

UNEDITED DRAFT

Generations and Gender Programme:
Goal, Framework, Requisite Data and Research Aims

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Note

This paper is an outcome of the discussions that took place during January-August 2001 among the members of the Consortium Board of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). On several occasions, including the meeting of the Consortium Board held in Rome on 10-11 May 2001 and the meetings involving smaller groups of members of the Board and other staff of the institutions comprising the Consortium, proposals for GGP have been put forward, considered and amended. The results of those deliberations have been incorporated into this paper as well as further developed by the author. Strengths of the proposals contained in the paper derive from the collective efforts of the consortium board members as well as the written contributions to and discussions at the Generations and Gender Meeting (Geneva, 3-5 July 2000). Shortcomings of the paper are solely those of the author.

Preface

In 1999, assisted by its then Advisory Group, the Population Activities Unit (PAU) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) proposed to undertake a new co-operative regional research and data collection project entitled Generations and Gender Programme (GGP).^{*} In June 2000, PAU invited seven European research institutes, university departments and national statistical offices to join the Unit and form a GGP Consortium with a view to helping UNECE develop and promote the programme. A month later, PAU convened the Generations and Gender Meeting (Geneva, 3-5 July 2001) in order to explore with interested national institutions proposals for broad objectives, requisite data and research aims of the programme and have them further developed. Following this meeting and in light of its recommendations, the Consortium has undertaken to develop a concrete set of proposals for a programme goal, a programme framework, requisite data sources and research aims of the programme.

The present paper contains these proposals, while accompanying papers further develop some of them. These papers make the documentation for the First Meeting of the Informal Working Group of the Generations and Gender Programme, which has been convened for 24-25 September 2001 in Budapest. The meeting will be hosted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and held in the context of the programme of work of the Conference of European Statisticians, a UNECE intergovernmental body overseeing PAU's work in the field of demographic analysis. The documentation will provide a basis for deliberations at Budapest.

^{*} Information on the programme is available at <http://www.unece.org/ead/pau/ggp>.

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A. Introduction

During the twentieth century, the family underwent a profound transformation in Europe, the overseas countries of European settlement and in a few countries of non-European cultural background, such as Japan. The changes had their roots in the demographic trends that permeated the industrialised world from the nineteenth century on and, in some instances, since earlier times. The shifts in fertility and mortality left a lasting mark, resulting in a rise of the “beanpole family,” consisting of four and increasingly five generations, each having relatively fewer members (Bengston et al, 1990). The mortality decline, particularly where it continued in the last few decades as a result of improvements in old-age survivorship caused the number of generations to increase. The fertility fall made subsequent generations relatively smaller. Although the underlying demographic changes have been complex and intricacies of the family change numerous, this broad generalisation holds true.

The intricacies in question have been caused, among other things, by the variations in the timing of onset and spread of fertility and mortality decline, in the shifts in fertility and mortality patterns over time, the spread of modern forms of procreation and partnership and novel trends in living arrangements. These underpinnings, which have been far better documented for the second half of the twentieth century than for the first half included during the post-war era the reversal of the trends towards earlier and universal marriage and earlier entry into parenthood, the spread of non-marital cohabitation and extra-marital childbearing, and the increase of prevalence of independent living, particularly among younger and older adults. A number of these developments have started earlier and have been more profound in western Europe and North America than in central and eastern Europe. These developments have not only influenced changes in the size and composition of the family, they have also contributed to shifts in relations within the family, both among members of different generations and between female and male members of the same generations. These various facets of the changes in demographic behaviour and the family have been so pervasive that an

increasing number of European population scholars inspired by Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa (1986) and Van de Kaa (1987) refer to a particular set of them as the second demographic transition.

Scholars of different persuasion have studied the changes in question, according more attention to some of them than to others and approaching them from different disciplinary perspectives. In addition to Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, American scholars, notably Becker (1981) and Easterlin (1976) have set the tone in this field of research. At the heart of their work and the work of their followers have been the debate and inquiry into major forces behind the changes encapsulated by the term second demographic transition. After a quarter of a century of research, rigorous findings remain few and far between. Questions awaiting answers continue to abound. Phrased in broad terms, they include the following. Have cultural and ideational changes been the prime driving forces behind these changes? What have been contributions to them of the profound post-war political, social and economic transformation of western Europe and North America? How has the unprecedented and more intense transformation in central and eastern Europe of the 1990s affected them? What has been the impact of the western welfare state and the state policies in the former socialist countries on these changes?

The study of principal changes in reproductive and partnership behaviour in an international perspective might have made limited progress, however, the advancement of knowledge of the fundamental changes in the family and family relations and their underpinnings in a cross-national perspective has been certainly less impressive. This type of research has been confined to a relatively small number countries, the most noted among which is the United State. As a result, for much of Europe, documenting and explaining recent and ongoing shifts in the family and family relations still lies in the future.

The Generations and Gender Programme will strive to advance knowledge in an international perspective of the dynamics of selected aspects of family-related demographic behaviour and two prime types of relations within the family. The relations

in question are the child-parent and partner-partner relations considered from the vantage point of individuals of different years of age, ranging from those in their late teens to persons approaching advanced old age. Specifically, the aim will be to broaden the understanding of underpinnings of behaviour bringing about the onset of these relations, of changes in the nature and content of those relations, and behaviour resulting in the end of the relations. The behaviour and the changes will be accorded approximately equal importance. The interest in the relations derives in part from the fact that their nature and content are dimensions of well-being of the individuals who are bound through them. Their well-being will be of interest in their own right.

This paper consists of four sections. The first section offers a statement on the goal of the Generations and Gender Programme. The second section proposes a framework of the programme, distinguishing three levels, namely the micro, mezzo and the macro levels. In particular, it discusses aspects of the child-parent and partner-partner relations considered of importance in light of the programme goal. Also, the section discusses broad factors that may have an impact on the relations. As perceived in the framework, these factors may operate directly on the relations or through intergenerational relationships and gender relationships. The third section discusses the various types of data that will be needed in order to support research grounded in the framework. The fourth section sketches out research aims of the programme consistent with the goal. The emphasis in this section is on possible research on influence of intergenerational and genders relationships on the child-parent and partner-partner relations.

B. Goal

The goal of the programme is an international comparative study of the dynamics of child-parent and partner-partner relations of women and men of different years of age placed within broader changes taking place in their households, families and support networks. The focus of the study will be on: (a) the coming into being of these relations through birth and adoption, the onset of stepparenthood and foster parenthood, as well as

through the formation of partnerships; (b) changes in the nature and content of the relations as aspects of individual well-being; and (c) the coming to an end of the relations through death, union dissolution and other forms of separation. The relations will be studied within the context of proximate and remote environments of the individual comprising, *inter alia*, intergenerational and gender relationships. The study will cover European and North American countries and pertain to the decades straddling the beginning of the new century. A related objective will be the monitoring of on-going demographic behaviour and family developments, such as the spread of non-marital cohabitation and stepfamilies and changes in family size, composition and forms by means of comparable descriptive statistics. The study of the relations and the monitoring of relevant behaviour and developments will be supported by the collection, standardisation, dissemination and analysis of micro- and macro-level data from the various sources: a new generation of demographic surveys, relevant administrative records, the 2000-round population and housing censuses, and a mixture of social, economic and institutional statistics.

C. Framework

The purpose of this section is to set out a framework of the programme. In what follows, we first consider the child-parent and partner-partner relations and their various aspects that appear relevant to the programme. In particular, we discuss the content and nature of these relations of the individuals involved in them as they move through the life course. Then, we consider the environment within which these relations arise, change and dissolve. We chose to refer to the environment as context, distinguishing proximate and remote parts of the context as well as two specific domains of the context that are of particular interest. The two are referred to as intergenerational relationships and gender relationships. Each set of relationships will be considered and an attempt will be made to explore possible influences running from them to the child-parent and partner-partner relations.

1. Relations

A child-parent relation may be a biological, social, step or a foster relation. It may begin with a birth, adoption, formation of a union with a child's parent or a placement of a child under foster care of an adult. The union, the onset of which gives rise to a step child-parent relation may be a marriage or, as is increasingly the case, a consensual union. (Whether a child brought into a consensual union by his or her parent can be referred to as a stepchild of the parent's partner probably depends on law.) The relation may end with, among others, a death, another type of dissolution of a union or an end of fostering. Biological child-parent relations are preponderant, while step relations, no matter how defined in law, are quantitatively significant in settings where union dissolution and reformation are common. The opposite is true of child-parent relations that begin with adoption or fostering.

A partner-partner relation also may assume different forms. It may be a conjugal relation, a consensual one, which does or does not involve co-residence, or any other of a growing variety of "fuzzy" stable intimate relations. It may be a heterosexual or homosexual relation, with the latter type being legally recognised in a small but growing number of countries. The relation may start with a marriage, a beginning of living together or living apart together or any one of less easily identifiable events bringing two people into a stable intimate relation. It may end with a divorce, *de facto* or *de jure* separation after marriage, change in the living arrangement of the couple in a consensual union or by a more or less identifiable separation after a period of stable intimacy outside of a conjugal or consensual union.

Like any other inter-personal relation, the child-parent or partner-partner relation involves transfers of tangible items, such as money, assets, goods, services and living space, or intangibles, such as time, advice, companionship and affection. These kinds of transfers may, however, be absent, as a relation may be characterised by a dislike, conflict or abuse, which we can be perceived as transfers in their own right. Combinations of the former and latter transfers are possible; for example, a relation may

exist where a conflict takes place hand in hand with a transfer of assets. Items being exchanged may flow in either direction. Some of these flows may be rooted in voluntary actions, while others may be a result of legally binding obligations. The individuals involved in a relation can be both givers and recipients although not necessarily of the same categories of items at any given time. Implications of the transfers for the two and their well-being may be quite different. Moreover, each can have his or her own perspective on giving and receiving involved. The assessment of specific aspects of the relation by one member of the dyad, therefore, may be quite different from that of the other. This can particularly be true with respect to transfers of intangibles, such as flows of affection.

Some relations endure far longer than others and, as a result, can undergo major transformations. Biological child-parent relations along with marital partner-partner relations in societies still unaccustomed to divorce or separation are prime examples of long-lasting relations. Their durability has been brought about by gains in co-survival of individuals involved. These relations, in particular their nature and content, some as a matter of course, undergo major changes over time. Thus, the biological child-parent relation cannot but change as it starts with a dependence of the child upon the parent and may end with a reliance of the parent on the child. The conjugal relations also undergo transformations, which may be related to children – their arrival and nurturing as well as departure from the parental home – and a host of other reasons. The step child-parent relations and partner-partner relations within consensual unions are often more short-lived. As long as they endure, the potential for change is there. The corollary of the change of the relations over time is that the nature and content of any given relation at different points in the life courses of the members of the dyad can be considerably different.

