



# changing families, complex lives

GENERATIONS  
& GENDER  
PROGRAMME





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## WHAT IS THE GENERATIONS AND GENDER PROGRAMME?

Family relationships have changed a lot over the past few decades. Today's families differ considerably from the 1950s where a male breadwinner was supported by his doting housewife. Families have become less stable, more complex and highly diversified. The rapid ageing of European populations has also contributed to this rapid pace of change and new types of families have emerged alongside new relationships between generations and between genders. Understanding these changes will help us meet many of the challenges that societies face today such as: How do we support and care for older people? How is disadvantage inherited? Why are women having fewer children? Answering such questions is the primary aim of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). The GGP was launched in 2001 and now covers 19 advanced industrialized countries. It improves our understanding of how various factors affect family life by collecting high quality individual-level survey data on topics such as partnership formation & dissolution, fertility

and intergenerational solidarity. Respondents are interviewed every 3 years and changes in the family life are recorded. Importantly, the GGP covers the whole adult life-course, between the age of 18 and 79, and is therefore the only dataset dedicated to the longitudinal and cross-national study of family life and generational relationships from early adulthood to older ages. Over time, the GGP follows respondents through relationships, marriages, parenthood, divorces, deaths and many of the trials and tribulations that people meet with. It then tracks the impact and consequences of these events at an individual and societal level. This survey data are complemented with indicators at the regional and national level through a Contextual Database and help us understand what part policy and other contextual factors play in family life.

The Generations and Gender Programme covers a wide variety of subjects relating to every part of the life course, enabling researchers to understand the changing family and complex lives.

### Families & Relationships

Partnership

Fertility

Work-family balance

Gender relations

### Change Across the Life Course

Transition to adulthood

Life course and decision-making

Economic activity

Intergenerational exchanges

### Later Life

Informal and formal care

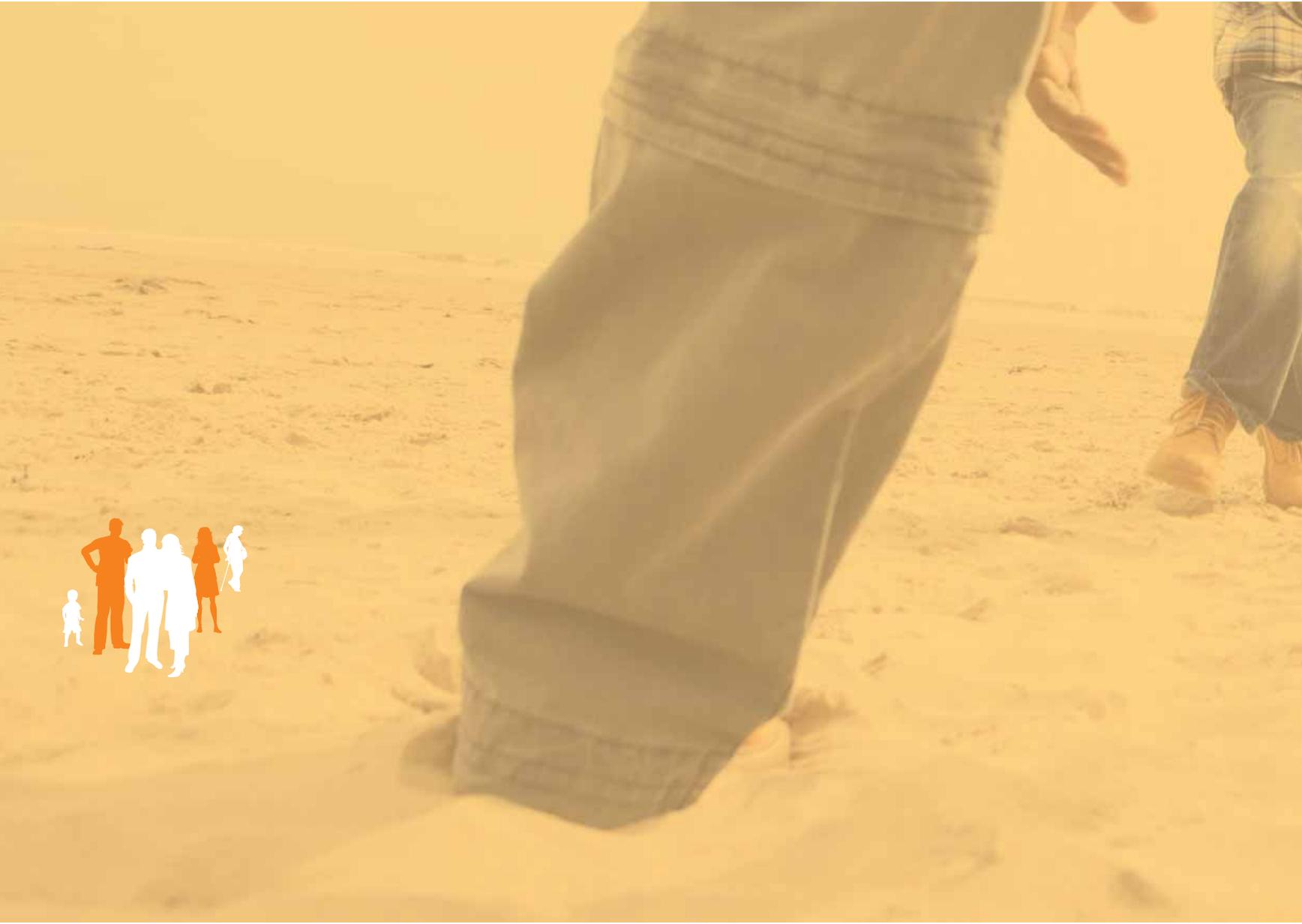
Wellbeing and health

Grandparenthood

Retirement

There are 17 European Countries in the Generations and Gender Programme as well as Australia and Japan. This allows researchers to understand how families and relationships differ across borders.





