

# **Generational memory and family relationships**

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## ***1. Introduction***

The elderly are laden with an individual, family and social memory, which they pass on to the younger generations. This process is evident and accepted as universal common sense. Family intergenerational interactions play a fundamental role in psychosocial identity development and continuity in the socialisation of family members (see Bengtson and Black, 1973). In this chapter, we will examine to what extent intergenerational exchanges also contribute to the shaping of the memory of historical events and social changes that have marked each family generation, i.e. their social-historical consciousness. As stated by the pioneering works of Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory, an individual's memory is made up of interactions between the numerous collective memories of the groups to which he or she belongs (Halbwachs, 1997). We assume that individual perception of one's generation history lays at the intersection of family memory and historical peer group memory

According to Mannheim (1952), the emergence of a new generation is produced by major events and social changes experienced during the formative years of the individuals involved. In the literature on generations produced since Mannheim's essay, and until recently, it has been commonplace to identify a generation with a founding political event that it experienced during its youth, such as the generation of 1914 (Wohl, 1979) or the '68 generation' (Hamon and Rottman, 1984). Whatever the controversy about which time interval specifies the formative years (see Becker, 1992, Schuman and Scott, 1989), it is now well established that the marks imprinted during the early stages of life are deep and lasting. However, the possibility of ongoing influences of historical events throughout a life must not be excluded (Attias-Donfut, 1988).

An individual's feeling of belonging to a generation, namely their generation identity and consciousness, is expressed in many ways. Mannheim (1952) pointed out the influence of historical time – in social movements and the political domain – through the 'entelechy' of a generation, its viewpoints (« weltanschauung »), and the actions or political involvement of its members. Inglehart (1990) defined generations through the values 'materialistic' and 'post-materialistic', depending on the kind of socialization of the individuals involved and on their level of need. Recent works have stressed how economic changes produce distinct generations in respect to their relationship to work and the welfare State (see Kohli, 1999, Becker, 2000, Attias-Donfut and Wolff, 2000).

We will not deal with the effects of social and economic changes on the life course of successive birth cohorts in this chapter, nor on their values and socialisation, but we will focus on

their specific memory of what are perceived as marking events. This type of memory belongs to what we call generational memory, even if it is only one of its aspects<sup>1</sup>. Our purpose is to investigate the interplay between intergenerational relations, personal lives and generational memories among family generations. The underlying idea is to capture some of the processes of transmission and continuity of 'living history', i.e. experienced and embodied history, through social and family interactions. Specifically, we intend to examine the three following issues.

First, we will exploit results from a cross-sectional data set at a macro-social level. Considering French society, we will empirically differentiate successive family generations and cohorts with their respective memories. Also, we will briefly refer to comparable analyses done in other countries in order to point out the determinant effect of societal and historical context on each generation's memories.

Second, we will explore at a micro-social level intra-generational variations and, more specifically, the gender differences in the perception of history and social changes and the impact of personal life events on this perception. We assume that memories are gendered. Men and women do not have the same perceptions of the marking history of their generation, whether relating to the same events or emphasising different events. We will also examine the influence of variables such as education, social mobility, and urban or rural settings on an individual's selection of marking events.

Third, we will focus on family intergenerational relations and their effect on each generation's memory. Influences between generations are mutual, which means that they can be either downward, upward or both directions. These influences impact directly the time interval of generation memory since they can lead to identification with a parent's or child's cohort time. Within the family, life histories of successive generations are interpenetrated, as shown by Hagestad (1986). This interpenetration also influences generational consciousness and results in an overlapping of generational memories. This phenomenon argues in favour of taking into account every stage of life, even if youth is the most significant, as shown by Schuman and Scott (1989). They concluded from their empirical study that political events or major changes that have been experienced by the age 20 or before are especially important in the structuring of generational imprinting.

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<sup>1</sup> Generation memory is not restricted to major events. It also includes all kinds of detailed recollection of one's lifetime such as music, fashion, TV or movie stars, sport games and other minor things occurring during youth. It also includes unconscious memory or involuntary memory, in the meaning given by Proust (1954). In a previous

Unlike the dominant trend in generation studies, we are also interested in detecting marks from historical experiences that occur throughout life. We will observe how far generational memory runs beyond the limits of adolescence and early adulthood. We will also examine under which circumstances adulthood and even old age are susceptible to being affected by important and marking events.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. We will begin by describing the French data on which our analyses are grounded and discuss the operationality of the concept of generation defined through the sampling method of the survey. When analysing the results, we will first compare the three generations as they are empirically defined by the main marking events. We will also look at their gender differences. Then, we will explore intragenerational differences according to personal life events and different variables. Finally, we will examine the possible interactions between generational memory and intergenerational relations.

