

Families & households: Kinship, gender and caregiving

How couples negotiate sharing of labour after transition to parenthood?

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The paper is based mainly on the results of 86 semi-structured individual interviews with 44 couples having at least one child, conducted in 2019. The sample is rather diverse, and includes people from various locations and socio-economic backgrounds.

Polish parents are offered relatively generous maternal, paternity and parental leaves, which enable parents to stay at home during the first year of life of a child. It is possible to share the available leaves equally, however in 2019 – when the interviews were conducted – only around 1% of fathers took any parental leave. Therefore, the uptake of leaves was very strongly gendered, despite seemingly gender-neutral policy. What is more, there is a ‘childcare gap’ for children aged between 1 and 3, because there are not enough places available in nurseries (both private and public ones), and the care for children remains gendered also at that time, with most children taken care by their mothers, or grandmothers.

I explore how such a gendered intra-family division of labour is decided by Polish couples, despite both partners working full-time prior children. What factors do they consider? Do they discuss with each other when deciding that a mother should stay at home? I will also analyse strategies used to negotiate domestic labour, as usually the issue becomes more salient and contentious when the new responsibilities connected to parenthood emerge. I offer both empirical, and theoretical contribution, as I discuss (and develop) typology of strategies used by parents in intra-family negotiation, offered by Aafke Komter (1989).

Reconstructing resilience: social networks as adaptive mechanisms for migrant families in small and medium size cities– An illustrative case from urban China

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While migration scholarship has long concentrated on individual labour flows to megacities, entire families relocating to small and medium-sized cities (SMCs) remain a largely overlooked demographic. As living costs in major cities intensify, more families are actively choosing SMCs as destinations. China's internal migration offers a generative case: millions of migrant families now settle in SMCs where formal welfare provision is limited, hukou-linked public services are restricted, and informal networks serve as the primary infrastructure of adaptation. This study investigates how these families construct resilience in the absence of formal state support.

The central argument of this study is that family resilience is not a static attribute but a process dynamically constructed through social networks. To substantiate this, this study employs an innovative mixed-method qualitative approach, combining 53 semi-structured interviews with Social Network Analysis (SNA) of 35 families. This method connects subjective experiences of adversity with the objective structure of their support networks, enabling a multi-dimensional analysis of resilience formation.

Findings reveal that resilience is built through a hierarchical, inside-out process based on the family's network structure. It begins with internal adjustments, where members reorganise roles to create an 'internal buffer'. Building on this internal foundation, the family as a unit then selectively activates and expands informal social relationships externally to compensate for institutional deficiencies. This work offers a fresh global perspective on the growing phenomenon of "secondary urbanization," challenging megacity-centric narratives and providing a transferable framework for understanding how migrants actively engineer stability in emerging urban settlements worldwide.

Households and kinship over the life cycle

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In this study we document how household size, and the different family relationships a person has with those household members, vary over the life course in contemporary Sweden. We study both how the number of household members varies across individuals of different ages, as well as how household composition evolves. We study households over the life course from a multifaceted view, engaging with gender differences, household size, various distinct family kin types, and the ages of the other household members. We put a particular focus on “complex” families formed through union dissolution and repartnering.

Our study population is all Swedish born individuals resident at the end of 2017 in Sweden. When calculating data on household members of our study population, we use data on all household members resident in Sweden, including also non-Swedish born household members. We study all households in Sweden using register data on the complete Swedish-born population in 2017. The study takes an individual perspective and maps how the number and the types of household members people live with varies across different ages. We use register data to reconstruct family links, including extended kin such as cousins and grandparents, and compare differences by individuals' own gender as well as by the gender and lineage of their kin.

How do the living standards of Britain's younger Millennials and Gen Z fare?

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It is well known that Millennials (i.e. those born between 1981-2000) have faced a more challenging path through life than previous cohorts when it comes to work, wealth and home ownership. But the older Millennials are now in their mid-40s, and it is timely to ask about Britain's youngest cohorts: younger Millennials born between 1991-2000 and Gen Z born from 2001 onwards. Recent news about Britain's resurgent 'NEET' problem and a rising prevalence of people living with parents later into adulthood gives us an impetus to comprehensively assess their living standards.