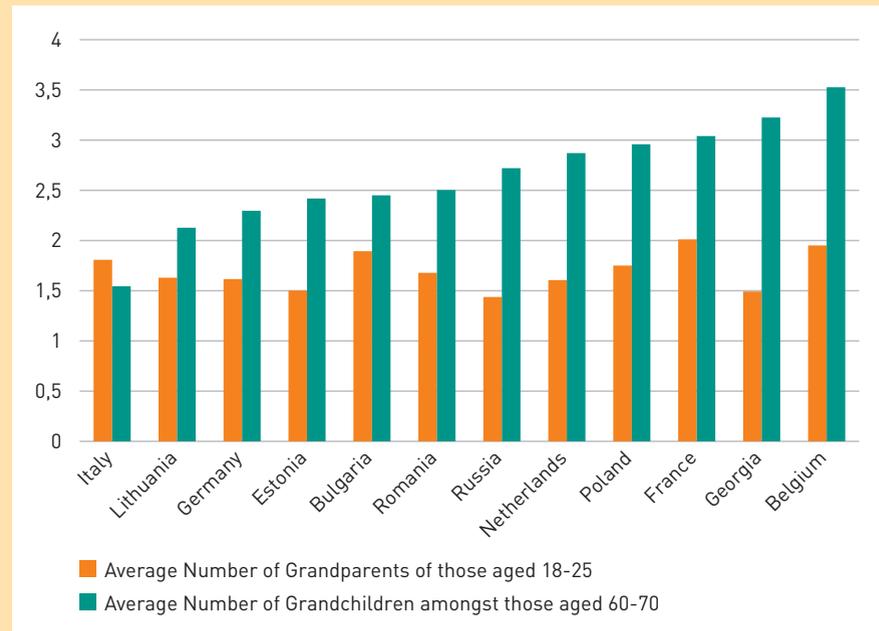


changing  
families

Demographic research has shown multiple ways in which changes in mortality and childbearing have produced major shifts in the types of families we find in Europe. Findings from the GGP provide new insights into the ways in which various past and present demographic trends come together to form specific intergenerational family constellations across Europe. For example, decreasing mortality means that older people are more likely to still be alive when their grandchildren become young adults. Similarly, decreasing fertility in many countries has meant that family trees are becoming longer as well as thinner. The comparative nature of the GGP has allowed researchers to map these patterns and consider the distinct challenges faced by policy makers in a variety of European countries.

*Based on findings from Puur, A., Sakkeus, L., Põldma, A., & Herm, A. "Intergenerational family constellations in contemporary Europe: Evidence from the Generations and Gender Survey" Demographic Research, 25(4), (2011), 135-172.*

## THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF GRANDPARENTS & GRANDCHILDREN



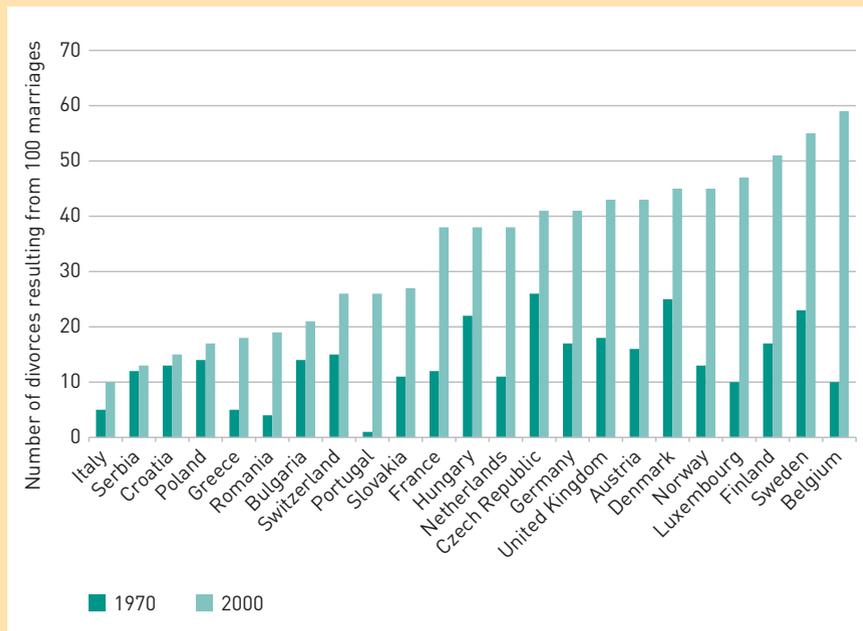
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## LEAVING MUM ALONE

The increase in divorce rates that has been observed across Europe has many consequences. One particular area of interest to researchers is the impact of divorce on the subsequent life course of children and young adults. For example, researchers using GGP data have examined whether children whose parents are divorced leave home sooner or later than children whose parents remain together. The evidence from across Europe is consistent in that children with divorced parents leave home earlier on average. Yet, interestingly, the last child to leave is on average more likely to delay leaving if their parents are divorced which might suggest that they are reluctant to leave Mum on her own.

*Based on findings from Mencarini, Letizia, Elena Meroni, and Chiara Pronzato. "Leaving Mum Alone? The Effect of Parental Separation on Children's Decisions to Leave Home." European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie 28.3 (2012): 337-357.*

