THE DIVERSITY OF FAMILY STRUCTURE IN EUROPE

A survey on partnership, parenting and childhood across Europe around the millennium¹

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INTRODUCTION

The simultaneous presence of converging, parallel and diverging processes and the incompletion of the recent changes in demographic behaviour make it impossible to provide a comprehensive picture of the European family structure or to track down the determining forces. For such an endeavour we would need to have precise knowledge on the shifts in and modifications of partnership behaviour alongside the life course, on the willingness to have children, on the features of partnership-, parental- and childhood roles, on the timing of the various events in the individual life curse, and the distribution of various life course trajectories as well as their association with different social strata. If we are also interested in finding out to what extent people live in the similar family structure (e.g. those living in a marriage bringing up two children) are in a similar position, we need to know the economic activity of the household members (eg. Kuijsten 1996; Saraceno et al. 2004), power relations and the division of labour within the family, the welfare services the family have access to in monetary form or in kind, and the material well-being of the families.

Despite these and other obstacles, often almost impossible to overcome, comparative analysis are seeking to identify what is common and what is different in the societies observed, and what sort of factors explain or may explain the similarities and differences. As demography deals with universal phenomena, and has amassed excellent data well suited for comparison, there are nu-

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merous comparative studies available to us.³ It would be an endless task to asses all of these or to provide an inventory of research questions and findings which confirm, contradict or complement each other. In processing the literature and for specifying our thematic field we needed to select continually among the questions, deciding which research findings to present and at what length, which field we have complementary data for and results to present. And although we try everything available, an enterprise of this sort can never be complete or entirely balanced.

No matter how much we emphasise the need for selection and the inevitably resulting unevenness, we cannot evade asking a fundamental question. This question is: how far do the demographic characteristics of European societies overlap or differ, and are we to expect convergence or divergence in terms of the tendencies? Being more specific: in terms of family structure do European societies point towards a definite European model? Or are we witnessing the survival or even growth of differences? Do the same forces induce changes in family structure over the whole of Europe or are there factors related to certain groups of countries which lead to the emergence of diverging models? Even if we remain sketchy, this question is to be asked in the introduction to a work on Europe.⁴

In interpreting and understanding European demographic changes, one of the most widely used theoretical frame is the concept of the second demographic transition (SDT),⁵ an essential element of which is the transformation of partnership relations and the consequent changes in family structure. To use a strongly simplifying paraphrase, the line of thought behind this model can be summed up by saying that Europe is defined by *very similar forces* (similarities in ideational shifts, changes in social and economic structure, institutional changes), therefore what we need to expect is *increasing convergence* according family structures (van de Kaa 1987; Lesthaeghe 1996; Lesthaeghe and Sur-

³ (Below I shall list but a few examples, without aiming at a complete inventory: Andersson 2004; Billari and Wilson 2001; Billari et al. 2001; Coleman 2004; Corijn and Klijzing ed. 2001; Fahey and Spéder 2004; Heuveline and Timberlake 2003; Heuveline et al. 2003; Kiernan 2002a, 2002b; Kohler et al. 2002; Lesthaeghe and Moors 2000; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2004; Liefbroer et al. 1996; Macura et al. 2000; Mills 2004; Monnier and Rychtarikova 1992; NiBhrolchain 1993; Philipov and Dorbritz 2004; Pinelli et al. 2002; Tomka 2002.)

⁴This is at the centre of the debate on the second demographic transition. In this respect the latest contributions have been: Bernhard 2004; Coleman 2004; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2004; Micheli 2004; van de Kaa 2004. Excellent brief surveys were also provided by Billari and Wilson on this question, focusing on the transition to adulthood (Billari and Wilson 2001). Tomka examines development in Hungary in the context of European tendencies (Tomka 2001).

⁵ As SDT theory is widely known, I shall not recapitulate it here.

kyn 2004).⁶ All other concepts, which presuppose the strengthening of globalisation and the mutual interdependence of countries also point toward homogeneity and convergence. This is how we have to think of the crisis hypothesis, too, which offers an alternative explanation to SDT in understanding the changes in the demographic processes of ex-socialist countries (Macura et al. 2000), and in which the roles of economic recession and unemployment, and of the deterioration of the safety net are emphasised, also presupposing the similarity of ongoing processes, at least for the sub-region in question.

Growing individualisation however does not lead necessarily to homogenisation. According to the scholars of the ever newer waves of *individualisation* (Beck 1986; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1990), the loosening of economic pressures in the strict sense and the weakening of communal control mechanisms leads to the disappearance of class boundaries and related prescriptions, which in turn generates new waves of individualisation. This eventually leads to the possibility of giving up dominant forms of living arrangements or manifests in giving up these forms. The question remains, however, whether a new stable reproductive model is going to develop, or whether a new, dominant order of family formation will emerge. Researchers of individualisation do not give an unequivocal answer, even though the 'chosen biography' ['Bastelbiographie'] model they worked out suggests that there is not, and there will not be a new dominant model.

Those who expect *the persistence of differences* work on the foundation of the developmental theory of *path dependency* (Zapf 1996; Mills and Blossfeld 2005), and point out the probable conservation of the structural elements of the institutional system (welfare regimes) and the long-term influence of the cultural legacy (Mayer 2001; Reher 1998). Discussing this question in general and explicit terms, Mayer points out that the inspiring and the hindering effects which flow from global and universal forces such as the market and the media are both mediated by the welfare institutional system. It is also this system that structures the resources on the basis of which individual countries give responses to the universal challenges in ways, which are characteristic of the various groups of countries (Mayer 2001). Billari, on the other hand, points out that the differences in the way in which background factors influence demographic behaviour can be retraced to the differences in their welfare systems (Billari 2005).

Naturally, in this paper we cannot answer all the questions of convergence or divergence. We just wanted to indicate that we kept the dilemma in mind when we compared the demographic behaviour of European societies in one respect or the other. We intended to find out how wide-spread we could call

⁶It would be unfair not to note that Lesthaeghe and Moors established 'destandardisation' and 'growing diversity' in the field of household structures, however the basic argumentation points to a universal development (Lesthaeghe and Moors 2000: 153).

one or other constitutive element of family structures or how far they were limited to just one group of countries. In presenting groups of countries it was particularly important to us to see what characterised *ex-socialist countries*. The nuptiality model of these countries was very similar in the period right before 1990 (Monnier and Rychtarikova 1992; NiBhrolchain 1993). At the same time, the transition of these societies was followed by some radical demographic changes. It is a question whether today they form a unified group of countries in terms of family structure.