## ***2. The trigenerational quantitative and qualitative surveys***

Our empirical analysis is grounded in two trigenerational studies, one quantitative and the other qualitative, conducted in France in 1992 and 1996 respectively, which deal with the various forms of intergenerational solidarity.

The first survey was focused on families comprised of at least three adult generations, anchored in the middle generation, subsequently referred to as the "pivots" (G2), aged 49 to 53. Their parents (G1) and their adult children (G3) were also interviewed<sup>2</sup>. It was a national study involving all the territories of France on a final sample of approximately 5,000 people belonging to 2,000 families composed of three adult generations, not necessarily living in the same household. Each questionnaire lasted about one hour and a half. The second study, a qualitative one, was done on a subsample of 30 trigenerational families, 90 people having been interviewed, by way of deep semi-directed interviews lasting about two hours and a half.

The same question was posed in both surveys : « *What are the historical events or social changes which have marked your generation ?* » The questionnaires gave each respondent the possibility of

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work (Attias-Donfut, 1988), the notion of generation was defined as a social construct, part of the social imagery and having a function of organizing 'social time' in Durkheim's sense of time shared by a group (Durkheim, 1915).

<sup>2</sup> A random sample of people aged 49 to 53 years was drawn from the population census in France. A preliminary telephone survey of 10,000 individuals belonging to this cohort aimed at identifying those who had at least one adult child and one living parent in order to constitute the final sample. It revealed that 67% had at least one living parent and 60% were members of a three-adult-generation family. Respondents provided the addresses of one of their parents and one of their adult children, who were then interviewed. In the end, about 5,000 individuals were interviewed. For further details on the two data sources, see Attias-Donfut (1995) and Attias-Donfut et alii (2002).

naming three different events. This question refers to one's perceptions of lived history and one's identification to generational memory. It can be a matter of either historical events unrelated to private life or historical events impacting directly on one's private life. In order to distinguish between the two possibilities, another question was posed in the quantitative survey : « *Have you been personally affected by historical events during your life ?* », and if yes, « *Which events ?* », again with the possibility of naming three different events. Importantly, the sample has a feature that is crucial to the theoretical import and objectives of the research, namely a method for delimiting and defining the observed generations, which makes it possible to operationalise the notion of generation in its various meanings.

*At the crossroads of cohorts and family generations*

Individuals each have several, simultaneous generational identities : in reference to their position in the family, to their relationship to work and to the welfare state, and to their historical situation. These affiliations make up a significant whole that has to be considered in all of its dimensions when examining intergenerational relations. This was made possible by the procedure used in this survey to isolate the three generations. By starting with the middle generation, selected from a cohort with a limited age variation, two other generations, the parents and the children, were defined within a relatively restricted age range. The pivots' parents, making up the older generation, are an average age of 77 and over 60% of them were 72 to 82. The younger respondents were even more strongly concentrated within an age span: 80% were 19 to 29. 80 % of their children, i.e. the pivots' grandchildren, were under 6 years of age.

Each of these three generations has specific, identifiable historical experiences, clearly differentiated from one generation to the next. They form three distinct cohorts in the meaning given by Ryder (1965, p. 845, quoted by Schuman and Scott, 1989, p. 359) of 'individuals having experienced the same event within the same interval of time'. The combination of the birth-reference cohort and the filiations proceeding from this cohort makes it possible to isolate within the population three generations that can be simultaneously defined, each in their position to the other two, in terms of the family, the socio-historical context and also the public-solidarity point of reference. On the basis of this construction, generational processes may therefore be studied in several interrelated dimensions, and particularly in an analysis of social and historical change interacting with family relations. We apply in this chapter the word generation to both meanings, cohorts and family generation, thus enriching the symbolic import of the notion.

### ***3. Traversing the three generations***

The contrasts between the respective experiences of the three generations are striking : G1 went through wars and economic crises, G2 benefited from the era of affluence, and G3 is coping with uncertainty while entering adult life. We examine the imprinting perceived by each of the three generations based mainly on the analysis of the quantitative survey, with a few references to the qualitative survey.

