



Technical Paper

Innovations Introduced with the  
New GGS Questionnaire

Arianna Caporali

*Institut national d'études démographiques (Ined)*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Compared to the 2004 questionnaire, the new one contains three main innovative aspects:

- “A revamping of the social network module. The new social network module makes it possible to more clearly distinguish the support relationships between genders and generations. This is important to better understand why certain family members offer and receive support, whereas others do not.
- Better measures of how societal constraints and social policies influence the decisions that individuals make concerning family formation and retirement. This is important, as one of the main goals of the GGP is to be able to understand how people react to changes in policy environments.
- Inclusion of a personality module. This is important as personality can have an impact on how individuals behave across a wide range of life domains and can have a long-lasting influence on how individuals react to adversity in the lives” (Deliverable<sup>1</sup> D38: p. 29).

These revisions were made due to the findings from methodological reports on the analysis of GGP Wave 1 collected data within the FP7 Design Study (D9, D11, D12, D13, D14, D21, D22, D23, D24). They were tested, both in CAPI and CAWI mode, in a pilot survey run in Slovenia in 2011 on 621 respondents (D18, D25).

For a comparative survey, cross-national equivalence – that instruments measure the same concept equivalently in different countries – is of utmost importance, and that equivalence was judged to be excellent for the large majority of the GGP measurement instruments (D38). For those instruments for which cross-national equivalence was evaluated to be subpar, alternative instruments were developed, and tested in the pilot survey. The tests were conducted as split-ballot experiments: one group was administered the original item wording in GGS wave 1, and the other group got the renewed wording of the same item.

In the following section, we summarize the main revisions introduced compared to GGS 2004 Core questionnaire<sup>2</sup>, based on the methodological recommendations of some of the above mentioned reports. In Appendix, we further detail and explain these revisions. Throughout the text, we refer to the new GGS questionnaire version 2.7 (available in the Annex; a previous version of the new questionnaire was published in D26).

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<sup>1</sup> See section 3 for deliverable titles and authors. Thereafter in the text, we abbreviate “Deliverable” with “D”.

<sup>2</sup> Available online: [www.ggp-i.org/data/methodology](http://www.ggp-i.org/data/methodology); also published in UNECE - UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (2005) *Generations and Gender Programme - Survey Instruments*. New York/ Geneva: United Nations (available online: [http://www.unece.org/pau/pub/ggp\\_survey\\_instruments.html](http://www.unece.org/pau/pub/ggp_survey_instruments.html)).

## 2. MAIN METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORRESPONDING QUESTIONNAIRE REVISIONS

### ***First recommendation (D22)***

*To group the questions on providing and receiving help with a view to: a) achieving an increased focus on dependencies between generations and gender and comparability with other surveys (e.g., SHARE); b) reducing the questionnaire length, respondents' burden and the reliance on visual cues and tools for a possible administration via CATI and WEB.*

#### Main corresponding questionnaire revisions

A new module entitled "Network delineation and support" (Q 5.01-5.41 of the new questionnaire) is introduced by grouping the previous sub-modules on childcare, household organisation, personal care, and monetary transfers and inheritance.

This grouping does not concern the questions on the repartition of tasks between partners which did not move, and allows for a significant simplification and reduction of the questionnaire flow. Additionally, it gives room for naming respondents' providers and for collecting their demographics, which increases dramatically the questionnaire quality for social network analyses.

### ***Second recommendation (D13, D24)***

*To enhance the health and well-being module for a greater understanding of the role played by health status and personality traits in demographic behaviours.*

#### Main corresponding questionnaire revisions

A set of new questions were introduced to capture respondents' satisfaction and happiness in life, their sense of control, their personality traits, and their objective health status (Q 7.01, 7.03-7.10 of the new questionnaire).

These revisions improve the quality of information on respondents' health, well-being and personality traits and allow for better considering these variables as potential causes and moderating factors of demographic behaviours. Additionally, they ameliorate the overall questionnaire cross-country comparability, as for example domain-specific items of the 2004 questions about satisfaction in life and locus of control were not applied in all countries.

### ***Third recommendation (D23)***

*To account for indications from applied research in the life course and decision-making module, especially in the Theory of Planned Behaviour items.*

#### Main corresponding questionnaire revisions

- a) Intention scale: a fifth mid-item "unsure" is introduced in all the questions asking about respondents' intention to undertake a given behaviour. The response categories become: "definitely not", "probably not", "unsure", "probably yes", "definitely yes".

