

Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) – Questionnaire Justification

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) is a cross-national, comparative, multidisciplinary, prospective study of the dynamics of family relationships in contemporary industrialised countries, in particular in countries of the ECE. The core element of the programme is the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), which is designed as a unitary national panel survey of around 10,000 women and men in the age range from 18 to 79 years in each participating country, with the panel intervals of three years. The GGS is designed to interview only one respondent per household. The average interview time is set at 60 minutes for the first wave.
2. The GGS builds on the Fertility and Family Survey (FFS) project of the nineties, which focussed on reproductive and partnership behaviour as key processes of family building and change, and includes two key family relationships: those between children and parents and those between partners. This will permit the study of the effects of gender and generations on interactions between demographic behaviour and changes in family relationships, especially in ageing societies. This will lead to improved understanding of the factors – including public policy and programme interventions – affecting the evolution of the principal family relationships.
3. The unique combination of panel design and a multidisciplinary-oriented collection of subjective aspects as well as of objective characteristics and past history from interviewees over almost the whole lifelong age range makes GGS an innovative comparative survey, different from instance both from existing comparative surveys like the European Community Household Panel, or from planned surveys like the European Social Survey, the Survey on Health and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) or the European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC).
4. In September 2001 the GGP Consortium Board (CB) established the Questionnaire Development Group (QDG) with the task to develop a core questionnaire based on the available documents on contents and scope of the project. The QDG used the draft modules developed by a group at the MPIDR co-ordinated by Angelika Tölke as the starting point when it first convened in December 2001. Since then the following scientists from the CB member institutions have worked as active members of the QDG: Gijs Beets (NIDI), Francesco Billari (previously MPIDR; currently Bocconi University Milan), Christoph Bühler (MPIDR), Martine Corijn (PAU), Aline Désesquelles (INED), Tineke Fokkema (NIDI), Alphonse MacDonald (PAU), Gerda Neyer (MPIDR), Ariane Pailhé (INED), Antonella Pinnelli (University La Sapienza, Rome), Anne Solaz (INED), Zsolt Spéder (Statistics Hungary), and Andres Vikat (MPIDR). Martine Corijn (until June 2002) and Andres Vikat (from June 2002) have co-ordinated the QDG work. Questionnaire development has been discussed at CB meetings in April 2002 and January 2003.
5. The QDG developed the core questionnaire for the first wave of the panel study, taking into account the need to have a baseline to measure subsequent changes in the other waves. It has

been acknowledged that some topics, in particular retrospective information on employment and education, need to be included in the second wave questionnaire due to interview time constraints.

6. In the course of developing the core questionnaire, the QDG decided to switch questions on some topics into optional sub-modules. Optional sub-modules are supposed to deal with topics that are relevant and important for GGS, but they may be of only limited importance in some potential GGS countries. Up to now questions have been developed and selected for three such modules: (1) nativity (questions on nationality, ethnicity, language and place of birth of the parents), (2) separation (questions on the intention and possible consequences of separation and/or divorce, and retrospective contact frequencies with children after union break-up), and (3) previous partners (questions on characteristics and children of previous partners). These modules are not yet readily available. It is strongly recommended to include these standard modules in order to facilitate comparative research.
7. The questionnaire aims to be respondent friendly, irrespective of age (generation), sex or position in the household. It has drawn on other successful studies on GGP topics.

Structure of this document

8. The now available core questionnaire contains specific sections, which follow an order to allow a 'logical and easy talk' with the respondent, R. To a certain extent we follow that sequence below. It is assumed that the respondent is pre-selected and is known before the household is contacted. For situations where this is not applicable specific instructions will be issued in due course.
9. The following document describes the rationale of studying the topics included in the core questionnaire. Some questions may vary for country-specific reasons, but if included it is strongly recommended to use standard wording to facilitate comparative research.