The relations in question interact and interactions may be numerous. Some of the interactions may be simple, other more or less complex. The simplicity can be illustrated by considering the case where a woman with a single child enters into a conjugal relation with a childless man. The act of marriage signifies a start of a partner-partner relation of

the two, the woman and the man, and a beginning of a step child-parent relation for the other dyad, the child and the man. The complexities may be substantial, however. To continue with the same example, the onset of the two relations and the way they change can increase or dampen chances for the couple to have a child of their own. And if and when, that child is born, the formerly established relations of the three may change in a variety of ways. To make things even more complex, death of the women may lead to a redefinition of the relations among the surviving three. How events giving rise to and/or ending relations interact as well as how the events and the relations interact is of key interest.

a. The child-parent relation

The relation typically begins with a birth or some other form of onset of the relation between an adult person and a young child.¹ An important distinguishing feature of the relation early on is a dependence of the child on the parent that is likely to be more profound than a dependence of the parent on the child. The parent invests in many different ways into the child, transferring to him or her a variety of tangibles and intangibles. These include money to pay for food and clothing, living space, care and other items. The transfers typically add up to major monetary, emotional, time and other costs that can be spread over a long period of time. The period may be shortened due to a break-up of what was, for example, a step or foster relation. Irrespective of the length of the period, for the parent, this may be a period of most intense giving during his or her lifetime. At the same time, the child gives companionship and affection to the parent, the value of which can be sufficiently high to justify large parental investments in the child. Many of the parent-to-child transfers taper off or come to an end as nurture ends, which may not be a well identifiable event, or as a result of a break-up of the relation.

¹ In relatively rare but growing number of instances, the formation of a child-parent relation brings two adults together. This happens when a biological parent of an adult person enters into a partnership and, in the process, that same adult enters a child-parent relation with the parent's partner.

After the nurture is over and the child is by and large on his or her own, the relation may flourish, languish or perhaps just lay dormant. The now adult child may undertake a family project of his or her own. This and/or other pursuits in his or her early or later adult life may help keep the child-parent bond firm. Transfers may continue in either direction and possibilities for child-parent interactions remain numerous. It will suffice to mention just a few of these. The parent may be called upon to help the child find a job. He or she may assist with meeting housing requirements of the child by making it possible for the child to continue living with the parent. Alternatively, the parent may take up the cost, fully or in part, of independent accommodation of the child. The parent may provide day-care for child's offspring and so forth. The child, in turn, can continue to be a source of companionship and affection. Depending on his or her economic circumstances and those of the parent, child's transfers to the parent also may include money, goods and services.

If the relation survives into the parent's old age, the mutual interdependence existing between the dyad may undergo change. Now it is the parent who may experience a growing need for transfers from the child and the need may have various causes. It may be linked to the financial conditions, health status, family situation and other circumstances of the parent. Transfers from the child to the parent, to the extent that the child can afford them, may favourably affect the well-being of the parent. Thus, regular child-to-parent money transfers may compensate for parent's inadequate income. Bringing the parent into the child's home may help keep the parent's costs of living in check. Alternatively, this may help the parent, if in ill health, disabled and/or frail more easily cope with challenges of daily leaving. Visits to the parent to keep him or her company may contribute to the well-being of the aged parent. Transfers in the opposite direction can also involve a variety of items. For example, a well-to-do parent may regularly supplement what may be an insufficient income of the child or make available to the child and his or her family one of his or her apartments. As the relation draws to a close or after it ends through death, parent's assets may, at least, in part go to the child.

b. The partner-partner relation

The formation of a union involving two persons, no matter how we choose to define it ushers a partner-partner relation, which may take on one of several different forms. A relation that involves young people typically begins when either partner is childless. Such a relation is devoid of complexities that may arise from the presence of children. If the relation is, however, precipitated by a pregnancy, the impending arrival of the child may well impact on it, particularly in settings where prevailing norms do not condone pre-marital conceptions. In childless partner-partner relations, no matter whether these involve younger or older people, the couple may have considerable freedom to arrange the relation the way they see it fit, choosing one type of union over others and making arrangements within the union to its liking. Needless to say, different constraints, such as those imposed by finances, available housing and norms may be at work, however, constraints associated with offspring, particularly their nurture, are absent. Some of the major transfers taking place between the partners, such as those involving money and time may largely depend on whether the two make a single- or double-earner couple.

A childless partner-partner relation may be a very long-lasting relation; an example of such a relation is a conjugal relation that endures into old age of the partners. Change in its nature and content may be occasioned by a protracted involuntary childlessness that may not be to the liking of one or both of the partners, by a transition from work to retirement or by any among a host of other possible reasons. Some of these may precipitate its end. A childless relations may of course evolve into a different relation – a living apart together cohabitation may turn into a co-residential cohabitation or a marriage – and the relation of the partners may acquire a different nature and content. This may or may not be a prelude to a transition to parenthood. For individuals and couples who eventually enter parenthood, the time spent in single or successive childless relations has in recent decades grew longer.

A partner-partner relation where the couple opts for a transition to parenthood is likely to be influenced in many ways by the presence and nurture of children. Raising a child is resource-intensive and by its very nature may necessitate a revamping of partner-to-partner transfers that have existed before and, more broadly, a change in the partner-partner relation. A corollary of this may be a need to revise what have been an original work-family-leisure arrangements of the couple. For example, money is now needed to underwrite the nurture costs and thereby may be scarce to pay for leisure activities. One of the parents may need to reduce the hours worked in order to be at home to care for the child. Alternatively, if it wishes to maintain the same material living standard as before, the couple may choose to work longer hours, outsourcing childcare and household chores. No matter what adjustments are made, the partner-partner relation is likely to change after a child or children have been added to the family. During the long years of child nurture, further changes are likely to follow. These may strengthen the partnership, improving the well-being of the couple, if and when, as it is often the case, children strengthen the bond between the partners.

Once the nurture is over and the child or children are on their own, the partner-partner relation may be in for a fresh start. The offspring may continue to co-reside with the parents well into their late twenties, as is frequently the case in south European countries. Nevertheless, the resource-intensive nurture is behind the couple and the partners may now modify the work-family-leisure arrangements as well as their relation. This can be influenced by a transition to retirement, no matter whether it is a gradual or an abrupt one or involves one or both partners. Freedom to change the relation may be greater now than the one enjoyed after the nurture began, as some of the constraints, such as those pertaining to finances or living space, may not apply with the same force as before. This may have a favourable effect on the well-being of the couple. The time constraint may, however, remain binding, as children may continue to exert demands on the parents, while the latter may also see their own ageing parents increasing demands on their time. In particular, the female partner may be called upon to provide care to both grandchildren and parents. As the couple continues to age, the relation is bound to undergo further change, which may become profound as one or both partners experience

ill health, disability and/or frailty. Before or after one of the two dies, his or her survivor is likely to see a full or partial transfer of the assets, if any, of the other. More often than not, the surviving partner becomes a sole owner of what the two used to jointly own.

2. Context

The behaviour of individuals pertaining to child-parent and partner-partner relations takes place within and interacts with the environment in which the individuals live. This environment, which we call context, can be thought of as comprising of different tiers, ranging from the one that is very close to the individual, such as the individual's household to a very distant tier, the example of which is his or her country. Two groups of such tiers will be recognised here and these will be referred to as proximate and remote contexts of the individual. The former will comprise the household, family and the support network of the individual. In the case where the person has a partner, the proximate context will also include the partner's family and network. (For the sake of simplicity, we assume that the individual and the partner belong to the same household.) The families and networks of the two may overlap to a lesser or greater degree. The remote context will encompass the continuum ranging from the community of the individual, over the region to which this belongs, to his or her country. Where a partner exists, in most instances, his or her remote context will coincide with that of the individual. This may not be the case where the two live apart together.

Related to the perception of the context as consisting of the two broad strata is recognition of three levels, namely the micro, mezzo and the macro levels. The mezzo and macro levels are viewed here as coinciding with the individual's (and partner's) proximate and remote contexts. The terms 'mezzo level' and 'proximate context' will be used interchangeably as will be the terms 'macro level' and 'remote context.' The micro level will refer to the individual's parent-child and partner-partner relations. The explicit recognition of these levels is intended to open possibilities for multi-level analyses, accommodating, in addition to the usual micro and macro levels, the intermediate, mezzo level.

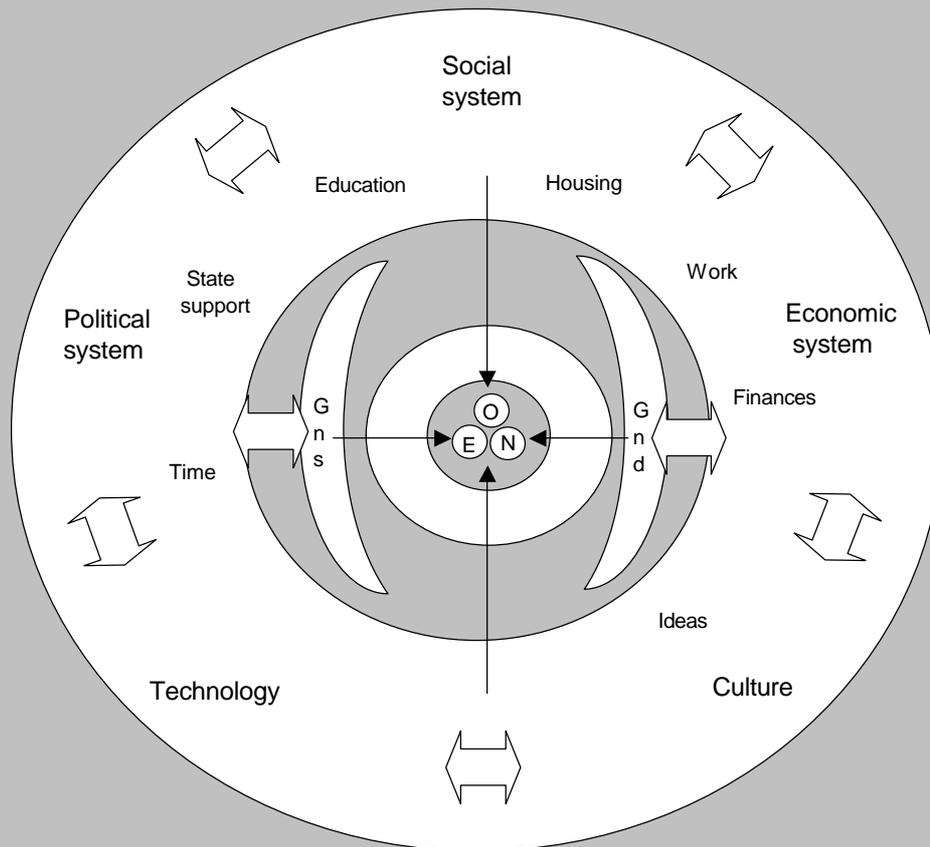
Moreover, two domains of the proximate and remote contexts are explicitly acknowledged. As indicated earlier, these are intergenerational relationships and gender relationships. Both classes of the relationships are shaped by and in turn influence the broad setting within which economic, social, political, cultural and technological forces operate, interacting among themselves. These forces influence groups of factors deemed relevant to the study of the relations on which the programme focuses. These factors, ranging from household finances and, education to work and ideas - norms, values and attitudes - are perceived as influencing child-parent and partner-partner relationships directly as well as through intergenerational and gender relations. This broad scheme adopted for the programme framework is depicted in Figure 1.

a. Factors

We next turn to considerations on how the relevant factors and the two classes of relationships may impact on child-parent and partner-partner relations. In these considerations, a variety of circumstances will be viewed as having a bearing on coming into being, changes in and coming to an end of these relations. These will include, *inter alia*, opportunities and constraints that individuals face when considering and making choices as well as, more specifically, benefits and costs associated with alternative choices. As opportunities and constraints and benefits and costs often cannot be measured with accuracy, particularly in the face of imperfect information, their subjective assessments have an impact, too. Also, as considerations of what constitutes conditions required for making specific choices do influence decisions concerning them, these will be discussed, too.

