

CHAPTER 4

CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUNG ADULTS : RESULTS FROM THE GENERATIONS AND GENDER PROGRAMME

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1 - INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is a critical period in the life course. It is the time when many key transitions are made: employment, sexual partnerships, childbearing, and independent living. These transitions are linked backwards to earlier experiences and forward to consequences later in the life course. The challenges – for the individuals concerned, for their families and for the State, are to ensure successful transitions and increasingly to make it possible to combine multiple roles. Economic performance and population reproduction are two of the key concerns of the modern European State that depend critically upon young people successfully negotiating these transitions through early adulthood.

A wide range of policy issues are critical for young adults: education and training, employment, housing and family policies are all central to their circumstances. More broadly, they are also affected by policies on social integration, social inclusion, poverty reduction, health and well-being, parenting, schooling and gender equity.

The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) aims to provide information to enable policymakers to monitor the status of their adult populations on most of these policy dimensions and, especially with subsequent waves of the Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS), to add considerably to understanding the dynamics of and reasons for change. This paper provides a preliminary comparative exploration of the results of the first wave of the Generations and Gender Surveys for six countries: Bulgaria, France, Germany, Georgia, Hungary and the Russian Federation. Young adults are taken to comprise those

under age 35, since many of the key transitions, especially to marriage and to parenthood, are now being delayed by many into the early thirties, as will be subsequently shown.

The first section of the paper considers the well-being of these young adults in several domains, covering poverty, economic activity status, and health and life satisfaction. This is followed by some results concerning the family, including the timing of several key demographic events, the extent of childbearing and the living arrangements of parents and non-parents among the respondents. To illustrate the potential for exploring the Generations element of the GGP, a series of analyses showing how those respondents who had experienced family disruption during childhood differ from those who did not, in terms of their poverty, mental and physical health, and partnership circumstances as young adults. Finally, to emphasize the potential in the Gender domain of the GGP, we present some direct results on the gender division of child-rearing and of household tasks.

Because the results are provided for six countries, much of the emphasis here will be comparative. In-depth analysis is more appropriately done within a country, but comparisons help to draw out the diversity across a varied selection of UNECE countries. As will be shown, there are often very large differences in the circumstances of young adults in the differing societies. An awareness of these international comparisons provides an important context for policymakers.

Table 36

Sample sizes for young adults aged less than 35 years, GGP Surveys

Age groups	France	Germany	Bulgaria	Georgia	Russian Federation	Hungary
Under 20	275	289	512	360	347	---
20–24	753	704	1,310	920	927	1,125
25–29	743	708	1,405	900	977	1,555
30–34	914	765	1,602	907	967	1,289
Total	2,685	2,466	4,829	3,087	3,218	3,969

Source: GGP Survey

Table 36 shows basic information on the samples that are used for the analyses presented in this paper. The numbers of young adults included (aged 18–34) range from about 2,500 in France and Germany to nearly 5,000 in Bulgaria. There were roughly equal numbers of respondents in each of the main five-year age groups (20–24, 25–29 and 30–34) within each country. We note that the Hungarian sample does not include any teenage respondents. We refer to two key publications for details of the standard survey instruments (UNECE 2005) and for a detailed discussion of the concepts and guidelines underpinning the GGP (UNECE 2007). Despite the best efforts to maintain comparability across the surveys, there are some occasions where results are not available (or not comparable) for all six countries included here, as will be indicated in the text or by omission from the relevant tables.

Since the current harmonized data files do not routinely include information on the sample design and probabilities of selection, all tabulations are presented as unweighted analyses. Moreover, most of the results presented will cover the entire age range up to age 35, since disaggregation by age-group would make the tables unwieldy; as proportions in each age-group do not differ widely across countries, we have not attempted to age-standardize within tables. However, most of the analyses are fairly robust to age variations and have been checked to ensure that results are neither distorted or misleading: for example, the analyses of living arrangements differentiate by whether or not the respondent has parental responsibilities, and results do not then differ much by age-group.

2 - STATE OF THE ART

The results presented here cover a very broad range of domains, including: a variety of indicators of poverty, economic activity and health and well-being; the timing of demographic events and living arrangements; the consequences of childhood family disruption for early adulthood; and gender equity in childcare and household tasks. A full literature review on all of these topics would go beyond the depth of analysis possible in a descriptive analysis and would require far more space than is available here. Instead, this section will briefly indicate some of the key recent research that is comparative across countries and draws on consistent comparative data sources. The nature of such data sources for different topics will also be indicated. The depth of information in the GGS and the prospective nature of the study means that it will provide very rich opportunities to explore many of the issues considered here in much more depth (see UNECE 2007).

Many comparative data sources are developed by the European Union through Eurostat; these cover the 25 EU Member States and are clearly invaluable resources. However, the GGP includes countries beyond the EU, with the current analyses covering Georgia and the Russian Federation among the six countries examined and surveys also being carried out in Japan and Australia, thus enabling different ranges of comparison. The EU data collection procedures are often mandatory

and focus particularly on the domains of poverty and well-being. For eight years (1994–2001), this included the now defunct European Community Household Panel (ECHP) Study, covering the then 12 expanding to 15 countries of the EU, which was a prospective study following up all members of a sample of households annually and proved a rich source for informative comparative analysis (see Wirtz and Mejer 2002 and <http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/echpanel/info/data/information.html>). From this study, there have been a large number of publications on a variety of key topics (see http://epunet.essex.ac.uk/bibliographic_references.php). Perhaps the best summary publication specifically on young people aged 17–25 is Iacovou and Berthoud (2001), which provides comparable information on education, early experience in the labour market, leaving home and family formation and living standards (see also Berthoud and Iacovou 2005).

The ECHP Study has now been replaced by a narrower and largely cross-sectional study that is mandatory in all 25 EU countries, the Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC; see Atkinson et al 2002, Eurostat 2005 and Guio 2005). Another key source of comparable information on poverty, economic activity and living standards is the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), which includes 30 countries and provides detailed information on income from repeated cross-sectional surveys

(<http://www.lisproject.org/introduction/history.htm>). This study has produced over 500 working papers. OECD also provides summary studies of comparative information on income and poverty (e.g. Förster and d'Ercole 2005).

Turning to demographic behaviours, timing of events in the life course and family living arrangements, there are again a range of important comparative data sources. One of the most prominent has been the exploration of the UNECE Family Formation Surveys (the precursor of the GGP Surveys). These surveys contained a wealth of retrospective and current information on demographic behaviours, but were much weaker than GGP on poverty and well-being indicators. Important comparative analyses cover cohabitation and child bearing outside marriage (Kiernan 1999, 1999a and 2004a), partnership formation and dissolution (Kiernan 2002 and 2004) and the timing of leaving home (Billari et al 2001; see also Iacovou 2001, using the ECHP), and more broadly transitions to adulthood (Corijn and Klijzing 2001; and Iacovou 2002 using the ECHP). Fahey and Spéder (2004) and Billari (2005) provide useful overall summaries, and Spéder (2007) draws on a wide range of comparative data sources including national censuses, the Eurobarometer Surveys, the Population Policy Acceptance Survey 2 and the European Quality of Life Survey in a recent and valuable overview of partnership, parenting and childbearing in Europe.

Comparative analysis of the consequences of parental divorce has relied very heavily on the Family Formation Studies as well (Kiernan 2002, 2004; Andersson 2002). The ability to extend such findings beyond the earliest associations found for the United States of America and the United Kingdom was important here. The GGP enables such work to continue and to be linked to a much wider range of socio-economic, mental, and physical well-being outcomes, in addition to demographic behaviour.

The final topic covered in the analyses here covers perceptions of gender equity in the division of

childcare and household tasks as well as reported satisfaction with these and other life domains. Other comparative cross-sectional studies include valuable information on attitudes, including the European Social Survey, the Eurobarometer Surveys and the European and World Values Surveys. Kiernan (1992) reviewed some of the key evidence on gender differences. More recently there have been several comparative studies, which draw for example on the LIS or the newly established Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) and are thus not always compatible with the emphasis on young adults here (Baxter 1997, Gauthier and Smeeding 2003, Davis and Greenstein 2004, and Hank and Jürgens 2007).

This brief review has placed the data from the GGP in a wider context and pointed to some of the key relevant publications on the topics covered. However, the focus is not always on young adults, as here. Many of the data sources considered are immensely valuable in their own domains, whether focusing on poverty and well-being, on the elderly, or on attitudes for example. One of the real strengths of the GGP is that it is unique in bringing together this variety of domains and thus providing the opportunity to explore the interplays (and with many features included in the surveys but not covered here (see UNECE 2005 and 2007)). Thus, for example, Hobcraft and Kiernan (1995) elaborated a wide range of domains that required consideration in examining the issue of becoming a parent. The implications of this for possible survey designs were drawn out further by Hobcraft (2002) and the content of the GGP was influenced by these concerns, though emerging better from the elaborate process of development (UNECE 2007). In another vein, there is a real need to explore the interplays of demography and disadvantage (Kiernan 2002a) and the interplays of demography and social exclusion cross-nationally (e.g. Hobcraft 2002a and 2004; Hobcraft and Kiernan 2001).