Insert Table 1 and Figure 1 here

#### *G1, the war and reconstruction generation*

The history of the elderly (G1) coincides with the greater part of the century. Born during the First World War, they had their children during the Second World War and, less than two decades later, their sons were sent to the Algerian War. Wars are a part of all of their memories and represent the main marking events, as related by Edith, a retired farmer, 82 years old:

*It was in 1915 when my father died. I remember the end of the war. I was in the garden with my mother and I saw my mother crying. I asked her 'Why are you crying?' She says 'Listen to the bells. The war is over, the Dads are coming home'. You know, this gives you a shock, too. I remember during the war a boy named Maurice, in the farm next ours. He was 2 years older than me; His father went to war, then he died too. One day, when I had the mumps with my sister, my mother wore her Sunday suit; I asked her "Mam, it is not Sunday. Why do you go out today?" She said, "listen my little girl, you know the little Maurice, his father is dead, like yours ,and his mother has just died from the flu". I can tell you that the following night I could not sleep: If I would lose Mother it would be so awful .I saw my grandmother and grandfather, they were unable to stand upright.... Three years after my marriage, my husband went to war. He was lucky, he was not made captive...but he nearly got taken .... Twenty years later my son went to Algeria. Then I said: It's too much! I was so frightened! It's not possible! I can tell you 'The wars, don't tell me anything about! For those who suffered them, this marks for life'.*

The Second World War is by far the most striking event, mentioned by 3 out of 4 respondents, whether in first, second or third position<sup>3</sup>. The First World War is mentioned by 15,4% and the Algerian war by 12%. Later events, like May 68 (4%), are more rarely considered as a generation marker (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Among the three choices, an important minority also refers to recent changes and events in which they recognise the time of their generation, although war has a crushing weight. These social changes include technological progress (30%), the improving of women's rights (10% of women and 3% of men), new lifestyles (sexual freedom, divorce), and AIDS (4%).

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<sup>3</sup> These percentages are calculated on the number of respondents, so that the proportions are much higher than in Table 1, where percentages are calculated on the total number of answers.

Among those who answered positively to the second question dealing with the events that directly affected their personal life, more than 90% of the respondents name the Second World War, 23% the First World War, 7% the Algerian War, and less than 3% the 1968 movement. Though a small minority give the latter events, they are a sign of generation interdependency. For instance, one respondent explains that his daughter was in jail during the '68 student movement'. Those whose sons went to Algeria as soldiers during the war were directly affected by this war. There is a correlation between the answers of the elderly and their children. When children (G2) say that they were affected by the Algeria War, their parents (G1) mention this war 3 times more often than other members of their generation.

Differences according to gender do not appear so clearly in the statistical data, although the qualitative interviews show that men and women do not have the same approach to the same event. Among the elderly, men and women on the whole quote the events in comparable proportions with two exceptions, the improvement in the conditions for women quoted more often by women and World War II slightly more cited by men. Qualitative interviews reveal that the experience of same events is dissimilar. Women relate to life during the war while men more often focus on the political and military aspects of the war in a quite traditional division of gender territories. War memories are family memory as well, when family relations are foremost, as in the story related by Edith, here above. Family bonds form the social framework of women's memories, built around the notion of family, as analysed by Halbwachs (1997).

### *G2, the affluent generation*

Born during the war of 1939-1945, the 'pivots' share with their parents the memory of this historical period, though many do not have precise memories of it. They are mainly identified with two events, the 1968 movement and the Algerian War. The former seems of greater importance though they were a little older than the leading initiators and actors of this movement (they were 25 to 29 year old). Pivots express a strong and quite coherent generation consciousness, feeling that they have personally participated in the strong social and cultural changes which characterise the 68 movement, such as the new patterns in couple relations and in styles of childhood education. G2 members have experienced a dramatic rise in the level of education, full employment, and consumption. They have benefited from favourable conditions of access to ownership, but they now have to cope at the end of their careers with a reversal in economic trends, encountering employment difficulties and, at least for some of them, unemployment.

The mention of their History by men and women has a different tonality. While in the previous generation women inscribed their history in specifically female territories, their daughters, on the contrary, challenge the traditional gender division, whether they express feminist involvement or not. Men and women are not equally affected by great events. This is obvious in the case of wars, which are more frequently mentioned by men than by women. 41% of men and 27% of women evoke the Algerian war, 43% of men and 34% of women the 68 movement. More recent events are evoked, such as the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of Communist societies (by 17% of men and 15% of women).

