WORLD CONFERENCE ON STUDENT - CENTERED LEARNING APPROACHES

MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Kubayeva Nilufar Shuhrat qizi

Lecturer, Navoi State University

Abstract

This thesis examines the mechanisms through which social solidarity develops in intergenerational relations and identifies the major trends shaping these relationships in contemporary society. Particular attention is paid to family socialization, emotional bonds, reciprocal assistance, shared values, digital communication, demographic change, and institutional support. The study argues that intergenerational solidarity should not be understood solely as a traditional family obligation. Rather, it represents a multidimensional social process influenced by cultural norms, economic circumstances, public policies, and changing lifestyles. Strengthening solidarity requires a balanced combination of family responsibility, mutual respect, social protection, and opportunities for cooperation between younger and older generations.

Keywords: intergenerational relations, social solidarity, family values, mutual assistance, social cohesion, demographic change, digital communication, social responsibility.

Introduction

Social solidarity is one of the fundamental conditions for maintaining social cohesion, continuity, and stability. In contemporary society, intergenerational relations are becoming increasingly complex due to urbanization, migration, demographic ageing, technological development, and changes in family structures. These processes influence how younger and older generations communicate, exchange resources, transmit cultural values, and fulfil their mutual responsibilities.

Intergenerational solidarity refers to the social, emotional, normative, and practical connections that unite different generations. It can be expressed through respect for older people, parental care, the transmission of knowledge and traditions, financial assistance, shared activities, and participation in community life. Therefore, solidarity should be examined not only as a moral principle but also as a system of social relationships shaped by both individual behaviour and broader institutional conditions.

Bengtson and Roberts developed a theoretical framework identifying six dimensions of intergenerational solidarity: associational, affectual, consensual, functional, normative, and structural solidarity [1]. Their framework provides a useful basis for understanding how intergenerational relationships are formed, maintained, and transformed under changing social conditions. Roberts and Bengtson's subsequent examination of the concept also questioned whether solidarity should be treated as a single-dimensional construct, supporting the need to consider its different components separately [3].

1. Mechanisms of Social Solidarity in Intergenerational Relations

One of the primary mechanisms of intergenerational solidarity is family socialization. The family is the first social environment in which individuals learn respect, responsibility, empathy, cooperation, and mutual assistance. Through everyday interaction, children acquire attitudes towards older people and develop an understanding of family obligations. The continuity of these values depends not only on verbal instruction but also on the behaviour demonstrated by parents and other family members.

A second mechanism is emotional attachment and interpersonal communication. Trust, affection, understanding, and a sense of belonging help maintain relationships between generations. Regular communication allows family members to share experiences, discuss problems, and provide emotional support. Importantly, emotional

closeness does not necessarily depend on living in the same household. Family members who live in different cities or countries may preserve strong relationships through regular contact and meaningful participation in one another's lives.

The third mechanism is reciprocity and the exchange of resources. Intergenerational relationships involve different forms of support, including financial assistance, childcare, household responsibilities, healthcare support, and the transfer of practical knowledge. Reciprocity does not always mean an immediate or equal exchange. Parents may devote considerable resources to raising children, while adult children may provide assistance to their parents later in life. Such exchanges create a long-term relationship of mutual dependence and responsibility.

The fourth mechanism is shared values and collective identity. Cultural traditions, family histories, language, and common social norms help connect generations. These elements provide a sense of continuity and belonging. Nevertheless, shared values should not be interpreted as requiring complete agreement between older and younger people. Genuine solidarity can coexist with differences in opinions, lifestyles, and aspirations, provided that these differences are addressed through mutual respect and constructive dialogue.

Finally, social institutions and public policies play an important role in sustaining solidarity. Educational institutions, community organizations, healthcare services, and social protection systems can complement family support. Daatland and Herlofson's comparative study demonstrates that family solidarity and public welfare provision are not necessarily contradictory; the expression of family responsibility varies according to cultural and institutional contexts [2]. This suggests that supporting families through accessible social services can strengthen rather than weaken intergenerational relationships.

2. Major Development Trends in Intergenerational Solidarity

One significant trend is the transformation of traditional family structures. In many societies, smaller households, geographical mobility, and changing employment patterns have altered the frequency and organization of face-to-face contact between generations. However, these changes do not automatically indicate the disappearance of solidarity. Instead, support may take new forms, including remote communication, financial transfers, planned visits, and coordinated care arrangements.