3 - POVERTY AND WELL-BEING

3.1 Poverty

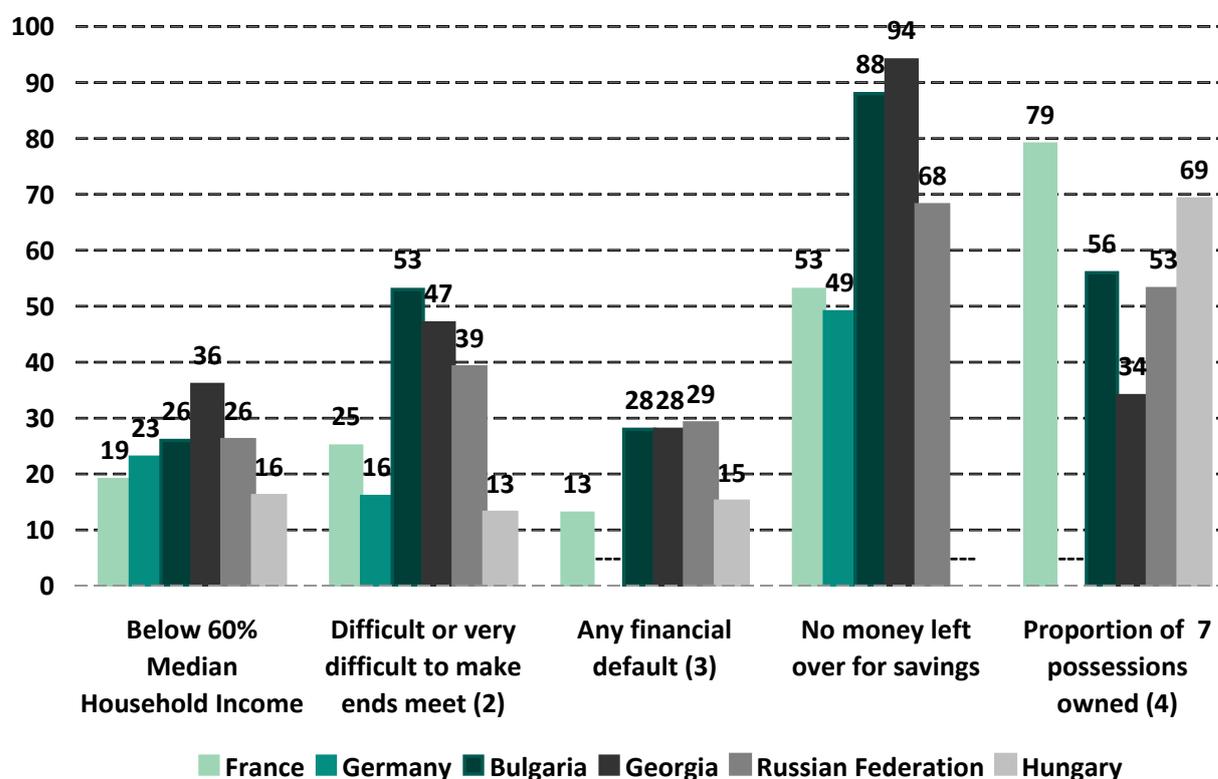
Measurement of poverty is a difficult topic, with key issues being whether more objective income measures should indicate relative or absolute poverty and the value of more subjective measures. Results,

and especially comparisons between countries, can vary considerably with different indicators. A widely used measure (of relative poverty) in Europe is an indicator of whether the household income is below 60 per cent of the median household income. (A number of other issues are not addressed here,

e.g. whether income should be gross or net, allow for housing costs and equalize for household size and structure). The first set of columns in figure XIII shows the proportions of young adult respondents who live in relatively poor households, according to this indicator. Such relative poverty is most prevalent in Georgia (over one third of respondents) and has a slightly higher incidence in Bulgaria and the Russian Federation. Perhaps surprisingly, this

indicator is lowest for Hungary, although we note that the banding of income measures for France and Germany make the results non-comparable. Of course, such relative poverty measures within each country are unlikely to be good indicators of between-country variation, since the underlying distributions generate quite different median household income levels.

Figure XIII:
Poverty indicators for young adults (percentage)



Notes:

1. The household incomes for France and Germany are banded, making it impossible to define this group properly; the figures presented here are those falling into the lowest two-income bands.
2. Household ability to make ends meet on monthly income on six-point scale: 1) with great difficulty, 2) with difficulty, 3) with some difficulty, 4) fairly easily, 5) easily and 6) very easily.
3. Any arrears in the last year on: rent for accommodation, mortgage payments, utility bills or loan repayments.
4. The possessions include seven items: colour TV, video or DVD, washing machine, computer, dishwasher, telephone and a car or van.

The second set of columns in figure XIII provides the proportions of respondents who replied that their household had great difficulty or difficulty in making ends meet with their monthly income. This subjective measure suggests that the French perceive themselves as poorer than do Germans and again suggests the least hardship in Hungary. But most striking is the very high proportions

who have difficulty in making ends meet in the Russian Federation (nearly 40 per cent) and even more so in Bulgaria and Georgia (about half of all young adult respondents). Similarly, about one third of respondents in Bulgaria, Georgia and the Russian Federation had experienced arrears on financial payments in the previous year, as compared with less than one sixth in France and

Hungary. In Bulgaria and Georgia, about 90 per cent of respondents replied that they had no money left over for savings, whereas this proportion was two thirds for the Russian Federation and about one half for France and Germany. The final poverty indicator shows the average proportion of seven possessions (colour TV, video or DVD, washing machine, computer, dishwasher, telephone and a car or van) owned by households. By this measure, the French are the least deprived, with about four fifths of the maximum being the average. The Georgians are the most deprived, with an average of only one third of the possessions per household, with just over half of these goods being the average for Bulgarians and Russians. Regarding these non-income based measures of poverty, we see that young adults in Georgia are poorest, with those in Bulgaria and the Russian Federation also having fairly high deprivation levels. As might be expected, French and German young adults are relatively less deprived by these measures.

Although we will rarely examine within-country differentials in this paper, it is interesting to look at the various poverty indicators for the former East and Western Germany. In terms of relative income poverty, i.e. below 60 per cent of the national median household income, poverty is still considerably worse in Eastern Germany (37 per cent) than Western Germany (20 per cent). However, this difference becomes quite small when we consider the proportions which have difficulty or great difficulty in making ends meet: 16 per cent for Western Germany and 19 per cent for Eastern Germany (both lower than for France, at 25 per cent). The difference is slightly larger if we look at an indicator of affluence, the proportion who report making ends meet easily or very easily, this being

27 per cent in Western Germany and 20 per cent in Eastern Germany (again this contrasts with France, where only 15 per cent report such affluence). Thus we see that objective relative poverty differences in Germany are greater than those for the perceived subjective measures.

3.2 Economic activity

The main patterns of economic activity status for young adult males are shown in table 37A. Unemployment rates are very high for young men in Georgia (31 per cent) and Bulgaria (25 per cent) and about 10 per cent for the other four countries considered here, with Hungary being slightly lower. In addition, some 1 to 3 per cent of young men report being on leave or are not in education, training or employment (NEET). Well over a quarter (28 per cent) of young men in Germany are still in education or training, a figure that is much higher than elsewhere, probably as a result of extensive apprenticeship systems. The lowest proportion remaining in education or training is for Hungary, which can be largely accounted for by there being no one under age 20 in the sample, unlike the remaining countries (see table 36). In the remaining four countries, which differ quite dramatically in many respects, about 15 per cent are in education and training. The remainder of young men are in employment and there is considerable variation in these proportions, ranging from just over 50 per cent in Georgia to nearly 80 per cent for Hungary. Employment rates are below 60 per cent for Bulgaria and Georgia, particularly as a result of unduly high unemployment rates, and for Germany, especially because of high proportions still in education or training.

Table 37A
Economic activity of men (percentage)

	France	Germany	Bulgaria	Georgia	Russian Federation	Hungary
Employed	68.8	58.6	59.1	51.6	73.4	78.7
Unemployed	11.9	11.8	25.4	30.7	10.3	8.0
Education/training	16.4	28.2	13.6	16.2	14.5	10.2
NEET	3.0	1.4	1.9	1.5	1.8	3.1

Note: NEET is not in employment, education or training.

Table 37B
Economic activity of women (percentage)

	France	Germany	Bulgaria	Georgia	Russian Federation	Hungary
Employed	56.2	45.6	48.1	23.6	54.2	55.2
Unemployed	10.3	9.0	23.5	24.4	8.1	6.4
Education/training	21.3	19.6	14.7	15.6	12.9	10.4
NEET	6.8	14.0	3.8	35.6	12.7	5.8
Maternity Leave	5.4	11.8	9.9	0.8	12.1	22.1

Note: NEET is not in employment, education or training.

The economic activity status of young women shows very different patterns, especially reflecting societal responses to marriage and child-rearing. This is illustrated by the much higher proportions reporting either as being on maternity leave or classified as NEET: over one third of young women in Georgia fall into these groups, about one quarter in Germany, Hungary and the Russian Federation, and about one sixth in Bulgaria and France. Once again, the groupings do not correspond to East/West distinctions. The division between being on maternity leave or not varies radically: in Hungary roughly four times as many report being on maternity leave as are classified as NEET (or homemakers), and about three times as many in Bulgaria. At the other extreme, hardly any women in Georgia report being on maternity leave, and the proportions are roughly equal for France, Germany and the Russian Federation. The proportions of young women in education or training are generally fairly similar to those of young men in the same country, with two exceptions: in France the proportion of women in education or training is five percentage points higher than for men, while in Germany the proportion for young women is nine percentage points lower than for men, although still higher than in the four countries other than France.