This revision takes into account the findings of qualitative research within the European funded project REPRO (Reproductive decision-making) that “unsure” is a valid response to intention questions. Additionally, it dramatically increases the response rates for these questions without drastically changing the scale. Indeed, the pilot study in Slovenia showed that the distribution of answers for the remaining categories was not affected by the addition of the new item.

- b) Attitudes linked to intentions, questions (Q 2.80, 4.55, 6.18, 8.36 of the new questionnaire) formulated as:

*Suppose that during the next 3 years you were to [behaviour]. I would like you to tell me what affect this would have on various aspects of your life. Please choose your answers...*

A smaller and more harmonised list of behavioural beliefs is implemented and new questions on attitudes towards marriages are added (Q 2.84-2.86 of the new questionnaire) to better study this phenomenon. The list of behavioural beliefs become: “the possibility to do what you want”, “the amount of money you can spend”, “the possibility to realize other goals in life”, “the joy and satisfaction you get from life”. The item “my sexual life” is also included for attitudes towards living home; the items “your employment opportunities” and “your partner’s employment opportunities” for attitudes towards having a/another child; the item “spending time with your family” for attitudes towards retirement.

These revisions drastically simplify the old questionnaire where a total of 14 different behavioural beliefs were included. The old list of behavioural beliefs did not prove to be useful for applied research, especially for cross-country comparisons.

- c) Subjective norms, questions (Q 2.82, 2.86, 4.57, 6.20, 8.38 of the new questionnaire) formulated as follows:

*Now I am going to read out some statements about what other people might think about you [behaviour] during the next 3 years. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with these statements...*

A common core of 3 items is used and reads as follows: “most of my friends think that I should...”, “my partner thinks that I should...”, “my parents think that I should...”. Additionally, these items are asked only if applicable (e.g., no question on partner’s opinions for those having no partner).

These revisions contribute to the simplification of the questionnaire.

- d) Perceived behavioural control, questions (Q 2.81, 2.85, 4.56, 6.19, 8.37 of the new questionnaire) formulated as follows:

*I’m going to read out some statements about conditions that might need to be fulfilled before [behaviour]. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with these statements....*

The response categories are reframed and harmonized across the questions and adapted to an agreement scale. The 2004 items and scale (“not at all”, “a little”, “quite a lot”, “a great deal”) turned out to be not satisfying and of difficult usability for applied research.

The above mentioned revisions are guided by a common set of principles:

- greater relevance and comparability to the given behaviour/decision across countries and questions,
- greater conceptual adherence to the Theory of Planned Behaviour,
- asymmetry across domains and internal questionnaire consistency,
- effective feasibility in each country and continuity with the 2004 questionnaire.

#### ***Fourth recommendation (D21)***

*To simplify the module on economic well-being for a greater cross-country comparability, usefulness and usability in applied research.*

##### Main corresponding questionnaire revisions

A significant number of questions are dropped because considered underused in research given their difficult interpretation. Keeping them does not justify the burden on respondents. Some other questions are re-framed, so as to account for greater cross-national comparability and harmonization with other international surveys (in particular with EU-SILC, which is the key source on living conditions in Europe).

##### a) Sub-module on education

The following questions of the 2004 Core questionnaire are dropped: questions on subject matters of study (old Q 121) and on intention to resume education within the next three years (old Q 124). This is done because countries operate with different groupings of subject matters of study which are difficult to compare, and the intention to resume education is of difficult interpretation as may depend on the attained level of education. The question on whether the respondent is currently studying is revised (Q 1.09 of the new questionnaire) adding the time frame “over the last 12 months” for greater comparability.

##### b) Sub-module on dwelling unit

Questions on intention to move (old Q 118 and 119) are dropped because underused.

##### c) Sub-module on child alimony/maintenance and partner alimony

Only some questions are maintained (Q 2.87-2.90 of the new questionnaire) that encapsulate all the necessary information in research and received the highest response rates in the majority of countries.

##### d) Respondent’s and partner’s activity and income

Main questions of the 2004 Core questionnaire that are dropped include:

- questions on satisfaction about current activity status (old Q 804, 809, 813),
- questions on intention to start working and complete education (old Q 810, 814, 820, and 826),

- questions on whether the leave is part-time or full-time (old Q 805b and 904b),
- questions on the description of working place and gender composition of work (old Q 836, 924, and 841),
- questions on regularity of the job and intention to change job (old Q 846, 848, 849),
- questions on satisfaction with being self-employed, on the expected future development of respondent's business/farm and on the intention to change job or stop paid work (old Q 850, 852, 853, 854),
- questions on the type of additional job/business (old Q 861, 863, 933, 935).