### DIVORCE IN EUROPE 1970-2000



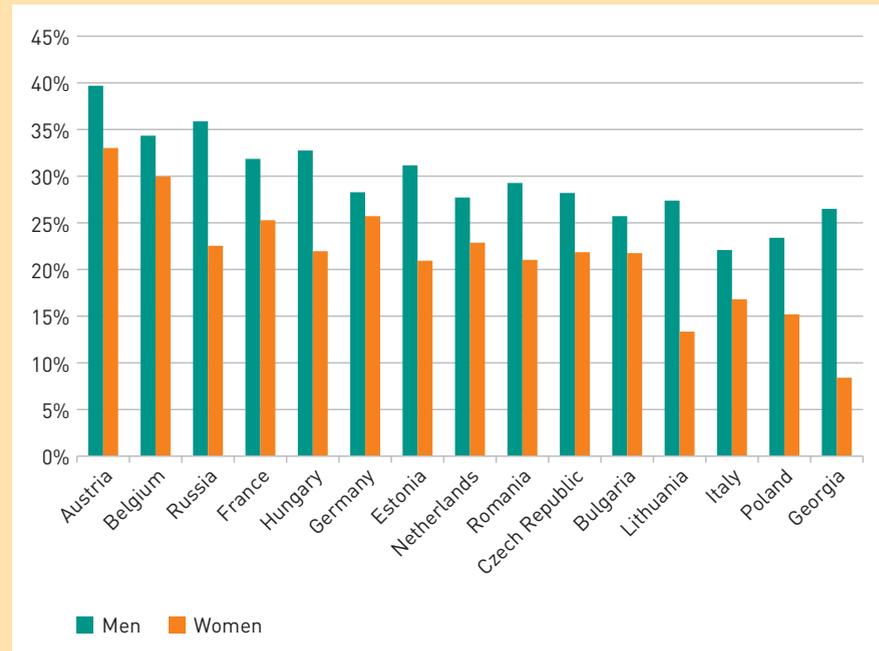
Source: Generations and Gender Programme Contextual Database

## RE-PARTNERING AFTER DIVORCE

The rise in divorce rates across Europe also raises important questions about forming new marital or cohabiting unions. Finding a new partner following divorce can be important because of its potential to counteract some of the negative effects of divorce. For example, divorcees generally report lower wellbeing than married people but a new romantic partner has been shown to counteract this. Furthermore, divorce has been found to result in a decline in socioeconomic status, for women in particular, which can be offset by remarriage. The majority of divorcees do re-partner yet the likelihood and the time between divorce and new partnerships can vary greatly between individuals. Research using GGP data shows that women find it harder to find a new partner than men and that this is partly due to women having custody of children from their previous relationship. The comparative nature of the GGP also shows that there are similar patterns across Europe in the rate of re-partnering despite differences in custody arrangements.

*Based on findings from Ivanova, K., Kalmijn, M., & Uunk, W. "The Effect of Children on Men's and Women's Chances of Re-partnering in a European Context" European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie, (2013), 29(4), 417-444.*

PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN THAT RE-PARTNER AFTER DIVORCE



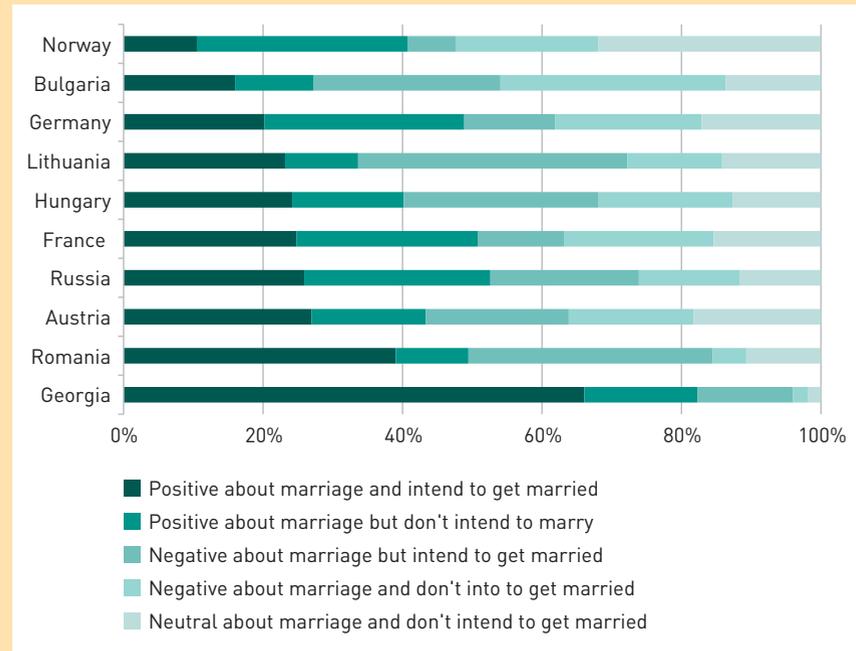
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## WHAT DOES COHABITATION MEAN?

Another big change over the past 50 years it has become more common to live together as a couple without being married. This simple change in behavior leads to many interesting questions for social scientists to consider. One of the most important is how do these couples view their relationship with regards to marriage? Researchers using data from the GGP identified that people cohabit for different reasons. Many who are cohabiting still perceive marriage positively and intend to get married which suggests that they view cohabitation as a stepping stone to marriage. In contrast some don't have a very positive view of marriage but still intend to get married. Furthermore the research shows that Eastern Europeans are more likely to view cohabitation as preparation for marriage where as in Western Europe there are more cohabiters who might never marry their partner.

*Based on findings from Hiekel, N., Liefbroer, A. C., & Poortman, A.-R. "The meaning of cohabitation across Europe" European Population Conference, Stockholm, June 13-16 2012*

### ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS REGARDING MARRIAGE AMONGST COHABITORS



Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1



# relationship dynamics

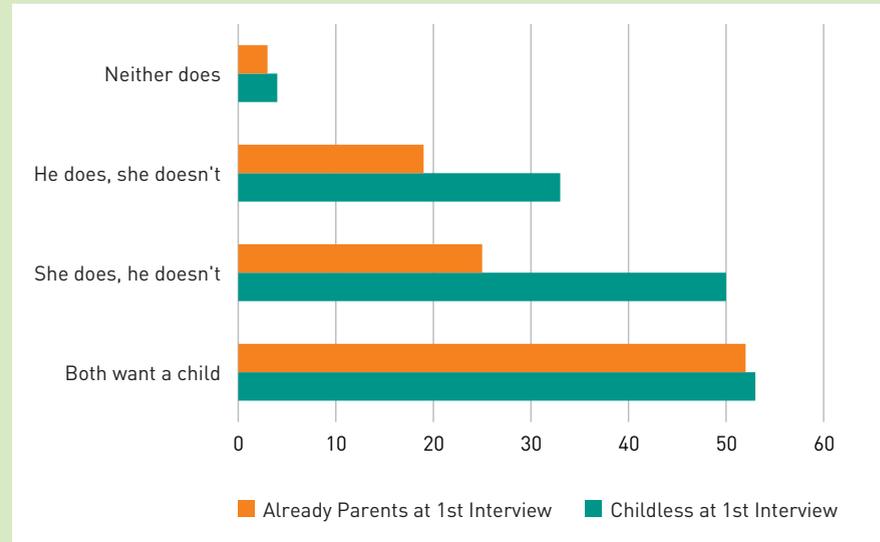
A photograph showing a child and an adult sitting at a table. The child is on the left, wearing a striped shirt, and the adult is on the right, wearing a striped shirt and denim jeans. The adult's hands are clasped in their lap. A plate of food is visible on the table in the bottom left corner. The text 'relationship dynamics' is overlaid in a teal color on the left side of the image.