Economic, social and political changes along with shifts in culture and technology influence groups of factors that, in turn, impact on child-parent and partner-partner relation dynamics. Inspired by Hobcraft and Kiernan (1995), among these factors we include, among others, finances, education, work, time and ideas. As public policies also play a role, we explicitly account for state support to the individual and the family. We

Figure 1



Gns = Intergenerational relationships
 Gnd = Gender relationships

O = Onset of relation
 E = End of relation
 N = Nature and content of relation

recognise that the Hobcraft-Kiernan framework has been proposed in order to contribute to the understanding of the transition to parenthood in Europe, namely to only one of the events of interest to this programme. We think that by expanding their framework we can arrive at a framework for the programme. Moreover, we believe that it is wiser to opt for a broad, eclectic framework rather than for a particular theoretical perspective and, in the process, distance the programme from what Lesthaeghe (1998) calls a “disciplinary soccer game.” We next turn to the factors that we consider having a bearing on the child-parent and partner-partner relations.

i Finances

Supporting a younger family, particularly raising children entails major costs over long time periods. A large share of these costs is borne by individuals in spite of the fact that in many countries the state covers much of the cost of education and health care of the young. Supporting a family of older persons also involves major expenditures, especially where old-age survival has greatly improved, as has been the case in the West since the 1960s. A disproportionate share of costs of older people are borne by the state, however, this is changing in many countries as the state increasingly promotes employer and individual pension programmes and other private old-age support schemes.

As the financial responsibility of building a family rests with an individual or couple, financial constraints faced by those embarking on the project may be real and initially severely binding. Parents of younger adults and/or other members of the broader family may financially assist it as may the state. However, the support, particularly the one deriving from the kin is typically meant to be neither long-term nor substantial. Hence, earnings of one, preferably both members of the couple embarking on or engaged in family building, now and in the future matters. Sufficient earnings, especially if these are expected with some certainty to continue into the future can facilitate longer-term commitments, which are a precondition for family building. In particular, these may make a consensual union more stable, pave the way for a marriage and/or lead to a decision to have a first or another child and in the final analysis contribute to the well-

being of the persons involved. Where this precondition is not met, the postponement of one or more of these critically important steps in one's life is both rational and likely.

Money matters later in life, too, and has a bearing on steps contemplated and/or taken. For instance, a middle-aged woman without a steady and/or sufficient income, but with one or two dependent children may find it financially disadvantageous to leave an unsatisfactory marriage. A divorce for such woman would typically mean a cut in her economic well-being. Unlike such a woman, a married, childless, professional woman with a high and steady income may relatively easily end an inadequate union. For such a woman, financial benefits of a separation may be major, costs minor and gains in well-being substantial. To take another example, an older, married, employed man, if he had a choice, may weight financial benefits and costs of continuing to work rather than retiring. And he may well do that together with his partner. His current earnings, his prospective retirement income and any income that his partner may have and/or may become entitled to are all likely to enter into the calculus and affect a decision to continue working or retire.

The calculus at any point in the life course does not solely depend on what people earn through work, but also is a function of other income they received and, in the case of need, on their savings, if any. Moreover, it depends on their expectations regarding their future income and its purchasing power. If this were not so, spending behaviour of consumers would not be influenced by their confidence in the economy. Indeed, the public is sensitive to the state of the economy and perceptions of future economic prospects. Individuals, couples and households considering major steps must perforce think about what the future, short- or long-term, holds for them and how in retrospect they may be judging specific steps if they were to take them. In spite of imperfect information or because of it, this may particularly be true in the case of irreversible events such as becoming a parent or having another child.

ii. Education

Life-long learning is a relatively new long-term goal in parts of the industrialised world, particularly in some European Union countries. Attaining the goal will probably take many years to achieve. In the meantime, education and work will remain largely segregated. Today, young people typically first complete education and then enter the labour market looking for jobs for which they have trained. This is not to say that some young people do not work while pursuing education. However, what they take on are often temporary, non-career jobs bringing money needed to support studies and/or leisure. Also, some return to school or pursue additional training after completing a degree and finding a relatively steady job. This may be required after it becomes obvious that the skills acquired may not be those expected by employers.

The young as well as their parents consider education as a *sine qua non* for professional success in life. Private and public sectors see it as an essential precondition for having well educated and trained labour force, especially at present when the domestic labour force in many countries is stagnating or beginning to shrink. Therefore, all parties concerned have contributed to the recent increases in enrolment and ever longer years spent in education. And this applies to both young women and men, with the former gradually outnumbering and outperforming the latter in a number of countries. Past gender inequalities in education, where women lagged behind men are increasingly being reversed. This gives women an edge in life and has many implications for family behaviour.

Education may be a precondition for a successful, well-remunerated career. Moreover, it may open opportunities for other pursuits in life, including long-term commitments, particularly the irreversible commitment to parenthood. As it is typically a full time activity, it is largely incompatible with family building, including marriage and parenthood. No wonder, therefore, that the expansion of education, specifically of tertiary education in the last few decades went hand and glove with a postponement of first unions, particularly marriages and entry into parenthood. Needless to say, the postponements have not been solely occasioned by the spread of education. In some countries, other factors have been responsible as well, such as limited parental and/or

state financial support to young people and lack of readily available and affordable housing.

iii. Work

The transition from education to work and economic independence may be anywhere between short and smooth and protracted and difficult. How individuals fare during this transition depends on labour market conditions, which vary widely among the industrialised countries. These conditions, particularly as they refer to young adults, have been unfavourable to them during the last few decades in southern Europe and more recently in central and eastern Europe. Stable jobs and earnings are often important prerequisites for long-term commitments - marriage and parenthood in particular. It is all but natural that poor labour market circumstances for the young result in the postponement of these commitments. Such conditions may, however, be less of an impediment to relatively changeable arrangements typical of co-residential cohabitation and living apart together.

Economic independence from the family associated with work and earnings it brings has been long cherished in many societies by young men. Also, more in parts of north-western Europe than, say, in southern Europe, young men have been expected, even pressured by the family to achieve early economic independence so that they can move on with their own lives, including building families of their own. Recently, young women have been catching up with their male peers or, in some societies, have approached, if not achieved parity with them. This has been a consequence of their higher rates of participation in education and the labour market. For many of them economic independence has become a new important objective, which when achieved shields them from an inferior position in partner-partner relations and the family. Pursuing this objective, mainly through work following education also contributed to the postponement of long-term commitments, in particular occasioning later entry into marriage and motherhood. This, however, in some countries did not prevent them from cohabitating, involving co-residence or living apart together.

Pursuing work, particularly a professional career places present-day young women on a footing different from that of their mothers. It makes them increasingly equal and sometime superior to men, enabling them to have a major say regarding the onset of partner-partner and child-parent relations and the nature and content of the relations. In unions where both partners work away from home – these unions among younger people predominate in many industrialised societies – women also have a greater say regarding domestic work, including the division of responsibilities, labour and roles within the household, as well as concerning leisure time and activities.

At the middle and later stages of the life course, the male bread-winner/female home-keeper-type of union is more prevalent than at the earlier stage, however, much less so in countries that were in the vanguard of bringing women into the labour force in large numbers. For example, in the Nordic countries and in central and eastern Europe this type of union is considerably less common than in southern Europe. This has a variety of implications for partner-partner and child-parent relations. Where women do not work away from home, the home and care of children are their prime responsibility. Moreover, it is women rather than men that are kin-keepers, particularly in these circumstances (Hagestad, 2000).

iv. Time

Unlike money, time poses constraints that cannot be relaxed. Hobcraft and Kiernan (1995) state that “[t]here is only 24 hours in a day in which to carry out all of our activities. Apart from sleep, most of our activities in a modern industrial society revolve around the triad of work, family and leisure.” This is particularly true of couples, with or without children, where both are in paid employment. Working couples with children and working lone parents, the majority of whom are mothers, face in their daily lives challenges of “high-pressure” time allocation. Working away from home, which may entail time-consuming commuting, raising children, ensuring that the home is properly run and maintained, and pursuing leisure activities add up to what is a difficult balancing act. Also, this requires stamina and entails major expenses of mental and physical energy.

This is particularly true in the case of professional couples with children living in large urban centres.

This modern life style has many ramifications for family building. Those who have not yet experienced it may wonder whether they can cope with time demands it may place on them. Therefore it may well be that late home-leaving, where parents just condone it or actively support it is partly a consequence of perceptions on part of the young that replacing the comfort of the parental home by rigors of having a family of one's own is not something to press for, at least not for a while. Similarly, living with a partner in a consensual union, while stretching education beyond what is necessary, combining it with irregular work and continuing to depend on financial support of the parents and postponing parenthood may perfectly be rational for a young adult. In brief, time demands the modern family living entail probably make young people cautious about leaping into family building, postponing it in the process. This applies to forming a stable union and even more so to having a first and particularly a second child.

Once the family is in place, the time pressure may test, possibly to the limit, the partner-partner and child-parent relations. It may have a variety of consequences, including inadequate care of the child or children, especially where childcare facilities and services are not readily available and/or affordable and relatives are not able to assist with childcare. It may also cause an under-performance at school, resulting in tensions within the family and so on. These difficulties may make parents think twice about having another child. The relations may deteriorate to the point where the continuation of the family becomes untenable, leading to its break-up. Whether these scenarios actually take place probably greatly depend on commitments and solidarity between the partners and their determination to overcome the strains of modern family life through various adjustments.

Time is not only scarce for younger parents. It may also be a major constraint for middle-aged parents in situations where filial obligations towards ageing, ailing parents grow while obligations towards own still-dependent children are not abating. Although

these children may be in their twenties or older, their needs for parental support may be multiple, ranging from assistance with completing education or finding a job, to help related to building families of their own or care of their children. Time pressures in such situations may particularly be acute for working women of the “Janus generation.” Competing demands on their time may have multiple effects on partner-partner and child-parent relations involving members of the three generations. Difficulties with meeting those demands may strain the relations, resulting in perceptions of the relations that possibly may have more to do with unrealistic expectations than lack of goodwill.