The criterion of homogeneity or inhomogeneity is significant not only in the comparison between countries: it is also interesting to see whether there are differences within the society of each country in terms of family structure. Examining family structure is related to the understanding of social structure (level of education, regional position, religion), and of the labour market (its flexibility, family employment profiles) at a number of points which we cannot fully elaborate here.

Differences and similarities of family structure, will be presented in a *selective fashion*. One the one hand we have singled out *two phases of the life course* (the time of family formation, and the time around the "empty ness") and we survey some *important characteristics of partnership relations* with regard to them. We analysed the situation also from the perspective of family roles: some aspects of *childhood and parenthood* will be also highlighted (areas such as being brought up in a single-parent and a two-parent family, or how long children stay with their parents).

As compared to other social sciences, demography has been much more developed in terms of comparison between countries, as it could rely on exact and full-scale vital statistics (and every ten years those of the census). Today, this advantage has dwindled, particularly in terms of partner relationships and the form of cohabitation, and it is no accident that after the success of the FFS programme today the Generation and Gender Programme is also aiming at exploring and describing the dynamics and structural conditions of partner relationships. Our study could not utilise this new data. The present survey was based mainly on the comparative data of European censuses around 2000, however, if necessary related cross-sectional comparative surveys were also retrieved (EB and CC barometers, PPA2 survey, EQLS survey for a description see the appendices). As long these comparative data do not cover all the European countries, and if yes, its sample size is quite low, our analysis is far from comprehensive. In order to highlight some non-widely discussed phenomenon, Hungarian country specific data was also used.

PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS OF YOUNG ADULTS

Over the past decade practically all elements of demographic behaviour have gone through substantial changes, but the most profound changes were those affecting union formation. After the golden age, the (almost exclusive) dominance of marriage, we have arrived at an era where different forms of non-marital cohabitation are everyday practices in all European countries, although their popularity is not the same. Being single often appears as a consciously chosen form of life, along with 'living apart together,' (LAT) which seeks a balance between independence and partnership. These changes will be described below in three sections: 1) firstly, as an introduction we show a simple distribution of preferred living arrangements; 2) than the tendencies and different understandings of cohabitation and marriage will be analysed in detail; 3) lastly we present some research results of the living arrangement 'single' and 'LAT'.

1. Perceived ideal partnership

Answers to questions on ideal living arrangements shows clearly the coexistence of cohabitation and marriage among the preferences of young women and man. On the one hand the dominant majority (75-90%) of young women (between 20 and 34 years of age) considered marriage as final state of preferred living arrangement, on the other hand the vast majority considers cohabitation as a preferred stage or as a final form of living arrangement. The European countries participating in the PPA2 survey strongly differ according the dominant preferences. In some countries a classical understanding of marriage – where premarital cohabitation is not a necessary stage in the marriage process-, is widespread among young woman (eg. Cyprus, Italy, Poland and also Slovenia). While in other countries, in the Netherlands, Germany, Estonia marriage comes after cohabitation as a preferred form of living arrangement. The rate of those, who think of cohabitation as an alternative ideal living arrangement is also not negligible in some countries: in Germany it is around one seventh, in The Netherlands and Estonia one tenth. The alternative living arrangements to partnership - single and LAT - are perceptible in some countries, mainly in Germany and The Netherlands.

Considering the opinion of the males similar figures could be found regarding the type of living arrangement, and differences concerning the investigated countries. Only one characteristic should be stressed: males are less inclined to establish legal marriage than females, and consequently more inclined to cohabitation. Overall: if there is any competition among living arrangement, that it is not among unions and non unions, but among different kind of unions.

Naturally, we know that there is a wide gap between wishes and everyday practice, but if we reckon with the growing role of values and ideas, we cannot consider it indifferent to examine preferred living arrangements.

Table 1
Distribution of living arrangement preferred by people aged 20 to 34, by gender in Europe, 2001–2003

Country	Single	LAT	Cohabita- tion fol- lowed by marriage	Cohabita- tion without marriage	Marriage	Other	All (=100%)
Czech Republic	5.8	4.5	40.3	7.3	40.9	0.6	154
Cyprus	4.5	3.0	14.8	0.6	75.1	2.1	337
Estonia	0	6.0	47.2	10.2	36.6	0	216
Finland	3.5	4.1	41.9	6.9	41.1	2.6	492
Germany	11.3	8.7	50.3	14.7	9.2	5.8	600
Italy	0.8	2.4	32.8	5.0	58.9	0.1	836
Lithuania	1.8	0.9	22.3	4.1	70.0	0.9	220
The Netherlands	0.4	7.1	70.0	10.0	9.6	3.0	240
Poland	2.9	1.2	14.3	2.2	77.6	1.7	803
Slovenia	5.8	4.1	23.9	6.6	57.2	2.4	243
Males							
Czech Republic	4.7	8.7	51.5	14.4	20.1	0.7	149
Cyprus	7.9	5.9	16.1	6.6	59.9	3.6	304
Estonia	1.4	4.8	51.7	18.4	23.1	0.7	147
Finland	5.7	4.8	43.6	10.1	33.9	2.0	525
Germany	19.4	12.3	43.8	11.4	7.7	5.4	587
Italy	1.5	3.0	41.4	8.2	45.6	0.2	840
Lithuania	1.1	3.9	29.1	6.7	55.9	3.4	179
The Netherlands	2.3	4.3	59.2	20.7	10.2	3.2	256
Poland	4.8	3.6	15.4	2.2	72.6	1,4	722
Slovenia	5.9	5.5	22.4	3.8	61.0	1.4	290

Source: own calculations, PPA2.

2. Marriage and/or cohabitation

Vital statistics indicate clear and profound changes in partnership behaviour. There is a drop in the willingness to get married and there is a postponement of first marriage (cf. Billari 2005; Lesthaeghe and Moors 2000). But, vital statistics are not able to reveal basic features of recent changes related to the spread of cohabitation, the transformation of the role of these unions. Therefore we need to rely on data collections such as censuses, and surveys on household structure, in order to get an overview on partnership and family structure of

young people. The differences in union formation among young people will be first shown on the basis of the existence of such relationships and then by the spread of marriages and cohabitation.