We use multiple data sources, from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings to the Wealth and Assets Survey, and methods, including decomposition analysis. 20-29-year-olds are increasingly living at home, due to rising rents and cost of living. Using standard measures of household income, generational income progress appears to have returned. However, exactly 50% of this progress comes from other household members. When we focus on the benefit-unit income (the young person, any co-resident partner, and dependent children), the very youngest cohort appear to be on a lower income trajectory. These gains are driven by the labour market and strong minimum wage increases. However, we find a gloomy wealth and assets story with declining cohort-on-cohort home ownership rates, a widening age-gradient in wealth holdings, and increasingly unequal inheritance transfers. These findings have implications for housing, NEETs, and minimum wage policies.

Parental commute and school results in Finland: Determinant of success or easily compensated?

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The distance to where one works is a key consideration when choosing a job or residence, as it has many consequences for individual well-being, but can also affect linked life courses, such as offspring. Stress and limits on time resources created by parents' long commutes could trickle down to children and can interfere with parenting responsibilities. As commuting is increasingly demanded, it is important to explore the extent to which this influences children's performance, which shapes the rest of the child's life course. Therefore, this study aims to study the relationship between parental commute and educational achievement, particularly school outcomes measured by the entry and level of secondary education. Using near-complete register data from Finland, we explore the odds of obtaining objective school outcomes of secondary school-aged children. Children who drop out have, on average, the shortest parental commutes; students entering academic education have the longest. However, we find that if we control for confounding compensating factors such as parental education, income, and housing size, commuting is, in fact, associated with the school outcomes. Rather than a predictor for educational shortfalls, the parental commute seems to be an indicator of academic success. Children with a shorter parental commute, whether it be the father's or the mother's commute, are more likely to enter academic education. However, parental commute is found to be unrelated to the odds of dropping out of secondary education. Furthermore, we find evidence of parental commutes having non-linear impacts and different impacts on male and female students' school outcomes.

Families & households: Spatial proximity of families and generations

Geographic proximity between siblings in mid-adulthood: The influence of gender, family structure, and socioeconomic status

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This paper documents the level of geographic proximity between siblings in mid-adulthood, and the factors driving its variation across siblings dyads. In doing so, we fill an important knowledge gap: few studies have investigated this topic, with the exception of a small literature focused on older siblings. That literature is primarily concerned with kinlessness and the potential role of siblings as care providers for childless and single individuals. In contrast, our study focuses on adults at 40 years old who, while generally not in need of care for themselves, often benefit from the contribution of kins to childcare. This allows us to revisit the role of childlessness and singlehood in patterns of geographic proximity between kins by focusing on a stage of the life course that has received only limited attention. Our findings show a complex role for parenthood and singlehood as a determinant of geographic proximity between siblings: dyads composed of two couples with kids experience greater proximity than many other types of siblings dyads, particularly brothers. Meanwhile, dyads composed of two single childless siblings experience the greatest proximity, especially among sisters. Results vary for mixed-family structure dyads. In addition, we consider the separate influence of income and find that lower income siblings are more likely to live in close proximity, including co-residing. We conclude that the factors driving geographic proximity between siblings in mid-adulthood are different from those in old age, and argue that decisions made at that life course stage have the potential to impact sibling relationships once they become older.

Living arrangements during the transition to adulthood among Gen Z

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The transition to adulthood is traditionally marked by key milestones, including leaving the parental home, forming partnerships, and becoming a parent. Evidence suggests that, compared to previous generations, these transitions are increasingly delayed among Generation Z in the United Kingdom. Drawing on data from the U.K. Millennium Cohort Study, this paper examines living arrangements and early family transitions at age 23 (2023–2025), and how these vary by socioeconomic position, educational attainment, and ethnicity, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of changing pathways to adulthood in the UK.

Findings highlight substantial delays in early family transitions compared to previous generations. At age 23, the majority (68%) of participants live with their parents, with financial constraints, such as the inability to afford independent housing or the need to save for a deposit, mentioned by respondents as the main reason. Despite this, over half (54%) of the respondents report being in a romantic relationship, although only a minority (17%) cohabit with a partner. Parenthood remains relatively uncommon, with just one in ten participants having children by this age, indicating a shift in the timing of family formation compared to previous generations.