In this generation, and more often than their mothers, we observe that women emphasise the improving female condition (25% compared to 10% of their mothers). In their generation, only 9% of the men name the improving female conditions as a marking event. There is a huge difference between men and women regarding the importance given to the changes in the conditions for women. For women of this generation, these changes come in second position, just after the Movement of 68 and before the Algerian War. For men, the women's movement comes in sixth position, just after German Reunification.

Concerning what has affected private life, there are also important differences between men and women. For instance, the Algerian War is named by 44% of men and 12% of women, the 68 movement is quoted by 16% of men and 10% of women. Despite the importance of these two major events (Algeria and 68), many other social, political or cultural facts having occurred at different periods of their lives are mentioned. This is a sign that generational memory does not stop at the border of youth, but rather goes on and accumulates its marks with the passing of time.

### *G3, the disenchanted generation*

The youngest generation, born between 1960 and the beginning of 1970, has grown up in an affluent society, has been brought up according to liberal patterns of education and has a higher level of education than the previous generations. However, confronted with workplace difficulties (see Baudelot and Establet, 2000), young adults are disappointed. Much more than their parents and grandparents, they express a kind of disillusion. Two scourges have affected their generation, namely unemployment and AIDS. Unlike the previous generations, they do not centre their generation identity on one or two major events, but they refer instead to a set of phenomena that they are currently experiencing.

The main political event mentioned is the fall of the Berlin wall and a related one, the end of communist regime. Besides these two linked major historical changes, men and women mainly mention society problems. Their view of their world seems particularly gloomy, since they evoke drugs, pollution, the nuclear threat, and famines in the third world.

Among the young, more importance is still given to the women's movement by women than by men, but the gender differences are less marked. There is still more emphasis given by women to issue such as Aids and societal problems, while men put more emphasis on the fall of communism. The vision of the world by the two genders in this generation is more similar than in the two previous generations.

*Some comparison with other countries*

The notion that major events have a deep and lasting effect on collective memory has been supported by other studies, such as the ones done in the Netherlands (Becker, 1992) and in the US (Schuman and Scott, 1989). The characteristics of generations in terms of culture seem to follow the same basic trends in western countries and mainly in Western Europe. Major political and economic events such as the great 1929 depression, World War II, the glorious postwar economic growth or the sixties youth protest were common to Western societies. This globalisation of political and economic changes results somehow in comparable ways of shaping memories in the societies involved. The 'four-generation model' proposed by Becker (1992), i.e. Pre-war, silent, protest, lost generations, largely overlaps the three-generation figures found in the French survey except for a difference due to methodology. We only consider family with three generations and not the whole range of birth cohorts, as in Becker's analysis. The 'silent generation', born between 1930 and 1940, is not part of our sample.

Within this global framework, there are national differences due to specific historical evolutions. This is obvious in contemporary Germany where East and West are still two different societies in terms of collective memory, as shown by Martin Kohli in his 1996 survey<sup>4</sup>. Concerning the question on historical events or changes that have marked one's life, the change in 1989/90 is affirmed by almost all East Germans aged 40-54, and close to half of those aged 70-85, while in the West among the 40-54-year-olds it is somewhat more than half, and among the 70-85-year-olds, only five percent. The events of "1968" have been important only for the 40-54-year-olds, but again in very unequal shares: 9 % for Westerners, 1 % for Easterners (Kohli, 2003). German reunification, a major event thoroughly impacting their personal lives has

replaced the dominant position of the previous major event experienced in their youth. Germans are different in terms of collective memory from the French generations of the same age, in our survey being the elderly and the middle generation (G1 and G2). In France, this event is much more salient for the younger generation than the older.

#### ***4. Intragenerational differences***

The memory of historical events differs according to the characteristics of the respondents. We consider first some of the main social stratification variables, urban versus rural, level of education and social mobility, and then we turn to the influence of personal life experience on the perception of historical events.

Insert Table 2 here

##### *Urban versus rural area of residency*

Among the youngest generation, the fall of the Iron Curtain is more important for people living in urban areas than for those living in rural areas. For the former, the three most important events are 'aids', 'unemployment and poverty' and the 'fall of the Iron Curtain'. In rural areas, the three most important events are 'aids', the 'Gulf War', and 'unemployment and poverty'.