For example, the question on satisfaction on maternity/parental/childcare leave is dropped because it could refer to either the duration or the payment of the leave. Similarly, asking about the intention of finding a job could be interpreted as respondent's perceived likelihood of finding a job. Asking whether people are on part-time or full-time leave is not necessary because most people on part-time leave would qualify their status as being in work.

Main questions that are revised include:

- the question on the opportunity to resume work after leave that has a new response category "did not work prior to this leave" (Q 8.15, 9.12 of the new questionnaire),
- the question on job security (Q 8.31 of the new questionnaire) now focusing on the perceived (and not actual) situation,
- the questions on occupation (Q 8.07, 8.17, 9.04, 9.14 of the new questionnaire) that now are answered according to the ISCO-2008 code,
- the questions on work schedule (Q 8.20-8.24, 9.17-9.21 of the new questionnaire) now more comparable with other surveys.

e) Household possessions, income and transfers

Questions that are dropped include, e.g., those on items that the household possesses, on the capacity to save money and on whether other individuals in the household receive income. This increases the comparability with EU-SILC questions. Additionally, the questions on monetary transfers and inheritance are moved into the social network module, thus ameliorating the questionnaire flow.

***Other questionnaire innovations***

Household composition, organisation and partnership quality

To enhance the questionnaire flow, this module now includes the household roster sub-module and the one about division of childcare tasks among household members.

Partnership quality and household organization

To achieve greater equivalence across countries, the list of disagreement items and of household tasks are partially revised (Q 2.18, 2.19 and 3.11 of the new questionnaire).

Fecundity

Questions on fertility intentions in the 2004 Core questionnaire (old Q 611 and 615) are removed.

### 3. DELIVERABLES

- D9. Deliverable 9: Report on existing GGS measures on Life Course and Decision Making. By Jane Klobas, Silvia Ruggeri, Marta Marzi. December 2010.
- D11. Deliverable 11: Interviewer effects on survey non-response in the GGP. The Dutch experience. By Edith D. de Leeuw, Joop J. Hox, Suzette Mathijssse. January 2011.
- D12. Deliverable 12: Report on the substantive and methodological evaluation of the various social network indices in the Generations and Gender Survey. By Pearl A. Dykstra, Christoph Bühler, Tina Kogovšek, Valentina Hlebec, Tineke Fokkema. December 2010.
- D13. Deliverable 13: Report on evaluation of existing and feasibility for development of new psychological instruments in the GGS. By Julia Ratikainen, Thomas Hansen & Britt Slagsvold. December 2010.
- D14. Deliverable 14: Genetics and biomarkers in surveys. By John Hobcraft. December 2010.
- D18. Deliverable 18: Pilot study fieldwork documentation. By Gregor Petrič, Nejc Berzelak, Rok Platinovšek. December 2011.
- D21. Deliverable 21: Proposed new questionnaire module on economic well-being. By Arnstein Aassve, Ariane Pailhé, and Olivier Thévenon. January 2011.
- D22. Deliverable 22: Proposed new questionnaire module on social support networks. By Pearl Dykstra, Tina Kogovšek, Valentina Hlebec, Gregor Petrič, Christoph Bühler and Tineke Fokkema. January 2011.
- D23. Deliverable 23: Proposed new questionnaire module on life course and decision making. By Jane Klobas, Aart C. Liefbroer, Francesco C. Billari and Icek Ajzen. January 2012.
- D24. Deliverable 24: Proposed new questionnaire module on psychological instruments. By Britt Slagsvold and Thomas Hansen. March 2012.
- D25. Deliverable 25: Report on the study fieldwork experience, methodological experiments and functionality of newly developed instruments. By Gregor Petrič, Katja Lozar Manfreda and Rok Platinovšek. December 2012.
- D26. Finalized new GGS questionnaire. By Arnstein Aassve, Icek Ajzen, Francesco Billari, Christoph Bühler, Pearl Dykstra, Tineke Fokkema, Thomas Hansen, Valentina Hlebec, Jane Klobas, Tina Kogovšek, Andrej Kveder, Trude Lappegård, Aat Liefbroer, Lívia Murinkó, Ariane Pailhé, Gregor Petrič, Julia Ratikainen, Britt Slagsvold, Zsolt Spéder, Olivier Thévenon. June 2013.
- D38. Deliverable 38: Conceptual design report on the new infrastructure. January 2014.



APPENDIX – Revisions of the GGS questionnaire, compared to the 2004 one, by (sub-) modules and questions, and their reasons.