## COUPLES' DISAGREEMENT ABOUT HAVING ANOTHER CHILD

The decision to have a child is one of the biggest decisions a couple will make. But what happens when they disagree? Research using GGP data from Italy demonstrates that disagreements about whether to have a child or not are more common when the woman is employed and does not hold a traditional role. What's more, by re-interviewing respondents three years later it was possible to consider who had the greater influence over the decision to have a child: the man or the woman. The analysis showed that if their partner didn't want to have a child, women were more likely than men to eventually have a child. This suggests that women play a more prominent role in the decision to have a child than men.

*Based on findings from Testa, Maria Rita, Laura Cavalli, and Alessandro Rosina. "Couples' childbearing behaviour in Italy: which of the partners is leading it?." Vienna Yearbook of Population Research (2011): 157-178.*

COUPLES BY THEIR INTENTIONS TO HAVE A CHILD IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS AND THE PERCENTAGE WHO DID HAVE A CHILD WHEN INTERVIEWED 3 YEARS LATER



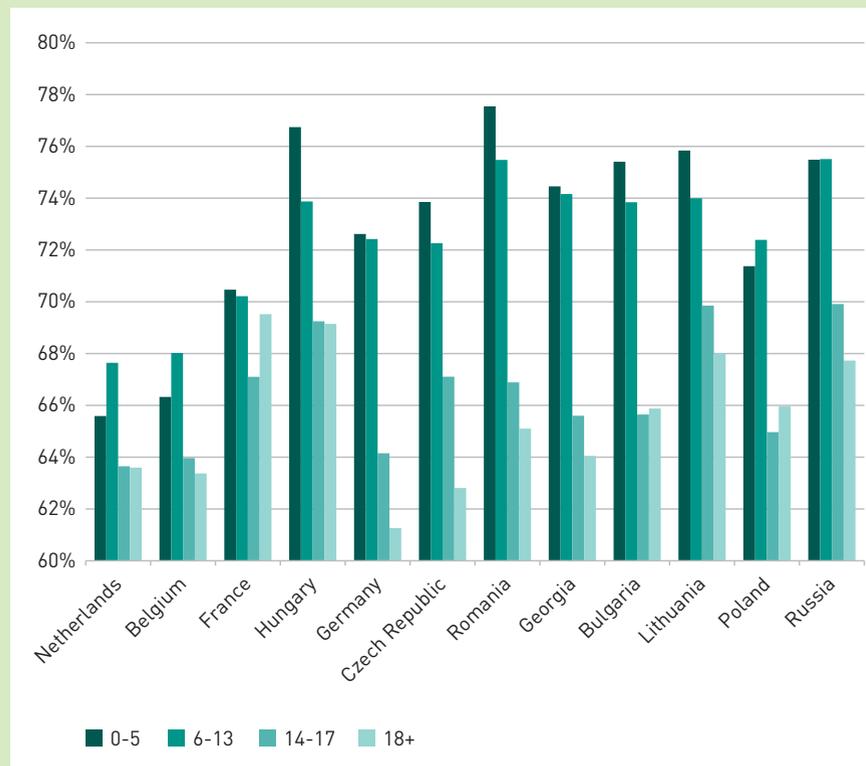
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Waves 1 & 2

## DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK AND CHILDCARE

Having children has been found to have a very large impact on the distribution of household tasks between men and women. It is still the norm for women to assume the majority of housework and childcare even if they continue paid work after having children. Researchers using GGP data have examined this in greater detail and looked to see how this changed as children got older. It was expected that the older children got, the more gender equal a couple would become until they eventually returned to their pre-parenthood habits. The findings of this research however suggested that in France and East Germany the distribution of housework became more unequal as the children got older and only started to recover when the children eventually left home. Even in West Germany, household tasks didn't start to rebalance until the youngest child was a teenager.

*Based on findings from Zabel, Cordula, and Valerie K. Heintz-Martin. "Does children's age impact the division of housework? A comparison of France, Eastern and Western Germany." European Societies (2012): 1-23.*

THE PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEWORK DONE BY THE MOTHER  
BY THE AGE OF THE YOUNGEST CHILD



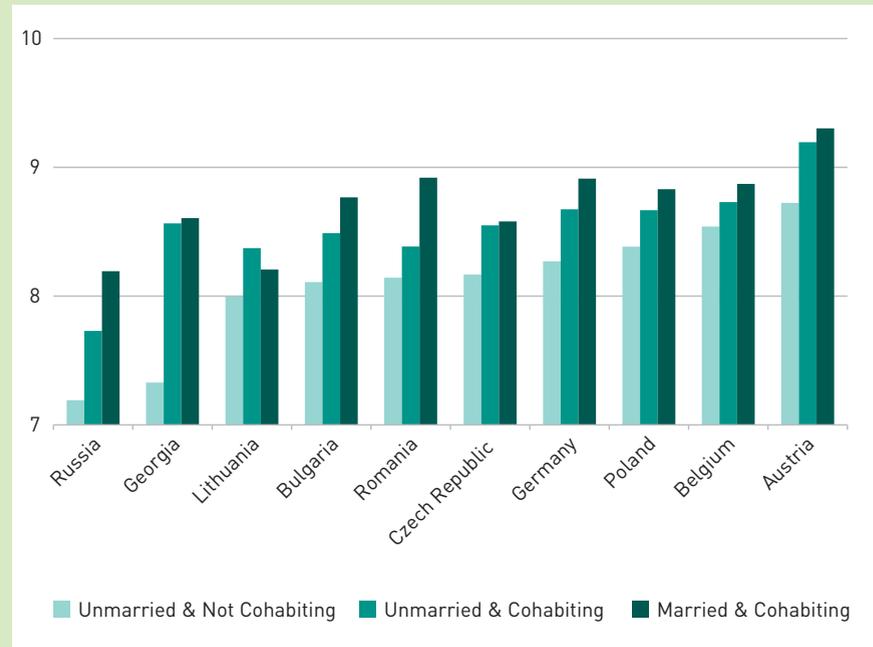
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND LIVING TOGETHER?