In the middle generation, the advancement of women is more often cited by people living in urban areas than by those living in rural areas. Among the eldest generation, there are no differences between people living in urban and rural areas regarding the two first events cited, i.e. World War II and World War I. These events are so massive that they pervade all parts of society. In third position, improvement in Social Security is cited by countryfolk and the 1936 movement (Front Populaire) by citydwellers.

##### *Level of Education*

Among the youngest generation, the most educated level is the only group to cite the fall of communism in the first position. The two middle levels of education cite German reunification in second position, while the two lowest levels do not cite these two events in the first three positions. Indeed, for the less educated young adults, the fall of the Iron Curtain is ranked fourth. The results are rather different when merging the fall of the Iron Curtain and the End of Communism. In that case, the ranking of this subgroup is one for all the educational levels, with the exception of the second lowest (the rank is two, after aids).

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<sup>4</sup> We thank Martin Kohli for having kindly sent us information from his own work on this topic.

Among the middle generation, the two most important events, the Algerian War and the Movement of 1968, whether in first or second position, are cited by all levels of education. The lowest level cites the Algerian War in first position, while all of the others cite the Movement of 1968 in first position. Differences according to the level of education occur at the third position, where the most educated individuals cite the improvement in the conditions for women while the least educated cite the economic crisis with unemployment and poverty and place in fourth position the improvement of women.

Among the eldest generation, the event cited in third position varies according to the level of education. The most educated cite the advancement of women, while social security is mentioned both by those having the lowest level or a middle level. The Movement of 1968 comes in fourth position among the most educated, in ninth among the following level and only fifteenth among the least educated. Even though they are the parents of the main actors in the movement, some of the oldest generation members among the most educated identify and feel involved with these social and cultural events.

#### *Social mobility*

For the different generations, subjective social mobility influences the perception of historical events. In particular, those who feel that their social position is in decline compared to their parents are more likely to point to social problems as the marking events of their generation. This is clearly observed both for the pivot and elderly generations, where unemployment and poverty is more often cited by people in descending mobility. At first sight, there is no difference among young adults since unemployment and poverty is the second reported event regardless of the social position. However, when aggregating the different events, those who feel that their social position is in decline compared to their parents are more likely to point to social problems as the marking events of their generation. The development of social security is most often cited by those who feel that they have achieved a better social position with respect to their parents.

#### *The influences of personal life on the historical consciousness of generations.*

In the qualitative survey, all the interviewees seemed personally involved in their answers to this question, and associated their own personal history to the social history. Speaking about one's generation also is, to a certain extent, speaking about oneself.

The pertinence of linking History and lives has been well established (Elder et alii, 1991). There is a close bond between personal life and historical events memory, as empirically shown

by Schuman and Scott (1989). The analysis of our data set shows a very strong correlation between the two questions, the one related to the events in which people were directly concerned in their own life, the other concerning the perception of the historical events or changes that have marked their generation. Among the elderly, those whose lives were personally affected by World War I more often cite the war as the marking event of their generation (22% instead 7.3%). In the same generation, 29% of those personally touched by the Algerian War cite it as the marking event of their generation (instead of 5.6% for the whole generation). Interestingly, we note that within the same generation events separated by 50 years are seen as the most important marking event of their generation<sup>5</sup>.

In the middle generation, those personally affected by World War II cite it 3 times more often than the average as the most important marking event of their generation (their responses on that event represent 8.5% versus 2.6%). There are also big differences regarding those personally concerned by the Algerian War (22.6% versus 13.5%) and the Movement of 1968 (20.3% versus 15.9%).

Among the young, those who experienced in their youth difficulties resulting from political troubles or wars (which could be the Algerian War or other aspects of decolonisation, or children of immigrants fleeing other countries) are more sensitive to the political events of their time between 1980 and 1992 than others.