Time allocation within the family is not entirely at the discretion of those deciding on it. Employers set working hours while employees, especially where they are not unionised, adapt. In particular, under pressure of the spreading global competition, businesses are increasingly introducing working hours at variance with the still prevalent daytime eight-hour work shift. The “new economy” offers a growing number of services around the clock and this demands new flexibility on part of workers, including, at the extreme, acceptance to be “on call.” Those in need of work, who make a vast majority, may have no choice but to accept these conditions. School authorities decide on school hours and in many countries these hours are anachronistic. They may be shorter than the working hours of the parents and sometimes may allow for a mid-day break that is incompatible with the prevalent two-earner pattern of family life. Shop owners set opening hours in accordance with relevant regulations and these are in some countries or communities outdated, too. For example, on weekdays, shopping may have to be squeezed within an hour or two after many employees leave the workplace for the day.

v. Housing

Affordable and adequate housing is one of the basic prerequisites of the family life and individual well-being. It may facilitate the onset of partner-partner and child-parent relations and enable those relations to develop more smoothly. In particular, such housing enables young people to leave the parental home, form unions and become parents earlier rather than later. Conversely, lack or limited supply of such housing can frustrate transitions to partnership and parenthood. Additionally, it may make parents

decide against another child or postpone having the child until housing prospects or actual conditions improve. Moreover, if inadequate, housing may place all kinds of strains on these relations. For example, a severe crowding and lack of privacy may constrain intimacy between parents, complicating their relation. It may make children under-perform in school, straining their relations with parents and so forth.

Affordable and adequate housing may make relations between the three generations more congenial. It enables independent living of young couples with children, limiting possible interfering of parents into their lives. Under these circumstances, young couples can arrange their lives according to their own preferences and without much regard for what the parents may think appropriate for them and their children. At the same time, independent living is likely to make the parents less accessible when their assistance, for example, with childcare is needed. The parents also are more likely to be better off, as demands on their many resources, including living space are less. This may be a reason for the middle-aged people to report an increase in satisfaction with family life after children have left the parental home (Coleman, 1998).

At the later stages of the life course, dwelling space is typically relatively larger than before children leave home, according improved well-being (Gaymu, 1999). This, however, is likely to go hand in hand with a decline in relative comfort. As housing ages, its quality may deteriorate. In addition, money may not be available to upgrade it to catch up with improving housing standards. As a result, when compared with younger people, the elderly are typically worse off in terms of housing amenities they enjoy. A part of the reason is that they by and large reside in housing of older vintages. Also, they are more likely to live in rural areas, where housing standards are often inferior to those in urban centres. When infirmity sets in, adaptations to housing that is required in order to successfully cope with increasingly difficult activities of daily living may not be feasible for financial and other reasons.

Decisions that people take with respect to their family life, with its many long-term implications do not necessarily only depend on their current housing conditions.

They are also influenced by what can reasonably be expected with regard to future housing conditions. These expectations cannot be but based on information that people have about the housing market or, where such a market does not exist, as is still the case in many central and east European countries, about the housing sector. The state of the housing market/sector and changes it may be undergoing, therefore, provide a basis for taking relevant decisions. The state and the changes may pertain to the access to and conditions under which housing credits can be secured, to vacancy rates and rental structures for the rental sections of the housing market/sector, to change in the size and composition (own-occupied versus rental) of the housing stock and so forth.

vi. Ideas

Rules and norms partially constrain ideas, tastes and preferences and can, in turn, often after a lag, be influenced by them. The interplay between these two sets of forces that pertain to family behaviour and relations has in recent decades travelled a longer distance in some parts of the industrialised world than in others. The reciprocal influence of the two also has taken different courses in seemingly similar societies, which upon closer inspection often reveal diverse cultural traditions. This, in view of the proponents of the second demographic transition has greatly influenced and continues to affect family behaviour and patterns.

Norms and, in some instances, rules on when to enter a union and whether that union can or cannot be anything but marriage, if it is to be considered legal, continue to vary widely across industrialised societies. The same applies to having children out of wedlock and less often to certain methods of birth control, such as induced abortion and contraceptive sterilisation. Norms in some countries and legislation in a few respectively discourage or prohibit divorce and legal separation. Same-sex unions are not legally recognised in most societies. These constraints, where they exist, are challenged by individuals, groups and sometimes political parties who perceive paternalistic stance of parents, community, society, and/or the state as unwarranted, if not as an outright infringement on individual liberties and rights.

At the root of the challenge may be what has been described as the “assertive individualism” (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988), which calls into question authority per se, be it that of parents, community, church or the state. Whether and when to enter a union and what kind of union, if and when to become a parent and have another child and so forth are solely up to the individual and/or his or her partner rather than some higher authority to decide on. The same is true whether or not to break the existing union or the family and start a new one as well as whether to maintain a relation, say, with one’s child above and beyond what is mandated by law. Irrespective of whether or not the individualism has decisively pushed the limits supposedly imposed by norms and rule, the right of individuals to decide on what may be the best for them in the family domain is upheld or sometimes just tolerated by parents, society, community and the state. Doing otherwise would be tantamount to challenging fundamentals of modern democracies.

Values and attitudes shaped through the advent and spread of the individualism are considered by some to have a major bearing on family behaviour and relations. According to a view supported by research findings, values and attitudes exert an influence on family behaviour (Lesthaeghe and Moors, 1995). In turn, values and attitudes are influenced by behaviour. These two-way effects operate at the individual level. The feedback may operate at a group level, too. Accumulation of a particular type of behaviour across individuals may influence values and attitudes of those who have not yet engaged in it, inducing them to embrace it, which in turn contributes to the accumulation of behaviour.

vii Technology

Until modern times biology has been placing various constraints on demographic behaviour and outcomes and, through these, on the family behaviour and relations. These constraints have been increasingly softened as a result of the advent of modern medical technologies over the last several decades. The pace of technological innovation has been quickening and our control over biology can only be expected to grow. This has an

increasing bearing on how and under what circumstances life begins and on how and under what conditions it ends.

Recent advances in medical technology have altered and continue to alter the ability of individuals and couples to avert a conception or birth as well as to effect them under conditions of subfecundity or sterility. The means of averting a conception or birth are at present far greater than those of bringing them about when nature fails the woman or the man. These means thus play a role in their own right in the onset of the biological child-parent relation, reducing or increasing its likelihood. However, whether or not they are actually issued by those in need of them in order to achieve a desired outcome is subject to a variety of constraints. The knowledge of, access to and affordability of them all matter and these vary widely across societies and, within these, among groups of population.

New medical technologies also influence capacity of individuals to maintain their health and functional ability. They play a role particularly in later stages of life when degenerative diseases and disability are far more likely to occur than earlier in life. In the process, they contribute to co-survival of family members, including those of children and parents and of partners. In other words, they make longer-lasting child-parent and partner-partner relations possible. Also, they add to the quality of co-survival and enhance well-being of individuals as well as contribute to the quality of the relations. As with technologies influencing reproduction, their contribution in many instances can be only latent. The knowledge of, access to and affordability of treatments their application enables differ across societies and groups.

viii. State support

An unprecedented growth of state support to individuals and families has been a distinguishing feature of post-war developments throughout the industrialised world (Gauthier, 1996). It has been achieved through major social and economic reforms

pursued since the 1950s by the governments in the West and East alike. Objectives have been multiple, including improvements of economic security of individuals and families and making it possible for them, couples with children in particular, to better cope with requirements of the family life in the face of increasing demands on family members to study and work. The development has resulted in many new legislation, institutions, programmes and policies. Among these are modern family laws, public pay-as-you-go pension schemes, unemployment programmes and child-care policies. These have varied and continue to differ across the industrialised world.

Effects of legislation, institutions, programmes and policies on family behaviour and relations are widely acknowledged but remain by and large ill understood. An attempt at coming to grips with them, no matter how difficult this may be, requires that the different types of state support to individuals and families, especially the major ones, be explicitly considered. With this in mind, we consider below how the various key types of state support may influence family behaviour and relations. While doing so, we recognise that the support modifies opportunities and constraints individuals and families face and, in particular, influences cost and benefits of the various steps they consider and take.

State financial assistance to individuals and families varies in type and size. It may take the form of public transfers and/or tax relieves. Either of the two or both simultaneously can be used to achieve the same objective of financially assisting families with children. Where the support to these families has the form of transfers, it may be given to all families irrespective of their economic status or only to those that meet specified income criteria. Child allowances or child-related family allowances may be flat or related to parity. Other variations on the theme are possible, the example of which is an allowance tied to the age of the child. Like tax relieves linked to children, the allowances help relax the financial constraint of families.

This may have an effect on a decision to become a parent or have another child. If there is an effect, it may be a weak one, influencing the timing of a birth rather than the

ultimate number of children. Whether much more generous allowances than those existing today in countries where they are relatively high could have an impact on the family size is an open question. It is, however, reasonable to conjecture that public transfers to families with children help them more easily meet substantial costs of child-raising and, in the process, make family life, including child-parent and partner-partner relations more manageable. Moreover, they may also make families more stable, that is making the relations more durable.

Public transfers to older people, anticipated or actual, are likely, as suggested earlier, to have influence on decisions to retire rather than continue working. Where the prospective retirement income is assured and is not much lower than income from employment, incentives to retire and enjoy what retirement brings while health may still be good are probably substantial. Adequate retirement income is also likely to render parent-child and partner-partner relations more satisfying than otherwise. For example, if there are children who may need financial assistance, they may be more easily helped if the pension and/or other retirement income is not limited, possibly making the child-parent relation stronger. Also, under these circumstances, the retired individual may enjoy his relation with the partner more fully than when family finances are strained.

Coping with family and work, as argued earlier, is a major challenge of modern living. Being a good and responsible parent and, at the same time, a good and dedicated worker is in the interest of everyone – the individual, employer and the state. No wonder, therefore, that many industrialised societies have developed complex rules and provisions enabling people to balance their working and family lives. The rules and provisions vary widely, however, being more conducive to striking a right balance in, for example, Nordic countries than in south and east European countries. The duration of maternity and parental leaves, childcare leaves and leaves to care for a sick relative, no matter whether a child or a parent, vary greatly across countries. And so do compensations for income foregone while away on leave. The same is true of accessible and affordable institutionalised childcare. The variations are a consequence of the fact that some countries, by default or design, never developed adequate policies in this area and of the

fact that a large number of central and east European countries down-sized, in some instances almost eliminated these policies as a consequence of transition to a market economy.

Whether these policies help form and sustain child-parent and partner-partner relations is something almost certainly beyond doubt. How different policy measures in this area influence the onset, change and the end of these relations is a more difficult question. One could on *a priori* grounds expect that, for example, generous maternity, parental and childcare leave provisions help individuals become parents earlier rather than later and have more rather than fewer children. Similarly, one may reasonably posit that widely accessible and inexpensive childcare services have the same effects and so forth. This is what one would expect, however, what effects may exist is in the final analysis an empirical question.

b. Intergenerational relationships

At the heart of intergenerational relationships are transfers occurring between the various generations, to which here we also add transfers between members of same generations. At the mezzo level these transfers may take place both within individual households and among households that have families and networks in common. It is household, family and network members that are behind them. As suggested earlier, these transfers may involve money and assets, goods and services, time and living space, counsel, companionship and affection. Most of the transfers are voluntary while law or regulations prescribe some. It is these transfers that to a large measure shape the content and nature of child-parent and partner-partner relations. For the sake of simplicity, to them we shall refer as network transfers, recognising however that a large share of these transfers take place within the family.