Another important trend is the growing influence of digital technologies. Messaging applications, video calls, and online services make it easier for geographically separated family members to remain connected. Digital communication can reduce the effects of distance and facilitate the exchange of information. At the same time, unequal levels of digital literacy may limit the participation of some older people. Intergenerational digital learning, in which younger people help older relatives use digital tools while older people share their experience and knowledge, can create opportunities for reciprocal learning.

A further trend concerns demographic ageing and the increasing importance of care. Longer life expectancy and changes in population age structures raise questions about healthcare, pensions, independent living, and long-term care. Older people should not be regarded exclusively as recipients of assistance. They also contribute to society through childcare, cultural transmission, volunteering, mentoring, and the preservation of collective memory. An effective model of solidarity therefore recognizes the contributions and needs of every generation. The United Nations' World Social Report 2023 similarly emphasizes the social-policy challenges associated with population ageing and the importance of inclusive support systems [4].

Changing values and expectations also influence intergenerational relations. Younger generations may place greater emphasis on personal autonomy, educational opportunities, career development, and individual choice. Older generations may place stronger emphasis on established family duties and collective traditions. Such

differences can produce tension, but they can also encourage dialogue and the renegotiation of family responsibilities. The central challenge is to reconcile individual independence with mutual care and social responsibility.

Economic inequality represents another major challenge. Housing costs, insecure employment, unequal access to healthcare, and differences in income can affect the capacity of families to support one another. Consequently, solidarity cannot depend exclusively on personal goodwill. Social policies that promote decent employment, accessible education, healthcare, and adequate support for older people are important for creating the material conditions in which intergenerational responsibility can be fulfilled. The United Nations' World Social Report 2023 discusses the challenges associated with population ageing and the need to ensure that older people are not left behind [4].

3. Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity in Contemporary Society

The development of sustainable intergenerational solidarity requires coordinated efforts at family, community, educational, and institutional levels.

First, families should promote open communication and the fair distribution of responsibilities. Respect for older people should be accompanied by recognition of the rights, aspirations, and personal boundaries of younger family members. Mutual understanding is more sustainable when responsibilities are discussed and accepted rather than imposed without consideration of individual circumstances.

Second, educational institutions can facilitate intergenerational cooperation through oral-history projects, community service, mentoring programmes, and joint cultural activities. Such initiatives allow young people to learn from older generations while enabling older people to remain active participants in social life.

Third, communities should encourage inclusive activities that bring different age groups together. Volunteering, cultural events, neighbourhood initiatives, and digital-

literacy programmes can reduce stereotypes and create opportunities for meaningful interaction.

Fourth, public institutions should ensure that family care is supported by accessible social services. Professional care, healthcare provision, and community support can reduce excessive pressure on individual family members while protecting the dignity and independence of older people.

Finally, research and social policy should recognize that intergenerational solidarity has multiple dimensions. The frequency of contact alone cannot demonstrate the quality of a relationship. Emotional closeness, practical assistance, shared values, mutual respect, and access to institutional support should also be considered when assessing intergenerational cohesion.

Conclusion

Social solidarity in intergenerational relations develops through a combination of family socialization, emotional attachment, reciprocal assistance, shared values, communication, and institutional support. These mechanisms connect generations and facilitate the transmission of knowledge, cultural traditions, and social responsibility.

Contemporary social changes are transforming the ways in which solidarity is expressed. Urbanization, migration, digital communication, demographic ageing, economic inequality, and changing personal values create both opportunities and challenges. Although traditional forms of family interaction may be changing, intergenerational solidarity can continue through new patterns of communication, support, and cooperation.

The central conclusion is that sustainable solidarity requires more than the preservation of traditional obligations. It depends on mutual respect, reciprocal responsibility, equal opportunities, and effective social institutions. A society that values the contributions of both younger and older generations is better positioned to

strengthen social cohesion, protect human dignity, and ensure continuity between the past, present, and future.

References

[1] Bengtson, V. L., & Roberts, R. E. L. (1991). Intergenerational Solidarity in Aging Families: An Example of Formal Theory Construction. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53(4), 856–870. https://doi.org/10.2307/352993

[2] Daatland, S. O., & Herlofson, K. (2003). "Lost Solidarity" or "Changed Solidarity": A Comparative European View of Normative Family Solidarity. Ageing & Society, 23(5), 537–560. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X03001272

[3] Roberts, R. E. L., & Bengtson, V. L. (1990). Is Intergenerational Solidarity a Unidimensional Construct? A Second Test of a Formal Model. Journal of Gerontology, 45(1), S12–S20. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronj/45.1.S12

[4] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2023). World Social Report 2023: Leaving No One Behind in an Ageing World. New York: United Nations. https://desapublications.un.org/publications/world-social-report-2023-leaving-no-one-behind-ageing-world