New questionnaire	2004 Questionnaire	Revisions	Reasons
<b>Sub-module on education</b>	Q 121 on subject matter of studies; Q 123 on whether R is currently studying; Q 124 on intention to resume education	Q 121 and 124 are dropped.  Q 123 is revised (Q 1.09) adding the time frame “over the last 12 months”.	Q 124 was difficult to interpret in the sense that reported intention would depend directly on the stage of education one is enrolled in. Q 121 was not comparable across countries. Countries operate with different groupings that cannot be easily compared. Q 123 was revised for greater comparability.
<b>Sub-module on dwelling unit</b>	Q 118 and Q 119 on intentions to move	These questions are dropped.	These questions turned out to be useless for research questions.
<b>Sub-modules on child Alimony/ maintenance and partner Alimony</b>	Questions 338-353	Only question Q 339, Q 343, Q 347 and Q 351 from old questionnaire are kept (Q 2.87-2.90).	The dropped questions performed particularly badly as the number of valid responses was very low. The questions kept encapsulate the information of all the questions that were dropped.
<b>Household composition, organization and partnership quality</b>	Sub-modules on household roster and childcare	Questions on household, previously spread over the questionnaire are now grouped in a unique module.	This revision aims to increase the questionnaire flow.
<b>Sub-modules on partnership quality and household organization</b>	Q 401 and 408 on partnership disagreement, and 409 on division of household tasks between partners	Partially revised list of items (Q 2.18, 2.19, 3.11).	This revision aims to achieve greater comparability and equivalence across countries.

New questionnaire	2004 Questionnaire	Revisions	Reasons
<b>Social network module</b>	Sub-modules on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- childcare (Q 201-208);</li> <li>- household organization (Q 401-404);</li> <li>- personal care (Q 704-718);</li> <li>- monetary transfers and inheritance (Q 1010-1018)</li> </ul>	Questions on providing/receiving help are now grouped in a new module (Q 5.01-5.38); some of them are dropped or reformulated. This does not concern the division of tasks between partners.  Additionally, the respondents are asked the characteristics (i.e., sex, age; type of relation) of their network members at the end of this module (Q 5.39-5.41).	These revisions aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduce interview length and time (20%) and respondents' burden;</li> <li>- increase the focus on dependencies between generations and genders;</li> <li>- achieve greater comparability with other surveys (e.g., SHARE);</li> <li>- reduce the reliance on visual cues and tools for a possible administration via CATI or WEB.</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-module on fecundity</b>	Q 611 and Q 615 on intention to have children now	These questions are dropped.	All the questions on intentions to have children are placed in the dedicated sub-module.
<b>Health and well-being module</b>	Satisfaction in life was asked with reference to specific domains (Q 719).  The other questions were absent.	New questions are introduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General satisfaction and happiness in life and global sense of control (Q 7.01, Q 7.09 and Q 7.10).</li> <li>- Personality traits (Q 7.08).</li> <li>- Health in general (Q 7.03-7.07).</li> </ul>	These revisions aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase the comparability as domain-specific items of locus of control were not applied in all countries;</li> <li>- increase the understanding of demographic behaviours as recent research showed that personality traits and global sense of control and well-being can be key causes and moderating factors of them;</li> <li>- better study respondents' health and greater comparability with other surveys.</li> </ul>

New questionnaire	2004 Questionnaire	Revisions	Reasons	
<b>Life course and decision making module (items of the Theory of Planned Behaviour)</b>	Attitudes linked to intentions: 14 different behavioural beliefs were present (Q 320, 579, 627, 857)	New questions Q 2.84-2.86 about the decision to marry are introduced.  A smaller “core” list of items is now used for all decisions (Q 2.80, 2.84, 4.55, 6.18, 8.36): “the possibility to do what you want”, “your financial situation”, “the possibility to realize other important goals in life”, “the joy and satisfaction you get from life”; plus specific items are used for specific decisions (e.g., “my sexual life” for leaving home)	The new question about attitudes towards marriage aims to better study this phenomenon.  The general principles justifying all these revisions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- greater relevance and compatibility to the behaviour/decision of interest across countries and sub-samples;</li> <li>- greater emphasis on generations and gender;</li> <li>- greater conceptual validity (i.e. reflection of the concepts as defined in the Theory of Planned Behaviour);</li> <li>- greater comparability across questions within the questionnaire;</li> </ul>	
	Subjective norms (Q 323, 582, 629, 859)	Q 2.82, 2.86, 4.57, 6.20, 8.38: a common core of 3 items are now used (“my partner”, “my parents”, “my friends”), plus “my employer” and “my children” for questions on retirement) and asked only if applicable.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- preservation of relevance, compatibility and conceptual validity;</li> <li>- asymmetry across domains, sufficiently and internal consistency;</li> <li>- feasibility in each country and continuity with the 2004 questionnaire.</li> </ul>
	Perceived behavioural control (Q 321, 580, 628, 858) used the scale “not at all”, “a little”, “quite a lot”, “a great deal”.	The items were reframed, harmonized across the questions, and adapted to an agreement scale (Q 2.81, 2.85, 4.56, 6.19, 8.37).		