At the macro level the transfers take place between members of the younger, middle and the older generations, to which Arber and Attias-Donfut (2000) refer to as “welfare generations”. More specifically, the bulk of the transfers occur, on the one hand, between members of the middle generation, who make the largest part of the employed in

any given economy and thereby the majority of tax payers and, on the other, members of the younger and older generations, most of whom do not work and are not liable to any or substantial taxation.² The state is behind these transfers: on the one hand, it raises revenues and, on the other, incurs expenditures, including those resulting in transfers to individuals and households. The transfers may include many of the categories of items involved in network transfers, comprising money and free or subsidised goods, services, living space and counsel. In some countries there may be quasi-public or private institutions involved in the transfers. To these transfers we shall refer as public transfers. We recognise, however, that for some countries this term may be a misnomer, as institutions other than the government may play a prominent role in these transfers.

Common to the network and public transfers is that many of them are expressly made in order to enable their recipients to better meet their needs arising from day-to-day life, including family life, thereby improving their well-being. These two broad categories of transfers are interconnected and often they complement each other (Arber and Attias-Donfut, 2000). In societies where the former are relatively abundant, the latter may be more limited and vice versa. How, *inter alia*, these two types of transfers and among them how transfers involving different categories of items impact on the child-parent and partner-partner relations is of particular interest. Below we focus on how these transfers may affect the onset of, changes in and the end of the relations. Finances, work, time, housing and other relevant factors discussed earlier will be revisited.

i Possible impact on the child-parent relation

As argued above, a transition to a child-parent relation, continued commitment to the relation or a decision to terminate it or radically redefine it (as the case may be if the relation is a biological one) may be influenced by a host of factors, some of which are under control of the parent or the parent to be while others are not. These include, among others, finances, access to education and work, time, ideas and so forth and they define

² In some countries, older persons receiving public pensions and/or other forms of retirement

opportunities for and constraints to the child-parent relation. What exactly those factors are for a particular individual in part depends on intergenerational transfers that he or she has or potentially can have access to. In other words, the transfers do shape those factors as they concern the individual and can possibly influence the relation.

Intergenerational transfers may possibly have a substantial influence on whether and/or when a transition to a child-parent relation occurs and on parent-to-child transfers that are part of the nurture process.³ All other things being equal, more rather than less generous public transfers may relax a variety of constraints on the onset and the development of the relation and the well-being of the two. A generous and well-compensated parental leave, a hefty child allowance and/or a prolonged and partially compensated childcare leave may relieve some of the money and time constraints of young parents and parents to be. Free or moderately priced, well organised, public or government-sponsored childcare services can be a substitute for a childcare leave with the same possibly favourable effect on money and time constraints. An abundant supply of moderately priced public housing may countervail what otherwise could be conditions typical of a tight housing market, a market inaccessible to many without substantial incomes. Moreover, educational grants and loans and low-cost student housing can lighten the financial burden of the parent who is helping the child pursue higher education. This of course illustrates but does not exhaust considerations on how public transfers may influence the child-parent relation. Network transfers can presumably have many of the same effects, relieving in the process money, time and space constraints. In addition, they can do what the state cannot, namely provide ready counsel, companionship and affection beyond and above what the parent can offer.

Public transfers to the family are an exception rather than a rule once the nurture period is over. After the child is on his or her own, neither the child nor the parent is likely to need state support except in the case of unemployment or earnings that

income are subject to income taxes, however, these taxes are not a major source of public revenues.

³ The transfers, as a rule, accrue to the parent, however, their rationale has to do with the fact that the parent and the child have needs that arise from the very existence of the latter. Thus what the parent receives in terms of many public transfers ought to be viewed as transfers to the child.

according to prevailing standards are considered to be insufficient to ensure a minimum living standard. In those instances the state steps in to provide unemployment benefits or social assistance, however, what the state offers differs vastly across societies, depending among other things on the state of economy and prevailing norms about the role the state should play in countervailing economic adversity of its citizens. In parts of Europe, in particular in southern, central and eastern Europe, where youth unemployment is comparatively high, the adult child may for a longer time be dependent on public unemployment assistance. Moreover, in these countries and also in some others affordable housing is often not readily available, which along with lack of work and steady earnings may combine to create conditions for a continued though partial financial dependence on the parent. To a smaller or greater extent this may persist until the adult child is ready to start a family of his own or even later.

The mutual relative independence of the child and the parent may continue well into the parent's old age. This may be particularly the case in affluent societies with generous public transfers. High living standards and generous transfers in those societies may well combine to keep child-parent transfers largely confined to flows of companionship and affection into the late stage of the child-parent relation. However, as late in his or her life the parent's health deteriorates, possibly necessitating sustained and/or prolonged long-term care, child-to-parent transfers may broaden to encompass care, particularly long-term care. Where patients cover part of the costs of medical and long-term care, the child-to-parent transfers may also include money to pay for the care. Toward the other end of the spectrum, in poorer countries, which nowadays predominate in eastern Europe, public transfers are almost certain to be too meagre to keep the financial dependence of the parent on the child in check until late in old age. We know for the fact that relatively large segments of the old populations in these countries live in poverty, prompting the speculation that network transfers, including child-to-parent transfers in support of persons across a wide spectrum of old age are probably multiple and relatively large. They may well include all the conceivable items - money, goods, services and living space, all the way to affection. It may well be that the well-being of older persons and the quality of their relations with their children in these countries is to a

large extent influenced by network transfers, in particular by transfers from the children.

ii. Possible impact on the partner-partner relation

The onset of, changes in and the end of a partner-partner relation are likely to be shaped by some of the same factors influencing the child-parent relation. Finances, education, work, living space and ideas are all likely to matter, influencing opportunities for and constraints to the partner-partner relation. Public and network transfers are also likely to play a role, as they influence some of what we deem to be determining factors. We next consider how transfers may influence the partner-partner relation. Those considerations amount to no more than preliminary hypothesizing that is not informed by knowledge of factors influencing partner-partner relations; such knowledge is still rudimentary.

Judging from the relatively early sexual initiation (Leridon, 1999), many first stable intimate relations are likely to take place in late adolescence or early adulthood, that is before many young people have left the parental home. For the vast majority of them, the entry into such a relation is a beginning of a childless partner-partner relation; only relatively few enter their first relation with a person who brings a child into it. We know relatively little about what influences these relations, nevertheless it is safe to suppose that norms, values and attitudes have a major bearing on the form of relations being chosen, the timing of the relations, the way the relations develop, a possibility that they may evolve into other relations with the same partners or on their breakdown. No matter how important ideas may be, they can only be a part of the story. Resources – money, living space and time - the young may be able to contribute towards forming and sustaining relations may be equally important. And when their own resources are scarce, and they are likely to be such in late adolescence and early adulthood, transfers are likely to be of quite some importance. In particular, for example, where public transfers to students in the form of educational grants and loans and inexpensive student housing are generous, cohabitation and marriage may be more prevalent among students. Where parents do not want to underwrite the cost of independent living of the children, the

opposite may be the case. Transfers or a lack thereof are also likely to impact on the survival chances of the relations.

These same factors – finances, living space, time and ideas – as well as transfers are likely to have an impact on the partner-partner relation where a child or children are present. When nurture is under way, the same resources are needed to raise the offspring and keep the partner-partner relation going. The more plentiful these are, the easier it is for the individual to manage the child-parent and partner-partner relations. Many public and network transfers reviewed earlier in conjunction with their possible effects on the child-parent relation are likely to have an impact on the partner-partner relation. The effects may possibly be indirect. By rendering the child-parent relation more manageable, the transfers may make the partner-partner relation stronger and more satisfying. An example can illustrate the point: affordable and ample childcare, no matter whether provided by the state or the network, can enable the couple to have more quality time together, contributing to their well-being.

After the child has left the parental home, resources that once supported the child-parent and partner-partner relations may sooner or later become far less constraining than before. As indicated earlier, in some instances this may not be the case, in particular with respect to time of the female partner. The woman in an “empty nest” partner-partner relation may find herself in a situation where her offspring and her and/or her partner’s parents simultaneously require her attention and time. However, if there is a phase in the partner-partner relation when transfers are least necessary, this may easily be the time after the child or children have left the home.

If and when the relation survives until one or both partners reach advanced age, the situation may well change. As indicated earlier, it is ill health, disability and/or frailty that may put strains on the partner-partner relation, reducing the well-being of couple, possibly making increased transfers to them welcome. No matter whether public or network, these transfers can help ease the strains, making the relation more enjoyable and countering negative effects of the deteriorating health on the couple’s well-being.

c. Gender relationships

Connections between women and men permeate many life domains and range from highly public to strictly private. They exist wherever the sexes meet and interact, namely in the settings comprising the household, family and network and at the community, regional or national levels. In view of this, we shall distinguish gender relationships that operate at the mezzo and macro levels, referring to them as private- and public-domain gender relationships. As with the intergenerational relations, the purpose will be to consider how these relationships may influence the child-parent and the partner-partner relations. Before doing so we seek to shed light on gender relationships that can collectively be referred to as the gender system.

According to the scholars, such as Mason (1995) and Pinnelli (1999), who have sought, so far only tentatively, to explore links between gender and demographic behaviour, a key aspect of gender relationships are gender inequalities of different types, which manifest themselves in different forms of gender stratification. According to them, these inequalities influence the various forms of demographic behaviour, however, how this happens is typically not elucidated.⁴ Here, we are largely in a terra incognita. This should not, however, deter us from attempting to probe. Our working hypothesis is that the lesser the inequalities, the more conducive gender relations are to the formation, development and continuation of the child-parent and partner-relations.

The reasoning behind the hypothesis is the following. In most contemporary industrialised societies, women, particularly younger women, have by and large, so to say, come of age during the last few decades. They have not yet secured a status comparable to that of men; in the public and private domains their position is in many respects inferior to that of men. This may be truer in some parts of the industrialised world (e.g. southern Europe) than in others (the Nordic countries). Nevertheless, women have grown aware almost everywhere that nothing makes them inherently second-rate to

⁴ The research on relation between gender and demographic behaviour, both theoretical and empirical, is in its infancy. It could not, therefore, offer a meaningful guidance to the considerations that follows. If anything, the relevant literature does not yet offer hypotheses regarding these effects.

men and that their condition should not be different from that of their male peers. Men, too, have shared in the change in the outlook on more equitable position of women and equality of the sexes. The right to equality has been recognised, certainly by the majority of younger women, and is being increasingly realised.

