

GENERATION X AND GENERATION Y. CASE STUDY – THE RELATION OF THESE GENERATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Alexandru DOBRESU

Loredana DRAGOMIR

Robert MALMARE

Mirela MAZILU

Abstract: *The purpose of this article with the title „Generation X and Generation Y. Case study – The relation of these generation with the environment” is to present systematically all the six types of generations analyzed throughout the time by sociologists and consecrated research. Thus, in the first part of this paper, we will analyze the situation in which the environment is, as well as the measures taken, referring strictly to the time interval representative to the period of the occurrence of each type of generation. The second part of the paper will be „rich in substance”, because we will approach the essence of this work, namely a detailed exposition of the situation in which our planet is from the point of view of climate changes, thus triggering an alarm signal among the adults of Generation X and Y, regarding the awareness and involvement in the environmental problems that have appeared mainly after the beginning of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 19th century, problems which exists today, and which undoubtedly will not be missing in the future that is intended to be of an eco-friendly nature. Finally, in the last part, we chose to draw attention to the awareness of the importance of involvement in environmental issues, stimulating the subjects of the study. In fact, the conclusion will be understood as a "new beginning", never being too late to take measures that can lead to a goal. The motto that was the basis of this work, and which precedes the conclusions, I am sure will remain imprinted in both the minds and souls of the readers, namely: "Regardless of the type of generation, be a role model for future generations, because as our future, of today's adults are our children of tomorrow. Also, the Earth must be seen as a living entity, which it requires care and patience, as well as unceasing love, all in order to achieve a balance of a harmonious life, without significant disturbances".*

Keywords: *sustainable development, environment changes, global warming, pollution, environmental measures.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of „*generation*” covers a wide spectrum, being present in most of all spheres of our life, from the economic, political and social, up to the humanist ones or to those that concern the problems of the environment (Tomonicska, 2016). However, a general definition of the term itself is difficult to elaborate, many researchers expressing their own vision, starting from a common hypothesis, namely the origin of the term itself. The term „*generation*” is one of the Latin origins, pulling its roots from the noun „*generāre*”, which means „*reproduction*”, or from the Greek term „*genos*”, a term attributed to a social group expressing the claim of a common offspring (Davies, J., 2015). Finding a definition of the analyzed term was a continuous intrigue and exists even nowadays, but topical is to find a ranking system for generations that appeared from the second half of the 20th and until the present days.

I even asked myself the question: „*Am I part of the Generation x or the Generation Y?*” The answer I found simple, discussing in detail in the ranks below, about the position that each of us can occupy, regarding the distribution of individuals according to the age of each one, on the scale of the types of generations. However, the topical for us must be information and awareness about the impasse encountered throughout the history of mankind, impasse that led to a quite pronounced environmental degradation, starting especially with the beginning of the progresses from the scientific-technical field. Our planet cries for help, and just as a protective mother raising her children, taking care of them not to miss anything, also does she shows us that is in a continuous searching for our attention. The sufferings are as real as possible, and to set off the alarm signal among the readers, the present paper will contain up-to-date data on global temperatures, changes in biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as data on the precipitation changes. All this will be accompanied by different futuristic scenarios, in which the „*main actor*” is man and his relationship with the environment. We believe that as long as we do not turn our attention to environmental issues, it is possible that due to our ignorance, future generations will not even want to know the history of their predecessors.

METHODOLOGY

At the base of this manuscript, as in case of any other, the documentation was a key factor in the process of obtaining as accurate

information as possible. Thus, in the subject we approached, of a great significance were the online sources, especially the NASA's web page, which have facilitated our access to a wide range of information regarding the multitude of conventions, protocols and debates on environmental issues. Also, statistical data were also used, and their interpretation led to results that facilitated a better view on the concepts and situations analyzed, for example to create a detailed profile of the main climatic changes (global temperature, changes in biodiversity and ecosystems, precipitation changes) that occurred between 2001 and 2019, the period that targeting Generation X and Y as adults.

Not least, with the help of the comparative method, we managed to highlight the reality of the environment, passing it through the filter of all types of generations analyzed. The historical method was also indispensable, due to its application, we managing to expose in detail the evolution of both Generations and the state of the environment throughout the years 1946-2019. Other research methods applied successfully in this paper are the deductive method, the inductive method and the analysis method.

1. The situation of the environment during the appearance of different types of generations

People born between 1946 and 1954 and which currently (in 2021) are between 75 and 67 years old, belong to the category of those included in the first step of the ranking of generations, namely „*Baby Boomers Generation*” or „*Boomers I*” (Sheehan, P., 2011). The aforementioned generation was witnessed events with significant impact on the society of the time, namely „*The human rights movement*”, emblematic in this regard being the „*Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*”, signed on November 4, 1950 at Rome, by which the foundations of some rights were laid, like: „*The Right to life*”, „*The Right to respect for private and family life*”, „*The Freedom of thought, conscience and religion*”, „*Prohibition of torture and discrimination*”, and many others (Council of Europe, 1950). The emergence of the new „*hippie*” trend, a youth protest movement against society or the outbreak of the Vietnam War, represents two other important socio-political events of the time.