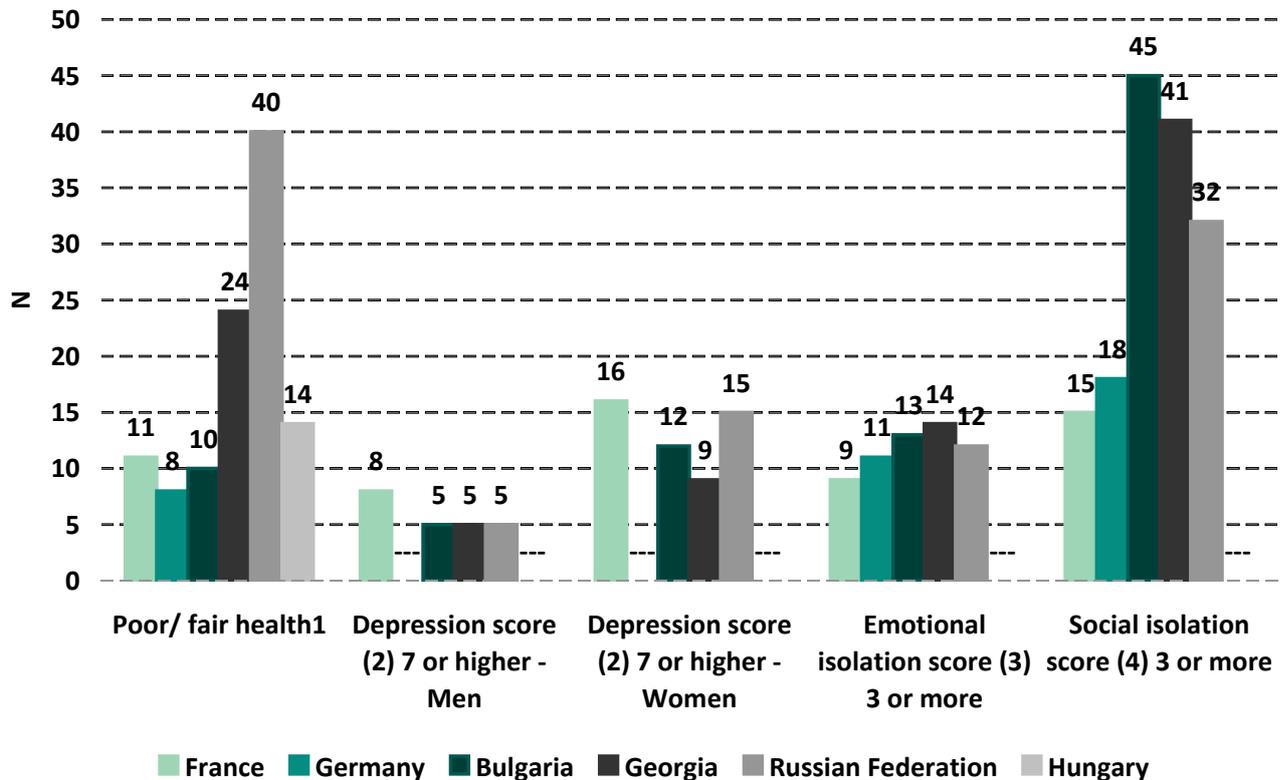
Particularly as a result of the significant levels of leave and NEET for women, much lower proportions are in the labour force (combining the employed and unemployed). For men, over 80 per cent are in the labour force everywhere except Germany (70

per cent), whereas for women these proportions are much lower: highest in Bulgaria (71 per cent), then France (66 per cent), the Russian Federation and Hungary (62 per cent), Germany (55 per cent), and Georgia being the lowest (48 per cent). Unemployment rates among those in the labour force (with many self-selection opportunities for education, training or NEET) are generally quite similar for men and women, with the sole exception of Georgia, where the rate for men is 37 per cent and the rate for women is 51 per cent.

3.3 Health and well-being

Respondents were asked a series of questions concerning their health and well-being. We begin with self-reports on general health, which we would expect to be good for young adults. Indeed, very low proportions reported their general health as being bad or very bad (fewer than 4 per cent); however, once we also include those who report their general health as being fair in addition to the bad categories, we obtain the results shown in figure XIV. About 10 per cent of young adults report bad or fair health in Bulgaria, France and Germany, with 14 per cent doing so in Hungary; however, nearly one quarter of young adults in Georgia and a full 40 per cent in the Russian Federation report having bad or fair general health. Moreover, these reports were substantially more prevalent among women than among men in Georgia (29 per cent vs. 19 per cent) and in the Russian Federation (45 per cent vs. 32 per cent), but hardly differed by gender elsewhere.

Figure XIV:
Health indicators for young adults (percentage)



Notes:

1. Based on question on 'how is your health in general' with categories: 1=very good, 2=good, 3=fair, 4=bad, 5=very bad. Proportions in groups 3, 4 and 5 shown.
2. Each of seven items concerning frequency of experience during the previous week scored as seldom=0, sometimes=1, often=2 and most or all of the time=3 and summed; the items are: could not shake off the blues, depressed, life failure, fearful, lonely, crying spells, sad.
3. Each of three items (general sense of emptiness, miss having people around, and often feel rejected) scored as 0= no, more or less =1, and yes=2 and summed.
4. Each of three items (plenty of people to lean on in case of trouble, many people to count on completely, and enough people feel close to) scored as 0=yes, more or less=1, and no=2 and summed.

Turning to mental health, respondents were asked a battery of seven questions concerning their intensity of experience during the past week of several conditions indicative of depression: could not shake off the blues, depressed, regarding life as a failure, being fearful, being lonely, having crying spells, and feeling sad. Four categories were identified: seldom, sometimes, often and most or all of the time. These were scored as 0, 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The scores were summed across all seven items to calculate a depression score. Figure XIV shows the proportions having a score of seven or more (corresponding to an average score of one or more) for the four countries where this measure is available. Since the prevalence of depression is higher for women than for men, these results are disaggregated by gender. By this measure, about 5 per cent of young men in Bulgaria, Georgia, and the Russian Federation are depressed, as compared with 8 per cent for young Frenchmen. For young women, the lowest

proportion was in Georgia (9 per cent), followed by Bulgaria (12 per cent) and the Russian Federation (15 per cent) and France (16 per cent). In France and Georgia, young women are about twice as likely to be depressed as young men; this contrasts with a threefold difference in prevalence by gender for the Russian Federation.

Two further indicators of well-being are presented in Figure XIV: emotional isolation and social isolation. These indicators derive from six-item scale "loneliness" scale developed by De Jong Gierveld (2006) for the study of loneliness among the elderly, which can be divided into two measures of emotional and social loneliness. Since the two measures differ significantly in their variation across the countries examined here, we treat them separately. The indicator of emotional loneliness derives from summing responses about feelings of a general sense of emptiness, of missing having people

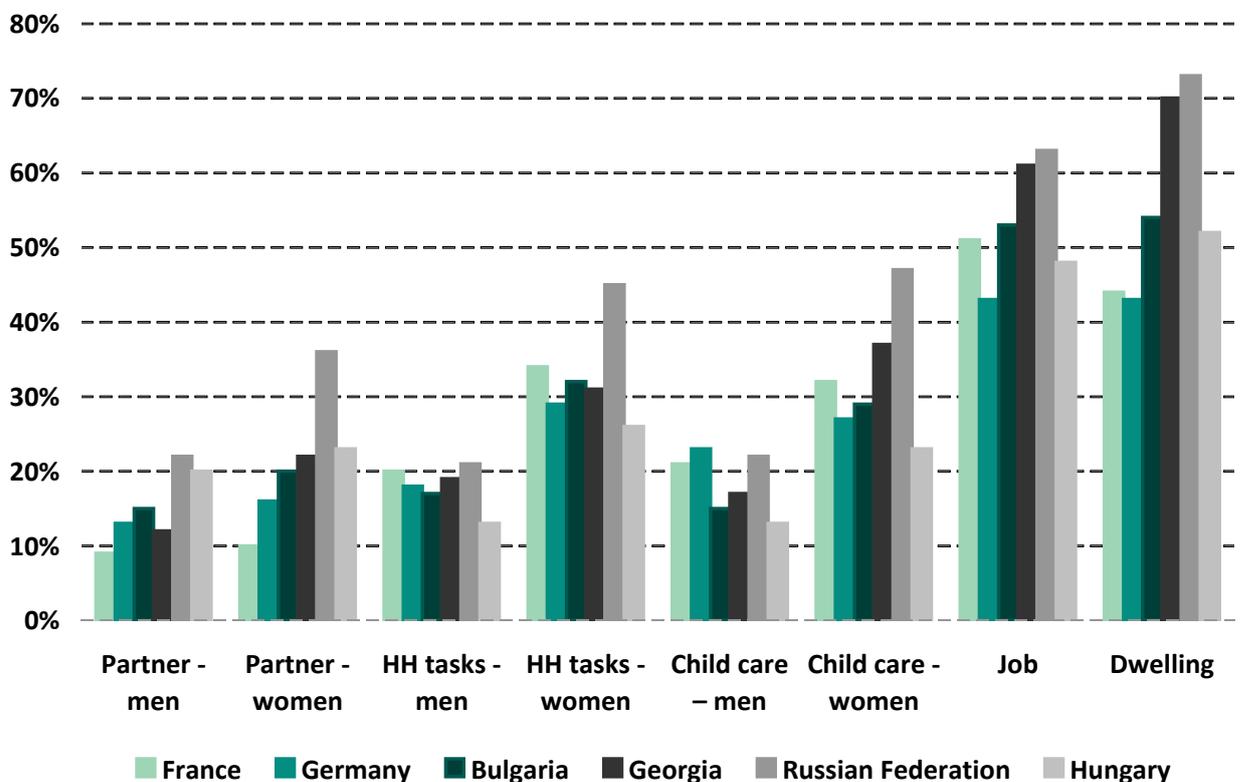
around, and of frequent rejection, with the response categories of no, more or less, and yes scored as 0, 1, and 2, respectively. A score of 3 or more is taken as an indicator of emotional loneliness or isolation. The differences across the five countries for which this measure is available are not that large, ranging from 9 per cent in France to 14 per cent in Georgia; moreover, only Bulgaria (10 per cent for men and 15 per cent for women) and the Russian Federation (9 per cent for men and 14 per cent for women) show significant gender differences.

When we turn to the indicator of social isolation, we see much greater differentiation across countries. The three items used for this indicator cover social support, including having plenty of people to lean on in case of trouble, many people to count on completely, and feeling close to enough people, with the response categories of yes, more or less and no scored as 0, 1, and 2, respectively. Again, a score of 3 or more is used as the indicator of social loneliness or isolation, or perhaps of having low support networks. In France and Germany, fewer than 20 per cent of young adults are socially isolated by this indicator; but one third of young adults are socially

isolated in the Russian Federation and over 40 per cent in Bulgaria and Georgia. As we shall see in a subsequent section, Bulgaria and especially Georgia have very high proportions of young adults living with either their own or their partner's parents, but this extended family living arrangement seems to be associated with high social isolation.