In Europe roughly two thirds of women between 25 and 34⁷ live in a partnership. To the extent males in partnership are older than average, the ratio of those living in partnership is lower among them. We notice clear differences among countries, but altogether the most noticeable feature is similarity: in the year 2000, between 60 and 70% of women lived in some kind of partnership in 16 out of the 27 countries examined here. However in six countries the rate was somewhat higher (Cyprus, Malta, Romania, Lithuania, Holland, Hungary) and in four countries (Slovenia, Ireland, Italy and Latvia) the rate was somewhat lower (Table 2). The significant differences clearly show that establishment of a stable partnership as a key event of becoming adult does not happen at the same time in European countries (see. Billari and Wilson 2001).

⁷ We chose this age group following Kiernan's example. We were unable to use narrower age groups because of the small n used in the surveys. In countries where we were unable to use census data, we carried out the analysis for ages 20–24, 25–29, 30–34 also.

Table 2
Ratio of living in partnership and of those living in cohabitation within all partnerships in the age group 25–34, by gender in Europe, 2000–2002

	Fen	nales	Males		
	1011	Ratio of co-	171	Ratio of co-	
Country	Living in	habitation	Living in	habitation	
Country	partnership	within partner-	partnership	within partner-	
	partiteromp	ships	partnersmp	ships	
Nordic countries	l .	- 1-		- F	
Denmark	70.2	43.1	59.1	51.6	
Finland	70.2	39.8	62.3	47.2	
Norway	66.7	41.5	52.7	48.4	
Western Europe	00.7	11.5	32.7	10.1	
-		20.5			
Austria*	65.9	30.5	_	_	
Belgium*	64.0	28.6	_	_	
France*	67.0	42.8	_	_	
Germany	69.1	22.4	54.6	28.8	
Holland	73.9	33.7	61.2	42.8	
Ireland*	56.7	19.8	_	_	
Liechtenstein	65.9	15.6	55.0	19.4	
Luxembourg*	69.3	26.2	_	_	
United Kingdom	66.9	32.6	62.9	39.6	
Southern Europe					
Cyprus	78.4		64.8		
Greece	66.3	5.4	43.8	8.5	
Italy	56.4	7.8	38.6	9.3	
Malta*	77.9		_		
Portugal	70.3	10.8	60.3	11.8	
Central Europe					
Czech Republic	63.5	7.2	50.1	8.9	
Hungary	71.0	16.8	61.0	20.8	
Poland	63.8	3.4	52.8	3.9	
Romania	77.7	9.4	67.8	12.0	
Slovakia	63.7	3.2	51.1	3.6	
Slovenia	59.2	21.1	41.0	25.1	
Baltic countries					
	64.0	24.4	(2.2	40.4	
Estonia	64.0	34.4	62.2	40.4	
Latvia	51.9	9.6	42.8	17.9	
Lithuania	75.1	8.5	85.0	9.7	

 $\it Source:$ own calculations based on the following: Eurostat Census data; *EB and CC Barometer 2000–2002, only for females.

If we turn our attention to the phenomenon, which type of partnership young adults chose, and we focus on the rate of those *living in cohabitation* within all partnerships, the variation is more substantial in the analysed countries (Table 2 second and fourth column). In some countries the rate of these people is lower than one twentieth part of all partner relationships. The rate is lowest in Slovakia (3%) and Poland (4%)⁸, in four other countries, on the other hand, the rate is at or above 40%. Predictably, the highest rate of cohabitation was found in the Northern European countries and in France. Despite the high degree of variance it can also be stated that the rate of married people was higher than of those living in cohabitation in all the European countries we examined.⁹

It is interesting to examine the former *state socialist countries* separately. They do not form a homogeneous block: although in a European comparison most of the ex-socialist countries show a *low* level of cohabitation, Estonia (34,5%) is clearly among countries that show a very high rate, while Slovenia (21,1%) and Hungary (16,7%) seem to have medium high rates¹⁰

Toulemon (Toulemon 1997), analysing France in this respect, and Kiernan (Kiernan 2002a) who examined several Western European countries were right to point out that cohabitation has become a lasting element among forms of partnership and an important point of reference ('cohabitation is here to stay'). Heuveline and Timberlake recently formulated six ideal types according to the chance and length of cohabitation, the chance of it developing into marriage and the risk of having children within the cohabitation (Heuveline and Timberlake 2003). The types have been named as: a) marginal; b) 'prelude to marriage'; c) 'stage in marriage process'; d) 'alternative to singleness'; e) 'alternative to marriage'; f) 'undistinguishable from marriage'(op cit. p.1219). The 16 (mainly European) countries analysed by the authors could be put into one of the above categories. At the same time the European countries fell into different categories, which means that at the time of the studied with the FFS surveys¹¹, cohabitation had different roles in the different countries. Today the various countries probably cannot be characterised by the same ideal type as at the time of the FFS surveys since the spread of cohabitation has not stopped in the recent period, as it is clearly indicated also by the growing number of non-marital

⁸ Ratios are even lower than this in Cyprus and Malta, but in these small, recently joined countries CC Barometer had a very low sample size.

⁹ In Sweden the rate of married people would definitely be lower than that of people cohabiting.

¹⁰It must be noted that on the basis of small sample (survey type) data collections the Czech Republic also shows higher rates (cf. Rabusic 2001). In this paper, however, there is no room for evaluating the different ratios which occur as a result of different data sources (different data recording methods).

¹¹ Since they analyse FFS data, their typology mainly reflects the characteristics of the 1980's and early 1990's.

births. This intensity of the diffusion was particularly high, well above average, in the ex-socialist countries.

Difference in the prevalence of cohabitation and its various types can occur between various *social groups* as well as between countries. Although it is often difficult to find distinguishing traits between married and cohabiting people, certain analyses were able to identify groups, which preferred cohabitation (Carlson and Klinger 1987; Villeneuve-Gokalp 1991; Kieman 2002; Spéder 2004). Ethnicity, religiosity and the level of education often appear as possible factors. Even if their effect is not overwhelming, it can no way be considered insignificant!