### ***5. Transmission between generations***

Insert Table 3 here

Each generation is sensitive to the lifetime of their parents and the lifetime of their children. Sometimes they identify their own generation with the lifetime they share with their parents or the lifetime they share with their children. The intensity of this identification depends on the level and quality of communication with either generation. The great majority of families do communicate on these questions. Among G1, 73% of respondents speak about the events which have marked their generation with their children and 53% with their grandchildren. Among G2, 84% speak about their own marking events with their children and 56,5% with their parents. And among the young (G3), 84% speak with their parents about what have marked their own generation and 40% with their grandparents. The greatest level

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<sup>5</sup> Among G1, the average age of those quoting World War I is 83.2 , it is 77.8 years old for World War II, and the average age is very close for those quoting the Algerian War (78.3).

of reciprocal communication is between the young and their parents. The stories are more often told from one generation to the next. The 'generation stake' described in Bengtson and Kuypers (1971) is at work here. This suggests that close generational relationships correlate to a high level of historical transmission.

This is especially true among the middle generation (see Table 3). Those who report communication with their parents more often cite events belonging to their parents' period as marking events in their lives. The same trend appears concerning their communication with their children. They more often quote historical events having occurred after 1980. They also much more often cite current social problems such as aids or unemployment. This pivot generation has been especially marked by the Movement of 1968 and it seems that those who were most involved in the movement discuss it less often with their parents (14.9% versus 17.4%)<sup>6</sup>. This is the sign of the leftover social rupture and generational conflict of that era. Those who identify with the 'sixties' are more distant from their parents and closer to their children. This is confirmed by the following additional result. On average, 58.8% of the pivots feel closer to the generation of their children than to that of their parents, compared to 60.9% among those who cite May 68.

Direct transmission also exists between the two extreme generations, though to a lesser extent than between successive generations. The qualitative survey reveals that, while the elderly fear boring their grandchildren by telling them 'old things', the young are interested in the history of their grandparents, and are even longing for it. A young woman, speaking about her grandparents said that they are '*historiens à demeure*' (permanent historians at home).

## **6. Conclusion**

Collective memory is subject to personal interpretations by the individuals involved. Our analysis show that these interpretations are influenced by their social and familial positions. As we know, generations are gendered. According to our data, this holds true with respect to collective memory as well. Changes in gender relations also result in changes in collective memory of both genders, as we observed by comparing successive generations. Therefore, when distinguishing between different historical generations, one should also take into account gender differences.

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<sup>6</sup> The proportion of respondents from the pivot generation discussing with their parents on the marking historical events is 59.7%, and it decreases to 55.6% for those quoting may 1968.

Historical generations are also shaped by family generations and by intergenerational relations. A French 19th century philosopher, A. Cournot, considered one century as a 'natural' pace of historical change, arguing that it represents three consecutive generations. During the socialisation of the new generation by the preceding one, they both receive influences from the oldest generation still living. According to Cournot (1973, p. 88-89), the young keep more than they imagine the tracks of the conversation they had with the elderly during their childhood. If we no longer concur with the 19th century notion that there is a regular and 'natural' rhythm of change, our results support the idea of a strong influence of all the living generations on the recollection of history. Today, with a longer life, the influence of the elderly on successive generations is even more evident and is extended to four generations, including the great-grandchildren.

The stories of the successive generations reveal how the historical generations overlap. What has been lived by one's parents can also be part of one's life since it has become part of family memory. For each generation, the historical inheritance from the previous generation is added to the objective current conditions. The infant years, where the impressions are strong and durable, coincide with the youthful years of parents, which is a significant and decisive period in their life course. Within the family, the lifetimes of the generations are not watertight. On the contrary, there are many gateways between them. Each generation has one foot in the history which formed its predecessor and one in its own history and time.

The knowledge of history transmitted through the family has a special tone, as distinct from history learned through the media, books or at school. It is a vivid history, embodied in family members and ancestors. The family circle is a 'memory milieu', which plays a central role in the continuity of History.

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**Table 1. The distribution of main historical events by generation and gender**