Focusing on the situation in which the Baby Boomers Generation has managed the circumstances in which the environment was, we can firmly argue that despite overcoming the difficult moments that occurred due to the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution or beginning of the Second World War, and implicitly the emergence of a huge environmental problem,

namely the invention of atomic weapons and their use as shock and terror weapons (the bombing undertaken by the USA in 1945 against Japan, namely on the city of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), these did not present a topical problem for those times, being considered minimal, a proof in this sense being the non-inclusion in the European Convention of Human Rights, of the phrase "environment" or „*the right to a healthy environment*” (García San José, D.I., 2005).

The second type of generation, „*Generation Boomers II*” or „*Generation Jones*”, as it is also known, includes those individuals who was born between 1955-1965 (aged 66-56 at the time of research) and which, unlike the previous generation, has expressed its interest in getting involved in environmental issues (Williams, J.J., 2014). Thus, as a response to the use of nuclear energy „*for peaceful purposes*”, a series of regulations aimed at the use of nuclear energy under a special regime were put in place, a proof in this regard being „*The Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage*”, adopted in Vienna on May 21, 1963 and entering into force on 12 November 1977 and in the final form since 4 October 2003 (IAEA, 1997; NEA, 1997). Also, within the Boomers II Generation, a series of measures were provided regarding the granting and protection of plant breeders rights, within the „*International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants*”, dated December 2, 1961, or the support of the „*Antarctic Treaty*” drawn up on 01.12.1959, which aimed at strengthening international cooperation in Antarctica in the field of scientific research, as well as prohibiting the elimination of radioactive waste in this region (UPOV, 1961; UNODA, 1959).

Therefore, all the measures taken by the Boomers II generation, in order to improve the quality of the environment, represented a starting point for the next type of generation hierarchized in this article, namely Generation X, a generation that encountered numerous obstacles in the process of defending the integrity of the environment surrounding.

According to the MetLife Mature Marketing Institute, in the paper „*The MetLife Study of the Gen X: The MTV Generation moves into Mid-Life*”, Generation X corresponds to people who were born between the years 1966-1976 (current age of 54-45 years, in 2021). This is a generation of the social changes, in fact also known as „*Latchkey Generation*”, as a result of reduced supervision of children by adults, compared to the period characteristic of Boomers I Generation and Boomers II Generation. At that time, Generation X was characterized by a difficult social period, because „*the majority (70%) of Gen Xers are married, with one in five having been married more than once. Approximately 20% have never been married and*

8% are divorced”, but also it was a phase in which the emphasis was placed on the participation of the maternal side in the workforce (MetLife Mature Marketing Institute, 2013). Once they became teenagers and young adults, most of the Gen Xers, from a cultural point of view, they were influenced by the genres Grunge and Hip-Hop, being nicknamed in most of the cases the „*MTV Generation*” (reference to the MTV music channel), (MetLife Mature Marketing Institute, 2013). At the same time, in 2001, Mike Males, in „*The True 'Great Generation*”, showed his enthusiasm about the polls that showed that 80% to 90% of Gen Xers were self-confident and optimistic (Males, M., 2001). Also, due to exceeding the difficult adaptation period after the Second World War, the American cohort was named by the journalist and author Thomas John Brokaw, as „*The Great Generation*” (Males, M., 2001). The young people of Generation X were able to enjoy this status and because they were the basis of the development of the high-tech industry, which propelled the economy of the 1990s (The Buffalo News, 2002).

As with the other two generations previously analyzed, Generation X was not one in which the environmental problems were non-existent, so the measures taken did not cease to appear. Thus, the table below hosts the most important events of the period when Generation X was born (Fig.1).

The calendar of environmental events which happened during the emergence of Generation X (1966-1977)	
Moscow, August 5, 1963	The Treaty banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water
London, Moscow, Washington, January 27, 1967	The Conditions regarding the Exploitation and Use of the Atmospheric Space are established
Paris, February 2, 1971	The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
Moscow, London, Washington, February 11, 1971	The Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil thereof
London, Moscow, Washington, April 10, 1972	The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction
Paris, November 16, 1972	The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
London, Mexico, Moscow, Washington, April 10, 1972	The Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter
Washington, March 3, 1973	The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
London, November 2, 1973	The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

Fig.1. The list of the most important environmental events which happened during the emergence of Generation X

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_international_environmental_agreements

All the conventions undertaken during the decade in which Generation X was formed, in my opinion, were monopolized by the „*Environmental Convention*”, the international conference organized in Stockholm on June 5-16, 1972, occasion by which was raised for the first time the problem of deterioration of the environment as a result of human activities (Clarke, R., Timberlake, L., 1982). In this declaration 26 principles regarding the environment and development were resolved.

The next type of generation from our hierarchy, the „*Millennial Generation*”, known as „*Generation Y*” or „*Echo Boomers*”, that was born between 1977-1995, and at the present time (the year 2021), in this generation being enrolled all those individuals who are between the ages of 44 and 26 years (Nielsen Media Research, 2014). The characteristics of the Generation Y vary from one region to another, in fact as in the case of all the other types of generations mentioned above, especially depending on the socio-economic conditions. However, the Generation Y are characterized by their degree of using and increasing familiarity with the means of communications, media stuffs, and digital technologies.