As noted earlier, it has become increasingly common for couples to live together outside of marriage. This has raised many questions for researchers about what this change in behaviour means for the relationship itself. Do cohabiting couples share housework more evenly than married couples? Are they less likely to have children? Are they more likely to break up? Are married couples happier with their relationship than those who cohabit? This last question was addressed by researchers analysing GGP data. They found that in all 8 of the European countries they looked at, married couples were happier with their relationships than couples who cohabit. However they found that the difference was smallest in countries where cohabiting was most common, like Norway.

*Based on findings from Aarskaug Wiik, Kenneth, Renske Keizer, and Trude Lappegård. "Relationship Quality in Marital and Cohabiting Unions Across Europe." Journal of Marriage and Family 74.3 (2012): 389-398.*

THE DIFFERENCE IN RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION BETWEEN MARRIED AND COHABITING COUPLES V THE PREVALENCE OF COHABITATION WITHIN A COUNTRY



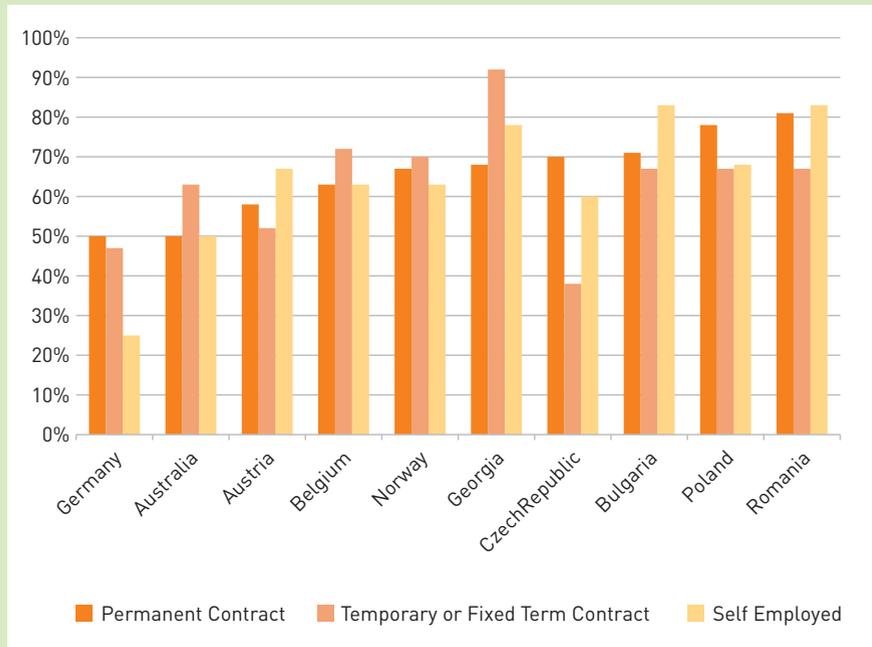
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## THE RUSH HOUR OF LIFE

Over the past half century, people have been postponing many of the big life events such as births, marriage and finishing education. This has meant that for many, these big life events are clustered around their late twenties, particularly if they are highly educated. This time of change has been labelled the rush hour of life and is a critical time in many people's lives when they are attempting to become economically stable in order to start a family. Research using GGP data suggests that people are less rushed in countries where there is policy & social support in the form of widespread childcare, use of flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies. In France and Norway for example, highly educated women will plan to have children irrespective of their career position. In contrast, highly educated women in Germany and Austria tend to postpone having children until they have a more established career footing.

*Based on findings from Buber, Isabella, Ralina Panova, and Jürgen Dorbritz. "Fertility intentions of highly educated men and women and the rush hour of life." Vienne Institute of Demography/Austrian Academy of Science Working Paper (2012)*

