



Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work

N° 028408 (CIT5)

Context of the research

SPReW is a research project funded under the 6th framework programme of the European Union, within priority 7 (Citizens and governance in the knowledge-based society). It is a two years project started the 1st of June 2006.

The overall objective of this project is to examine the factors leading to solidarity or tensions in intergenerational relations, in the specific area of work and correlated fields. It intends to provide a better and updated understanding of the relation that diverse generations have with work, and to analyse the policy challenges and implications of these changes.

The project involves researchers from six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal) and stakeholders (French Ministry of Labour; Social Development Agency of the European Trade Union Confederation).

Progress in the qualitative approach

A important task of the project consists of a qualitative approach conducted in the six participating countries. It consists of a collection of narrative interviews and group interviews.

Round 25 to 30 *narrative interviews* have been conducted in the six countries (round 150 interviews in total). The narrative interviews have been distributed in each country according to the following table. Some additional interviews have been carried out to improve diversity.

Roadmap for sampling the interviewees in each country

	Family				Level of education			Total
	Men No child	Men Children	Women No child	Women Children	Low	Mid	High	
< 30 years old	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	9
30 – 50	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	9
> 50 years old	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	7
Total	7	6	6	6	8	9	8	25

The narrative interviews gather information that gives answers to the following questions through an age perspective:

- *Relation to work.* This dimension focuses on how do the individuals experience their professional situation, their status, their opportunities and wishes of self-development at

work, the place of work in their existence. Which place does this activity take in the building of their identity? What are their expectations regarding work? How did this experience and expectations evolve in their personal trajectory? Do other social spheres balance the importance of work? Which ones?

- *Generational and intergenerational issues.* This dimension focuses on the perception of generations and intergenerational relations at work, the importance of solidarity / conflicts between generations at work and the paradox between intra familial solidarity and “tensions between generations” within organisations.
- *Individual trajectories.* This set of questions concentrates on trajectories. In which kind of trajectory does this experience take place? Particularly, what are the “origins” (family, education) of the individuals? What are the significant events of their trajectories? How do they anticipate their professional future?
- *Social and organisational environment.* The key issues of this dimension are individual contextual factors. Which place take family strategies or support, the geographical origin, the territorial variables, the network of relationships and social capital in the understanding of the individuals’ relation to work and to other generations?
- *Societal dimensions.* The last dimension focuses on societal factors. What is the relation between the experience of (intergenerational relation at) work and the perceptions of independence, integration in society, citizenship or on the choices about family founding/couple or life style?

The narrative interviews are completed by three *group interviews* in each country. The groups are multi-age. The task of these group discussions is to express visions of the problem setting, to react to the patterns proposed by the researchers and to point out areas of solidarity and tensions between generations.

In a first step, the analysis of all interviews will lead to the elaboration of types (work as...) and the understanding of the articulation between these types: the social construction of the different types, the dynamic dimension (from one type to another according to different stages in a life course), the nearness or distance between types.

In a second step, the analysis will support a comprehensive understanding of generations at work: the multiple factors that shape generations at work (socio-economic factors, organisational, individual and cultural); the generational differences and accordances; the relevance of generations in working life.

Finally, patterns of intergenerational relations will be drawn pointing out factors of solidarity and tensions (at work / outside work) between generations.

National reports for this qualitative approach will be completed in October 2007 and a comparative report will be completed in December 2007. It will be available on the website in January 2008.

Other research tasks in progress

- The SPREW project also includes a *quantitative approach*. It consists of the collection of relevant common data in each country; an inventory of existing relevant surveys at regional, national and international levels, with secondary analysis of data when it is possible and relevant; the assessment of such inventory; the elaboration of an appropriate set of questions or indicators that could be proposed for inclusion in existing survey schemes (EVS, ESS, others?). Concrete proposal from CEE and FTU to be submitted and discussed by the whole consortium.

Up to now, the main investigation has been made at the European level: secondary analysis of the results of the European value survey (EVS) concerning the relation to work and employment; a synthesis of secondary analysis of the results of the European social survey (ESS2) concerning the generational dimension; an overview of the main features of European surveys (partly) addressing the SPReW themes (EVS, ESS2, EHCP, Eurobarometer, European working condition survey).

- Empirical data collection also includes a *selection of good policy practices* in the field of youth policies and employment policies taking into account differentiated attitudes in the relation to work and generational aspects.

Selection criteria have been defined in order to collect relevant good policy practices that could fit the themes of the project and enhance its policy relevance. The policy areas to be potentially covered are: specific labour market policies; specific education and training policies; specific welfare state provisions; specific collective agreements addressing the intergenerational dimension; specific human resource management practices for younger or elder workers or for working parents; wider policy frameworks: gender policies and policies related to demographic change and labour mobility. A strong focus will be given to the intergenerational aspects, in order to avoid replication of many policy studies referring either to youth policies or to elderly policies, but separately.

Available reports

- State of the art of the current research, report available in electronic version on the website and in paper version:

	<p>SPReW project</p> <p>Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work</p> <p>Edited by Patricia Vendramin</p> <p>Contributions from Bureau Marie-Christine, Castro Paula, Cultiaux John, Davoine Lucie, Delay Béatrice, Füleki Katalin, Grützmacher Nicole, Knop Alexander, Méda Dominique, Nogal Ángela, Passos Ana, Polyacskó Orsolya, Ponzellini Anna, Richter Götz, Vajda Júlia, Valenduc Gérard, Vendramin Patricia, Wong Michal, Zoll Rainer, Zoll-Grubert Elisabeth</p> <p>Series "EU research on social sciences and humanities" – EUR 22702 ISBN 978-92-79-04874-6 European Commission, Brussels, 2007</p>
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- *Research hypotheses.* This report gathers and organises all the hypotheses that the researchers have pointed out through the survey of literature. It proposes a structured synthesis that organises a selection of key hypotheses and questions and supports the elaboration of master guidelines for the narrative interviews.
- *General bibliography.* A general bibliography was compiled on the issues of the research project. It gathers a list of references in the different languages of the consortium and in English. This is an additional deliverable of the project.

Electronic versions available on www.ftu-namur.org/sprew

Further information

Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work (SPReW)

Briefing papers with interim results and final results	June 2006; November 2006; May 2007; November 2007; May 2008
Conclusions and recommendations	April 2008
Final synthesis report	May 2008
Press release	May 2008

Other reports concerning different stages of the research (state of the art and hypothesis, quantitative approach, qualitative approach, policy analysis...) will be available during the life cycle of the project.

Updated information about the project will be available at the following web address:

<http://www.ftu-namur.org/SPREW/>

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