At the same time, the start moment of the Great World Economic Crisis of 2007, culminated in a disastrous situation for the Millennials, who passed through an early maturing period, especially for young adults, whose path in life, to finding a stable job and laying the foundations of a family had just begun. The young Millennials were put in a position to see themselves unemployed with properly acts, the adaptation to the new socio-economic conditions being difficult to achieve. Regarding the relationship of the Generation Y with the environment, throughout the period that characterizes the emergence of this generation, a series of measures were taken aimed at protecting the environment, more exactly, a number of about 40 international conventions, agreements and protocols, among which the most important ones are mentioned in the table below (Fig.2).

The calendar of environmental events which happened during the emergence of Generation Y (1977-1995)	
Geneva, May 18, 1977	The Convention on Prohibition of the Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques
Bern, September 19, 1979	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats
Vienna, March 22, 1985	Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer
Vienna, September 26, 1986	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
Madrid, October 4, 1991	The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty
Rio de Janeiro, June 5, 1992	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Vienna, June 17, 1994	The Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS)
Paris, June 17, 1994	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
Lisbon, December 17, 1994	The Energy Charter Protocol on Energy Efficiency and Related Environmental Aspects (PEEREA)

Fig.2. The calendar of most important environmental events which happened during the emergence of Generation Y

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_international_environmental_agreements

On the other hand, we must remember that during the development of the Generation Y, there have been other events that have a huge impact on the history of tourism and the environment. Thus, in 1983, begins its activity the „*World Commission for Environment and Development*”, also known as Brundtland Commission, fact due to distinguished lady president, Gro Harlem Brundtland, which together with representatives of several countries, had the mission to unite countries to pursue sustainable development together, mission that was going to enjoy a special attention due to the awareness of the existence of massive deterioration of the environment and by default of the natural resources.

In order to keep countries' attention on sustainable development and its importance for future generations, in 1987, the UN General Assembly launched a new concept, a new plan, called the „*Brundtland Report*”, also known as „*Our Common Future*”. In addition to all this, in the last month of the same year, the General Assembly permanently dissolve the Brundland Commission (WCED, 1987). In any case, we wanted to highlight these historical data, because, as a result of these events, the term „*sustainable development*” was born. Therefore, the World Commission on Environment and Development has formulated a general definition of the term sustainable development, as a starting point, a basis for support for the next steps that the term would know over the time.

„Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

The concept of 'needs', in particular, the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given.

The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs". (WCED, 1987).

Finally, advancing to the period that ends the births of the individuals considered to be part of the Millennials Generation, we must remember the fact that on June 13, 1992, the United Nations (UN) organized the first „*Earth Summit*”, during the „*Rio de Janeiro Conference*”, after which was starting a usefull plans to support sustainable development, namely „*Agenda 21*” (UN. Department of Public Information, 1994).

Generation Z, the penultimate type of generation from our ranking, it is the last one that ends the cycle of generations whose basic name comes from the Latin alphabet, comprising all those individuals who were born in the period 1996-2010 (Business Insider, 2017). We must keep in mind that although the „*Young Z*” were born in a diversified period from the point of view of technology, the adult period is regarded as a successful one, much more prosperous than that of previous generations. Also, during the formation of the Generation Z period as adults, the climate changes has worsened, and we even being able to state the fact that these changes on the environment have led to media coverage especially on the online environment of the phenomenon of „*climate changes*”. Given this awful problematic of reality, it is desirable that members of Generation Z want to tackle climate change to avoid the potentially catastrophic effects of a planet ready to „*catch fire*”. At the same time, it should be mentioned that although the media is considered to be one of the great powers of the world, I think that its effects on humanity can also be much more beneficial, an eloquent example being the involvement in environmental activities and their promotion among the masses, through the Internet and the Television.

The Alpha generation is that generation which, in the analytical conception of the researchers, represents „*a new beginning*”, making a similarity between the term „*Alpha*” regarding this type of analyzed generation, and the term itself, the origin of which is Greek (Williams, 2015). We mention the fact that following the first letter of the Greek alphabet, are the following, Beta, Gamma, Delta, considering that the following types of generations will borrow these terms. According to Mark McCrindle, Alpha young people are those born between 2010-2024, and

who are part of the first generation born entirely in the 21st century (McCrindle, 2018). As expected, this new generation will have to endure the climate changes that have resulted from the pollution-generating activities of previous generations.

In the following, in order to obtain a clear picture of how the Generation Alpha and future generations will be involved in environmental issues, we must analyze the situation of the fertility rate worldwide. Thus, according to the data provided by the worldbank.org, From year to year, the total value of the fertility rate (births per woman) shows a downward trend. Thus, since 2010, the debut year of Generation Alpha, from the value of 2,516 (births per woman), a value of 2,145 was registered in 2018 (data.worldbank.org, 2021). If we analyze the entire database stored by the aforementioned source, we will find that the downward trend above, has as a starting point the value of 5,055 recorded in 1964, a total value of the fertility rate, almost double that of 2018. The table below highlights the entire downward path of the previously analyzed index, between 1964-2018 (Fig. 3).