Respondents in the GGS were asked about their levels of satisfaction with several elements of their lives, with reports being on a scale from 0 to 10 where zero corresponds to complete dissatisfaction and 10 to complete satisfaction. These measures are often referred to as being indicative of subjective well-being or, more loosely, of happiness. Reports were restricted to those having a partner for dissatisfaction with the partner and with the household division of tasks, those who had a child in the household for dissatisfaction with childcare arrangements, and those who were employed for job dissatisfaction. Figure XV presents the results and shows some striking differentials in levels of happiness between countries, between different aspects of life satisfaction and by gender.

Figure XV:
Proportions dissatisfied with circumstances (percentage)



Note: Low satisfaction as indicated by percentage reporting 0–7 on a 0–10 scale, with 0 corresponding to complete dissatisfaction and 10 to complete satisfaction.

Respondents were least dissatisfied with their partners who they had chosen, compared with all other circumstances in every country. Women were generally less satisfied with their partners than were men, with the difference by gender being quite small in France but a full 10 percentage points in Georgia and 14 percentage points in the Russian Federation, such that over one third of partnered Russian women under age 35 were dissatisfied with their partners.

These gender differences become even more apparent once we examine levels of dissatisfaction with the division of household tasks and of childcare. In broad terms, about a fifth of men are dissatisfied with the household division of domestic tasks (the proportion is lower for Hungary), whereas about one third of women are dissatisfied in this regard (the proportion is much higher in the Russian Federation, at 45 per cent). The minimum gender gap is 11 percentage points (for Germany), and women are twice as dissatisfied as men in both Hungary (with the lowest levels of dissatisfaction) and in the Russian Federation (with the highest levels of dissatisfaction). Levels of dissatisfaction with childcare arrangements show very similar patterns, although the gender gap for Germany is only four percentage points. Women were over twice as likely to be dissatisfied with childcare arrangements as

men in Georgia and the Russian Federation. We shall subsequently show that there is significant inequality in the division of both household tasks and childcare by gender; the results shown here indicate that women not only do more of these tasks and of the childcare, but also feel unhappy about the situation.

Levels of dissatisfaction with current job and with current dwelling are extremely high in all six countries: with the exceptions of Germany for job satisfaction and France and Germany for dwelling satisfaction, over half of respondents express fairly high levels of dissatisfaction with their jobs and their housing. Nearly two-thirds are dissatisfied with their jobs in Georgia and the Russian Federation, and nearly three quarters are dissatisfied with their dwellings in these same two countries. Dwelling dissatisfaction levels are fairly similar for each of four subgroups formed by distinguishing combinations of whether or not a child is present and whether or not the respondents are living with either their or their partners' parent(s). The only clear differential within countries on this classification is for France and for Germany, where those who are living independently from their parents but are childless are generally less dissatisfied with their dwellings than others.

4 - DEMOGRAPHY AND FAMILY

4.1 Demographic events

Figures XVI A and XVI B show the proportions of young adults who have become parents for each five-year age group. Parenthood among teenage members of the samples is rare, with fewer than 4 per cent being fathers everywhere and from 4 to 11 per cent having become mothers. Entry to fatherhood is fairly delayed in France, Germany and Hungary with about one quarter being fathers when aged 25–29. In contrast, one third of men are fathers at ages 25–29 in Bulgaria, 40 per cent in Georgia and already half of men are fathers by this age in the Russian Federation. By ages 30–34, we see that fatherhood is quite delayed in Germany, with less than half having become fathers. About 60 per cent are fathers when aged 30–34 in Bulgaria, France, Georgia and Hungary, showing some convergence; but nearly 80 per cent are fathers by this age in the Russian Federation.

Entry into motherhood typically occurs earlier than into fatherhood. Motherhood is most delayed in France: by ages 25–29 just under 40 per cent are mothers, whereas 40 per cent are already mothers by ages 20–24 in the Russian Federation, compared with only 14 per cent in France. Differences between countries in the proportions who are mothers vary most for the age groups 20–24 and 25–29, e.g. at ages 25–29 the proportions who have become mothers are about 40 per cent for France, about 50 per cent for Germany and Hungary, about two thirds for Bulgaria and Georgia, and three quarters for the Russian Federation. By age 30–34 about one quarter of women in France, Germany and Hungary have not had a first birth. In Georgia, a fifth of women had not become mothers by ages 30–34, in Bulgaria this proportion was about one sixth, and in the Russian Federation less than one tenth had not become mothers.

Figure XVI A
Proportions who are parents (percentage) - Men

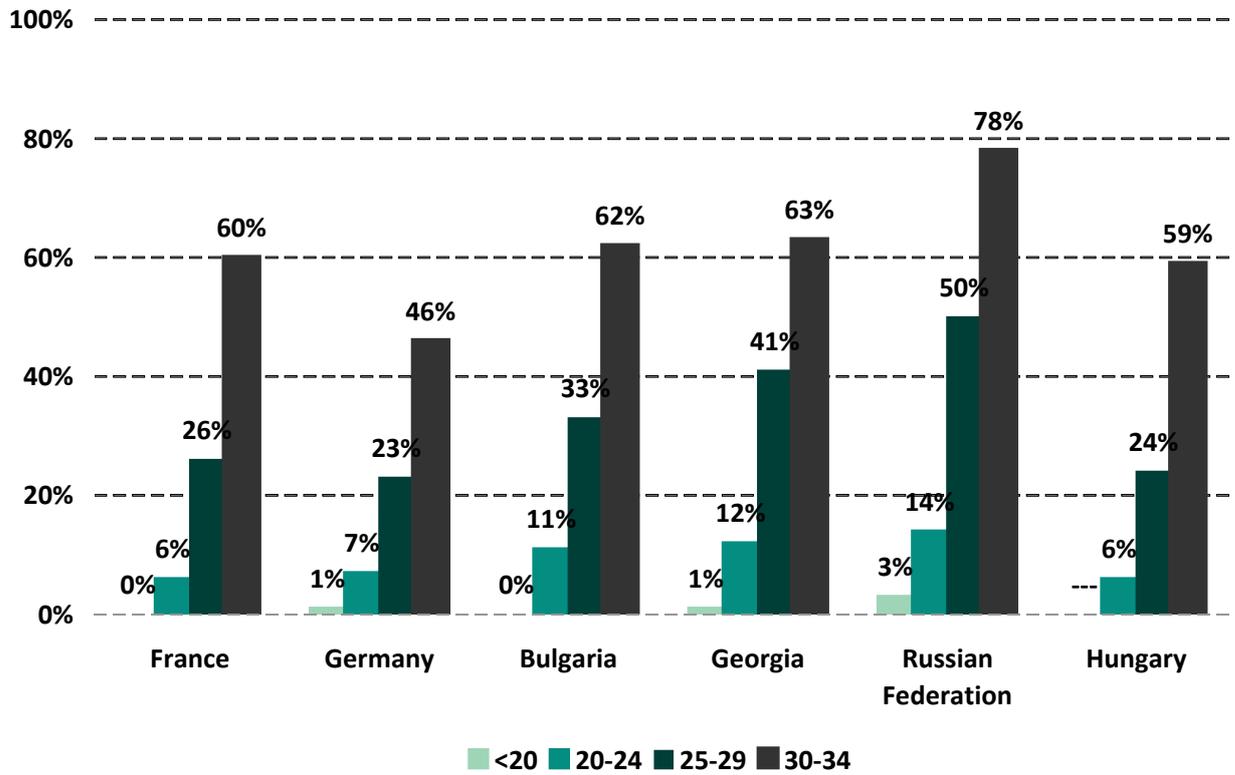
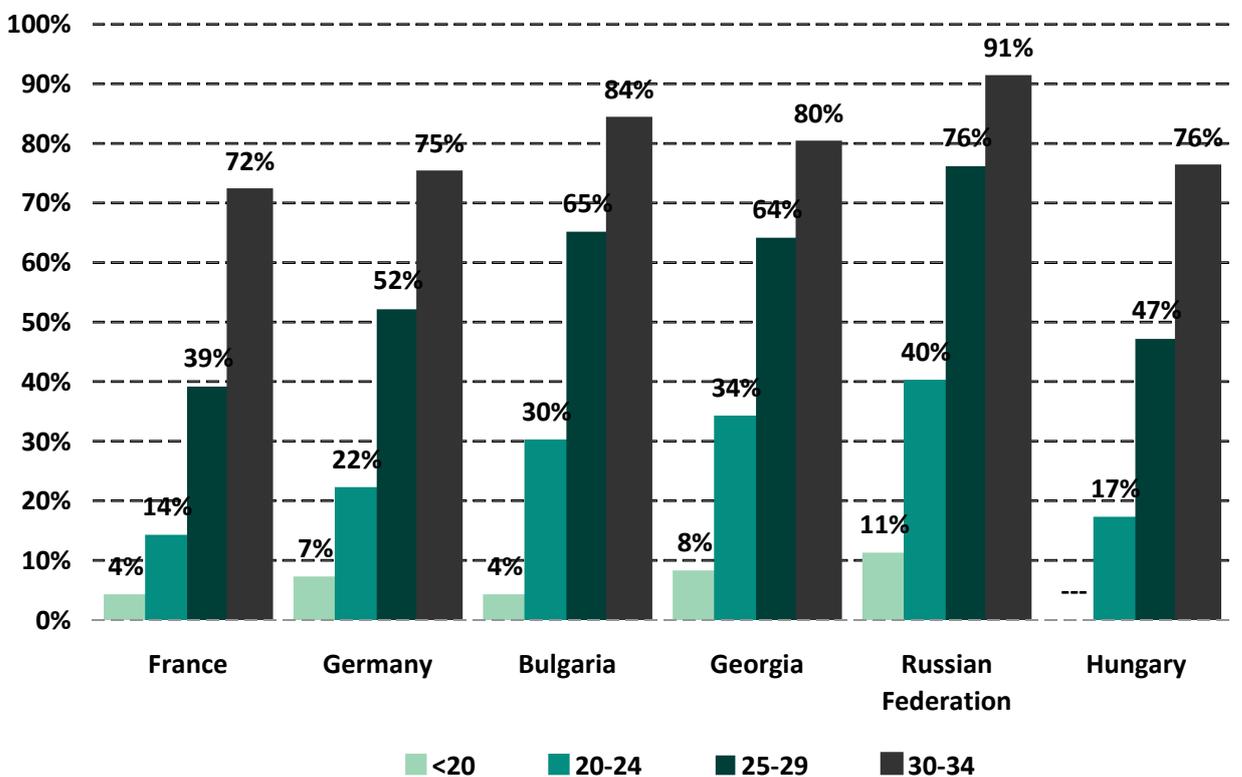