In terms of the spread of cohabitation, two rival hypotheses have emerged: one speaks of 'college graduates as trend-setters' the other calls it a 'working class phenomenon'. 12 After surveying the analyses the picture emerges that we cannot rely merely on the thesis, whereby cohabiting relationships have spread as a new, fashionable type of relationship 'from top downwards.' There are two considerations that need particular attention here. One is that in such widely different countries as the USA and Hungary cohabitation first gained predominance among the disadvantaged strata of society (cf. Cherlin 1992; Spéder 2004), and that strong prevalence of the disadvantageous strata prevails in the later phase of the development (cf. Figure 1). The other remarkable consideration is a characteristic of childbirths within cohabitations. Examining this guestion, Kiernan pointed out that apart from Nordic countries and East Germany several countries of Europe are characterised by the phenomenon that mainly the lowest classes have children in cohabiting arrangements (cf. Kiernan 2002a. p. 9). In Hungary though cohabitation is present at all levels of society, but children are born to cohabiting couples mainly among those with a low level of education. Differences in structural positions of individuals and/or differing value orientations within a society could force and/or motivate people to live in cohabitation. Thus cohabitation can have different function/meanings even in a given country. It may happen that the divergent types persist parallel to each other, precisely as they are connected to different parts of the social structure. Following Heuveline's ideas, cohabitation can be an alternative to loneliness, a prelude to marriage or indistinguishable from marriage in the same historical period and *also* within the same country.

¹² In certain cases we might even be talking about an underclass-type phenomenon.

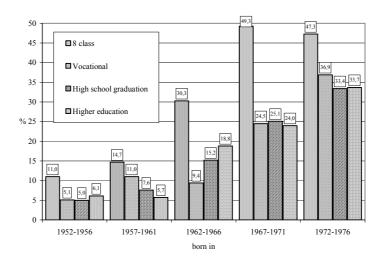


Figure 1

Educational level of mothers and diffusion of cohabitation in Hungary by birth cohorts

The ratio of women establishing their first union as cohabitation by the age 25, according to levels of education (%)

3. Single and Living Apart Together (LAT)

Single and LAT were often seen as a future alternative to marriage and lasting cohabitation, by now it has transpired that these forms do not represent a serious rival to cohabitation type partnership forms. The only exemption seems to be Germany, where around ten percent find single status, and another ten percent the LAT as the preferred living arrangement.

Among the dozen European countries which carried out a PPA2 survey, in Germany more than one tenth of young people consider a single as ideal form while in other countries this popularity is far lower (cf. Table 1). Naturally, most people gain some experience during their lives of not having a partner for a certain period of time, however if focusing on those in later ages living alone, researchers found that this living arrangement is an unwanted phase and not a chosen lifestyle (cf. Utasi 2003).

There are also very few European young women who consider LAT, a form of relationship which seeks a balance between independence and partnership, as an ideal form of life. Of the countries having conducted the PPA-survey, Germany, Holland and Estonia show a low, but not insignificant rate of people who consider this life form the ideal version (cf. Table 1).

According to Kiernan's analysis based on FFS data, a certain number (30–40%) of people who never had a partner have had an intimate partnership at some stage of their lives but not all of them characterised this as an ideal and voluntarily chosen situation (Kiernan 2002b). According to her analyse, the rate of people whose relationship could be interpreted as LAT varied from country to country (op. cit. 63). On the basis of PPA data we were also able to identify people who have an intimate partner relationship and who do not live with their parents (any longer). In Germany (17%) and in Finland (12%) we found significant portions (Table 3) among respondents aged 20–34. Of course, we should avoid early overgeneralization, since questions at the PAA are not fully suitable to discriminate properly between dating and LAT relationships. On the other side, it is indisputable that the noticeable preference and prevalence of such relations in Germany demonstrate that LAT is a socially accepted living arrangement.

Table 3
Estimated ratio of persons living in LAT relationships in some European countries, among women of 20 to 34 (2001–2002)

Country	Percent
Belgium	0.5
Hungary	1.0
Italy	1.3
Czech Republic	3.1
Romania	3.2
Lithuania	4.9
Holland	5.8
Austria	6.1
Slovenia	6.1
Finland	11.9
Germany	16.6

Source: own calculations, PPA-2.

SELECTED PARETNHOOD AND CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Leaving home: 'free to choose' or 'locked into the parental home'

Billari and his associates used FFS data of 16 countries to compare the appearance and timing of various stages of transition of adulthood (leaving home, first relationship, marriage) and the order in which they are related to each other (Billari et al. 2001). They found significant differences both in terms of timing and their sequences. Considering the sequences of events in becoming

adult he concluded that while in certain, mainly Scandinavian, countries the process of detachment from the parental home is homogeneous and standardised process and these societies can be considered age graded, in a different group of countries, particularly in Southern Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe both the timing and the sequence of leaving home is rather heterogeneous. We only briefly consider this question of leaving home from one point of view: we concentrate on the situation when young adults live at home but with a partner and/or own child.

Saraceno with her colleagues also highlight the differences between European countries which also manifest in the length of time young people spend with their parents, without their parents and alone (as well as the rates of young people attached to each category) (Saraceno et al. 2004). They concluded, that different welfare regimes, the different ways of acquiring an independent home ('housing market'), the different structure of the labour markets ('first access to jobs') of each country and diverging cultural norms lead to a situation in which young adults leave their home at an earlier age in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe ((Billari et al. 2001; Mayer 2001; Saraceno et al. 2004).

Tendencies in the ex-socialist countries before the 1990's showed a sign of growing ratio of early leavers. According to the data of 2003's European Quality of Life Survey, after the transformation the ex-socialist countries seems to witness the re-emergence of long gone phenomena of residing at home till a rather late age. As we are analysing a data set with small samples (small country samples and limited age groups), we formed groups of countries (Table 4).

In 2003 in the ex-socialist countries a great proportion of young people still live in the parental home, approaching the rates characteristic of Southern Europe. What is new, however, is a re-appearing phenomenon whereby young people stay in the parental home together with their own partner or spouse and even with their own children. Both in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Baltic states, more than 10% of women between 25 and 34 live in (parental) extended households. (According to the detailed national figures this rate is one in five in Poland and Bulgaria.) In these households, young people surely face new conflicts in terms of family roles. Young adults living with their parents also have to act in the roles of spouse and mother, and thus have to find a balance between different family roles. The spouse moving into the family partly has to learn the roles of partner and parent and partly also needs to develop the behavioural repertoire of the role of the daughter-in-law or son-in-law. At the same time, the position of the parents also becomes modified: they remain parents and yet must accept that they have to (or at least ought to) find totally novel ways of fulfilling their parental role.