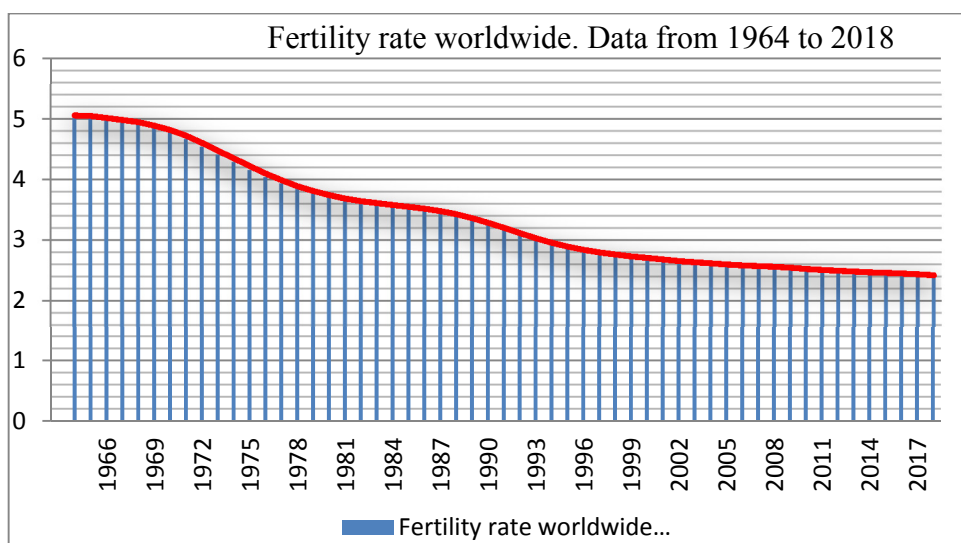


Fig.3. Fertility rate worldwide (births per woman)

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>

Therefore, we must be very careful if the advancement of the technological process, simultaneously with the attraction of the generations to this sector, does not forget the importance of the environment. Digitization may lead to less and less concern for future generations about environmental issues. In any case, a meticulous education of today's young

people, who at a certain time will become parents, will represent the cornerstone of a healthy environment.

2. The adult period of Generation X and Y. Their implications for environmental issues

This second part of this paper helps us to solve the next enigma: „*What is the perception of Generations X and Y regarding their involvement in environmental issues?*” Of course, it should be mentioned the fact that in the following, we will discuss about the situation of the environment, referring to the adult period (the period between 35 and 65 years) of these two types of generations. Given the fact that the first series of individuals that make up Generation X was born in 1966, their adult period starting at 35 years old, we will focus on the data collected from 2001 to 2019. Concomitant, we will include in this time interval the data regarding the environmental issues that occurred in the moment of the appearance of the first series of adults of the Generation Y, because the year 2012 falls between 2001-2019.

In other words, starting from the reality that Generation X and Y, from the moment of their appearance, environmental problems existed, being left like a „*legacy*” of previous generations and reinforcing our hypothesis by the harsh reality of the present highlighted in numerous specialized works regarding the desolate situation in which our planet is due to the environmental changes that have occurred as a result of the human activities, we can affirm the fact that the period of childhood of the Generation X and Y could not present another scenario... maybe a darker one, but a brighter one, certainly not, so the present being a living proof in this regard... but why exist all this negative trend? The answer is simple, the man... the man who was, is and will always be looking for the new, for the unique, and for the top-performing technologies. The self-centered desire of people to achieve perfection through „*easy methods*” can surpass any imagination, the most significant repercussions being of environmental nature.

Moreover, those I stated above are reinforced in the work such as „*Tourism – A Privileged Relation with the Lasting Development*” (2007), from the point of view of the author Mirela Mazilu, „*the world is constantly changing and the transformations from the field of social, economic, and political values take place during the longest period of economic stagnation through which several countries of the developed world pass: the continuous industrial development has determined the appearance of a strong impact on the environment*” (Mazilu, M., 2007).

So, with the help of the following data provided by the website of climate.nasa.gov, we will be able to create a detailed profile of the main environmental changes that occurred between 2001 and 2019, the period that targeting Generation X and Y as adults, as I mentioned previously. Therefore, for analysis, our priorities will be the following:

- Global Temperature;
- Changes in biodiversity and ecosystems;
- Precipitation Changes;

Global temperature - According to data obtained from the climate.nasa.gov website, „Globally, the average temperature was second only to that of 2016 and continued the planet's long-term warming trend: the past five years have been the warmest of the last 140 years”, we can only trust the truthfulness of these words, but also the increase of the average annual temperatures within the period 2001-2019 (NASA/GISS, (2021)(Fig.4).