New questionnaire	2004 Questionnaire	Revisions	Reasons
<b>Life course and decision making module (items of the Theory of Planned Behaviour) (continued)</b>	Intention scale structured in 4-points: “definitely not”, “probably not”, “probably yes”, “definitely yes”.	A 5 <sup>th</sup> mid-point “unsure” is now available. The tests showed no scale effect on the distribution of answers: introducing the category “unsure” may draw respondents to this category without affecting the distribution of answers for the remaining categories.	The revision of the intention scale aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- give the opportunity to answer “unsure” which is a valid response to intention, as shown by qualitative research within the project REPRO;</li> <li>- increase the response rates for these questions;</li> <li>- provide for greater variance in answers, without drastically changing the scale;</li> <li>- allow for higher predictability of the intentions.</li> </ul>
<b>Respondent’s and partner’s activity and income modules</b>	Q 804 on satisfaction of maternity/parental or childcare leave, and Q 805b and 904b on whether the leave is part-time or full-time	These questions are dropped.	This revision reduces the length of the questionnaire. As to Q 804 it was unclear whether the satisfaction was to be related to the payment or to the duration. As to Q 805b and 904b, in case of part-time work, people would qualify this status as being in work, plus in some countries people would work part-time even if they are on full leave. Instead of asking this, it is better to just ask only about part-time work.
	Q 806 and 905 on opportunity to resume work after leave	The category “did not work before leave” is added (Q 8.15 and 9.12)	This revision is introduced because in some countries people would answer that they/their partners are on maternity leave despite not having worked prior to it.
	Q 809 on satisfaction about being unemployed and Q 810 on intention to start working	These questions are dropped.	As to Q 809, most respondents were rather unsatisfied with being unemployed. As to Q 810, it was not clear whether the question reflected real intentions or rather the perceived likelihood of finding a job.

New questionnaire	2004 Questionnaire	Revisions	Reasons
<b>Respondent's and partner's activity and income modules (continued)</b>	Q 813 on satisfaction of being a student, and 814 on intention to complete education	These questions are dropped.	Q 813 and 814 are dropped because of difficult interpretation in applied research. The answer would be driven by the stage of education the respondent is enrolled in.
	Q 820 and 826 on intention to start working for permanently disabled and those in military or social service	These questions are dropped.	Q 820 and 827 are dropped because they concerned only very few people.
	Q 828, 832, 861, 917, 921, 933 on the type of occupation	ISCO-2008 codes instead of 1988 ones are now applied (Q 8.07, 8.17, 9.04, 9.14)	Update the questionnaire and increase comparability with other surveys.
	Q 837 and 925 on work schedule	These questions are revised and new ones are added (8.20-8.24; 9.17-9.21).	The aim is to make these questions more comparable with the same type of questions in other surveys.
	Q 841 on gender composition of work	The question is dropped.	A proxy to this question can be the question on type of occupation by ISCO codes.
	Q 847 on satisfaction about job security	This question is revised (Q 8.31).	This revision aims to focus on the perceived (and not actual) job security.
	Q 861, 863, 933 and 935 on the type of additional job/business; Q 836 and 924 on the description of work place; Q 846, 848, 849 on regularity of job and intention to change job	These questions are dropped.	These questions did not turn to be useful for research.
	Q 850 and Q 853-854 on satisfaction about self-employment and intention to change/stop job; Q 852 on the development of own business/farm	These questions are dropped.	These questions can be replaced by the extent to which respondent feels secure about his/her job.

New questionnaire	2004 Questionnaire	Revisions	Reasons
<b>Household possessions, income and transfers module</b>	Q 1001 on items that the household possesses; Q 1005 on capacity to save money; Q 1006 and 1007 on whether others in the household has income from other sources	These questions are dropped.	These revisions aim to achieve greater comparability with EU-SILC which is the key source of information for living standards in Europe and reduced length of the questionnaire. Information provided by Q 1005 was additional to Q 1002 (Q 10.04 of the new questionnaire).
	Module on monetary transfers and inheritance	This module is moved in the social network module (see above).	See above "Social network module".

## ANNEX – The new Generations and Gender Survey questionnaire