THE INTENTION OF HIGHLY EDUCATED WOMEN AGED 25-35 TO HAVE A CHILD, BY CONTRACT TYPE IN TEN COUNTRIES



Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1



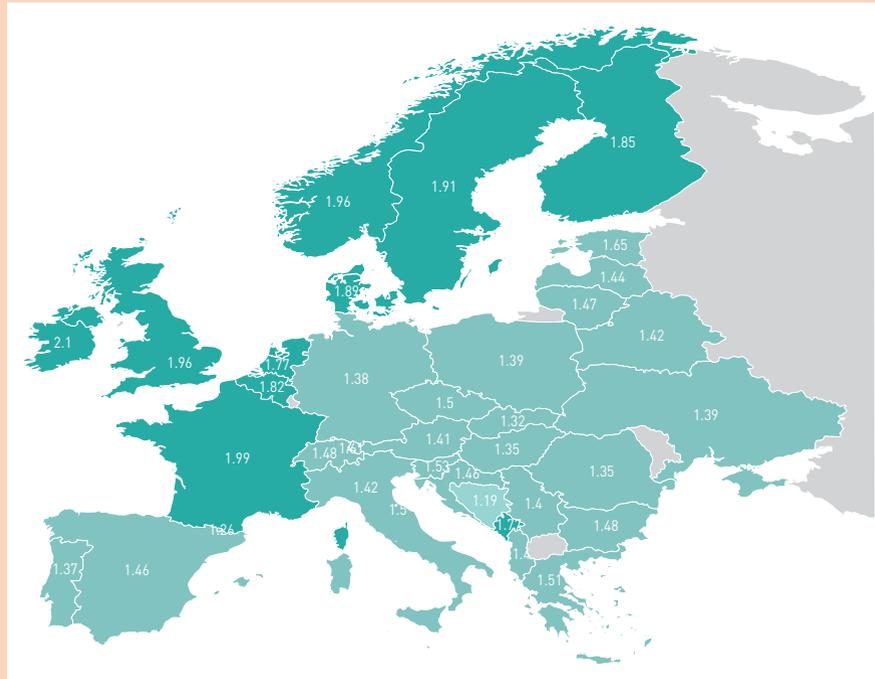


becoming a  
parent

Planning to become a parent can be complex. Data from the GGP has revealed that many young couples who plan to have a child in the next three years fail to realise their plans. Health, relationship, housing, work and financial issues all play a role in making people delay or even abandon their plans to have children. But research from the GGP has shown that whilst this is true across Europe, it is especially true in post-socialist countries where conservative views of gender roles and family values, coupled with rapid economic change have caused considerable difficulties for young people planning to start a family. This in part explains the low levels of fertility seen in these countries since the mid-nineties.

*Based on findings from Spéder, Zsolt, and Balázs Kapitány. "Failure to Realize Fertility Intentions: A Key Aspect of the Post-communist Fertility Transition." Population Research and Policy Review (2013): 1-26.*

THE TOTAL FERTILITY RATE ACROSS EUROPE IN 2008



The graphic contains data from the GGP Contextual database

# SUPPORT NETWORKS AND HAVING MORE CHILDREN

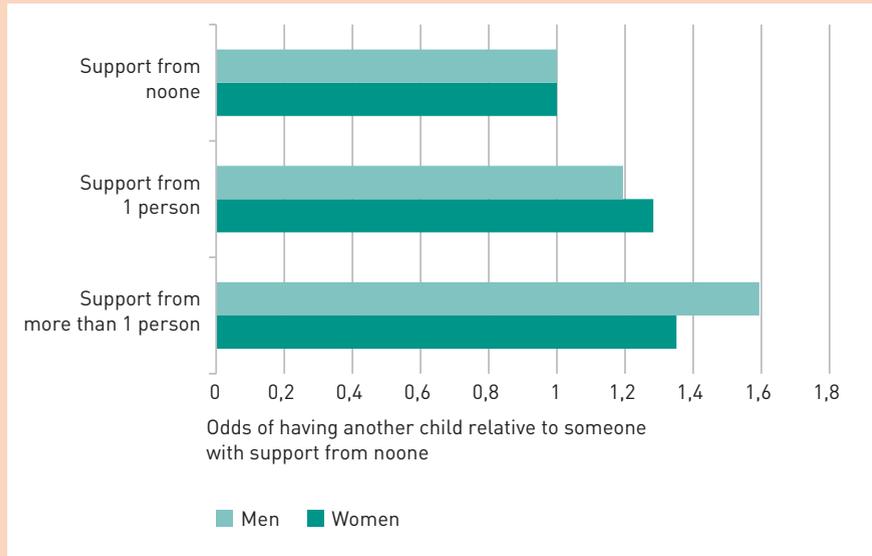
One consistent finding in demographic research is that the decision to have a first child can be a very different process than the decision to have a second or third. Different factors matter in the decision, depending on how many children a couple already has. For example, research using GGP has shown that when couples decide to have a second or third child, social and support networks are exceptionally important. Those with close friends and family who are able to help them in a variety of ways are far more likely to have additional children than those who are relatively isolated.

What's more this is particularly true in countries where institutional support such as flexible employment and childcare are not available to mothers.

*Based on findings from Balbo, Nicoletta, and Melinda Mills.*

*"The effects of social capital and social pressure on the intention to have a second or third child in France, Germany, and Bulgaria, 2004-05." Population Studies 65.3 (2011): 335-351.*

## ODDS OF HAVING ANOTHER CHILD AND THE ROLE OF SUPPORT NETWORKS



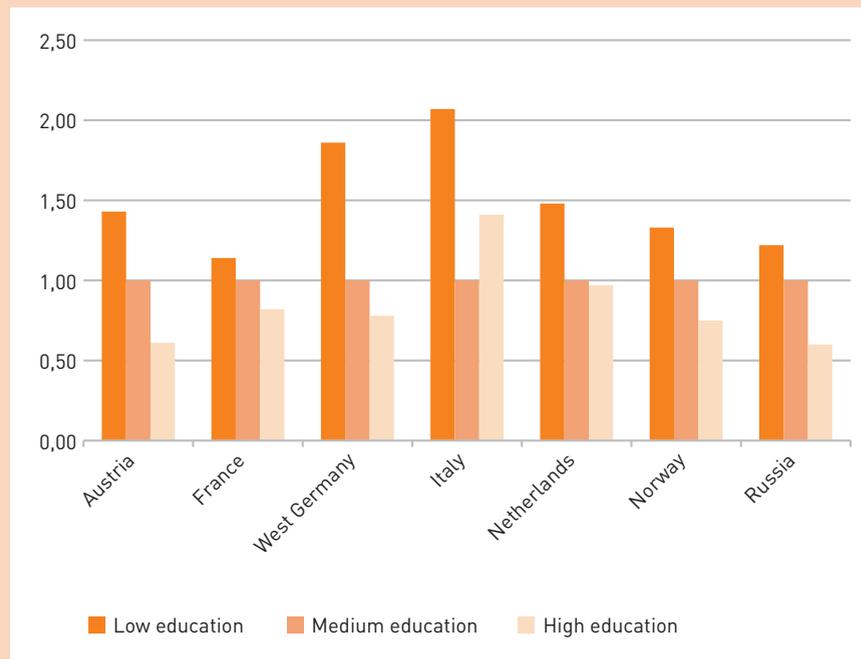
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## WHO HAS KIDS OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE?