HOUSEHOLD

10. After R is identified a complete overview of the household members with whom R is sharing his/her life is obtained. This will allow the establishment of family and household characteristics (stability and homogeneity). Typologies will provide an indication of R's direct kin network, its size and composition. These household variables may help explain union and fertility decisions, and vice versa, union and fertility experiences may influence the shape of households.
11. Household is a concept that is difficult to measure, and there is no universally agreed definition. The GGP proposes to use a subjective approach, in which R determines who is considered members of the household based on shared premises. The definition is not focused on 'shared budget' alone but also on 'intimacy'. It is comparable to the one used in the FFS but more detailed, and excludes temporary visitors or children who live somewhere else but may spend the weekends with the parents. These persons are listed separately if R still regards them to be members of his/her household.
12. The following definition is proposed for GGS: "all persons who live normally (at least four days in a normal week) in the same premises as R and who did so for at least three months". However the following categories should also be included: babies of less than three months old, dependent children with joint custody, and children and others who study or work at non-daily commuting distances or are (temporarily) in hospital, jail or military service. The definition will appear in the 'Interview Instructions', a document that will accompany the questionnaire and still has to be developed.

CHILDREN AND FERTILITY

13. Information on R's children has a central role in GGS, given that one of the GGP goals is to study relationships between generations. Birth of a child is one of the main demographic events on which future research based on GGS will focus, while characteristics of children and R's relationship with them play a key role in explaining fertility and other demographic behaviour, labour market activity, and the life situation of older people. To meet all those multifaceted functions, the child-related information in the first-wave GGS questionnaire embraces retrospective, current and prospective dimensions.
14. In GGS, children are conceptualised broadly, to capture both biological and social parenthood. R's biological and adopted children are included regardless of whether R ever lived together with them or acted as a parent towards them, and we broaden our perspective to step- and foster-children since they also establish social parenthood. More detailed questions about children who live together with R concentrate around childcare, whereas questions on non-resident children pertain to the quality of R's relationship with each of them, proximity and contact.
15. Ageing of fertility has become a universal phenomenon throughout Europe, as more women tend to start childbearing close to the upper limit of the fertile life span when their fecundity may be reduced. At the same time, couples have ready access to means to avoid unintended births. In such context, the fertility questions in GGS focus on activities related to actions towards having children, that is, 'proceptive' activities rather than on contraception that had been a focal point in many earlier fertility surveys. The extent to which a couple (or a single R) would want to have another child is treated as a continuum, with a couple who does not want (more) children and uses contraception, at the one end, and a couple who explicitly intends to have a child and uses proceptive means if there are health-related difficulties in realising the childbearing plans at the other end. Through its panel design, the GGS can obtain information on time to pregnancy.
16. In collecting information about children and fertility, GGS uses a couple approach through questions about R's partner, which enables the analysis of the individual and shared elements underlying childbearing decisions and outcomes.

PARTNERSHIPS

17. Information on R's partners has a central role in GGS, given that one of the goals is to study relationships between genders. Formation and dissolution of partnerships are among the main demographic events on which future research based on the GGS will focus, while most important life decisions, decisions on having children in particular, are made on a couple level. GGS is designed from the perspective of interviewing only one respondent per household, and we need to implement the couple perspective through questions to R about R's partner. In this context the definition of a partner's background as obtained from R is of crucial importance. Like we do with R's children, we also deal with partners in a retrospective, current and prospective dimension.
18. Living arrangements and the way living arrangements are linked with other life domains have rapidly changed in recent decades, when stepfamilies, one-person households, single parents, and couples living apart from each other, the so-called LAT relationships, have become increasingly common. Living arrangements have at least three dimensions that are relevant in the GGP framework: (1) partnering – R has a partner or not; (2) co-residence – determining whether the partner lives in the same household with R or not; (3) legal marital status. We address all these dimensions in the questionnaire.