Generation Event	G1			G2			G3		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
World War I	7.3	7.4	7.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
World War II	33.4	35.0	32.8	2.6	2.7	2.5	0.3	0.2	0.4
Algerian War	5.6	6.1	5.5	13.5	16.8	10.7	0.3	0.2	0.4
1968 Movement	2.1	2.1	2.0	15.9	17.8	14.4	2.6	2.9	2.3
Election of Mitterand	0.9	1.2	0.8	4.4	5.6	3.4	4.9	5.5	4.4
End of Communism	0.7	1.2	0.5	3.6	4.3	3.0	8.4	10.4	6.7
German reunification	0.4	0.3	0.5	3.0	2.9	3.2	10.1	10.1	10.0
Gulf War	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.5	3.1	3.8	9.3	9.0	9.5
Construction of Europe	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.6	2.3	0.9	5.4	5.2	5.5
Technological progress	5.2	5.0	5.3	3.0	2.5	3.4	2.9	2.9	2.9
Development of Social Security	6.1	6.4	6.0	1.8	1.4	2.2	0.5	0.5	0.5
Unemployment, poverty	4.2	3.9	4.2	8.2	8.1	8.4	11.6	11.1	11.9
Advancement of Women	3.9	1.5	4.7	9.0	4.1	13.2	4.0	1.7	6.0
Evolution of Social Mores	3.6	4.1	3.4	3.3	2.4	4.1	2.7	3.3	2.3
Societal Problems	2.0	1.2	2.3	3.2	2.7	3.6	4.9	4.1	5.5
Aids	1.9	1.2	2.1	3.3	2.4	4.1	12.8	10.9	14.5
Ecological and nuclear dangers	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.8	1.9	1.8

Source: Survey Cnav 1992 Three generations.

**Table 2. The influence of individual characteristics on historical events**

	Most quoted events		Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
G 3	Location	Rural	Aids	Gulf War	Unemployment, poverty
		Urban	Aids	Unemployment, poverty	German reunification
	Education	Bepc or less	Aids	Unemployment, poverty	Gulf War
		Cap, Bep	Aids	Gulf War	Unemployment, poverty
		Baccalaureate	Aids	German reunification	Unemployment, poverty
	Social mobility	Graduate	Aids	German reunification	Unemployment, poverty
		Postgraduate	End of Communism	Unemployment, poverty	Aids
	Subjective	Ascending	Aids	Unemployment, poverty	German reunification
		Descending	Aids	Unemployment, poverty	Gulf War
		Unchanged	Aids	Unemployment, poverty	German reunification
Unknown		Aids	Unemployment, poverty	German reunification	
G 2	Location	Rural	1968 movement	Algerian War	Unemployment, poverty
		Urban	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of women
	Education	Bepc or less	Algerian War	1968 movement	Unemployment, poverty
		Cap, Bep	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women
		Baccalaureate	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women
	Social mobility	Graduate	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women
		Postgraduate	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women
	Subjective	Ascending	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women
		Descending	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women
		Unchanged	1968 movement	Algerian War	Unemployment, poverty
Personal events	Unknown	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women	
	Yes	Algerian War	1968 movement	Advancement of Women	
No	1968 movement	Algerian War	Advancement of Women		
G 1	Location	Rural	World War II	World War I	Dev. of Social Security
		Urban	World War II	World War I	1936 movement
	Education	No education	World War II	World War I	Algerian War
		Cep	World War II	World War I	Dev. of Social Security
		Bepc, Cap, Bep	World War II	1936 movement	World War I
	Social mobility	Bac or more	World War II	World War I	Advancement of Women
		Ascending	World War II	Dev. of Social Security	World War I
	Subjective	Descending	World War II	World War I	Unemployment, poverty
		Unchanged	World War II	World War I	Technological progress
		Unknown	World War II	World War I	Algerian War
Personal events	Yes	World War II	World War I	Dev. of Social Security	
	No	World War II	Technological progress	Dev. of Social Security	