Figure XVI B
Proportions who are parents (percentage) - Women



Tables 38A and 38B show the estimated median ages (i.e. ages at which half of the sample had experienced the event) at several demographic events, derived from life-table calculations. The earliest event in the life course considered here is the timing of first leaving the parental home. The median age at leaving home for women ranges from just under age

20 for the Russian Federation to just over age 21 for France. This for men is typically somewhat higher (typically ages 21–23) and strikingly so for Georgia (26 years), where subsequent analysis will show that men often remain living with their parents after marriage and entry into fatherhood.

Table 38A

Median ages at demographic events - men

	France	Germany	Bulgaria	Georgia	Russian Federation	Hungary
First left home	22.8	21.4	23.2	26.2	21.0	---
First partnership	27.0	27.6	27.6	27.8	23.2	27.6
First marriage	>35	>35	>35	34.2	25.5	33.2
First birth	30.8	>35	30.1	29.5	26.5	31.5

Table 38B

Median ages at demographic events - women

	France	Germany	Bulgaria	Georgia	Russian Federation	Hungary
First left home	21.2	20.3	20.3	20.9	19.6	----
First partnership	24.2	23.8	22.2	22.3	20.6	23.5
First marriage	32.1	28.6	25.2	28.2	22.6	27.3
First birth	28.1	27.8	23.8	23.7	22.6	27.2

With the exception of the Russian Federation, men in the other countries enter their first partnership at very similar median ages, around age 27–28. Half of men in The Russian Federation have partnered by age 23, a full four years earlier. Women enter their first partnership at younger ages, the median age being around age 20–21 in the Russian Federation, 22 in Bulgaria and Georgia, and 23–24 in France, Germany and Hungary. Entry into first marriage is delayed further, with the earliest instance being the Russian Federation, with half of all women first married before age 23 and half of all men around age 25. Women also marry fairly early in Bulgaria, with a median age of 25 years. In France, Georgia and Hungary, it is not until their late twenties that half of all women have married, and this is delayed until the early thirties in France. For men, except in the Russian Federation, marriage is delayed until the mid- to late thirties. Thus we see clear evidence of entry into first partnership increasingly being separated from entry into first marriage, often by several years.

The final event covered by tables 38A and 38B concerns becoming a parent: perhaps the most noteworthy fact is that half of all women become mothers before half enter marriage in all six countries. Half of women have entered motherhood by about age 23 or 24 in Bulgaria, Georgia and the Russian Federation, whereas this milestone is delayed until around age 27–28 for France, Germany and Hungary. Once again, the Russian Federation stands out as having early entry into fatherhood, with half of men achieving this before age 23. In Bulgaria, France, Georgia and Hungary about half of men have become fathers by around age 30 or 31; fewer than half of German men have become fathers by age 35 (the maximum age considered in this analysis).

Thus we see that both men and women in the Russian Federation make major demographic transitions earlier than in the other countries considered here. Leaving home occurs fairly early for both men and women, although it is delayed for men in Bulgaria

and especially in Georgia. Entry into first partnership occurs at fairly similar ages both for men and for women, as does entry into first marriage for men in all but the Russian Federation. The timing of first birth for men is fairly similar in all but the Russian Federation (earlier) and Germany (later). There is greater variation across countries in the timing of entry into first marriage and into motherhood for women.

4.2 Living arrangements

Early adulthood typically sees the transition from living with one or both parents to more independent

living. We have already looked at the evidence regarding the timing of first leaving home, but we will now examine what arrangements are in place for the young adult respondents. We know that living arrangements typically change with age, but for the analyses presented in this section we shall simply divide respondents by gender into those who are parents and those who are not by the time of the survey. This reflects an underlying proposition that becoming a parent is one of the most key transitions that young adults make, and permits exploration of the extent to which the nuclear family is a strong normative concern in the societies considered.

Table 39
Proportions living in a complex household (percentage)

	No child		With child(ren)		All	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
France	1.8	0.9	0.6	1.0	1.5	0.9
Germany	4.1	3.5	1.9	1.7	3.7	2.7
Bulgaria	5.6	6.4	31.5	30.8	13.8	20.3
Georgia	7.6	9.4	65.8	64.4	26.4	39.2
Russian Federation	4.6	6.7	17.6	24.6	9.8	18.0
Hungary	6.1	9.1	11.5	13.6	7.7	11.3

Note: Complex households are either three generations or comprise respondent and partner living with parent(s).

Table 39 shows the prevalence of living in complex households, here defined as those containing three generations (the respondent, one or more children and a parent of the respondent or possibly of their partner, if they have one) or comprising the respondent and a partner living with one or more of their parents. Fewer than 10 per cent of men or women without children live in such complex households (which are by definition not three-generation households) in any of the six countries. However, among young adult respondents who are parents, there is enormous variation in the propensity to live in complex, three-generation households: almost none do in France or Germany, whereas two thirds do in Georgia. In between these extremes, just under one third of young parents live in three generation households in Bulgaria, and just over 10 per cent in Hungary. There are noticeable differences by gender for the Russian Federation, with one quarter of mothers and only 18 per cent of fathers living in complex households. These striking differences for parents among countries undoubtedly reflect a combination of substantial constraints in housing markets and possibly a less

entrenched nuclear family norm, other than in France and Germany.

Tables 40A for men and 40B for women provide some more detail concerning living and partnership circumstances among the young adults who are not parents. Low proportions (about 20 to 30 per cent) of young men and young women who are childless still live with their parents in France and in Germany, yet we have seen that childbearing is quite delayed in both countries, indicating a prolonged period of independent living before becoming a parent. During this period, a variety of living arrangements and sexual partnership circumstances occur: about half of men and 60 per cent of women are in a sexual partnership, although only about 20 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women are in co-residential partnerships; almost one third of both men and women are in a non-cohabiting but long-term sexual partnership (i.e. living apart together). In the Russian Federation, where both men and women spend less time living independently without children because of earlier entry into parenthood, the proportions of young adults still living with their parents are higher

than for France or Germany, but the partnership patterns are quite similar. At the other extreme, the great majority (over three quarters) of childless young men and women in Bulgaria and Georgia live with their own parents. In both countries, very few are married or cohabiting, reflecting a rapid transition to parenthood once such partnerships are established; in Georgia sexual partnerships that are not co-residential are very rare, but Bulgarian

men and women have a moderately high prevalence of living apart together relationships. Young adult childless Hungarian men (69 per cent) and women (59 per cent) are quite likely to be living with their own parents, but are as likely to be cohabiting or married as their French or German counterparts, with intermediate levels of living apart together akin to those in Bulgaria.

Table 40A
Living arrangements among childless young men (percentage)

	N	Live with own parents	Partnership status				
			Never	Out	LAT	Cohabiting	Married
France	779	27.9	38.4	12.6	26.7	15.1	7.2
Germany	906	22.7	44.9	6.0	29.7	13.8	5.6
Bulgaria	1,429	81.6	69.7	2.4	16.4	7.1	4.4
Georgia	1,000	91.3	86.4	0.9	3.6	5.3	3.8
Russian Federation	843	42.6	38.4	7.0	33.3	11.4	9.9
Hungary	1,362	69.2	55.8	6.8	15.9	13.4	8.1

Table 40B
Living arrangements among childless young women (percentage)

	N	Live with own parents	Partnership status				
			Never	Out	LAT	Cohabiting	Married
France	974	26.8	30.2	9.1	29.6	21.0	10.1
Germany	719	18.8	38.1	4.3	24.4	21.9	11.4
Bulgaria	1,177	75.9	60.2	1.3	22.6	8.2	7.8
Georgia	735	84.9	86.1	1.5	0.4	6.5	5.4
Russian Federation	670	51.0	33.5	4.7	33.8	16.0	12.1
Hungary	1,041	59.1	41.0	6.0	17.4	22.7	13.0

Notes: Out is not currently in a partnership, but previously in a cohabitation or marriage. LAT is "living apart together" which is an ongoing sexual partnership that is not coresidential.

We now turn to an examination of two key aspects of living arrangements for those young adults who were parents at the time of the survey (tables 41A and 41B): lone parenthood and living in complex households. Lone fatherhood is rare (and higher than expected for Germany), but there are many more lone mothers. Fewer than 10 per cent of mothers are lone mothers in Georgia and Bulgaria and about 12 per cent in Hungary; however, over 20 per cent of mothers are not co-resident with a partner in France, Germany and the Russian Federation.