One of the big demographic changes of recent decades has been the increased number of births outside of marriage. For example in France in 1970 around 10% of births were to women who were not married but by 2004 this had risen to around 50%. Data from the GGP has allowed researchers to explore this trend and consider which women are having children outside of marriage. Findings consistently show that women with lower levels of education are more likely to have children outside of marriage. However in some countries the difference between education groups is smaller than in other countries. One aim of future research is to explore why this cross-national variation exists and persists.

*Based on findings from Perelli-Harris, Brienna, et al. "The educational gradient of childbearing within cohabitation in Europe." Population and development review 36.4 (2010): 775-801.*

RELATIVE ODDS OF HAVING A CHILD WHILST COHABITING BY EDUCATION LEVEL



Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## DOES SHARING THE HOUSEWORK LEAD TO MORE OR LESS CHILDREN?

The GGP is a unique resource, allowing researchers to examine how couples organise their lives and the subsequent impact this has on their demographic behaviour. For example, researchers have considered how housework impacts upon a couples plan to have another child. The results suggest that people who are satisfied with how the chores are divided are far more likely to want another child, as are women who share their household chores equally. However, men who do as much housework as their spouses before they have children are less likely to want to become dads. The findings from this study also indicated that what mattered for women when deciding whether to have another child was whether the chores were actually distributed equally. For men on the other hand, it mattered far more if they were *satisfied* with how the chores were distributed.

*Based on findings from Neyer, Gerda, Trude Lappegård, and Daniele Vignoli. "Gender equality and fertility: Which equality matters?." European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie 29.3 (2013): 245-272.*

PROBABILITY OF INTENDING TO HAVE ANOTHER CHILD DEPENDING ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEWORK IN 7 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1



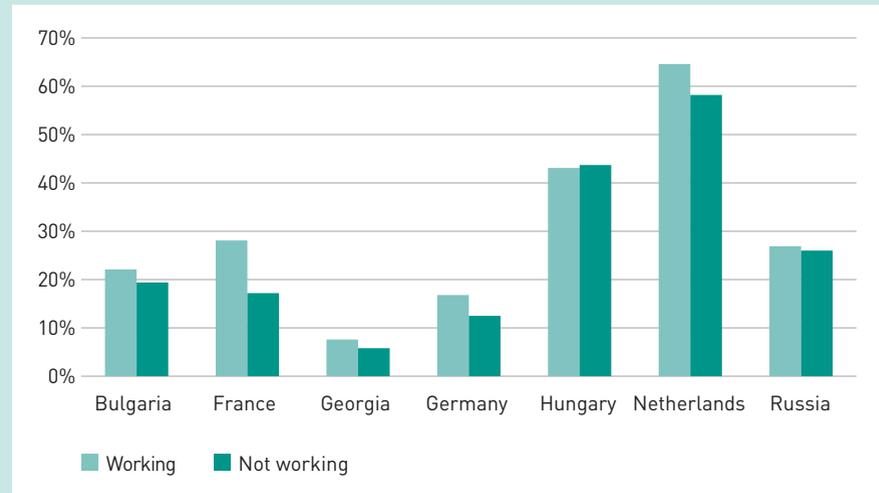


family for  
life

The GGP is about generations and gender. One area where these two issues intersect is the provision of childcare by grandparents. By taking care of their grandchildren, older generations can enable their adult children to go back to work. Researchers using GGP data have been at the forefront of research in this area. The results suggest that in some countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany, grandparents providing childcare can be an important factor in allowing women to return to work. Yet in countries such as the Netherlands, Georgia and Russia there is little or no sign of such an effect. To explore these interdependencies further, rich longitudinal data is necessary so as to better capture the multidimensional nature of the relationship between parents and their children in later life. This is something that will be made possible through future waves of the GGP

*Aassve, Arnstein, Bruno Arpino, and Alice Goisis. "Grandparenting and mothers' labour force participation: A comparative analysis using the generations and gender survey." Demographic Research 27 (2012).*

PERCENTAGE OF MOTHERS RECEIVING HELP WITH CHILDCARE FROM THEIR PARENTS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



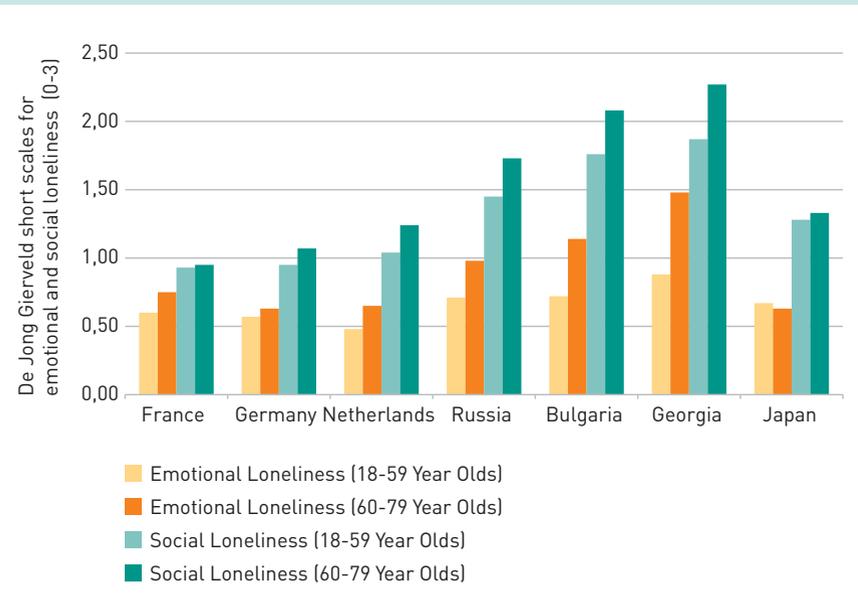
Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

## LONELINESS IN LATER LIFE

GGP has made several key findings about the way generations support each other throughout life. It is the only the cross-national, longitudinal survey which contains data on relationships and covers the whole life course. This helps researchers understand how relationships and social networks change during one's life. For example, the GGP was used to show how loneliness is more prevalent in Eastern than Western Europe. This is attributable to the greater health and wealth of older generations in Western Europe and the extent to which it helps them combat loneliness. However the GGP has been also used to show that loneliness is far more prevalent amongst older generations and this difference across the life course is universal.