Table 4
Living arrangements among young adults: Living with and without parents, alone or with partner and/or child, ages 25–34, in Europe, 2003 (%)

	Witho	out parents	With parents		
Country groups	Alone	With partner and/or child	Alone	With partner and/or child	
Females					
Nordic countries	25.7	73.1	1.2	0	
Western Europe	20.9	73.7	4.0	1.4	
Southern Europe	10.4	63.1	22.0	4.5	
Central and Eastern (former					
state-socialist) countries	6.7	63.5	11.2	15.6	
Baltic countries	12.4	70.1	7.7	9.8	
Males					
Nordic countries	37.2	57.5	4.9	0.4	
Western Europe	35.5	52.1	11.6	0.8	
Southern Europe	17.8	42.7	36.3	3.2	
Central and Eastern (former					
state-socialist) countries	9.7	48.6	29.3	12.4	
Baltic countries	15.1	55.2	18.5	11.2	

Country-groupings: Nordic: Denmark, Finland, Sweden; Western-Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, UK, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands; Southern countries: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Malta Central-Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia; Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. Source: own calculation, European Quality of Life Survey, European Foundation, Dublin

We have a good reason to believe that young adults co-habiting with their parents is a temporary phenomenon and that, similarly to Western Europe, as the economy gains impetus, there will be a decrease in the number of young people who start their own family within the household of their parents. This, however, may be limited by a number of factors. Primary of these is that after the transition a new situation has arisen in the housing market of the exsocialist countries: home-owning has become almost exclusively predominant (Table 5), the rental sector is almost totally absent and municipal housing has become severely marginalized (cf.: Domanski et al. 2004). At the same time, it is in the ex-socialist countries that we find the lowest average number of rooms per home (op. cit p. 15). The dominance of home ownership requires buyers to amass considerable financial resources. Naturally, persons who have the means or whose family can provide them with the 'starting capital' can easily enter the housing market. Those, however, who wish to establish a family, but do not have the necessary funds, have to choose either to postpone family formation

for a long time or may decide to live with one of the two parental families. This is the dilemma reflected in the opinions found in the PPA surveys according to which people of ex-socialist countries find the main cause for postponement of family formation in the difficulties of solving the housing problems and their inadequate financial background (Pongrácz and Spéder 2008). As the structural transformation of the housing market or the appearance of affordable rented homes is a long process in a market economy, we need to assume that the ways of household formation in harmony with structural position will not alter in Eastern European ex-socialist countries in the foreseeable future. This means that reconciliation of roles within the extended family will continue to constitute a part of the family life of young adults and their parents who are affected by this situation.

Table 5
Distribution of home ownership by country-groups, in Europe, 2003

Country	Ownership without mortgage	Ownership with mort- gage		Tenant, paying rent for so- cial/voluntary/ municipal housing	Accommodation is provided rent free	Other
EU-15	37.5	22.3	21.9	14.7	2.6	1.0
AC-10	66.4	5.2	4.4	19.4	3.0	1.6
EU-25	45.9	16.7	18.9	13.3	4.1	1.1
CC3	66.0	1.3	18.5	1.5	11.8	1.0

EU15: Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, UK, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece; AC-10: Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia; CC3: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey.

Source: Domanski et al. (2004) p. 18.

Single parent, two parent and "recombined" families from the children's view

Profound changes in partnership forms discussed earlier also influence the position of children within their family. It is obvious that the changes in relationships, divorce and re-marriage and varying periods of solitude affect the lives of children once born into the family. Of these conditions here we focus on single parent families as it is well known that they live under harsher cir-

¹³ To clarify the connection between the home sector and family formation naturally requires further investigations.

cumstances than average¹⁴ and children who grow up this way, struggle with several social problems both in youth and adulthood (poor school performance, early childbirth, poverty, etc). It is important to investigate whether the prevalence of single parent families is dominated by similarities or differences.

When considering this problem we need to pay more attention to the fact that a single-parent family structure is not a static characteristic as it may go through different processes. A single parent family can emerge when a cohabitation or when a marriage end by separating/divorcing, or by the death of the partner or when the mother decides to bring up a baby alone. The condition may end by a re-marriage (or new cohabitation), the previous partner may return, the child may grow up and even start a new family, or the death of the care taking parent can also bring the end of a single-parent family.

Censuses carried out around 2000 enable us to examine, at least in a static way, how far the demographic situation of children in families varies in Europe, if they are brought up by one or two parents, by biological or stepparents, if the parents are married or cohabiting. We examined the position of children broken down into three age groups (0–4 years, 5–9 years, 10–14 years).

Data show considerable differences (Table 6). In the southern countries of Europe, the rate of single parent families is extremely low. In Cyprus, for example, only 3% of children under 4 live in single parent families, in Greece this figure is 6%. In some other European countries, however, this rate is more than one in five, approaching one in four (23% in Estonia and the Czech Republic). The rate of single-parent families is generally high in ex-socialist countries, reaching 20% in five out of the seven countries. Significantly lower rates are only found in two countries, Romania (9%) and Hungary (12%). In other European countries the average value of this indicator is around 10%. It is considerably lower in the southern countries already referred to, and considerably higher in the United Kingdom and Austria. The extremely high rate (21%) in the UK has long been known in Western Europe and is mainly explained by the decision of women to opt for raising children alone. If, however, ex-socialist countries are also taken into account, the phenomenon can no longer be called unique.

¹⁴ For more detail on this see point 4.