Extremely low proportions of young adult fathers and mothers live with their own or their partners' parent(s) in France and Germany. For the remaining countries, there are significant proportions of young adult fathers and mothers who live with their own or their partners' parents. There are consistent apparent anomalies in these reports by gender. Both men and women are more likely to report living with their own parents, compared with the proportions of women and men who report living with their partner's parents. In Bulgaria, for example, 28.0 per cent of young fathers report living with their own

Table 41A

Living arrangements for male respondents with children (percentage)

	N	Lone Parents	Live with parents		
			Own	Partner's	Either
France	313	2.2	0.3	0.3	0.6
Germany	211	6.6	1.9	0.0	1.9
Bulgaria	664	3.6	28.0	3.5	31.5
Georgia	479	1.9	61.8	4.2	66.0
Russian Federation	557	1.4	11.5	6.1	17.6
Hungary	565	1.8	5.8	5.7	11.5

Table 41B

Living arrangements for female respondents with children (percentage)

	N	Lone Parents	Live with parents		
			Own	Partner's	Either
France	619	20.8	0.8	0.2	1.0
Germany	630	21.3	1.6	0.2	1.8
Bulgaria	1,559	9.9	14.2	16.7	30.9
Georgia	873	7.4	15.5	49.1	64.6
Russian Federation	1,148	22.4	17.7	6.9	24.6
Hungary	1,001	12.4	10.3	3.3	13.6

Notes: Lone parents include those without a partner who are living with parents.

parents, while only 16.7 per cent of women report living with their partner's parents – a difference of 11.3 percentage points. It is also the case that 14.2 per cent of young Bulgarian mothers report living with their own parents, but only 3.5 per cent of young fathers report living with their partner's parents – a difference of 10.7 percentage points. A similar pattern of fairly symmetric differences of this kind is found for all the other countries with the exception of the Russian Federation, where the excess of women living with their own parents compared with men living with their partner's parents (11.6 percentage points) is much higher than the converse difference (4.6 percentage points). This may reflect a combination of fairly high rates of lone motherhood combined with a moderately high propensity to live with parents in the Russian Federation (a similar

but weaker pattern can be seen for Hungary, where both levels of lone motherhood and living with parents are lower). The consistent biases towards reporting living with own parents for both mothers and fathers may simply be a reporting error arising from complexities of the household grid.

We can see that Georgia is a strongly patrilocal society, with half or more of all young mothers and young fathers living with the father's parents. Almost one third of Bulgarian young fathers and mothers live with either their own or their partners' parents and there is some evidence of a preference for co-residence with the father's parents, although this conclusion would be stronger without the complications arising from the reporting biases discussed above.

5 - FAMILY DISRUPTION ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

To illustrate the importance of cross-generational ties for the young adults considered here, we shall examine differences between those who experienced

some family disruption before age 16 and those who did not – the distinction is made according to whether the respondent lived with both biological parents

throughout childhood (up to age 15), although the measure available for Hungary concerns whether there was ever family disruption (not just up to age 16). Table 42 shows the proportions of young adults who experienced family disruption: fewer than 10 per cent in Bulgaria and Georgia, about 15 per cent in France, Germany and Hungary, and 22 per cent in the Russian Federation.

In this section, we shall examine differences between those who experienced family disruption and those who did not for a range of outcomes: self-reported general health, depression indicators, incidence of poverty and partnership behaviours.

Respondents who experienced family disruption report higher levels of poor or fair general health, as shown in Figure XVII, although only marginally so in Georgia and Hungary. The differences exceed

five percentage points for France, Germany and the Russian Federation; put another way, the incidence of poor or fair health among those who experienced family disruption during childhood is about 50 per cent higher than for those who did not in Bulgaria and France, and it is doubled in Germany.

Turning to mental health, figure XVIII shows the average scores on the depression inventory, described in section 3.3 above. These measures are not available for Germany or Hungary, but each of the four remaining countries shows a higher average score for those who experienced family disruption than those who did not: the average depression score is more than 30 per cent higher for the disrupted than the intact in Bulgaria, France and Georgia.

Table 42
Experience of family disruption by age 16 (percentage)

	France	Germany	Bulgaria	Georgia	Russian Federation	Hungary
Disrupted	14.9	16.9	9.9	9.0	22.4	15.1*

Note: * - (ever)

Figure XVII
Reports of general health as poor or fair by experience of family disruption (percentage)