These patterns suggest that prolonged economic pressures, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, might be contributing to delays in achieving traditional adult milestones.

Spatial heterogeneity in the determinants of parent-child co-residence: Evidence from the UK Household Longitudinal Study

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While the determinants of intergenerational living arrangements have attracted considerable scholarly attention, the spatial heterogeneity of these associations – that is, the extent to which they vary across space – remains underexplored. Drawing on data from the UK Household Longitudinal Survey, this research employs random-slope multilevel logistic regression to investigate spatial variation in the determinants of parent-child co-residence. The findings indicate that the likelihood of adult children co-residing with their parents is significantly associated with life-course factors (i.e., age, education, and partnership status), cultural and identity characteristics (i.e., gender, country of birth, and ethnicity), and family structure (i.e., the number of children under 16 in the household and the number of siblings), and that these associations

vary considerably across space. Notably, highly educated adult children are less likely to co-reside with their parents, particularly in London. Unpartnered individuals are more likely to live with their parents, with this association more pronounced in Northern Ireland and in parts of southeastern Scotland and South West. The presence of children under 16 is associated with a lower likelihood of parent-child co-residence; however, this negative relationship is weaker in London but stronger in Northern Ireland. The spatial variation in these associations is likely moderated by local opportunity structures, cultural norms, and (im)migration patterns in the areas where adult children live.

Probabilistic forecasts of English kinship networks: Comparisons, validation, and evaluation

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Forecasts of kinship networks provide policy relevant information about the strongest form of social ties – those between family members. Kinship research has experienced a renaissance in demography in recent years. Matrix approaches allow expected number of kin to be estimated with minimal computation, while approaches based on convolutions and probability generation functions give analytic distributions over numbers of kin. At the same time, simulation methods provide for relationships between individuals which cannot easily be including in analytic methods, at the expense of increased data and computational requirements. All such forecasts are sensitive to the assumptions, data inputs, and demographic rate forecasts that they are built upon, and require validation against existing data where possible. We present a series of estimates and forecasts of English kinship networks using different approaches, including those recently developed by the present authors. The sensitivity of kinship forecasts to different assumptions is investigated, and the extent to which these estimates may be validated is examined. Data is drawn from a variety of different sources including vital registration data; mid-year estimates; pre-existing household surveys such as Understanding Society, English Longitudinal Study of Ageing and the Generations and Gender Survey; and census data. Sensitivity of kinship forecasts to the inclusion of measures of spatial location will be presented, together with estimates dependent on other characteristics. These may include parity; education; or birth spacing. The paper will conclude by presenting implications and recommendations for future kinship forecasts.

How long do parents and children live together? Trends in shared lifetime and parental loss across Europe in 2000-2024

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Life expectancy in Europe has increased in recent decades, although gains slowed after 2010 and during the COVID-19. In parallel, sustained fertility declines have reshaped populations and restructured family networks. These demographic changes have led to individuals pertaining to different generations to spend more time jointly alive, e.g. children and parents. However, quantitative analyses of these family dynamics and shared lifespans remain limited. While cross-national heterogeneity in demographic trajectories has been documented, inequality in shared lifetimes across countries remains largely unexplored.

We aim to characterise parent- and child-age patterns using time-varying mortality and fertility rates, to estimate parental loss across Europe in 2000-2024, and to quantify shared lifetime among surviving parent-child couples.

Age-specific mortality and female fertility rates were extracted from the Human Mortality Database and Human Fertility Database. Parent- and child-age patterns were constructed to represent surviving children counts by age, using fertility data. Parental loss was estimated from death counts, with double orphanhood adjusted.

From 2000–2024, the peak in parent-child age patterns shifted from child ages 30–40 to ~55 years, reflecting more surviving children at older maternal ages. Maternal loss was higher in Latvia and Estonia. In contrast, Poland and Germany showed the lowest levels of maternal loss. Rates among 18-24-year-olds were about twice those of 0-17-year-olds. Pandemic-related increases occurred in Bulgaria and the UK, while Western Europe experienced declining maternal loss. Shared lifetime between mothers and children increased from ~50 to nearly 60 years, with cross-country variation persisting.