As long as the right is not fully realised women are likely to remain a discontented group. Dissatisfaction is not a fertile ground for many pursuits in life, including family life. Therefore, all other things being equal, the more dissatisfied the women are with gender relations, the more likely it is that they will be unwilling partners in family life. In other words, our working hypothesis is that, *ceteris paribus*, the greater are gender equalities, the greater the propensity of the women and, by implication, of men to enter and remain in partner-partner and child-parent relations.⁵ ⁶ After having spelled out the hypothesis we should add, however, that the notion of gender equality might be a rather elusive concept. If and when men and women willingly accept differences between them that, by proponents of gender equality, would possibly qualify as blatant gender inequalities, it may be difficult to speak of inequalities. The case in point are differences arising from mutually acceptable gender specialisation in the family domain that according to Arber and Attias-Donfut (2000) is part of what they call the gender contract.⁷

We turn next to private-domain gender relationships and, in particular, to what appear to be relevant aspects of gender inequalities. Of interest are many different types of inequalities, however, some of the most important ones are probably the inequalities in educational attainment, earnings, time-use, decision-making power and control over

⁵ This hypothesis is consistent with the views of, for example, Chesnais (1996) and Stoltenberg (1993), a scholar and a policy maker, who have both speculated about favourable influence of relatively high gender equality on aggregate fertility in Sweden and Norway in the early 1990s. Hobcraft and Kiernan (1995) maintain that “the prolonged struggle to alter traditional [gender] roles towards a more egalitarian structure places considerable extra strain on entry into parenthood.”

⁶ An alternative working hypothesis, completely contrary to the one just introduced, would postulate that, all other things being equal, the greater are gender equalities, the less likely it is for child-parent and partner-partner relations to come into being or continue.

⁷ In a particular settings, an acceptable gender specialisation may amount to mothers devoting greater time and attention to education of children and fathers making sure, if necessary working long hours that financial needs of the family are adequately met.

domestic resources. These various types of inequalities are likely to be highly interrelated. Thus, large gender differentials in education may go hand in hand with major differentials in earnings, sizeable differentials in resource control, large differentials in decision-making power and in sizeable differentials in time-use.

The other side of the time-use-inequalities coin are inequalities in the gender division of labour. As regards this, of central interest to us here is how the woman and the man as partners divide work among themselves in connection with the various activities that are carried more or less regularly in day-to-day family life. The categories of work that we consider relevant are: paid work; education; unpaid work (other than that pertaining to kin care); kin care (in particular child, partner, parent and other-kin care), non-kin care, personal care (including sleep); social activities; and leisure. The categories are related to the roles of the partners as earners, students, homemakers, care-providers, and participants in public life.

The public-domain gender relationships can be captured by inequalities of similar types, namely inequalities in educational attainment, wage rates, participation in the labour force, occupational segregation and participation in the political process. As regards the participation in the labour force, relevant are both the propensity to engage in paid work, both part-time and full-time and the prevalence of unemployment. A cumulative result of these inequalities over time are gender inequalities in years spent in paid work and in related pension entitlements.

i Possible impact on the child-parent relation

Whether or not to become a parent or have another child, whether a satisfying child-parent relation is possible and whether continuing a child-parent relation is desirable may all depend on gender relationships existing between the parent concerned and his or her partner. Fundamental gender inequalities may work against the formation and continuation of the child-parent relation. Let us take a few examples to see why this may be so. If time-use gender inequalities among parents or parents to be are large and

disadvantageous to the woman, in particular if the woman takes upon herself and/or is expected to shoulder a disproportionate share of homemaking and childcare while also working away from home, becoming a mother or having another child may not be attractive to her. Also, she may not consider such a time-use arrangement conducive to a satisfactory child-parent relation and this may possibly lead to its break-up through separation with the partner. The woman may feel the same way if she is to play a minor if any role in, say, decision-making pertaining to a host of aspects of family life and the control of resources, such as the nurture of the child, spending on major durables and purchase of property, and in particular if the woman perceives the inferiority of her position as unfair or unacceptable.

How could public-domain gender relationships affect the child-parent-relation? Probably not directly, as it is difficult to imagine that the way women and men fare, for example, in the educational system, labour market, community affairs and in the political process can have a direct bearing on their decisions regarding child-parent relations. The public-domain gender relationships may, however, possibly influence views of women and men as regards fairness of these relationships. The opinions may in turn guide perceptions of the private-domain gender relationships and, in the process, influence the child-parent relation. For example, in a setting where a majority of women work outside home, prevailing value may be that it is a woman's right to be in the labour force. In such a setting, a woman confined to homemaking not as a result of her own choosing may find her position unacceptable, possibly rendering her less interested in motherhood.

ii. Possible impact on the partner-partner relation

Gender relationships between a woman and man sharing a partner-partner relation define to a large extent the nature and content of the relation. Is it therefore meaningful to talk about the effect of the former on the latter? In our view, it is. The reason is that gender relationships, anticipated or actual can influence a possible formation of a partner-partner relation, its possible conversion from one form to another and its continuation or break-up.

In particular, if a potential partner-partner relation promises to be strife with gender inequalities, it may well never materialise. If it comes into being and inequalities manifest themselves, the relation may sooner or later fall apart. Alternatively, the couple may resolve to reduce the inequalities and do so, even eliminating some of them and, in the process, make the relationship smoother and more congenial. If the relation is a co-residential cohabitation, it may ultimately transform into a marriage, say, provided that whatever inequalities remain can be acceptable to the partners.

In a partner-partner relation where a child or children are present, as argued earlier, financial, living space, time and other constraints are likely to result in some difficult choices for the couple. Examples of such choices are: who (she or he), if necessary, should forego further education and start working in order to contribute to family income; who should switch from full- to part-time work or stop working if for any reason childcare cannot be provided by anyone but a parent; who should work extra hours to supplement household income; and who should become a key decision maker regarding the use of scarce funds if the joint decision-making regarding spending is not satisfactory. The way choices are made along with implications of the choices may exacerbate inequalities, possibly rendering the partner-partner relation strained. It may well be that requisite work-family-leisure rearrangements are such that no agreement about them can be reached or, if it could be arrived at, it may ultimately lead to gender relationships unacceptable to one or both, eventually precipitating a breakdown of the relation. However, the fact that the family is at stake, including a continuation of the child-parent relations of both partners, a new arrangement and the redefined gender relationships may be accepted by both, possibly weakening but not breaking the relation.

If and when the partner-partner relation survives beyond the point when a child or children leave the parental home, gender relationship may take another turn, possibly for the better. If it is indeed true that the gender relationships partly depend on the pressures associated with the presence of children and their nurture, after the nurture is over the

couple can return to what might have been originally more equitable gender relationships. This may improve the quality of the relation, improving the well-being of the partners.

D. Requisite Data

As indicated above in the section on the programme goal, it is envisaged that the programme will develop or access, standardise, disseminate and analyse data from the following four sources: new demographic surveys, population and housing censuses of the year-2000 round, relevant administrative records, and a mixture of social, economic and institutional statistics. This section considers these different types of data before addressing the issue in the next section of how the programme framework and the data in question can support the various lines of research into the child-parent and parent-parent relations. We begin with the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), continue the discussion with administrative records and the population and housing censuses and conclude with considerations on the economic, social and institutional data.

a. GGS data

In order to enable the study of the dynamics of child-parent and partner-partner relations using a rich set of covariates suggested by the framework, GGS will by necessity be a prospective panel survey implemented through several field waves. As the study of the dynamics of the relations is to be comparative in nature, GGS will yield comparable information for most of the variables it will measure. A degree of non-comparability is to be expected, however, this will be occasioned by different realities in countries participating in the programme rather by the countries choosing to depart from the common GGS instruments, in particular the survey design and the questionnaire. The GGS data will provide information for variables at the micro and mezzo levels. In some instances, the survey data may provide information for certain variables at the macro level as well.

i Survey design

GGs will be a unitary survey based on a prospective panel design, which will be implemented through several waves. The two-wave absolute minimum will not be an objective but rather a fall-back position for countries that under no circumstances can accommodate a larger number of waves. The sampling unit will be the individual, who will be followed through subsequent waves. Approximately 10,000 individuals will be drawn into the sample, interviewed and re-interviewed, most likely by means of face-to-face interviewing. These respondents, to whom we refer as primary respondents or anchors will include women and men within the age range 18-79.⁸ In addition to them, the partners of the primary respondents will be interviewed and/or requested to complete and mail back a relatively short questionnaire. It may also prove necessary to obtain information from adult children and parents of the primary respondents. To these latter respondents – partners, children and parents - we refer to as secondary respondents. The amount of information to be collected from the primary respondents will be considerably larger than that to be gathered from the secondary respondents.⁹

ii. Survey content

In order to provide information supporting research grounded in the framework proposed above, GGS will have to result in a variety of data on the past, present and the future. The information will pertain to facts, perceptions and ideas. Below we identify most of the types of information that we expect to be collected from the primary respondents and their partners.

Child-parent and partner-partner relations. Information on the child-parent and partner-partner relations will be collected by and large from the primary respondents. As

⁸ Note that if the primary-respondent sample size and the age range were respectively 10,000 and 18-79, then the average number of female and male respondents per five-year age group would be somewhat larger than the average numbers of interviewees of the two sexes combined in the Slovenian FFS. The average number would be smaller than those in the Austrian and Italian FFS surveys.

⁹ For a more complete discussion of the survey design the reader is referred to the paper “Generations and Gender Survey: Design and Content.”

the relations are defined by events bringing about their formation and dissolution as well as by their nature and content, the relevant information will include that on events and on specific aspects of the nature and content.

Information on the events will necessarily pertain to the past. In particular, at the time of the first wave event histories pertaining to the formation and dissolution of child-parent and partner-partner relations will be collected. It is possible that these histories will not be complete but rather censored at an agreed-upon point in time prior to the first wave. Among the events, *inter alia*, will be births and deaths as well as marriages and divorces. At the time of the second and subsequent waves, inter-wave histories of the same types will be collected. Information concerning those events will be more ample than those regarding the events that took place prior to the first wave. The information on these events will probably be gathered by means of questionnaire components dedicated to the child-parent and partner-partner relations.

The nature and content of the current child-parent and partner-partner relations will be captured by means of information on a variety of variables. Among these central will be transfers occurring between children and parents and between partners, which will be part of broader information on network transfers; these data will be collected through a questionnaire component dedicated to those transfers. Among this information also will be the one concerning gender inequalities, including time-use inequalities. Also, current information on perceptions and values and attitudes regarding child-parent and partner-partner relations will be compiled.

Household, families, networks. These overlapping groups, which constitute the proximate context or the mezzo level are, as indicated earlier, of paramount interest. Current information on the membership of the household, family and network of the primary respondent will, therefore, be collected through subsequent waves. Where the partner of the respondent exists, information on the membership of the family and

network of this secondary respondent will be collected.¹⁰ Note that we here assume that the two respondents are members of the same household.¹¹ In addition, information on the family of origin of the primary respondent and the partner, if any, will be gathered.

The network of the primary respondent will include members of his or her household, his or her close kin, that is, his or her children, parents and siblings, plus any distant kin and non-kin of him or her who are engaged in transfers occurring between them and the primary respondent. The network of the partner will be defined analogously. The definition of the network will critically depend on the types of transfers that will be identified as those of prime interest to the programme.

Information on the household members and closer family members (children, parents and siblings) will be relatively detailed. Data on a variety of their personal characteristics will be collected. Information on more distant family members (grandchildren, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and so forth) will be less detailed. It is possible that only summary data will be collected for selected types of distant family relations. Data on kin and non-kin network members may be as detailed as those on close kin. As some transfers between the anchor and the partner, if any, on the one hand and their network members, on the other, are a function of the distance between their respective residences, information on the distance will be gathered, too.