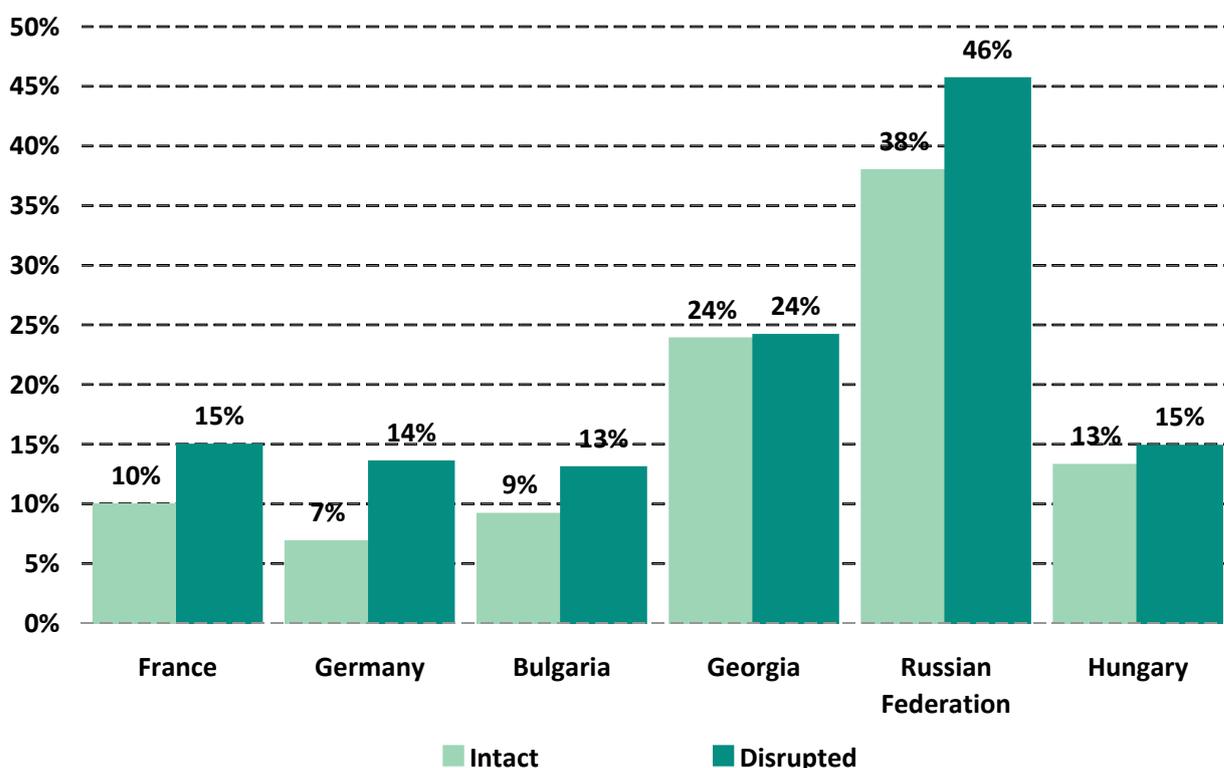


Figure XVIII

Average depression scores by experience of family disruption during childhood

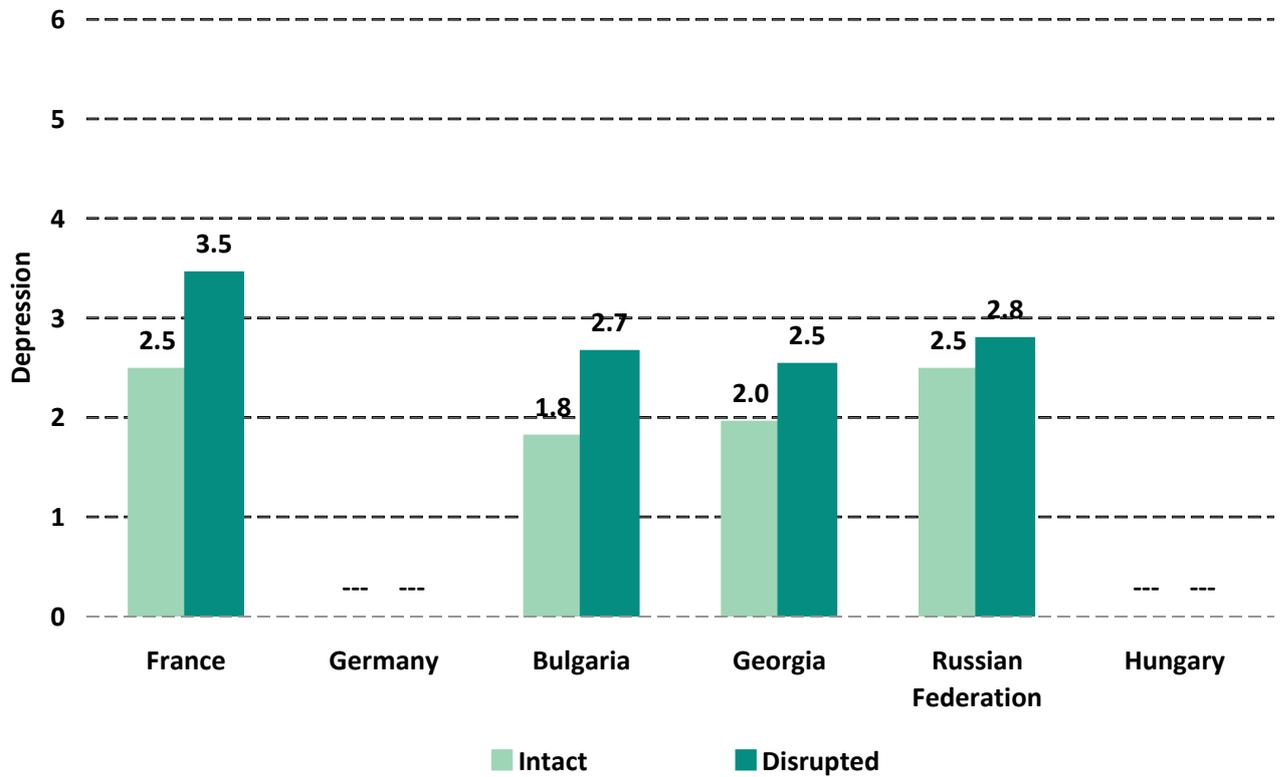
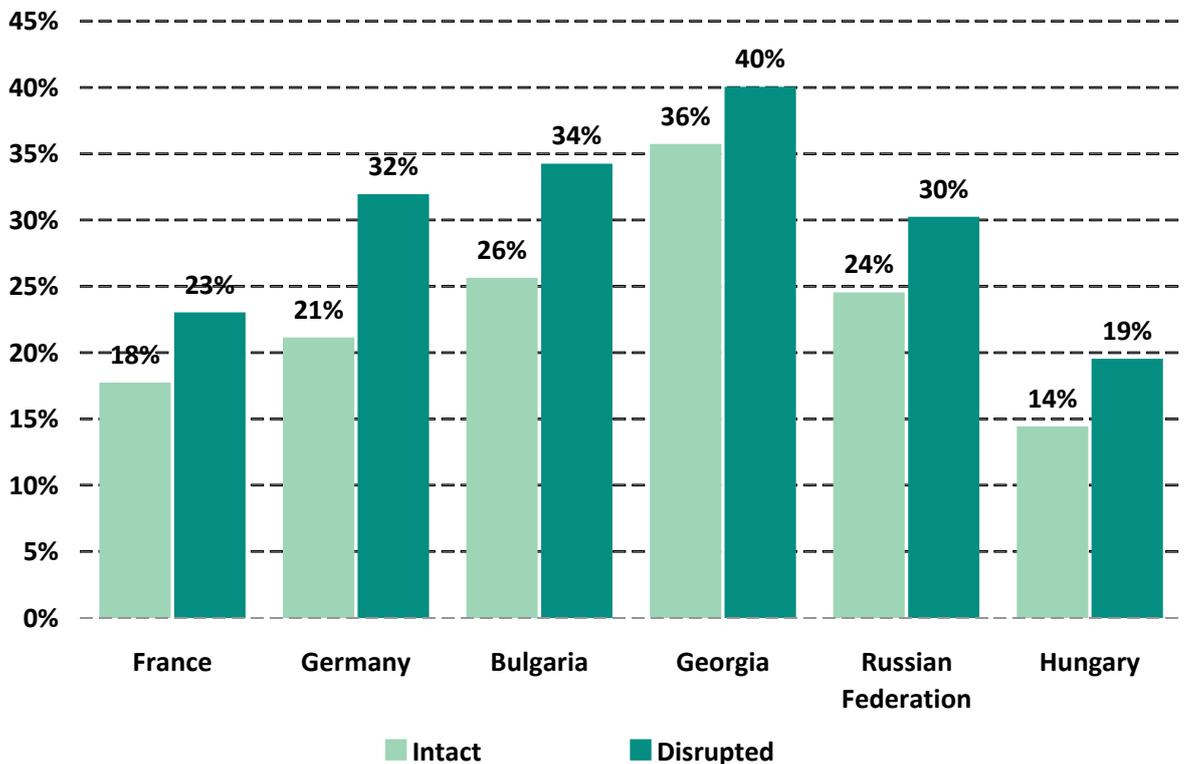


Figure XIX

Household income below 60% of median by experience of family disruption as child (percentage)



The incidence of poverty, shown in figure XIX, is also higher for young adults who experienced family disruption than for those in intact families throughout childhood: the difference is about five percentage points for France Georgia, Hungary and the Russian Federation. This poverty gap is greater in Bulgaria (nine per cent) and Germany (eleven per cent).

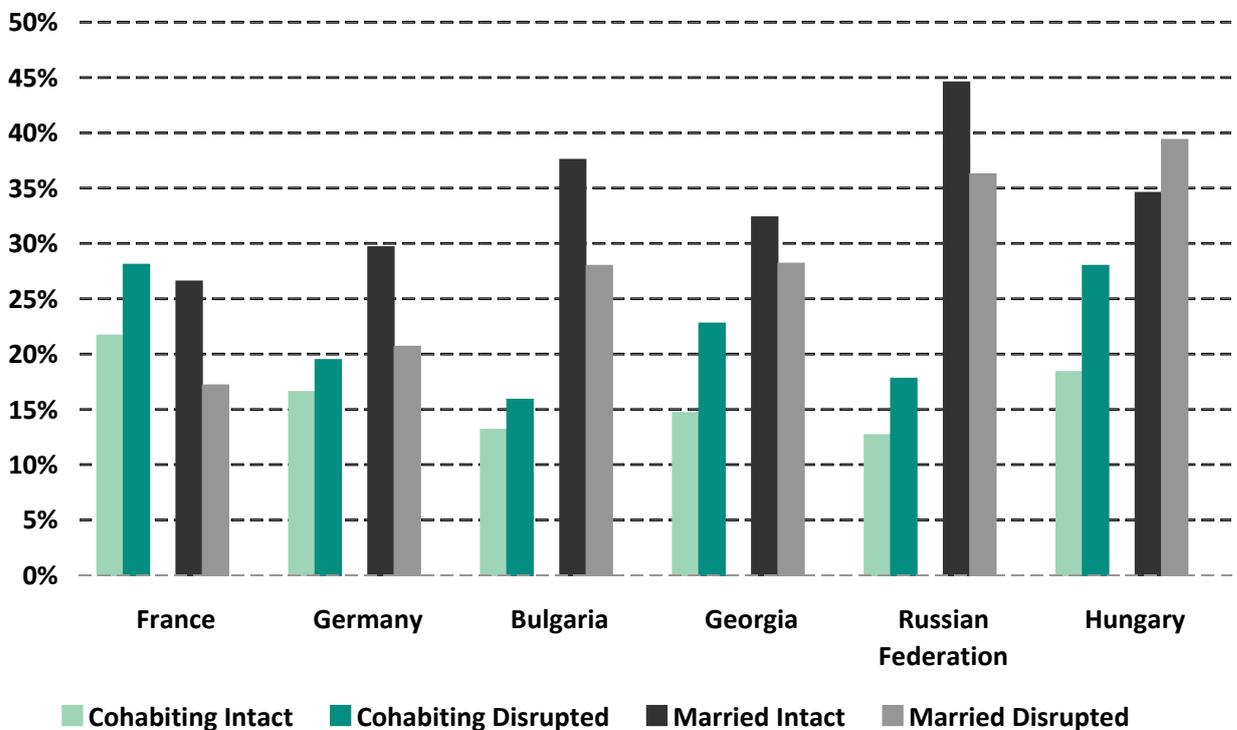
Our final illustration of the differences between the intact and disrupted groups relates to partnership experiences. Figure XX shows the proportions who were cohabiting and who were married. For each country a higher proportion of young adults who experienced family disruption than did not are cohabiting, with the differentials being smallest for Germany and Bulgaria and largest for Georgia and Hungary. In contrast, the proportions that are married are generally lower for the disrupted than the intact group, with the exception of Hungary. The difference is eight to 10 percentage points for Bulgaria, France, Germany and the Russian Federation, but only half that for Georgia. Hungarian

young adults who ever experienced family disruption are also more likely to be married than those who did not. However, there is an unusually large difference in the propensity of the two groups to have never partnered, with 31 per cent of the intact group and only 16 per cent of the disrupted group being in this category. (This difference of 15 percentage points compares with a range of plus to minus five percentage points for the same difference in never partnered status for the remaining countries). Although there is not space to show the results and the overall prevalence is small, each country shows an excess proportion of those from disrupted families currently being out of a partnership (having previously been partnered), compared with those from intact families.

Thus, we see that experience of family disruption during childhood is generally associated with a range of less desirable outcomes in adulthood: poorer general and mental health, greater incidence of poverty and less stable partnerships.

Figure XX

Partnership status by experience of family disruption during childhood (percentage)



6 - GENDER EQUITY IN CHILDCARE AND HOUSEHOLD TASKS

In section 2.3 we discussed results from figure XV, which showed that women were much more dissatisfied than men with the division of labour for household tasks and for childcare within the household. In very broad terms, about 20 per cent of men were dissatisfied with the division of household tasks and of childcare, while about 30 per cent of women were.

In this section, we turn to reports by men and women concerning the actual division of labour for childcare and for household tasks. The analyses presented here are restricted to those respondents who had a co-resident partner and further to those with children for the childcare items. For each of six childcare tasks (dressing, putting to bed, staying home when child ill, play or leisure, help with homework, and transport) and six household tasks (preparing daily meals, doing the dishes, food shopping, vacuum-cleaning, paying bills/financial records, and organizing joint social activities)

respondents reported that the task was 1) always self; 2) usually self; 3) equally with partner; 4) usually partner; and 5) always partner. For Germany, only three categories (usually respondent [=2], about equally [=3] and usually partner [=4]) were available regarding the childcare tasks and household tasks. The average score for each of the six tasks was then averaged across the six tasks for each of the broad domains. This approach of averaging averages was used because different numbers of respondents were available for different tasks. For example, help with homework does not apply to very young children, whereas help with dressing or seeing the child is properly dressed is less relevant for older children, who do many of the tasks for themselves. A value for this overall average of below 3.0 means the household tasks are done more by the respondent and a value above 3.0 more by the partner. The results are shown in the first panel of table 43.