Table 6
Distribution of children aged 0–14 according to parental situation, in Europe, 2000–2001

	0-4 y		5–9 y	years	10–14 years		
Country	Two par-	Single	Two par-	Single	Two par-	Single	
	ents	parent	ents	parent	ents	parent	
Nordic countries							
Denmark	88.9	11.1	83.9	16.1	81.7	18.3	
Finland	88.8	11.2	84.0	16.0	81.2	18.8	
Norway	88.3	11.7	83.8	16.2	81.9	18.1	
Western Europe							
France	89.6	10.4	86.1	13.9	84.2	15.9	
Germany	89.4	10.6	86.3	13.7	84.4	15.6	
Holland	92.2	7.8	88.8	11.2	86.5	13.5	
Liechtenstein	92.0	8.0	89.0	11.0	86.0	14.1	
United Kingdom	79.0	21.0	76.2	23.8	75.2	24.8	
Southern Europe							
Cyprus	97.2	2.8	94.4	5.6	93.4	6.6	
Greece	94.5	5.5	92.0	8.0	90.0	10.0	
Italy	91.8	8.2	91.0	9.0	89.5	10.5	
Portugal	92.1	7.9	89.8	10.2	88.1	11.9	
Central Europe							
Czech Republic	76.7	23.3	79.8	20.2	80.0	20.0	
Hungary	87.7	12.3	85.5	14.5	83.0	17.1	
Poland	81.1	18.9	84.9	15.1	85.7	14.3	
Romania	90.9	9.1	89.6	10.5	86.7	13.3	
Slovakia	82.2	17.8	86.6	13.4	86.9	13.1	
Slovenia	80.7	19.3	85.3	14.7	86.2	13.9	
Baltic countries							
Estonia	77.0	23.0	75.2	24.8	73.6	26.4	
Lithuania	81.9	18.1	81.4	18.6	80.5	19.5	

Source: own calculations, European censuses 2000–2001.

The prevalence of single-parent status can also vary according to age of children. Although it is widely acknowledged that the existence of children constrain the break-up of partnership, the growing probability of the break-up of marriages and the spread of cohabitation (being less stable as compared to marriage) will increase the proportion of single parent families. Nonetheless repartnering decreases the proportion of single parent families at least considering our cross-sectional data.

The census data of Hungary enable us to give a (static) picture on changing parental structures as a consequence of partnership dissolution and repartnering. We not only know whether the child lived with one or two parents – the data source also tells us whether they were the biological or the step parents of the child. We present four age groups (babies under 1 year of age, children of 5, 10 and 14 years) concerning the situation of children within the parental union (Table 7). As the number of divorces is stable, and cohabitations are more fragile than marriages, the number of children who spend (a part of the) childhood in a single parent family is certainly on the increase. Shift between two parent families are also clear: the number of children living with two biological parents is decreasing and the rate of parental partnerships involving a step-parent is on the increase. These changes have many consequences for children involved.

Firstly, even some of those children who live in two-parent families (those having step-parents) had some experience of a one-parent situation for a certain, varying extent of time. Therefore the ratio of children having experienced the one parent family situation is much higher as compared to the ratio found in usual cross-sectional analyse. Secondly, the growing number of children should have learned new 'child roles'. They have to adapt to new partners (spouses) and have to shape a relationship with the biological parent who moved out of the partnership, and possibly even with that parent's new partner. While among babies under 12 months the rate of those facing these challenges is 2.7%, for five-year-olds the rate is 7.1% and for children of 14 it is one in ten (9.7%). On the final balance, without passing any value judgement, we can point out that barely more than two thirds (68.8%) of 14-year-old children live with their blood parents. ¹⁶

¹⁵ Here we cannot analyse in detail the commonly known fact that a single parent family almost exclusively means life with the mother.

¹⁶ We may assume that for a certain period in their lives, some of them also gained experience of a single-parent family (eg. An after birth establishment of cohabiting partnership; transitory separation of blood parents).

Table 7
Division of children of different ages in Hungary according to the number of parents, the type of partnership and the parental situation, 2000

Parental situation	Age of child in years				
Farcillal Situation	Under 1	5	10	14	
Two-parent families					
Both are biological parents					
Married	67.1	68.6	68.5	66.8	
Cohabiting	18.0	7.1	3.2	2.0	
One is a biological parent					
Married	1.7	4.1	5.5	5.7	
Cohabiting	1.0	3.0	3.8	4.0	
Two step-parents	1.0	3.4	3.2	4.1	
One-parent families					
Biological parent					
Mother	10.4	11.9	13.2	14.9	
Father	0.4	0.9	1.4	2.0	
Step-parent	0.5	0.9	1.2	1.5	
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	
N=	96 128	108 475	122 401	119 360	

Source: own calculations based on census data for 2001.

As regards the chances of the different children ending up in various family types and the durability of the position we can only gain a comprehensive picture after a detailed analysis of the children's life course. (Andersson 2004; Bumpass and Lu 2000; Heuveline, Timberlake and Fürstenberg 2003; Heuveline and Timberlake 2004). By cohorts and countries these works calculate and compare the likelihood and the probability of the child spending some time in each of the possible family situations. According to the data, variance is extremely high in Europe in terms of the risk of living in a one-parent family, and differences in terms of the length of time spent in single-parent family, if smaller, are still significant (cf. Andersson 2004). Andersson showed that the risk of a child gaining experience of single-parent families before the age of 15 was lowest in Italy (9%) and highest in one-time East Germany and Latvia (46% and 44% respectively). If, on the other hand, we aim to establish the length of time a child spends in a single-parent family, on average, before the age of 14: in Italy the result is 3% of childhood years and in Latvia it is 15%. We should not reach easy conclusions by the fact that children spend the majority of their childhood not in a single-parent family: from the point of view of predictable social problems: the simple fact of the event ever taking place can have far-reaching consequences (cf. McLanahan 1985).

Anderson points out that countries cannot be readily classified on the basis of the family demographic experiences of children unless we take into account that 'Some European countries are characterised by a particularly stable family pattern from the point of view of children. These countries are found in different areas of Europe, but all have the trait in common of being strongly dominated by the Catholic confession' (op. cit. p. 321).

We know that chances of ending up in a single-parent scenario are much higher in cohabiting partnerships than in marriages (cf. Andersson 2004; Kiernan 2002a). Bumpass and Lu used American data to examine whether social factors played a role in determining the length of time children spend in oneparent or two-parent families (cohabitations or marriages). Beyond the already known relationship, whereby those born in cohabitations are likely to spend more time in a single-parent family, they also point out that the mother's level of education and ethnic identity is also related to the length of time the child spends in various family types and, within that, in a single-parent family (op. cit. p. 38). We know that the rate of single-parent families is particularly high in the USA compared to European countries. However, the question occurs whether there are countries in Europe where children's family demographic experiences are tied in with particular social positions. Kiernan pointed out that in the UK most single mothers who decide to have a baby alone come from the disadvantaged classes (Kiernan 2002a). In Hungary, too, we found that singleparent families are usually recruited from among those with a low level of education (Spéder 2004). Thinking along these lines it is worth asking the question whether social structure plays a part in the family demographic experience of children. If it does, do we find these connections in all countries or do diverging state welfare programmes and cultural traditions lead to diverging patterns in Europe? At the same time we may also suspect that the classic pattern will persist whereby children are born into marriages and brought up by parents in a lasting partnership. Can these paths be associated with certain social groups? Is it possible that this 'traditional' kind of life cycle will become a form of 'privileged childhood' in the future?