Families & households: The gendered division of time use

How commuting time shapes parenting time: Evidence across parenting activities, child age, and gender

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Commuting to work is a highly time- and energy-demanding daily activity that often comes at the expense of other aspects of life, including time spent with family. Using data from the American Time Use Survey, this study examines the relationship between commuting time and time spent in distinct parenting activities – including basic care, play, educational activities, management tasks, shared meals, and television co-viewing. We analyze both the absolute time spent on parenting activities and the proportional share of each within total parenting time. We also examine whether the association between commuting time and parenting time varies across children's developmental stages and parents' gender. Results show that longer commuting times are associated with less time spent on most parenting activities. In response to longer commutes, parents do not reduce all forms of parenting equally but instead shift their relative investment across activities. While the relationship between commuting time and playtime is strongest when children are very young, the negative consequences of longer commutes remain broadly consistent across children's developmental stages for most parenting activities. Patterns differ between mothers and fathers. These findings highlight that commuting is a structural constraint on family life, reducing time spent on parenting and reshaping parenting behavior.

Gender differences in leisure time in East Asian and Western societies

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Time is arguably the most valuable resource, and how it is used has profound implications for social inequalities, health, and well-being. This talk focuses on leisure time. We analyse time diary data from 14 East Asian and Western societies — China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Spain, Italy, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, and Norway — collected between 2000 and 2021, to examine gender gaps in leisure time.

We explore how gender differences in leisure — including activities such as sport, socialising, media consumption, and reading — vary across the life course, from ages 16 to 75. Our findings reveal persistent gender inequalities: men generally enjoy more leisure time than women. In most of the societies studied, gender gaps in leisure time are present across all age groups. These disparities are particularly pronounced in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Spain, and Italy, and comparatively smaller in the Nordic countries.

Across all contexts, gender differences are evident in both active (e.g. sport, socialising) and passive (e.g. watching television, browsing the internet) leisure activities. Notably, the gaps are widest at weekends, when most individuals are free from paid work.

The gendered interruption of leisure in family life: A comparative time-diary analysis across seventeen settings

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How families and households organize unpaid work and care shapes not only how much leisure individuals have, but also how protected that leisure is once it occurs. This paper examines leisure interruption as a family- and household-related dimension of gender inequality in everyday life. It asks whether women's leisure is more vulnerable than men's to intrusions from short episodes of unpaid work, childcare, adult care, shopping, and paid work, and how these patterns vary across societies and stages of adulthood.

The analysis uses harmonized episode-level time-diary data from the Multinational Time Use Study as well as China's Time Use Survey. Restricted to 2005 onward, the study covers 17 country/region-settings, 601,659 diaries, 2,892,464 leisure episodes, and 73,360 strict interruptions. Leisure interruption is defined as a

leisure—obligation—leisure sequence in which the inserted obligation lasts 30 minutes or less. Country/region-specific OLS models estimate interruptions per leisure hour, while Poisson models estimate interruption counts with leisure time as the exposure.

Preliminary findings show that women experience higher adjusted leisure interruption rates than men in 15 of 17 settings. Housework is the dominant interrupter in most contexts, while women's interruptions are generally more housework- and childcare-heavy and men's more often linked to paid work. The gender gap is typically strongest in early- to mid-adulthood, consistent with family and care-related life-stage pressures. The paper contributes a new comparative measure of how household labor and care demands structure the quality, continuity, and protection of leisure within family life.

Homeworking husbands, happy relationship? Spousal working from home and women's relationship satisfaction in the UK

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As flexible working becomes increasingly embedded in the labour market, couples are constantly renegotiating the boundaries between paid and unpaid labour, with important implications for relationship well-being. Men's adoption of working from home (WFH) is particularly consequential because male employment has long been organised around the ideal-worker norm of constant availability and work devotion, reinforcing men's role as breadwinners and women's role as default caregivers. By relocating paid work into the home, WFH may disrupt these arrangements and reshape intimate relationships.