Education and work. Event-history and current-status information on education and work will be collected from the primary respondents and, where those exist, from their partners. As regards the event history data, they will concern education and work-related events and spells. In particular, at the time of the first wave education and work event histories will be collected from the primary respondents and their partners. It is possible that these histories will not be complete but would rather be censored at an agreed-upon point in time prior to the first wave. Normally the histories will be longer for primary respondents than for their partners, as the histories of the latter will be confined

¹⁰ It is the household, family and the network in the case where the primary respondent is without a partner and the household, the two families and the two networks in the instance where the respondent has a partner that make the proximate context of that primary respondent.

¹¹ Where this is not the case, for example in the case where the partners live apart together in separate households, the information on the partner's household will be gathered, too.

to the periods starting at the time of their entry into the partnership with the anchor. At the time of the second and subsequent waves, inter-wave education and work histories will be collected too. Information concerning those events and spells will be richer than that regarding the events and spells that preceded the first wave. Again, as regards the partners, their histories will pertain to the periods since the onset of the partnership with the anchor where those periods are shorter than the inter-wave period.

Current-status information on education and work will be fairly detailed. Data pertaining to education will concern level, grade, type of education, whether part- or full-time and so forth. (A similar level of detail will apply to inter-wave education histories.) Information on work will pertain to employment and unemployment and in the case of employment on the primary job and any secondary jobs. Regarding unemployment, information on its characteristics will be gathered. Concerning jobs, data on their traits will be collected and among the characteristics the following may be included: hours worked, type of contract, sector (public/private), industry and so forth.

Earnings, assets and housing. Information on earnings of the anchor and the partner, if any, will include net amounts earned from work, that is employment and self-employment combined, by each separately. They will also include net amounts earned by the anchor and the partner separately as a result of the ownership of the various assets, the examples of which are real estate, land, shares and government bonds. These latter data will pertain to the total earnings from assets rather than by category of asset. The data will pertain to a chosen period, e.g. a year prior to a wave and will be collected from the primary respondent and the partner.

This information will be complemented by data on combined net earning of other household members and the total net income in kind accruing to the household. The primary respondent will provide this information. When put together, these data will provide information on total earnings of the household net of taxes that its various members pay. When complemented with data on public and network transfers, the information will yield a picture on the total household income, that is, the current resources, financial and in kind, available to the household.

The information on assets will include data on the combined value of current assets owned separately by the anchor and the partner. In the case where the respondent and/or the partner own the house or apartment they occupy, information on the current value of the house and the ownership or co-ownership will be gathered, too. Also, information on the year when the house came into the possession of the anchor and/or the partner will be obtained. The data on the total value of assets owned by other household members also will be collected. Like the information on earnings, the data on assets will not be detailed.

Information on the housing unit occupied by the primary respondent and his household will include data on its size and amenities. This will include the size of the floor area and the number of rooms as well as amenities, such as types of heating and toilet facilities. In the case of units that are part of apartment buildings, selected information on the buildings will be gathered, too. Moreover, selected data on the neighbourhood may be included.

Public and network transfers. These transfers modify financial and other resources, such as finances and living space, available to the anchor and his or her household. Information on the transfers will be collected from the primary respondent and the partner, if any, for the period prior to each wave, e.g. the year preceding it. This information will include public transfers accruing to them along with network transfers in which they take part. Data on other public and network transfers, namely those that do not pertain to the primary respondent and/or his or her partner but rather to other household members or the household as a unit will be gathered from the primary respondent.

Regarding the public transfers, the information will include amounts pertaining financial transfers accruing to the primary respondent, partner, other household members and the entire household as a unit. Information will be gathered on the amounts by broad category of transfers, such as those accruing to children and older persons; the examples are child allowances and public pensions. In addition to financial transfers, households benefit from public transfers in kind, in particular free or subsidised services. Information

on the various services rendered to the primary respondent, partner, other household members or the entire household will be collected. Examples of the services are institutional childcare and institutional long-term care for older persons. Also data on payments for those services will be collected, although those may not be on the amounts paid but rather on whether payments have been made.

Concerning network transfers, those may flow between network members, on the one hand, and the primary respondent, partner, other household members and/or the household as a unit, on the other. They may involve various tangible items - money, assets, goods, services and living space – and/or intangible items - time, advice, companionship and affection. Information will be collected on selected items being transfers for the chosen reference period prior to a wave. The primary respondent will provide information on the transfers that pertain to him or her, to members of the household other than him or her and the partner, and to the household as a unit. The partner will provide information on the transfers that pertain to him or her.

Migration, time-use and health. Information on migration will be confined to the residential mobility of the primary respondent. A complete or censored mobility history – a listing of particular localities of residence and dates of change of localities – for the anchor may be collected during the first wave.¹² During the second and subsequent waves, the inter-wave mobility histories will be collected. This will make it possible to link remote-context information for communities or regions with GGS information.

As far as the time-use information is concerned, it will be gathered for the principal respondent and the partner, if any. The information will pertain to the broad time-use categories referred to above, namely those related to paid work; education; unpaid work (other than that involving kin care); kin care (in particular child, partner, parent and other-kin care), non-kin care, personal care (including sleep); social activities; and leisure. This information will have to be consistent with data on hours worked, time

¹² The decision whether to collect pre-wave-one mobility history will be guided by considerations and a decision regarding a possible collection and use of time-series remote-context information for the period prior to the first wave. If the decision is taken to collect this information, the gathering of the mobility event-history data at the time of the first wave will be essential.

devoted to network members and with any other pieces of information collected on time use, such as time spent on commuting.

As regards health, basic information on the current health status of the anchor and the partner, if any, will be collected from the two, respectively. It will pertain to any self-reported acute and/or chronic diseases as well as disabilities. Allowance will be made for physical and mental diseases. For people in their reproductive ages, the data will include those on any known sub-fecundity conditions. In addition, for older persons in particular, ADL information will be compiled.

Gender inequalities. Diverse information capable of shedding light on private-domain gender relationships among the couple will be compiled. As indicated earlier in the framework section, of particular interest will be data on gender inequalities, namely those pertaining to educational attainment, earnings, time-use, decision-making power and the control over domestic resources. Requisite information pertaining to education, earnings and time-use will be compiled, as indicated above, respectively, as part of the data collection on individual characteristics, earnings and time-use of the primary respondent and the partner, if any. The information on decision-making power and control of domestic resource, also to be collected from the anchor and the partner, will pertain to the roles the two play in arriving at key decision regarding the household, including those on how household resources are generated as well as the roles of the two in using those resources.

Values and attitudes. Information on values and attitudes of the anchor and the partner, if any, will be collected from the two. Data will pertain to different categories of values and attitudes. The categories will include those pertaining to religiousness and secularisation; materialism and postmaterialism; family orientation, familism and public morality; intergenerational relationships and gender relationships.

Data pertaining to family orientations, familism and public morality will be on values and attitudes that pertain, among other things, to beliefs regarding the onset, nature and content and end of child-parent and partner-partner relations. For example, beliefs will be those on cohabitation versus marriage as forms of partner-partner relations, onset

of parenthood outside of a partner-partner relation of any type and in partner-partner relations of different forms, and those on dissolution of relations where partners do not have children, have children who are still being nurtured or children who are on their own.

Information on values and attitudes pertaining to intergenerational relationships will concern those relationships at both mezzo and macro levels. Data regarding the former relationships will pertain to views on filial obligations toward a child, parent and a parent as well as possibly to filial obligations toward other kin, in particular a sibling. Information concerning the latter relationships will concern views on macro-level intergenerational transfers and solidarity.

Data on values and attitudes on gender interrelations will be on beliefs regarding private- and public-domain gender relationships. Among them will be information on beliefs on gender roles within partner-partner relations, in particular on an equitable division of labour between partners within the household. They will also include views on what could be considered equitable positions and roles of women and men in the public domain, in particular in education, the labour market and the political arena.

b. Administrative records

In some countries, particularly the Nordic countries, there is a long tradition of compiling, maintaining and using micro-level administrative-records information. A part of this tradition pertains to population registers, the completeness and accuracy of which is so high that the statistical authorities in an increasing number of these countries consider population censuses superfluous.¹³ In these countries administrative records from different source, such as population registers and income tax returns can be pulled and matched to create rich data sets that can be further combined with information obtained through sample surveys.

¹³ The trend has been under way for a few decades now in a growing number of countries to forego the classical population census enumeration and have it replaced by creating what is similar to census returns by merging relevant information from the various sources containing administrative records.

In view of this, there will be no need to field full-fledged GGS surveys in countries where complete, accurate and rich administrative-records sources exist and where legislation and statistical practices pertaining to the use of these sources make them accessible to researchers. In these countries a reduced-version GGS could meet data requirements of the programme, provided that the survey information collected through a reduced-version GGS can be complemented at the individual level with data from administrative records. Where this could be done, the cost of obtaining the information required by the programme will presumably be lower and the quality of information higher.¹⁴

In this group of countries the population registers or other similar data sources containing basic micro-level information on the entire populations will be used as sample frames.

c. 2000-round censuses

GGS surveys will be launched in the early 2000s, in 2003 at the earliest. In many countries the first wave will take place a few years after the enumeration or administrative-records data linking is completed as part of the year-2000 round of population and housing censuses. Soon after the micro-level census data become available, it is expected that they will be used in a number of countries as sample frames. This will be the case in countries where there are no alternative sources of recent micro-level information on the entire national populations.

Population and housing censuses may not be a very suitable source for deriving observations on remote-context or macro-level variables at the sub-national level. The reason is that census data refer only to a point in time – the critical moment of the census – and, therefore, cannot provide time-series information needed for these variables. This is true no matter whether those variables are required to complement event histories compiled as part of the first wave and/or inter-wave event histories and current information collected through subsequent waves. However, in some countries, the

¹⁴ There is at least one precedent of combining FFS data with administrative-records information. In Sweden, event history information obtained through the 1992/93 Swedish FFS has been complemented

censuses may prove to be one of a few major sources of sub-national macro-level information and will have, in spite of limitations that they pose, to be used for this purpose.

d. Macro-level economic, social and institutional data

A variety of macro-level economic, social and institutional information will complement the data discussed above. This information will be used in order to construct macro-level or remote-context variables, which will be linked with GGS data and, where appropriate, to information to be drawn from administrative records. We consider below broad categories of macro-level information that may be employed in order to construct these variables at the national and sub-national levels.¹⁵ As the work on the macro-level variables will begin in earnest only after a number of decisions regarding the framework and GGS are finalised, the discussion that follows will necessarily be rather speculative.

The key premise of the paper just referred to is that both national and sub-national remote contexts matter and that both national and sub-national macro-level data should be used. According to this premise, differences in national conditions, including national welfare-state regimes are substantial and these differences may have significant effects on cross-national variations in behaviour influencing the onset of, changes in and the end of child-parent and partner-partner relations. Encapsulating those differences by means of national-level remote-context variables may be essential if we were to attempt to explain the cross-national variations in the behaviour. Differences also exist at the sub-national level, possibly more in some countries than others, and capturing them through the remote-context variables will be required in order to attempt to explain sub-national variations in the behaviour.