19. Our basic definition of partnership for retrospective collection: we are interested in partners with whom R has had an intimate relationship, whether married or not. If the partnership has ended, we require that the partners were married or lived in the same household for at least three months. The three-month time frame is necessary to avoid short casual relationships, and it is consistent with the definition used in the FFS. In the retrospective questions, we consider living with the same partner more than once as separate partnerships.
20. In determining the start and end of partnerships, we rely on R's judgement on when did s/he actually start to live in the same household with the partner. This is asked separately from the date of marriage, which may occur both later and earlier than the actual start of a partnership. In the same way, it is important to distinguish between actual split-up and divorce. The divorce after splitting up is postponed longer in some countries than in others, which may be caused by differences in legal regulations.
21. In addition to co-residential partnerships, we are interested in *living apart together* (LAT) relationships. A LAT relationship is not only a living arrangement for young people, but increasingly also for people in middle and older age groups, and we still know little about it. We suspect that in Western Europe it is no longer only a period of preparation for the formation of a more established kind of relationship, but it has become an independent kind of relationship in itself. For some couples the labour market or different places of training/education may cause them to live apart from each other, others prefer this living arrangement for personal reasons. Even legally married couples may spend part of their time in different dwellings or have completely different addresses. In Central and Eastern Europe the housing market plays a decisive role and may induce couples to live apart from each other. This living arrangement may also be chosen by people at higher ages that want to preserve a certain degree of autonomy from each other or may want to keep a widow's pension. Conversely, divorced persons may live in the same dwelling due to difficulties in finding other housing and/or for financial reasons; this may be particularly relevant for Eastern European countries.

HOUSEHOLD ORGANISATION

22. The section on the division of household tasks (including the possible support by others) is highly relevant from a gender and generation perspective and may help to explain union and fertility behaviour. Most surveys limit questions regarding the division of household tasks to couples, however GGS intends to cover all household members. This will allow the analysis of (1) differences between couples and non-couples regarding organisation and burden of household tasks, and (2) division of household tasks in extended families or in parental homes (if R is still living with the parents).
23. It is mostly in this section that 'significant other persons', not previously mentioned by R, may be identified because of their possible support to R's household. Household support is seen as an indicator (transfer) of the supportive network. Sets of questions are included on various specific household tasks (like cleaning, preparing meals, etc.), including the provision of paid or unpaid help, as well as on childcare tasks (like dressing, putting to bed, etc.). The last topic is located in the section on Children. The topics Decision-making power and Partnership Quality are discussed under Gender.

PARENTS AND PARENTAL HOME

24. Research has shown that the environment and circumstances during early life may also explain R's union and fertility decisions. For example, living in a two-parent household in general and with both biological parents in particular, has several beneficial effects for the children's behaviour in later life. Also the socio-economic status of the parents contributes to the

children's well being. To obtain this information, two options are possible: (1) asking R about the situation directly after his/her birth, followed by a question whether this situation ever changed during his/her childhood and if so, indicating the time (= R's age at the) new situation; (2) one overall question about the way R lived most of his/her childhood. To limit interview time, the second option is chosen.

25. In this section the following information is obtained about the parents, whether at the time alive or not, together or not, some details about their union history (divorced, repartnered), the quality of their relationship, their socio-economic status, the place where R was living most of his/her childhood, and the age R left the parental home. Intentions to leave the parents are asked to those who are still living in the parental home. Moreover another question focuses on the possibility that R and his/her parents' start living together again. These variables are thought to have a determining impact of several aspects of a child's subsequent life, behaviour, attitudes and values.