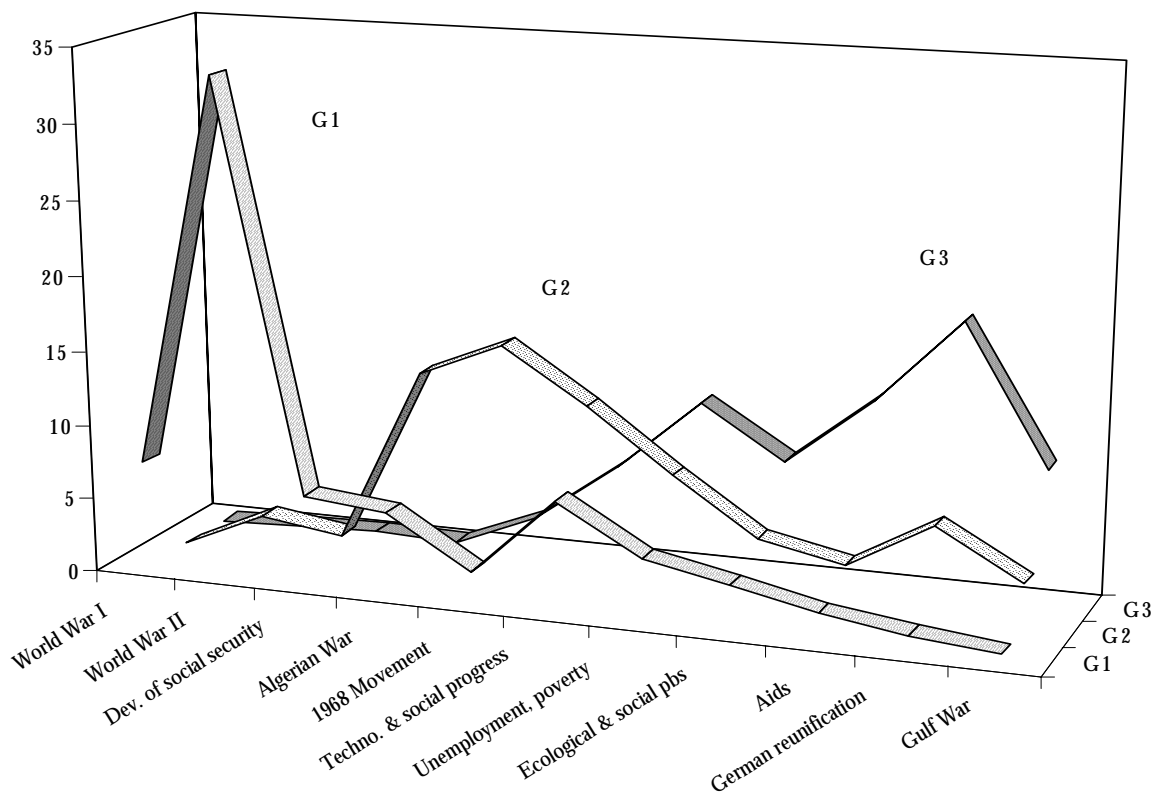
Source: Survey Cnav 1992 Three generations.

**Table 3. Historical events and transmission between generations**

Distribution		Historical 1914-1945	Historical 1946-1979	Historical 1980-1992	Societal progress	Societal problems	Other
		G1					
G1 talk to G2	No	47.7	8.7	2.3	27.9	7.0	6.4
	Yes	47.7	9.4	4.0	27.8	9.9	1.2
		G2					
G2 talk to G1	No	4.0	35.2	16.8	24.7	15.8	3.5
	Yes	5.0	33.1	16.8	27.0	17.2	0.9
G1 talk to G2	No	3.4	36.8	15.7	27.7	14.4	2.2
	Yes	4.7	33.9	16.8	26.0	16.8	1.8
G2 talk to G3	No	4.4	43.6	13.6	20.3	9.2	8.9
	Yes	4.6	32.5	17.3	27.0	17.8	0.9
G3 talk to G2	No	4.3	31.0	19.2	26.1	16.5	2.9
	Yes	4.6	35.2	15.6	25.8	16.0	2.8
G1	Historical 1914-1945	4.7	40.3	15.9	23.9	13.2	2.0
	Historical 1946-1979	2.9	33.0	15.0	26.7	20.5	1.8
	Historical 1980-1992	3.6	37.3	19.1	18.2	20.0	1.8
	Societal progress	4.2	29.3	17.6	30.7	16.4	1.8
	Societal problems	1.9	23.6	16.0	31.2	26.6	0.8
		G3					
G3 talk to G2	No	4.3	5.1	34.6	19.6	26.9	9.6
	Yes	3.9	3.5	42.1	15.3	34.7	0.5
G2 talk to G3	No	3.4	3.4	40.6	15.1	33.1	4.4
	Yes	4.1	3.9	40.8	15.7	33.1	2.5
G2	Historical 1914-1945	3.2	2.7	42.2	17.3	31.9	2.7
	Historical 1946-1979	4.0	3.9	45.6	15.3	28.4	2.9
	Historical 1980-1992	4.4	2.9	41.0	15.2	32.8	3.7
	Societal progress	3.5	4.8	36.6	16.0	37.3	1.8
	Societal problems	3.7	3.1	37.2	16.2	37.5	2.3

Source: Survey Cnav 1992 Three generations.

**Figure 1. Generations and historical events**



Source: Survey Cnav 1992 Three generations.