THE YOUNGER ELDERLY: LIVING ALONE, WITH A PARTNER OR WITH CHILDREN AT THE AGE 65–69

The censuses of 1990/91 and even of 1980 have shown clearly that changes in family structure experienced after the middle of the 20th century are also generated by the elderly generation (Jong Gierveld et al. 2001). The decrease in average household size, for example, was largely due to a growth in the number and rate of old people living alone and by an increase in the length of time spent in a family consisting solely of the ageing couple. Individualisation and

the striving for independence and autonomy can be captured in the behaviour of cohorts born in the first third to first half of the 20th century. By comparing the data of Finland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and, from the other side, Italy and Hungary for 1990 it could be shown that new, so-called 'chosen biography' as opposed to traditional, standard life courses is more widespread in northern and western European countries than in southern or eastern Europe (Jong Gierveld et al. 2001).

The situation of the ageing generations as we have seen in the former section 'Leaving home' is not independent of their children's strivings to become independent. In this way the ageing generations are directly and indirectly affected by several phenomena generally associated with the 'Second Demographic Transition'. What we have in mind here are phenomena such as the postponement of moving out of the parental home, young people postponing and foregoing marriage, divorce and the need to tackle situations that arise.

Papers analysing tendencies of household structure of the elderly concentrate on the shift of emphasis between various family and household constellations and all of them examine the changes in the rate of old people living alone or in partnership (mainly marriage). These two family types are the *embodiment of the individualisation process of the elderly*. The process seems to characterise the whole of Europe in a unified fashion, although, naturally, there are differences among country groups. Rates are lower in Central and Eastern Europe as compared to Northern or Western Europe (Grundy 1998; Jong Giervald 2003). The family structure of men and women shows considerable differences mainly because of the differences in mortality.

We shall review the data of censuses in 2000 and 2001 regarding the elderly mainly with a view to establishing the rate of old persons living alone or with their partner but without their children in the various countries of Europe. However from the point of view of extended parental roles mentioned in the former section it is also an important question just what rate of people between 65 and 69 still live with their children. We can accept Verdon and Jong Giervald's approach whereby the cohabitation of the elderly with their children is a forced necessity (Jong Giervald 2003), which either takes place because the child cannot move out or because the parent, mainly for health reasons, cannot live alone. In addition, we also need to add that on a social level the rate of two-person families, consisting of (married) partners, is the best measure of the possibility of realising a relatively individualised lifestyle free of unwanted necessities which even offer a greater chance to self-realisation.

On the basis of European censuses conducted in 2000/2001 we can examine several countries in order to identify to what extent Europe presents a unified picture. The results of our analysis seems to support Jong Gierveld's statement that she made after comparing two countries which represented Western and Eastern Europe, The Netherlands and Hungary (Jong Gierveld 2003). Accord-

ing to her comparison, the rate of one-person households and households with two people living in partnership in the Netherlands was higher in every age group than in Hungary. Using now the European census data, the rate of those women who still live with their partner, but not with their children is the highest in Germany, Cyprus, Denmark, France and the United Kingdom. The same is true of men, except in France. The lowest rates of households with two people living in partnership were found in the ex-socialist countries: in Estonia, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia. Highest rates for women living alone were found in Estonia, Finland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, while the rate of men living alone was highest, besides Estonia, in Denmark, Finland and the United Kingdom. In Germany, for example, 95% of men and women in this age group live in the above mentioned two types of households. In other words, what we see is that the rate of the elderly persons living in individualised households is highest in Western and Northern Europe. Unfortunately, we were not able to examine trends, thus we can only refer to a finding by Jong Gierveld whereby individualisation has gained impetus among the elderly in both the Netherlands and Hungary.

The consideration of the proportion of people living with their children among those aged 65–69 repeat and reinforce our results of the section 'Leaving home'. As a reminder: this age group is especially interesting because the state of health of its members usually does not render them dependent upon their children (yet), so cohabitation of children and parents cannot be explained by this factor. There are two country groups where the rate of elderly parents living with their children is high: southern Europe and the ex-socialist countries. In Italy, Greece and Portugal more than one quarter of women of this age live with their children, and rates are equally high in Slovenia and Poland.

Table 8
Distribution of men and women aged 65–69 according to chosen household type, in Europe, 2000/2001

Countries	Living alone	Living with spouse, without children	Living without partner, with child(ren)	Living with partner and child(ren)
Females				
Nordic countries				
Denmark	40.0	59.8	0.1	0.1
Finland	36.7	52.8	4.4	6.1
Western Europe				
France	29.5	58.2	5.0	7.3
Germany	31.2	64.7	3.2	0.8
Holland	30.4	61.2	2.8	5.6
United Kingdom	29.8	56.3	5.7	8.2
Southern Europe				
Cyprus	21.5	60.2	5.8	18.4
Greece	21.5	51.6	9.5	17.4
Italy	23.5	46.6	10.4	19.4
Portugal	20.2	53.6	9.7	16.5
Central Europe				
Czech Republic	35.6	50.4	7.5	6.5
Hungary	37.5	49.6	7.4	5.5
Poland	29.4	44.4	13.4	12.8
Slovakia	40.3	41.0	9.8	8.9
Slovenia	27.8	44.6	12.2	15.4
Baltic countries Estonia	43.1	41.3	9.6	6.0
Males	13.1	11.5	7.0	0.0
Maies Nordic countries				
Denmark	23.0	75.1	0.2	1.7
Finland	19.5	68.5	1.4	10.6
	17.3	00.5	1.4	10.0
Western Europe	140	70.0	1.6	12.5
France	14.0 13.2	70.9 82.0	1.6 0.9	13.5 3.7
Germany Holland	13.2	75.3	1.0	9.7
United Kingdom	16.8	67.4	2.1	13.7
_	10.6	07.4	2.1	13.7
Southern Europe	<i>5.6</i>	72.2	1.2	20.0
Cyprus Greece	5.6 7.5	72.3 56.9	1.3 2.3	20.9 33.4
	10.1	51.4	3.3	35.4 35.2
Italy Portugal	7.3	63.8	2.0	26.8
0	7.5	03.8	2.0	20.8
Central Europe	144	(0.6	2.1	14.0
Czech Republic	14.4 12.4	68.6 72.0	2.1 2.0	14.8 13.6
Hungary Poland	12.4	60.1	3.2	13.6 24.9
Slovakia	14.2	62.5	2.7	24.9
Slovakia	14.2	57.7	3.1	29.0
	10.1	31.1	3.1	29.0
Baltic countries	10.0	(()	2.5	10.4
Estonia	19.0	66.0	2.5	12.4

Source: own calculations, European censuses 2000–2001, Eurostat.