*De Jong Gierveld, Jenny, and Theo Van Tilburg. "The De Jong Gierveld short scales for emotional and social loneliness: tested on data from 7 countries in the UN Generations and Gender Surveys." European journal of ageing 7.2 (2010): 121-130.*

### EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL LONELINESS AMONGST YOUNGER AND OLDER PERSONS IN 7 GGP COUNTRIES

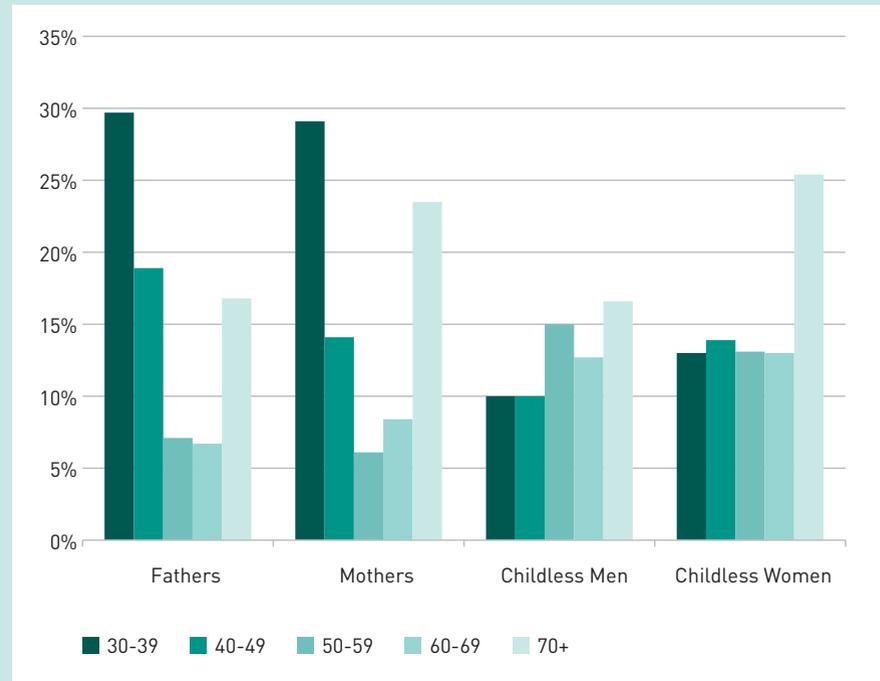


Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

Demographic change is causing a great deal of diversity in European populations. One group that is expected to increase in size over the coming years are those who never had children. Since the 1970s, people have been having fewer children and this now means that there are an increasing number of childless older people. This is a challenge for policy makers, especially when designing care policies. However research based on GGP data from Italy interestingly suggests that those who are childless do not receive any less help or care than their contemporaries who have children. So whilst parents receive considerably more support when they are middle aged and have children of their own, there is no difference between parents and the childless when it comes to receiving support in later life.

*Based on findings from Albertini, Marco, and Letizia Mencarini. "Childlessness and Support Networks in Later Life New Pressures on Familistic Welfare States?." Journal of Family Issues 35.3 (2014): 331-357.*

PERCENTAGE OF ITALIANS RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM FAMILY MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE-COURSE

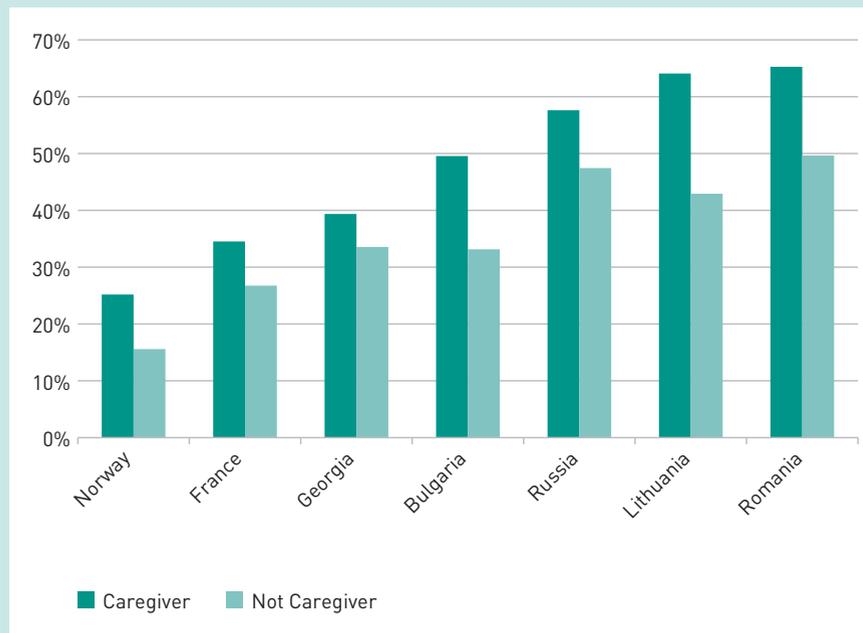


Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

In addition to looking at how relationships can help and support individuals throughout the life-course, research using the GGP has considered the impact of caring and support on the caregivers themselves. Many older persons in particular are the primary caregivers for their spouses and this has been shown to have implications for their own health and well-being. Yet research using the Norwegian GGP has shown that being a caregiver to another individual in Norway is less detrimental to individual caregivers in many ways and suggests that the strong caregiving institutions such as those in Norway may mitigate many of the problems associated with long-term caregiving.

Hansen, Thomas, Britt Slagsvold, and Reidun Ingebretsen. "The Strains and Gains of Caregiving: An Examination of the Effects of Providing Personal Care to a Parent on a Range of Indicators of Psychological Well-Being." *Social indicators research* 114.2 (2013): 323-343.

PROPORTION OF 65-75 WHO REPORTED BEING DEPRESSED IN THE LAST WEEK



Source: Generations and Gender Survey Wave 1

For more information

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**GGP**