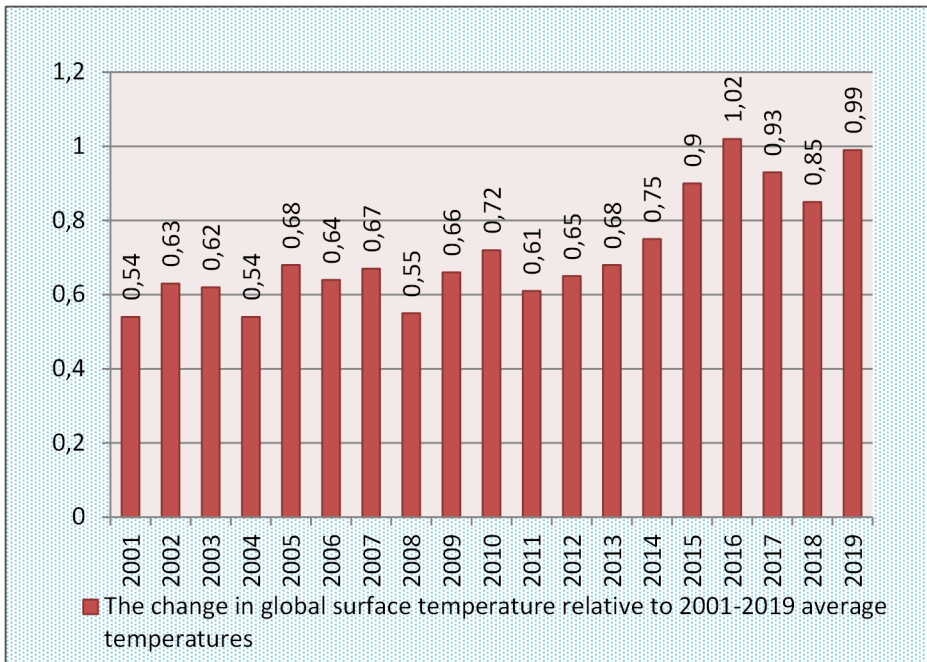


Fig.4. The change in global surface temperature relative to 2001-2019 average temperatures

Source: https://data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/graphs/graph_data/Global_Mean_Estimates_based_on_Land_and_Ocean_Data/graph.txt

Therefore, after analyzing the data from Fig.4, we can affirm that the trend of global temperature is in a continuous increase, at the same time, the last six years (2014-2019) were highlighted through the biggest increases of the average temperature (+0.75°C in 2014, +0.9°C in 2015, +1.02°C in 2016, +0.93 in 2017, +0.85°C in 2018, +0.99°C in 2019), in the period that characterizes the adult period of the Generations X and Y. In another order of ideas, within the nearly two decades, the worldwide average annual temperature grew up with 0.65 °C (NASA/GISS, (2021)). This value may not seem to present any danger to the future that is intended to be a sustainable one, but in the hope that this paper will be read at one point by at least a few of adults of Generation X and Y, I want to clarify this issue, so we will refer to a scenario that will probably be applied in the coming years, namely that of increasing the average annual temperature by 2 degrees Celsius.

According to the IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming, prepared on June 19, 2019, there are various situations related to limiting global warming by 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the average, but to draw attention to the consequences that could appear as a result of global warming, the researchers give us some truthful data regarding a 2 degree Celsius heating compared to the annual average, *„at 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, about 14 percent of Earth’s population will be exposed to severe heatwaves at last one every five years, while at 2 degrees warming that number jumps to 37 percent”* (Buis, A., 2019). The adults of Generation X and Y must urgently environmental measures so that, in the following decades, the temperature should only increase up to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and that thus looking at the whole situation from an optimistic perspective, since at an increase of 2 degrees, living on Earth would be characterized by a multitude of impediments. If these two generations are considered to be obsolete in terms of involvement in environmental issues, at least they should be involved in educating and encouraging the younger generations for saving the environment.

Changes in biodiversity and ecosystems - Moreover, 105,000 species of insects, plants and vertebrates were studied, exposing a comparative presentation of the two situations where the average temperature would increase by 1.5 degrees Celsius, respectively 2 degrees Celsius. Therefore, in the first case, *„6 percent of the insects, 8 percent of the plants and 4 percent of the vertebrates will be their climatically determined geographic range reduced by more than half”*, while in the second case, the scenario would be mostly darker one, namely *„At 2 degrees*

Celsius warming, those numbers jump to 18 percent, 16 percent and 8 percent, respectively” (NASA/GISS, (2021).

Biodiversity and ecosystems are essential conditions for human existence on Earth. We must take into account that, despite the fact that there are fluctuations in terms of increases in average annual temperatures, the trend is towards 1.5 degrees Celsius, added to the average annual temperature, so the day when biodiversity and ecosystems will be compromise, it will become a sad reality. According to Gavin M.C. and collaborators, if biodiversity were lost, it would result in long-term undermining of ecosystem functions and the well-being of human populations (Gavin et al., 2018).

In any case, the gloomy scenarios do not stop here, the current NASA report representing other negative effects on the environment as a result of non-sustainable practices undertaken by the key-human factor, on the environment.

Precipitation changes – We start by mentioning in fact that, in case of a precipitation imbalance, the repercussions will be not only on the environment, but also on the social and economic sectors.