The male partner's WFH may improve relationship quality by reducing time pressure and enabling his greater emotional availability and domestic involvement. However, it may also intensify work demands, blur boundaries, and create conflicts and new burdens that fall disproportionately on the female partner. Drawing on doing gender theory, I thus argue that men's WFH is not inherently beneficial, whose relational consequences depend on both partners' gender role attitudes and household power relations. This study thus asks: (1) how is the male partner's WFH associated with the female partner's relationship satisfaction? and (2) do these associations vary by couples' employment structure and gender role attitudes? Using Understanding Society (UKHLS) Waves 1-15 (2009-2024), I estimate two-way fixed-effects models of within-couple change in the female partner's satisfaction as the male partner's WFH status changes. Interactions test variation by employment arrangement and both partners' gender role attitudes, while occupation-level WFH prevalence is used as a robustness check.

Families & households: Transition to union formation and parenthood

The family diversity perspective: Demographic change, normativity, and parenthood among women in same-sex couples

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Theoretical perspectives shape which inequalities and policies become visible through family demographic research. Existing research on access to parenthood has primarily focused on socioeconomic barriers and on the challenges of combining work and family life. We propose a perspective on family change that highlights inequalities in access to parenthood that arise from normativity and the default trajectories targeted by public policies. We argue that in today's individualized societies, the extent to which policies support diverse family trajectories is an important determinant of who becomes a parent. We provide empirical evidence by studying the case of policies regulating assisted reproductive technologies in Spain. We examine a reform that excluded women in same-sex couples from accessing assisted reproduction through the public health system. Using data from the Spanish census and large household surveys, we show that this reform substantially reduced parenthood among women in same-sex couples. In regions where public access to assisted reproduction was later restored, parenthood levels among women in same-sex couples recovered. By contrast, parenthood remained low in regions where access continued to be restricted. These findings provide a first example of how the extent to which policies support diverse family forms has important consequences for who becomes a parent.

Exploring the impact of gender roles and social norms on fertility intention among young adults — An empirical analysis of international data

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This study examines how social norms relate to young adults' fertility ideals in a cross-national setting, using attitudes toward gender roles, marriage, and childbearing as indicators of social norms. The analysis identifies which normative attitude domain—gender roles, marriage, or childbearing—retains a stable association with fertility ideals among one-child adults aged 18–35 after absorbing unobserved national context. Three latent attitude dimensions are derived via confirmatory factor analysis, and Poisson models are estimated with and without country fixed effects. The results show that childbearing attitudes are the most stable predictor of fertility ideals across model specifications. Marriage attitudes remain negatively associated with fertility ideals and become stronger once country fixed effects are introduced. Gender role attitudes are not significant in pooled models but become significantly negative under country fixed effects. These findings suggest that the three attitudinal domains do not operate in the same way. Childbearing attitudes appear to capture more stable individual-level evaluations of the costs and rewards of parenthood, whereas the interpretation of gender role attitudes is more sensitive to cross-national institutional and cultural context. Overall, the study shows that controlling for country fixed effects materially changes how attitudinal predictors should be interpreted in comparative fertility research.

Who are the individuals having fewer or no children, and why? evidence from the FIESTA study

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The rapid decline in the birth rate in the 21st century has raised questions of what factors may be driving the trend and what the appropriate policy response should be. Policies that support individuals in achieving their fertility goals are likely to advantage both individuals and society but must be informed by robust empirical evidence of people's fertility needs and preferences.

In this paper we draw on the perspectives of participants recruited to FIESTA (the Fertility Intentions and Experience Study) on their responses to fertility intentions and status items in the fourth National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal 4). Since the decline in fertility reflects an increase in the proportions of people who remain childless or have fewer higher order births, and the impact on family size of postponement of childbearing, in-depth interviews were conducted in the FIESTA study with 25 participants in each of three groups: those who were childless and intending to remain so; those having one child and intending no more; and those aged 35, currently childless but intending to have children. We use survey data to describe changes in the profile of members of these groups and the bespoke qualitative data to report their perceptions of the value and meaning of parenthood, its costs and benefits, circumstances seen as impacting childbearing, and the extent to which fertility experience is determined by choice or constraint. We also report participants' views on possible policy options to support individuals in achieving their fertility goals.