

Intergenerational and kin relationships

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Keeping Family Close: Intergenerational Geographic Proximity in the United Kingdom

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Drawing on data from Understanding Society, this study investigates the spatial distribution of families in the UK, focusing on proximity to parents, proximity to adult children, and whether one lives with both parents and children. The analysis reveals that adult children and parents generally live near one another – a pattern more evident from the perspective of parents – whereas three-generational co-residence is relatively uncommon. Logistic regression results indicate that the likelihood of co-residence declines significantly with age. Individuals with higher educational attainment are less likely to co-reside with, or live near, their parents or adult children. Distinct ethnic patterns are also observed: Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis have a greater tendency to either co-reside with other generations or maintain close residential proximity. At the household level, for adult children, having dependent children is linked to a higher likelihood of living near parents or sharing a three-generational household, while the number of siblings is negatively associated with co-residence or proximity to parents. Among parents, having more children is linked to a greater likelihood of co-residing with or living near at least one of them. Notably, substantial regional variation in intergenerational proximity exists across local authorities. Individuals residing in economically developed regions (e.g., London, South East, and South West) are more likely to co-reside with their parents, adult children, or both; however, when not co-residing, they tend to live at greater distances from them. In contrast, those in Northern Ireland are more likely to live with or near their parents or adult children.

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Parental support for adult children's homeownership transition in the UK

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Owner-occupation is an important symbol of wealth, stability and well-being. When pathways into homeownership become narrow, adult children become more dependent on resources pooled or exchanged within family networks. Previous studies show that increasing percentages of adult children owning the property with assistances from parents. Parental support for homeownership may raise the issue of widening inequality and hindering social mobility within the younger generation. Nevertheless, quantitative research on this topic is limited because there was no UK dataset available until 2023. This study firstly uses the latest two waves of the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) which release new questions on homeownership support to examine which groups of adult children are more likely to receive direct homeownership support from parents. Results show that adult children aged under 30, with higher levels of education, living in regions with unaffordable housing markets are more likely to receive support, while those belonging to the 50th and 75th percentile of personal income, having 3 or more siblings are less likely to receive support. It is worth mentioning that the effects of geographic locations (house markets) on parental homeownership support vary by first-time owners and existed owners. Secondly, this study uses Wave 1-14 of the UKHLS to research the effect of regular parental support and parental home (co-residence) on homeownership transition, and examine which type of parental support is more influential for adult children.

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Working-Time Pressure and Fertility: Can Grandparents Help?

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Recent labour market transformations, driven by technological advancements and intensified global competition, have substantially increased working-time demands, reflected in extended, irregular, and atypical work hours. These conditions complicate time management, particularly for parents, and may discourage childbearing. Existing literature suggests that grandparental support, especially with childcare, may alleviate work-family conflict and thereby encourage family expansion. Such support, due to its flexibility in responding to changing needs, may become particularly important under rising occupational time pressures.

This study investigates how grandparental support in unpaid labour may buffer the negative impact of heightened working-time demands on the likelihood of having a(nother) child. It also examines whether grandparents' education shapes this buffering effect, given previous evidence of socioeconomic differences in the availability and type of support. Grandparental involvement is measured by geographic proximity, frequency of contact, and form of assistance, including specific childcare and household tasks. Working-time demands are operationalised as both the duration (long hours, overtime) and timing of work (weekend/evening work). Using the UK Household Longitudinal Study and event history modelling, we analyse how these demands relate to progression to first and second births, emphasising the moderating role of grandparental support.

Preliminary findings suggest that among women working long hours, those with nearby grandparents are more likely to transition to motherhood than those without such proximity. Further analysis will clarify how various forms of grandparental support mitigate work-time constraints on childbearing, providing valuable insights into what supports fertility decisions within increasingly demanding work environments.

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The Interplay between Childlessness and Kinlessness in Europe: A Microsimulation Approach
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Changes in the timing and nature of union and family formation have led to growing concerns over the rates of cohort childlessness in Europe. While contemporary levels of childlessness are not historically unprecedented, to what extent these trends translate to kinlessness is less well understood. Childless individuals may not be kinless due to the presence of ascendant (parents), horizontal (partners, siblings), and descendant (nieces, nephews) kin for longer durations in the life course. We examine the long-term impacts of demographic changes in eight countries in Europe to offer a comparative perspective on childlessness and kinlessness trajectories. These eight countries can be characterized by varying degrees of cohort fertility and levels of childlessness. We use empirically-informed microsimulation techniques to model the availability of kin across four typologies of low fertility: (1) high childlessness, high overall cohort fertility (example: England and Wales, Ireland); (2) high childlessness, low overall cohort fertility (example: Italy, Spain); (3) low childlessness, high overall cohort fertility (example: Norway, Sweden); (4) low childlessness, low overall cohort fertility (example: Bulgaria and Lithuania). Using microsimulation methods, we generate synthetic populations with kin networks at the individual level based on input demographic rates from the Human Fertility Database, the Human Mortality Database and other sources of population data. Our results indicate that trends in mortality decline continue to outpace fertility decline across most typologies, such that increasing childlessness for middle-aged adults does not yet translate to kinlessness, due to the increased presence of ascendant and horizontal kin, albeit to varying degrees.

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