EDUCATION

26. Education is a key variable in any social survey as it affects behaviour, attitudes and values of persons in multiple ways. It is also a determining factor in the development of human capital. In this study, the set of questions on education is designed to study the impact of educational attainment and its subject matter on (1) family formation (how does the length of the studies affect age at parenthood? How far is pursuing education compatible with family life? Values probably vary significantly according to the level of education. What are the consequences for family formation?), and (2) on gender relations (socio-economic inequalities between men and women may be partly explained by differences in educational attainment).
27. The determination of R's current situation (still studying or not) requires a precise and unambiguous definition of the 'studies'. Education is one component of the human capital that more largely consists of all individual productive capacities: all abilities and knowledge, either innate or acquired at school, on the job or elsewhere, pertain to human capital.
28. Here 'studies' is defined as any enrolment, either part-time or full-time, in general, vocational or technical programs including continuing education, provided they (might) lead to a qualification. For the level of educational attainment we use the FFS question, and obtain R's age at completion of education. The subject matter of the studies and educational intentions for the future are also inventoried. Retrospective educational histories will be collected in the second panel wave questionnaire.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

29. The objective of this section is twofold: (1) Health and well-being are components of the human capital (see also the paragraph on Education). As such, they may interfere with the occurrence of life events that are under the GGS scope and in particular union formation and fertility: variation in health and well-being may lead to variation in union formation and/or fertility outcomes, whereas variation in union formation and/or fertility outcomes may lead to variation in health and well-being; (2) Health and well-being are highly predictive for the need for health care and as a consequence, for intergenerational transfers (impaired household members or non-resident parents).
30. Health is a multidimensional concept, with at least one of three highly correlated dimensions: (1) subjective self-assessed health, (2) morbidity (presence of a disease), and (3) restrictions in daily activities. The WHO definition of health ("Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity") suggests that a good

measurement of health also requires assessment of well-being. Even the healthiest person may feel bad for shorter or longer periods due to negative experiences in personal relationships, at one's job (sexual harassment, discrimination, violation of human rights) or other areas of life, which could have (had) a negative impact on (part of) their psychological balance and well-being. We look at physical (long-standing illness or chronic condition) and mental health (tested shortened versions of loneliness and depression scales). Personal health support is seen as an indicator (transfer) of the supportive network.

RESPONDENT'S AND PARTNER'S ACTIVITY

31. In order to better understand the interactions between employment pattern and family dynamics there is a need to analyse how employment status affects family development as well as vice versa, namely whether union formation and fertility act upon labour market activities. In countries in transition and in periods of economic crisis, men's activity histories are less 'linear' than they used to be. How are men's family dynamics affected by discontinuous employment and by development of flexitime? In Western Europe the rates of women leaving the employed workforce are lower, and the length of their career interruptions has declined. What is the impact of these changes on fertility and union disruption? Until the 1990s women in Central and Eastern Europe had to combine employment with having a family. How has women's life changed since the beginning of the transition period in this region?
32. Moreover, characteristics of R's occupational status offer information on social class, economic situation, and career track. Theoretical approaches such as the New Home Economics or theoretical statements about the polarisation of life patterns underline the importance of this dimension for family formation and development (childbirth, union disruption, and family re-formation).
33. The collection of complete employment biographies is put off to the second wave. Sets of questions in the first wave questionnaire relate a description of the current job (human capital, time schedule, characteristics local unit, satisfactions and intentions, earnings), maternity/parental leave, last/secondary job, retirement, and partner's activities.

EARNINGS AND ASSETS

34. The information on earnings and assets is necessary, as all family events are largely influenced by economic factors. The New Home Economics have mainly focused on the impact of economic factors on fertility, power to negotiate between household members, and women's activity behaviour. The information about resources of the household is then necessary (1) to have an estimation of the household's standard of living, (2) to measure the 'sharing rules' between P and R (to measure the bargaining power of each partner), and (3) to be able to evaluate the role of public transfers and social welfare policy. It would allow a large set of new studies in particular from economists.
35. In a generation perspective, monetary network transfers with persons outside the household (grandparents, friends, children, etc.) should be collected, covering the following questions: what is the household receiving? How much? And from whom? What is the household giving? How much? And to whom? The distinction between regular and exceptional expenses or incomes (for example an inheritance) needs to be made. We distinguish these transfers at the household level.
36. In a gender perspective the power of negotiation of both partners should be assessed. Incomes are one of the best expressions of the bargaining power. Hence, each partner's earnings should

be assessed. Relative income may be a crucial variable to explain union and fertility choices, as well as decisions to leave the labour market or to divorce.