What can be the reasons behind the differences found in Europe? Observing Northern and Western European tendencies it may be assumed that, similarly to the aspirations of the younger generations, striving for an independent life and autonomy, individualisation and the modern transformation of traditional family values and norms is spreading among elderly people. After the children leave the parental home, the parent(s) can become similar to persons living independently or with a partner but without children, like the members of the younger generation who have not yet had children. This phenomenon is also strengthened by the extension of the period of economic activity. As people retire around the age of 65, their environment can easily accept that these elderly men and women make themselves independent of family ties and concentrate their efforts on realising their own objectives.

The contrast which appears in the family composition of the elderly in Western (and northern) European as opposed to Eastern (and partly Southern) European countries also has reasons which arise from the differences of economic and welfare regimes. Because of the difficulties of starting an independent life (home acquisition, finding employment) most parents do not close the door in front of the child who has left the family home. This alone is enough to postpone separation in the Eastern and Southern regions. In ex-socialist countries, which are characterised by a high divorce rate, there is also a chance of returning: of the young adult moving back to the parental home after his or her divorce. These are also the causes behind the fact that grandparents have to make serious financial contributions to the upbringing of their grandchildren.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the basis of the above analysis it is very clear that family forms and structures vary in the analysed European countries. We also have to make clear that the different tendencies do point into the same direction. Thus we have demonstrated that the new partnership forms (for instance cohabitation) appearing in some countries make their way also in other countries, but the dynamics of the process and the forms of cohabitation are not the same in the different European countries. As Mayer has observed (Mayer 2001) there are several forces (globalised market, the unification of the educational systems, borderless media, fashions in life styles etc.), which provide similar conditions for the living arrangements of the young, the middle aged and the elderly in Europe. At the same time those factors are also to be taken into account, which lead to the emergence and the maintenance of peculiar living arrangements and which at the same time inhibits the development of other forms. Two groups of factors might be of special importance in this respect. First there are substantial institu-

tional differences ('welfare state regimes') among European countries (housing market, housing policies, the social security systems etc.). Second there are huge differences among national cultures, religious traditions integrated into them (Inglehart and Baker 2000), and in the positive and negative ideals, patterns transferred between generations (Della-Zuanna 2004).

In case we extend our comparisons not only to the issue of who lives together with whom, but also the modes and conditions of living together, then the variance is even greater. Ten years ago Kuijsten wrote that if employment is also included into our analysis then the variety of living arrangements increase as we see different ratios of family with one, one and the half or two earners. The families with varying employment profiles have different opportunities concerning their free time and they divide up their time differently between recreation, reproduction, self-subsistence. Comparative studies on the generational aspects on material well being show, that different welfare regimes create different conditions for the younger and older generations in the European countries (Förster and d'Ercole 2004). It would be rather important to include further aspects – like the quality of partnerships and the power relationships within – which would increase the already observed variance.

At the same time it would be a mistake to stress variance beyond a certain level as there significant similarities in case we look at Europe from the perspective of Africa or Islamic countries. Altogether then we have to establish a balance between homogeneity and variance in the context of globalisation when it is so easy to stress homogeneity at the price of existing variance.

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APPENDIX

Data sources

European population censuses 2000–2001

The results of the censuses in 2000 and 2001 were organised into a thematically organised comparative data set by the Eurostat. The integrated data set used in this paper was made available by the Census Department of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

EB Barometer and CC Barometer 2000-2001

In 2002 a special Eurobarometer Survey was organised for the Candidate Countries, where several former questions from the Eurobarometer were incorporated. The integrated dataset of the EB and CC barometer was organised by the department of Social Structure at the Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung Berlin (WZB) in a joint project of the WZB, ESRI (Dublin) and the DRI (Budapest).

Population Policy Acceptance Survey 2 (PPA2)

The second round of the Population Policy Acceptance Survey is a result of an international cooperation led by the Bundesinstitute für Befölkerunsforschung (BiB) in Wiesbaden. The survey was carried out and financed by the participating countries. The comparative data-set was produced in the project 'DIALOG – Population Policy Acceptance Study (PPAS): The Viewpoint of Citizens and Policy Actors Regarding the Management of Population Related Change' funded by the European Commission under the 5th Framework Program, Contract No. HPSE-CT-2002-00153. The sample size is between 1500 and 3000 per country.

European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)

The EQLS, a survey of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin), covers 28 countries (25 new and old member states, and 3 candidate countries). The survey examines the relation of quality of life in core domains in European Countries on the one side and several independent variables (among them the demographic characteristics of the respondents) on the other side. The sample size is around 1,000 per country (600 for the 3 small countries), therefore we grouped the countries in order to use information for the age group 25–34. In the construction of Table 4 each respondent had the same weight.

Turning points of the life course

The project "Turning points in the life-course" (cf. Spéder 2001) was developed and carried out by the Demographic Research Institute Budapest under the umbrella of the "Generations and Gender Program (GGP)", an international collaborative research project launched by PAU in Geneva. The research questions, devised along the lines of the GGP, cover a broad range of demographic problems and are geared to gain a deeper understanding of changing demographic behaviour in Europe. The follow-up design, the parallel application the objective and subjective variables, and the strong prevalence of attitudinal variables all make for a special feature of the GGP and the Hungarian survey. The "Turning points in the life-course" is a representative survey of the Hungarian population aged 18–74 in 2001. There were 16,394 persons interviewed at the turn of 2001 and 2002 about the social, economic, demographic, and ideational components of their life. The fieldwork was concluded in mid-2002 and the cleaned-up data-set was made available in 2003. www.dpa.demografia.hu