Sea level rise and the occurrence of hazardous weather phenomena are a consequence of intensified climate changes in recent decades due to lack of human attention to the environment. It should be mentioned that as the temperatures rise each year, the waters of the planetary ocean also heat up. Depending on the situation, the increase of precipitation quantities in the areas where tropical cyclones are formed, will culminate with floods and significant disasters. According to Henderson-Sellers et al. in the „*Tropical Cyclones and Global Climate Change: A Post – IPCC Assessment*” (1998), tropical cyclones are the result of the energy obtained by evaporation of water from the oceans, as a result of their gradual heating. The vapors form convective clouds, and ultimately these recondenses into rain when moist air rises and cools to saturation (Henderson et al., 1998).

Therefore, if we wish that in the future we do not face such natural hazards, which by the action of waves and strong winds, especially in coastal areas, culminate with material damages and losses of human lives, that would mean that the current generations, especially Generation X and Y must take responsibility for diminishing global warming.

Floods due to heavy rainfall, must also be mentioned as side effects of environmental disturbances. Imagine what the outcome would be if, in the event of heavy rainfall, the riverbeds would be unable to store all the water received. What would happen to local communities that live in close proximity to permanently flowing watercourses? Surely the houses would

remain abandoned or even destroyed by the floods, drinking water would become contaminated, landslides and soil erosion would also be present, and diseases among the population (Hepatitis A virus) or loss of human life would be creating an even darker outcome.

Another alarming situation we have to mention is that of sea level rising. According to a NASA report, *„sea level rise is caused primarily by two factors related to global warming: the added water from melting ice sheets and the expansion of seawater as it warms”* (NASA/GISS, (2021). Besides that, analyzing the satellite data taken from the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, we can see the obvious trend of sea level rise, with an average increase of 3.3 (\pm 4) mm per year (NASA Global Climate, 2021).

Observing that the environment is in a continuous process of deterioration, we consider it essential to implement a new, revolutionary approach, which will encourage and engage the current generations in environmental issues. In this sense, in the next chapter we wanted to clarify what the friendship between generations and the environment must mean.

3. Why protecting the environment must be understood as a priority nowadays?

„All the possibilities have been tried!”, *„We don't know what else to do...”*, *„It's not up to us!”*. These are negative, even demoralizing attitudes that should not penetrate the thinking of our fellow human beings. Positivity and patience with nature, protecting it from the dangers generated by global polluting activities, must be seen as fundamental priorities for the well-being of the environment, as well as ours.

Exposing data that has a significant impact on environmental degradation should be sufficient to raise awareness of the dangers to which we are exposed now and in the long term, to awaken in us a sense of fear. We believe that the feeling of fear can be a partner in the fight against environmental problems. If there is a feeling of fear about one's health, the fear that hot temperatures can affect crops or floods can destroy the life savings of some of our fellow human beings, only then will there be a general mobilization to take effective action. to save the environment. Regardless of the type of generation we might be talking about, we think that the attitude that each of us must adopt is to get involved, to put our soul into environmental actions, as if we were doing it for our own well-being, happiness and fulfillment.

Surely the impact given by real life situations, the situations set out in the lines above, characteristic of the adult age period of Generation X and Y, and which coincided with the increase of the popularity of the internet,

implicitly of the easier access of people to information, will lead to awareness of the repercussions arising from the environmental issues, and the attempt to change things for the better. We believe that the impact given by real life situations, topical situations, characteristic of the adult age period of Generation X and Y, and which coincided with the increase of the popularity of the internet, implicitly of the easier access of people to information, it will be that of awareness of the repercussions arising from the environmental issues, and the attempt to change things for the better.

This paper is based on data and information that focuses on the situation of the environment in the general spectrum, at global level, not at national, regional or local level, so it would be difficult for people from all over the world to suddenly saying: „*OK, it's enough! From now on we will stop any activity that could harm the environment*”. It would be absurd to have such conceptions, because this aspect would not be achievable, given that the various world economies are based on the consume of oil, coal and natural gases, without which it would be difficult to operate in normal parameters.

However, taking into account the aforementioned and the fact that air, water and soil pollution, as well as other types of pollution, are the basis of climate changes, thus negatively influencing people's health and living conditions, strategic plans should be adopted that present objectives for the sustainable development of the environment. As a perspective on the future of the environment, we are sure that „*change for the better*” will be done gradually, the young people of today being more educated and responsible in their relationship with the environment. „*Our common future*”, a concept established within the WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development) in 1987, must be treated as such, entering into the depth of the terms, the future being not only mine or yours, dear reader, but it is also of the generations to come after us, so if it is a „*common future*”, it does not mean that the responsibilities must be passed from one to the other, like a soccer ball, but all the necessary ones must be undertaken, so that by their own contribution, each individual can bring own contribution in diminishing the harmful effects on the environment.

„*His own contribution*” must be understood as a „*necessity*”, for just as in Maslow's hierarchy, the individual has primary needs such as the need to breathe, the need to eat or the need for hydration, just like these, the protection of the environment must be „*implemented*” by educating the individual from an early age... or in other words, as we like to say, „*the protection of the environment must be understood as a condition of our own existence on earth*” (Maslow, A., 1943).