37. GGS measures three main sources of income: earnings from labour, public transfers and incomes from capital. Public transfers need to be known in order to measure the impact of public policy on poverty and on demographic behaviour, and to have a better estimation of the total household income. For instance, it is necessary to evaluate the implication of the network when public transfers are low.
38. From an inter-temporal perspective, it is necessary to collect financial assets separately in order to know if the household saves for the future, in particular for their children. The questions we developed relate to the household wealth; some are objective ones, others subjective.

VALUES AND ORIENTATIONS: SUBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS AND INTENTIONS

39. Changing attitudes, norms, and values play a prominent role in explanations of current fertility patterns and developments as well as for other aspects of family dynamics. Such subjective dimensions may also help to understand gender issues in a family as well as the relationships between family members from different generations. Therefore, rather extensive information on attitudes, norms, and values should be collected during the first GGS wave. The impact of the subjective dimensions on demographic behaviour can then be studied on the basis of the events recorded in the period up to the second wave. Conversely, accumulating life experience surely makes individuals and families adjust their attitudes and values. Information on the same subjective dimensions should therefore be obtained in the second survey wave in order to enable investigators to relate changes in such dimensions to demographic behaviour up to the time of the second wave. The same argument applies to any subsequent panel waves.
40. Intentions and plans for future demographic behaviour are closely connected to the same subjective dimensions, and corresponding information is suitably collected in the same segment of the questionnaire. Data on intentions should be collected in the first panel wave to enable investigators to confront recorded intentions with manifest subsequent demographic behaviour. In subsequent panel rounds, intentions should be elicited for the same reason. This would also enable analysts to study changes in intentions and their correspondence with accumulating life experience.
41. Subjective dimensions may be proximate or distant determinants of demographic behaviour. In practice this means that they may concern general value orientations on the one hand, or may be more directly tied to demographic choice. In the GGS, demographic choice is connected to concrete and directed family behaviour, such as whether to start living together without getting married, whether to turn a consensual union into a marriage, or whether to have a child in the next few years. These are two different but complementary approaches, and we suggest that both be incorporated.
42. The first, more purpose-directed approach is targeted at revealing how attitudes and norms influence demographic behaviour in different contexts (perhaps via intentions). The approach is centred on proximate determinants of decision-making, and it is based on the social-psychological theory of planned behaviour. For instance, it addresses how the intention to have a child in the next three years is shaped by the individual's perception of costs and benefits of having a child, by norms perceived by members of the R's network, and by how R sees his/her ability to control childbearing. In this approach one also asks how such intentions materialise in true childbearing.
43. The second perspective relies on general value orientations that are more distant determinants of demographic behaviour. It tries to address questions like whether career oriented individuals

postpone childbearing, and whether people who put a high value on intergenerational ties have a lower fertility.

44. Explaining specific demographic behaviour such as childbearing or starting and ending a partnership is of key interest to the GGS. A focus on attitudes, norms, behavioural control, and intentions will permit international comparisons of the potentially differential impact of each such component on subsequent behaviour throughout Europe. The theoretical basis is partially found in the social-psychological theory of planned behaviour (a newer version of the theory of reasoned action), outlined by Fishbein and Ajzen. A full implementation of the theory of planned behaviour is hardly feasible in a large-scale comparative demographic survey. For the GGS, we propose a 'minimalist' implementation, simplifying the social-psychological framework. In particular, on attitudes, we suggest that we should not ask about 'beliefs', which is the subjective probability that certain behaviour will produce the expected consequences. Instead we suggest that we only ask what the expected consequences are.
45. Intentions play a key role and should be implemented on the timing of demographic events, with a specific emphasis on the time window between the panel waves. We suggest to focus on the following specific behaviour: the birth of the next child, union formation, union dissolution, leaving the parental home, retirement, and for older adults, the transition to institutional living arrangements.
46. Based on experiences from existing surveys we plan to obtain value orientations on the following dimensions: gender and generations; religiousness and secularisation; marriage, children, general family orientation and public morality; materialism and postmaterialism; and on confidence, locus of control, trust and worries.
47. The information that we require on subjective dimensions refers to the situation at the time of the interview. The time horizon for intentions about demographic behaviour must be consistent with the panel period.
48. The GGS would constitute the first international comparative effort to use such a framework, and this is expected to give considerable added value in the explanation of difference between and within countries.