What appropriate sub-national level is will, it is presumed, differ across countries. In a number of instances this level will correspond to subdivisions of countries at which welfare-state policies and programmes are formulated and implemented. As regards

with time-series micro-level income data from relevant administrative records.

macro-level conditions other than those pertaining to the policies and programmes, the relevant sub-national level may differ from the subdivisions in question. It may pertain, for example, to regions having similar conditions, such as labour market and housing conditions.

At the national level, economic, social and institutional information is, as a rule, richer than that at the sub-national level. Consequently, in a number of countries, national-level data will yield macro-level variables that may relatively comprehensively depict national-level conditions, including those pertaining to the welfare-state regimes. Among these will be data on conditions, legislation and regulations pertaining to the labour and housing markets, education and health sectors and to family-policy and old-age support programmes. These data may be supplemented by aggregated GGS information that will depict prevailing societal-level values and attitudes pertaining to, among other things, religiousness and secularism; family orientations, familism and public morality; as well as intergenerational and gender relationships at the mezzo and macro levels. These various data, it is hoped, will allow us to differentiate societies with respect to the extent in which they are family-friendly.

Availability of relevant economic, social and institutional data at the sub-national levels probably differs greatly across countries. In view of this and the fact referred to above, namely that these data are considerably less comprehensive than the national-level information, sub-national remote-context variables will be less comprehensive than their national-level counterparts. How comprehensive these variables will prove to be will vary across countries. Moreover, aggregated sub-national-level GGS information on the values and attitudes just mentioned, due to small numbers, may not be useful for all practical purposes. As a result, speculations on sub-national data that could be used would be premature. Nevertheless, we may add that these data, at least in some countries, are likely to pertain, among other things, to labour and housing market conditions, education and health sectors and to family and old-age-related policies and programmes.

¹⁵ The rationale for constructing macro-level variables at these two levels is provided in the paper

E. Research Aims

The programme, in particular the proposed framework and data will, it is hoped, open numerous research opportunities. As indicated in the introduction, it is expected that the research will broaden the understanding of the various factors influencing behaviour bringing about the onset of child-parent and partner-partner relations, changes in the nature and content of those relations, and behaviour resulting in the end of the relations. It is hoped that research findings will shed light on how those factors directly contribute to the behaviour and changes as well as how they operate through intergenerational and gender relationships. As these relationships may in part be autonomous from the factors in question, the research could contribute to the knowledge of possible independent influences of the intergenerational and gender relationships. The discussion on possible lines of research that follows will by no means seek to be exhaustive, as only researchers participating in the programme can collectively identify what may prove to be a comprehensive research agenda of the programme.

Moreover, in the considerations that follow no attempt will be made to depart from the programme objective, venturing into a discussion of possible research options that the programme can support, which, however, fall outside the domain delineated by the programme objective. Such options are probably numerous and are in no way likely to be of lesser interest to researchers that may find the lines of research on which we will focus congenial. To illustrate the point, we emphasise that of interest to us here will, for example, be analyses into effects of finances of individuals, couples or households on child-parent and partner-partner relations but not reverse effects of those relations on finances. This position in no way suggests that the reverse effects may be of lesser interest. This position is taken here in order to keep the research aims of the programme relatively well focused.

a. Focus on the child-parent relation

The research into the child-parent relation, among other things, will be on the onset of parenthood and repeated parenthood as modes of the onset of the child-parent relation. It will accommodate the four forms of parenthood – biological, step, social and foster – in order to allow for the four different modes of the onset of the relation – birth, formation of a union with a child’s parent, adoption and the beginning of fostering. The purpose will be to add to the understanding of how transitions to the first, second and the third child are influenced by factors that are likely to have a bearing on reproductive behaviour as well as behaviour resulting in the start of non-biological child-parent relations. Alternative strands of recent and ongoing theorising and empirical research into these transitions, which have been recently reviewed by Hoem et al. (2000) will provide a guide for this line of research. In particular, effects, among others, of education, work and the various resources – financial, living space, time – available to the individual or the couple along with influences of values and attitudes and means of fertility regulation will be studied.

Situating the onset of the child-parent relation within intergeneration and gender relationships will make it possible to seek answers to questions regarding influences of those relationships on the transition to parenthood and repeated parenthood. In particular, this will enable the programme to address and, we hope, answer questions, such as the following. How do parent-to-child transfers, such as financial, time, and emotional transfers influence the transitions in question? Do child-to-parent transfers matter and how do they influence the transitions? How do transfers to parents and parents-to-be, specifically both network and public transfers, help alleviate constraints to having children? In particular, how transfers from own parents to the adult child help? (Note that we have here the three generations involved, i.e. an indirect grandchild-grandparent relation.) Which categories of these broad transfers are more conducive to relaxing the constraints? In connection with this, what roles do various public and network transfers play? Also, the questions will include as follows. Are more equitable private- and public-domain gender relationships conducive to the transitions? Specifically, what impact do private-domain gender inequalities, in particular time-use inequalities within the partner-partner relation have on the transition to parenthood and repeated parenthood?

The end of the child-parent relations will also be in the focus of research. However, causes of all different forms of the end of the relation will not be of interest. In particular, death of a member of the dyad will fall outside the scope of research – the programme is not interested in causes of death. Conversely, major break-ups in biological child-parent relations and adoptive child-parent relations associated with separation of parents and their determinants will be of interest. The same is true of break-ups of step child-parent relations. As any of these break-ups may intimately be connected with dissolution of the accompanying partner-partner relations, factors bringing them about will be studied in conjunction with those of dissolution of these relations.

As long as the child-parent relation endures its nature and content can change. The nature and content perforce differ at different points of the child's and parent's life courses. One of the research aims will be to shed light on changes in the relation over time and on factors behind the changes. As suggested earlier, the nature and content of the relation are by and large defined by transfers taking place between the dyad. In view of this, the focus of the research will in part be on factors influencing the transfers. Some of these factors may be the same as those presumed to have an impact on the onset and end of the relation. Some may be factors that go beyond those that are part of the framework, rendering our conceptual and data foundation for the study of child-partner relations possibly less sound than that developed to analyse their onset and end. With this caveat in mind, it would be prudent to assume that our ability to explain changes in the nature and content of the child-parent relation may be circumscribed.

As regard the change in the nature and content of the child-parent relation, research will be on changes in the size and composition of transfers flowing between the members of the dyad. The analysis will shed light on how these changes over time as the two move through their respective life courses. It is expected that it will provide information and knowledge on how, for example, transfers of specific tangible and intangible items, flowing towards and away from a particular member of the dyad shift as he or she moves through the life course. This will, it is hoped, inform us, for example, on

whether it is the child or the parent who is a net recipient of particular transfer items at different points in the life course. This is likely to help us understand how well-being of the child and the parent are influenced by the transfers. As regards the determinants of the transfers, some of the factors that are part of the programme framework, for example, values and attitudes and finances influence the transfers and thus the nature and content of the relation. These effects will be studied.

b. Focus on the partner-partner relation

The research into the partner-partner relations of individuals will, *inter alia*, be on the onset of the relations of different forms, including first and subsequent relations, where the latter may or may not be with the same partner. The different forms will include conjugal and consensual relations, and among the latter co-residential and LAT relations. They may also include still unidentified but spreading and increasingly relevant “fuzzy” relations that GGS should be able to yield information on (Hoem et al., 2000). The aim of the research will be to contribute to the understanding of the patterns of coming into being of these relations and of factors that influence their onset. Specifically, influences, among others, of education, work and the various resources – financial, living space, time – available to the individual or the partners along with those of values and attitudes, such as those pertaining to family orientations, familism and public morality will be studied.

Placing the onset of the partner-partner relation within intergeneration and gender relationships will, it is expected, make it possible to pose and answer a variety of questions, such as the following. How do transfers from parents to adult children, such as financial, time, and counsel transfers influence the start of the relations and transitions of the relations from one form to another? In particular, do these transfers facilitate or hinder the onset of the relations and their transitions? Do other network transfers, such as those from peers of young adults influence the formation of relations? What, if any, bearing do public transfers to young adults have on them, possibly relaxing constraints on the onset of partner-partner relations? Specifically, do some public transfers have an

effect while others do not? The questions regarding gender relationships will include as follows. Are more equitable private- and public-domain gender relationships conducive to the onset of partner-partner relations and transitions of these relations from one form to another? Specifically, what impact do private-domain gender inequalities, in particular time-use inequalities exert?

Dissolutions of partner-partner relations, however not those of all different types, and their causes will be a focus of a particular line of research. As just suggested, the end of a relation of a particular form that coincides with a start of a relation of another form with the same partner will not be viewed as a dissolution of the relation and will not be studied. Death as an end point of a partner-partner relation will be of interest only to the extent that it precipitates dissolution; its cause will not be of interest. The research will concern factors behind other different types of dissolutions, including dissolutions that coincide with break-ups of child-parent relations. The purpose will be to add to knowledge on how various factors that are part of the programme framework may contribute to dissolutions as well as the role intergenerational and gender relationships play in the process. Suitably modified, many of the questions regarding effects of those relationships posed earlier will apply to this line of research. Also, as children contribute to bonds between partners, the research will seek to shed light on how their presence or absence influence dissolution of partner-partner relations. It will also seek to contribute to the knowledge on the influence on the end of partner-partner relation that the presence of younger children as opposed of that of adult children may have.

Change in the nature and content of the partner-partner relations and factors influencing them will be analysed, too. Here it will prove useful to consider successive partner-partner relations involving the same individuals as a single relation. As regards the nature and content, they will be perceived as being to a large extent defined by the form or forms of the relations, the absence or presence of a child or children, and in the latter case by whether or not nurture of the child or children has been completed. They will also be viewed as being defined by transfers taking place between partners, including transfers of companionship and affection, as well as their gender relationships, in

particular inequalities between the two. These dimensions will be studied with a view to adding knowledge on changes in the nature and content of the relations. The analysis will also seek to throw light on what is behind these changes. In part, the analysis will be one and the same as the analysis considered earlier, in particular that on factors behind transitions from one form of relation to another involving the same individuals and transitions to parenthood and repeated parenthood. Also, the research will be on underpinnings of transfers between the partners and their gender relationships. Here, our framework and data may prove less than a robust basis of research, as they are not being developed with a view to studying determinants of intergenerational and gender relationships.

F. A message to the reader

This paper has defined the objective of the Gender and Generations Programme, proposed the framework for the programme, identified the types of data to be developed as part of programme implementation and suggested research issues to be addressed. The proposals contained in the paper are intended to elicit reactions of the readers as part of a continuing dialogue between prospective programme participants, on the one hand, and the GGP Consortium and the Population Activities Union, on the other. The Consortium and PAU look forward to views on the proposals of the participants of the First Meetings of the Informal Working Group of the Generations and Gender Programme and others who may wish to comment on them. The views and comments will be welcome inputs into a next stage of work on the programme.

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