CONCLUSION

The environmental issues were always present, characterizing for the period in which the generations analyzed in this article appeared in society. At the same time, there was a tendency to neglect the situation of the environment, focusing on rapid and polluting industrial development. However, the different types of generations, since the moment of their appearance, were also characterized by actions aimed at protecting the environment.

During the period of childhood of Generation X and Y, conventions, protocols and debates on environmental issues, not only that they had a qualitative character or a significant number, but through them, an alarm signal was made regarding the fact that the environment is crying for help. Ecological disorders have been multiple and difficult to alleviate, all the more to be stopped altogether, in a relatively short period of time. To create a detailed picture of some of the most important environmental changes, focusing on the years 2001-2019, the period that coincides with that of adults of the Generation X and Y, we managed to present the situation of global temperature, that of changes in biodiversity and ecosystems, but also that of precipitation changes.

The statistical data that characterize the desolate situation of the environment, together with some scenarios that appear to be detached from the apocalyptic movies, had the role of awareness among both the Generations X and Y, as well as the future ones, of the fact that there are repercussions on the environment, as a result of human activities that disturb the balance of nature.

Once the understanding of the phenomenon of climate change worldwide, our subjects have benefited from a series of motivational urges regarding the creation of a sustainable future, a common future that in order to be achievable, needs the conscious involvement of each of us.

References

- Buis, A., (2019), *NASA's Global Climate Change. "A Degree of Concern: Why Global Temperatures Matter."*, Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, Available at <https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2865/a-degree-of-concern-why-global-temperatures-matter>, Accessed on 28 January 2021
- Business Insider, (2017), *Generation Z: Latest Gen Z News, Research, Facts & Strategies*, Available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/generation-z>, Accessed on 26 January 2021
- Clarke, R., Timberlake, L., (1982), *Stockholm plus ten : promises, promises? : the decade since the 1972 UN Environment Conference*, London : International Institute for Environment and Development
- Council of Europe, (1950), *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, as amended by Protocols Nos. 11 and 14, 4 November 1950, ETS 5, Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3b04.html>, Accessed 5 February 2021
- data.worldbank.org, (2021), *Fertility Rate, Total (Births per Woman)*, Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>. Accessed on 26 Jan. 2021
- Davies, J., (2015), *Genos*, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Classics, 22 Dec. 2015, Available at doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.2818, Accessed on January 3, 2021
- García San José, D.I., (2005), *Environmental Protection And The European Convention On Human Rights*, Council Of Europe Pub., Vol 88, p.5, ISBN 92-871-5698-0
- Gavin, M.C.; McCarter, J.; Berkes, F.; Mead, A.T.P.; Sterling, E.J.; Tang, R.; Turner, N.J., (2018), *Effective Biodiversity Conservation Requires Dynamic, Pluralistic, Partnership-Based Approaches*, Sustainability 2018, 10, 1846, Available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10061846>, Accessed on 8 January 2021
- Henderson, S.A., Zhang, H., Berz, G., Emanuel, K., Gray, W., Landsea, C., Holland, G., Lighthill, J., Shieh, S.L., Webster, P., McGuffie, K., (1998), *Tropical Cyclones and Global Climate Change: A Post-IPCC Assessment*, Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society., Vol. 79, No. 1, January 1998 , p. 20, Available at https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fab9/1a8b19d77f40e29572b5feb3e34f53b157fc.pdf?_ga=2.116767174.1518573496.1581590869-1447083078.1581590869, Accessed on November 8, 2020
- IAEA-International Atomic Energy Agency, (1997), *The 1997 Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the 1997 Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage — Explanatory Texts*, Available at https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/P1768_web.pdf, Accessed on 3 February 2021
- Males, M. (2001). *The True 'Great Generation*, LA Times, Available at <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-aug-26-op-38674-story.html>, Accessed on 1 February 2021
- Maslow, A., (1943), *A Theory of Human Motivation*, Originally Published in Psychological Review, 50, P. 370-396
- Mazilu, M., (2007), *Tourism – A Privileged Relation with the Lasting Development*, Revista de Marketing Online – Vol.1, Nr. 4, p 65
- McCrindle, M., (2018), *The ABC of XYZ: Understanding the Global Generations*, p.222
- MetLife Mature Marketing Institute, (2013), *The MetLife Study of the Gen X: The MTV Generation moves into Mid-Life*, p.2-5, Available at:

- http://www.studyinglifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/metlife_study_o
f_gen_x.pdf, Accesed on December 19,2020
- NASA Global Climate, (2021), “*Sea Level | NASA Global Climate Change*”, Climate
Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, Available at [https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-
signs/sea-level](https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/sea-level), Accessed on 4 February 2021
- NASA/GISS, (2021), *Change, NASA Global Climate. “Global Surface, Temperature |
NASA Global Climate Change*”, Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet,
Available at <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/global-temperature>, Accessed on
28 January 2021
- NEA- Nuclear Energy Agency, (1997), *Protocol to Amend the 1963 Vienna Convention on
Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (1997 Vienna Protocol)*, Available at
[https://www.oecd-nea.org/jcms/pl_29285/protocol-to-amend-the-1963-vienna-
convention-on-civil-liability-for-nuclear-damage-1997-vienna-protocol](https://www.oecd-nea.org/jcms/pl_29285/protocol-to-amend-the-1963-vienna-convention-on-civil-liability-for-nuclear-damage-1997-vienna-protocol),
Accessed on 5 February. 2021.
- Nielsen Media Research, (2014), *Millennials: Much Deeper Than Their Facebook Pages*,
Available at [https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2014/millennials-
much-deeper-than-their-facebook-pages/](https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2014/millennials-much-deeper-than-their-facebook-pages/), Accesed on October 30, 2020
- Sheehan, P., (2011), *Greed of Boomers Led Us to a Total Bust*, The Sydney Morning
Herald, 25 Sept. 2011, Available at:
[https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/greed-of-boomers-led-us-to-a-total-
bust-20110925-1krki.html](https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/greed-of-boomers-led-us-to-a-total-bust-20110925-1krki.html), Accesed on January 4, 2021
- The Buffalo News, (2002). *Generation X Reconsidered; 'Slackers' No More. Today's
Young Adults Have Fought Wars Fiercely, Reversed Unfortunate Social Trends
and Are Proving Themselves to be Another “Great Generation”*, Available at
[https://web.archive.org/web/20160911121441/https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1
P2-22449092.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20160911121441/https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-22449092.html)
- Tomonicska, I, (2016), *Modele, concepte și contexte ale istoriei literaturii române
contemporane*, Editura Universității Transilvania din Brașov, editor Rodica Ilie,
Dan Botezatu, p.67-100, ISBN 978-606-19-0779-3
- UN. Department of Public Information, (1992), *Conference on Environment and
Development, editor. Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable
Development ; Rio Declaration on Environment and Development ; Statement of
Forest Principles ; the Final Text of Agreements Negotiated by Governments at
the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), 3 -
14 June 1992, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, 2. print, Department of Public Information,
United Nations, 1993.
- UNODA-United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, (1959), *Antarctic Treaty*,
Available at <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/antarctic/text>, Accesed on
December 20, 2020
- UPOV, (1961), *International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants*,
adopted by Diplomatic Conference, Paris
- WCED - World Commission on Environment and Development, (1987), *Our Common
Future*, Oxford University Press, 1987, p.43, Available at
[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-
future.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf), Accesed on January 3, 2021
- WCED - World Commission on Environment and Development, (1987), *Our Common
Future*. Oxford University Press, 1987, p.300, Available at
[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-
future.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf), Accesed on January 3, 2021

- Williams, A., (2015), *Meet Alpha: The Next 'Next Generation*, The New York Times, 19 Sept. 2015, Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/19/fashion/meet-alpha-the-next-next-generation.html>, Accessed on September 10, 2020
- Williams, J.J., (2014), *Not my Generation, The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Available at <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Generation-Jones/145569>, Accessed on January 1, 2021

NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

Alexandru DOBRESCU, PhD. student at the Faculty of Sciences, Geography Department, University of Craiova, Romania. Important qualifications: master in Tourism and Sustainable Development, licensed in Geography of Tourism, GIS certificate. E-mail address: dobrescu.sorin.alexandru@gmail.com

Loredana DRAGOMIR, PhD. student at the Faculty of Sciences, Geography Department, University of Craiova, Romania. Her thesis centres on the topic of global ecotourism certification systems versus regional certifications. Essential qualifications: master in tourism and sustainable development, licensed in geography of tourism, DELE certificate, ECDL certificate and GIS certificate. Member of tourism research center. E-mail address: loredana.dragomir25@yahoo.com

Robert MALMARE, PhD. student at the Faculty of Sciences, Geography Department, University of Craiova, Romania. Important qualifications: master in Tourism and Sustainable Development, licensed in Geography of Tourism, GIS certificate, teacher in pre-university education, 2017-present. E-mail address: robert.malmare@yahoo.ro

Mirela MAZILU, Univ. Professor, Ph.D. at the Faculty of Sciences, Geography Department, University of Craiova, Romania. She holds a Bachelor Degree in geography from the Faculty of Geography, the University of Bucharest, Bucharest city, Romania in 1984 and Ph.D. Degree in geography from the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, Bucharest city, Romania in 1995. She attended the West University of Timișoara-Center of Excellency Jean Monnet, School of high European comparative studies between 2004 and 2006 and the International summer school "Media and Intercultural Dialogue", organized under the patronage of the International Management Science Institute-Bruxelles in 2006. Became professor in 2009 and now is Ph.D. professor of the University of Craiova, Romania. Has many national and international reseaches, over 15 books published a single author; university manuals; over 150 articles published in the volumes of the national and international Congresses, symposiums and seminars and also in prestigious magazines with CNCSIS range and over 150 participations to scientific events. Also, is affiliated to over 30 International Research Associations and published over 30 articles in international magazines in different fields such as: European integrations, ecology, enviroment protection, tourism etc.. E-mail address: mirelamazilu2004@yahoo.com.