GENDER

49. Demographic behaviour is fundamentally affected by gender considerations. Hence, changes in these relations will have a strong influence on (1) changes in the frequency and ways of forming unions, (2) in the quantum and tempo of fertility, (3) in living arrangements of the elderly and (4) in the support network available to them. It is therefore important to assess the gender system in each of the countries under study and the specific gender contract of each R, as well as their links with demographic behaviour.
50. Gender is a multidimensional concept, the various aspects of which include at least: (1) access to and control of resources (education, employment, the possession of durable goods, the ability to dispose freely of earnings and possessions), (2) autonomy (ability to take decisions without having to ask anyone's permission; economic independence; freedom of movement), (3) power (in decision-making) and (4) roles. The gender system has undergone profound changes during the last 50 years.
51. The aspects mentioned serve to assess the gender system both as an object of study and as an explanatory variable of demographic change. On one side, we may hypothesise that women with more human capital are becoming less interested in marriage, more in favour of cohabitation and inclined to separate/divorce, and that they regard children as just one aspect of

self-fulfilment, which competes with other life careers. Fertility may therefore be delayed and reduced. On the other side we may hypothesise that women with greater resources and decision-making opportunities may achieve a level of fertility closer to the desired level, as they may find easier ways to overcome the incompatibilities just described. Also institutional arrangements that favour the compatibility of work and family careers may make it easier to accomplish reproductive plans. The improvement of the status of women should indeed lead to an increase in the participation of others (men and/or institutions) in roles of both the care for children and for the elderly.

52. Variables include access to and control of resources, autonomy, roles, partnership quality and power.

GENERATIONS

53. The fertility reduction and the lengthening of the life span led to an unprecedented ageing process, first in Europe and now even worldwide. As a consequence the relationships between the generations within the family are changing, obviously with much variation within Europe. These changes in turn may affect other demographic and social processes, with consequences for the composition, quality and extent of the supportive networks. Given a prospective design we dig, next to demographic behaviour, into values and an attitude on intergenerational links, assuming that such research contributes to the understanding of partnership and fertility behaviour.
54. Changes in longevity, fertility and family size, spatial mobility and non-family obligations and commitments may adversely affect the system of care for the very young and the old, leading possibly to alternative forms for paid or unpaid arrangements of care to be provided by persons outside the immediate kinship-based network.
55. Changes in union formation, fertility and longevity may also lead to modifications in the type and level of material and non-material transfers between generations, both upwards (towards parents and grandparents) and downwards (towards children, grandchildren and maybe even great-grandchildren).

TRANSFERS / SUPPORTIVE NETWORK

56. Networks, consisting of the complete set of family and non-family members with whom R shares life, will not be investigated as such. Previously in this document references have been made to several possible types of transfers (childcare, household, personal care, emotional and monetary support) that may indicate the existence of a supportive network. So we are mainly interested in those 'significant others', who have according to R a 'significant impact' on R's life, i.e. we concentrate on the social network from a supportive perspective. This approach should add to the broader understanding of the possible effects of support on demographic behaviour.

FINALLY: INTERVIEW OBSERVATIONS AND PANEL ISSUES

57. This section contains information to assess the duration of the interview, total and time per section, characteristics of the dwelling, and observations (presence of others, interruptions, state of mind of R, etc), which might provide indications on the quality of the information, obtained. Also included is a specific question on R's willingness to participate in the second wave interview (question 1115).