Table 43

Gender equity in childcare and division of household tasks

	Childcare		Household tasks	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
France	3.49	2.26	3.36	2.42
Germany*	3.41	2.31	3.19	2.60
Bulgaria	3.76	2.04	3.52	2.24
Georgia	4.09	1.70	3.52	2.31
Russian Federation	3.61	2.05	3.43	2.24
Hungary	3.57	2.12	3.54	2.18

Notes: For each of six childcare tasks (dressing, putting child to bed, staying home when child is ill, play or leisure, help with homework, and transport) and six household tasks (preparing daily meals, doing the dishes, food shopping, vacuuming, paying bills/financial records and organizing joint social activities), respondents reported that the task was 1=always self, 2=usually self, 3=equally with partner, 4= usually the partner or 5=always the partner. Those who did not have a co-resident partner or who reported the task was done by others were omitted from the analysis. The average score for each task was then averaged across the six tasks for each of the broad domains. Thus, a value below 3.0 means the household tasks are done more by the respondent and one above 3.0 more by the partner.

* For Germany only three categories (usually respondent [=1], about equally [=2] and usually partner [=4]) were available regarding the childcare tasks and the household tasks.

In order to make simpler comparisons by gender, these results were further manipulated to provide a measure of gender inequity. For men, the index is derived as the score in the previous panel minus 3.0; for women, as 3.0 minus the score. Thus an equitable division of childcare or household tasks would correspond to a gender inequity index of 0.0. For example, for childcare tasks in France, the

overall average score for men is 3.49, resulting in a gender equity index of 0.49 (=3.49–3.0), and for women is 2.26, resulting in a gender equity index of 0.75 (=3.0–2.26).

Positive values for the gender equity index show that women do more of the tasks; a negative value would suggest that men do more of the tasks. With

respect to childcare in France, we see that both men and women report more being done by women, but there is some bias in reports by gender, since women report doing more childcare than men report their partners doing – the average gender index (“gender gap”) for childcare tasks in France is 0.62 points $(=(0.49 + 0.75)/2)$, while the difference in reports between men and women (“gender discrepancy”) is 0.26 $(=0.75-0.49)$ (see table 44).

Both men and women in all six countries report that women undertake more of the childcare tasks on average. The average gender gap is greatest for Georgia, where the gap is 1.19 points (more than one point on the five-point scale) and over three quarters of a point for Bulgaria and the Russian Federation. The lowest gender gap in childcare tasks is for Germany, but this may well result from the limitation to a three-point scale. When we look at the gender discrepancy in reports, these range from 0.21 to 0.35 points, with women consistently

reporting greater female responsibility for childcare tasks than men do. A tendency on the part of respondents to exaggerate their own contributions is probably the case for both men and women.

Women also undertake more of the six household tasks included here than men, although the gender gap is lower for every country than was the case for childcare tasks – although only just so for Hungary. The gender gaps on household tasks are typically from half to two thirds of a point (lower in Germany with the truncated scale). Gender discrepancies in reports are very similar for both childcare and household tasks. The largest gender discrepancies being for the Russian Federation, where women were most dissatisfied with the division of childcare and household tasks, is intriguing. However, women in Georgia were next most dissatisfied with the division of these tasks, but Georgia shows the lowest gender discrepancies in reports of who did the tasks.

Table 44
Indexes of gender inequity

	Childcare		Gender gap	Gender discrepancy
	Men	Women	Average	Difference
France	0.49	0.75	0.62	0.26
Germany*	0.41	0.69	0.55	0.28
Bulgaria	0.76	0.96	0.86	0.21
Georgia	1.09	1.30	1.19	0.21
Russian Federation	0.61	0.95	0.78	0.35
Hungary	0.57	0.88	0.72	0.31

	Household tasks		Gender gap	Gender discrepancy
	Men	Women	Average	Difference
France	0.36	0.58	0.47	0.23
Germany*	0.19	0.41	0.30	0.22
Bulgaria	0.52	0.76	0.64	0.24
Georgia	0.52	0.69	0.61	0.18
Russian Federation	0.43	0.76	0.59	0.33
Hungary	0.54	0.82	0.68	0.28

Notes: For men, the index is derived as the score in the previous panel minus 3.0; for women, as 3.0 minus the score. Thus, an equitable division of childcare or household tasks would correspond to a gender inequity index of 0.0. Any positive value shows that women do more of the tasks – clearly the case for all female self-reports and most reports by men; a negative value (only occurring for male self-reports) suggests that men do more of the tasks. The average gender inequity index across both sexes always shows women doing more of the household tasks. The difference in gender inequity indexes between the reports of women and those of men shows the often very different perceptions by gender.

* For Germany only three categories (usually respondent [=1], about equally [=2] and usually partner [=4]) were available regarding the childcare tasks and the household tasks.

More detail concerning specific tasks is provided in table 45. The overall average gender gap is greatest for staying at home when the child is ill and also greater than one point for dressing or supervising dressing of the child. The average gender gap is lowest for play or leisure activities with the child. As for the combined measures of table 43, we see that the gender gap is highest in Georgia for every one of the six childcare tasks, with the gender gap being about 1.5 points (three quarters of the distance between gender equity and all always done by the

woman) for dressing, putting to the child bed and staying at home because of illness. Georgian women carry much higher gender gaps than those in the other countries examined for dressing the child, putting the child to bed, play and leisure activity, homework and transport. We note that the average gender discrepancies across all six countries are of the same order of magnitude (0.25–0.32 points) with the exception of play or leisure activity, the most gender-equitable childcare task, where the average gender discrepancy is 0.18.

Table 45

Gender gaps in division of specific childcare and household tasks

A. Childcare tasks

	Dressing	Bed	Illness	Leisure	Homework	Transport
France	0.91	0.43	1.00	0.12	0.63	0.61
<i>Germany*</i>	0.69	0.41	0.72	0.33	0.56	0.59
Bulgaria	1.11	1.06	1.27	0.44	0.73	0.58
Georgia	1.54	1.58	1.49	0.63	1.01	0.91
Russian Federation	1.03	0.82	1.25	0.36	0.65	0.56
Hungary	0.86	0.72	1.36	0.15	0.69	0.57
Average gender gap	1.02	0.84	1.18	0.34	0.71	0.64
Average gender discrepancy	0.32	0.27	0.32	0.18	0.28	0.25

B. Household tasks

	Meals	Dishes	Food shop	Clean	Bills	Social	Small repairs
France	0.82	0.46	0.48	0.56	0.32	0.19	-1.18
<i>Germany*</i>	0.56	0.47	0.31	0.40	-0.02	0.08	-0.66
Bulgaria	1.23	1.18	0.47	0.94	-0.11	0.14	-1.20
Georgia	1.64	1.62	-0.16	1.60	-0.88	-0.19	-1.39
Russian Federation	1.08	0.87	0.44	0.54	0.59	0.04	-1.08
Hungary	1.25	1.11	0.41	0.94	0.28	0.11	-1.31
Average gender gap	1.10	0.95	0.32	0.83	0.03	0.06	-1.14
Average gender discrepancy	0.23	0.22	0.30	0.23	0.30	0.20	0.23

Note: * For Germany only three categories (usually respondent [=1], about equally [=2] and usually partner [=4]) were available regarding the childcare tasks and the household tasks.

Turning to the household tasks, shown in panel B of table 45, we include one further task area not included in the overall results presented in table 43, namely who usually does small repairs in and around the house. Both men and women consistently report that men do more small repairs, with the gender gap being consistently negative and large for this domain. Moreover, we see that the average gender

discrepancy for this domain of small repairs is of very similar magnitude to those observed for all other domains among household tasks, indicating a similar bias in reports for both men and women regardless of the gendered pattern of the task, making the average measure of the gender gap that we have used a plausible, good estimate of the true behaviour in the population.

The most consistently and strongly gendered domains include the male-dominated small repairs and the female-dominated preparing meals and doing the dishes among household tasks, and dressing and staying at home because of illness among the childcare tasks. Women are also disproportionately responsible for vacuuming the house and most other childcare tasks. The most gender-equitable sharing of household tasks is that of organizing joint social activities, with the gender gap never exceeding 0.2 in either direction but nevertheless showing a small tendency towards greater female roles, except for Georgia where men are slightly more responsible. There is much greater

variability in gender roles regarding who pays the bills and keeps financial records. In Georgia, this is done substantially by men, with a gender gap of -0.88. There is approximate gender equity in this task for Germany and Bulgaria although a slight male gender gap. In France, Hungary and especially the Russian Federation the gender gap indicates that women take a greater role in paying bills. The male dominance in financial matters for Georgia also shows up, with a slight male gender gap for food shopping activities, which contrasts with a moderately large female gender gap for food shopping in the remaining countries.

7 - CONCLUSIONS

This paper has illustrated some of the key issues regarding the lives of young adults that can be highlighted from the first wave of the Generation and Gender Surveys. Many of these findings could be contrasted with similar ones for older age groups (possibly 35–54 and 55 and over) to show changing patterns across generations or cohorts or the life course (interpretation as to which being challenging). Such contrasts would help document changing ages at events or shifting patterns of gender equity, for example.

As we have shown, the GGS are rich in information on a wide range of issues; moreover, the value of contrasting comparable results across differing societies has been shown. Partly because of the explicit focus of the GGS on generations and gender we have deliberately explored some of these aspects here. We have illustrated some of the potential for studying links across the generations with our analysis of the legacies of family disruption during childhood for the respondents; there is a further potential to link across educational achievements of parents. As indicated above, there is also much

potential for exploring how experiences and circumstances differ across the life course by examining other broad age groups of respondents, although this was beyond the scope of this paper.

Many of our analyses have distinguished results by gender and several have quite explicitly focused on gender differences. Bringing together the men's and women's reports regarding their perceived division of childcare and household tasks and their levels of dissatisfaction about these shows some of the richness to be further explored.

Beyond the enormous potential to broaden and deepen the preliminary comparative analyses presented here, the future holds out the enticing prospect of being able to examine results from the second and third waves of the GGS and to link results to the contextual databases. Through such analyses we shall be able to explore what changes occur for individuals over their life course and make some real progress in understanding how and in what circumstances such changes take place.

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