angry or sad, and they by no means always show the desired remorse. For some young women, it is the knowledge of the ordinariness of (domestic) violence that makes them hesitate to commit to this order. (2) It is the *self-reduction*, a truncation of scopes, of options of the self, but also already a truncation of the mere processes of the self, of imagining and appraising the self, that creates resistance. This already appears in the teens, who don't talk about parental decisions they want to change but put it more subtly as "drawing a picture of one's own life" and about chances to learn from mistakes. It becomes even more obvious in the young adults and here again in the young women. When there is no time for oneself, neither in everyday life with its strong obligations to participate in collective life nor in the biographical shaping of the transition to adulthood, when "everybody who is older thinks that he or she has the right to advise you or to direct you", as Jamila complains in the interview, then one tries to escape. (3) It is the articulation of a *generational gap* that creates a break with the generational arrangement. The motif appears in the teens and in the young adults, although rather rarely. The group of young adults studied here draws on personal experience in "individualized"/Western societies and, we can assume, frequently engages in communication via globalized (social) media. Such influences are likely to stimulate configurative knowledge constitution. However, the change is partly postponed until later: for their own future children, they consider a different generational arrangement than the one they continue to accept.

The reasons for cooperation or rejection are clearly linked to the young people's well-being. This can be seen in their statements, especially where their well-being is restricted. While in the case of young children this is still limited to occasions of immediate violence that make them "sad" or "upset", in the case of older children and young adults it is longer lasting setbacks and impairments that are mentioned. For example, the feeling of hating oneself that a teen brought up, or for the young women, the repeated expressions of determined rejection: "They force me […] I don't want that".

Of course, our samples in all three studies are only comparatively small convenience samples. Also, the individual studies each shed light on specific sections of the generational relationship. Nevertheless, these snapshots provide a surprisingly consistent picture that would be worth studying in a proper longitudinal approach. To be sure, there is as yet little evidence of breaking off cooperation among young children, except in situations of violence. Apart from that, there is a remarkable consistency across all ages: in principle, the same basic arguments pro and contra co-production of the generational arrangement can be found. Nevertheless, the importance attached to these justifications varies at different points in the life course, in part because the pressures or rewards of the generational arrangement manifest themselves in different ways depending on age and gender. The gender bias is most evident among the oldest group.

There would be enough reasons for the young people to withdraw their co-production for this asymmetrical arrangement, but they cannot risk a breakup with the family. Occasionally, the young adults cite emotional reasons for this, referring to the warmth and cordiality of the family. More clearly, however, the breakup appears as an existential threat: as the loss of a necessary network of support and an indispensable unit through which one is integrated into the wider society. This brings us back to the starting point that families have their overriding importance also because they compensate for deficiencies of the welfare state. In this situation, the resistance can be a question of partial freedom for individuals, and individually negotiated grace periods, rather than a fundamental restructuring of generational obligations. Where the burdens and gratifications for children and teens are reasonably in balance, even if there is little room for individual decision-making, however, the disadvantages that the arrangement implies for women at the threshold to adulthood require urgent attention. This also applies to the extent of violence to which our studies have pointed.

Appendix

Table.1 Concepts and exemplary items

Concept	Dimensions	Exemplary items/exemplary material	Study
Core concept: generational order			
- *mutual obligations according to interdependence model*	functional network	*helpful bug:* mutual contributions, "washes my clothes"; "father builds the house"	I
		dollhouse: children's own work contributions	III
		Young adults: "I earn for them as well. It's my duty …"	II
	parents as donors of life	*essays:* "they give life to children, which is the most precious thing"	II
		Young adults: "…this is a reward for my mom, she had a child, carried it under her heart for nine months…"	III
	filial piety	*future wishes:* "I will buy a car for my parents"; "I will be a doctor, take care of my parents"	I
		Essays: "we should always listen to them"	II
		Young adults: "I can't imagine living apart from my mom…"	III
- *parental knowledge lead*	parents decide on choice of study etc.	*future wishes:* children's wishes correspond with parents' expectations.	I
		essays: "yes, parents know best"; "children and teens can't think"	II
		Young adults: "Dad says 'Yes you have to get married! When you are 50, 60 who will take care of you?'"	III
Reasons for acceptance			
- *gratitude*		*helpful bug:* the mere mentioning of all the contributions	I
		essays: "they would even give their lives for us", "work hard for us"; "they have been feeding us"	II
		Young adults: "And I'm very grateful to my father for showing me the right way in time."	III
- *self-upgrading*		*Future wishes:* "I'll work hard to be the president"; "I will be a doctor"	I

Table.1 (continued)

Concept	Dimensions	Exemplary items/exemplary material	Study
		field notes: "I am a good boy...", "I am a good girl..." (spontaneously, in regard to work and obedience)	II
		essays: "parents want to see their children be the best"	III
- reparation strategies *(1) doing authenticity*		*Young adults*: "Every semester break I went home, prepared everything, the food for the animals ... My father always said, 'Without you this house would be upside down.'"	III
		Young adults: "And that's why I would never say 'Yeah, I'm doing it this way because that was my father's decision', but because (...) maybe I think like my father."	III
		"I also want to bring up my children socially ... in Kyrgyz families, children are mostly not social."	III
(2) shift negotiation/ change into future			
Limits of acceptance			
- violence		*smileys*: "I'm upset when someone quarrels and beats me"	I
		Young adults: "beating wives is like a very common thing"	III
- self-reduction		*essays*: "everyone is the hero of his life ..."; "children must make mistakes"	II
		Young adults: "Everybody who is older thinks that he/she has the right to advise you or direct you."	III
- generational gap		*essays*: "we are another generation";	II
		Young adults: "I think it also has to do with tradition... But I'm a bit more European there, a bit more democratic...".	III
Fear of breakup with family		*essays*: "children accept it, they are afraid to offend their parents"; "family is the greatest wealth"	II
		Young adults: "Because you can't survive in Kyrgyzstan without relations with your relatives."	III

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Declarations

Conflict of Interest No conflicts of interest.

Ethics Approval No particularly sensitive material was collected. The subjects studied were informed that they were free not to answer some questions or to stop the interview at any point.

Consent to Participate Informed consent was obtained from all subjects examined. In the case of minors examined, parental consent was also obtained.

Consent for Publication No restriction.

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