

## **Life-course analysis of living distance between adult children of immigrants and their parents**

Living distance between adult children and their parents is an essential aspect of family life, determining the provision of support and maintaining direct interpersonal connections (DeWit 1988; Knijn and Liefbroer 2006; Lawton et al. 1994; Mulder 2007; Mulder and Van der Meer 2009). Over the life-course, living distance between generations changes in response to children's demographic transitions that affect the need for parental support, such as coming of age, moving in with a partner, experiencing relationship breakups, or having children of their own (Michielin et al. 2008). As the issue of intergenerational living proximity reside in the nexus between migration and family research, there has been a growing interest among researchers in exploring individual characteristics associated with living distance to kin (Malmberg and Pettersson 2007; Michielin and Mulder 2007; Mulder and Kalmijn 2006; Reyes et al. 2020; Shelton and Grundy 2000) and understanding how distances between family members change over the life course (Choi et al. 2021; Kolk 2017; Michielin et al. 2008; Rogerson et al. 1997).

Intergenerational proximity and solidarity are often associated with migration background. In Northwestern European and Anglo-Saxon countries, migrant nuclear families tend to place a greater emphasis on family ties. One explanation is that the migration processes itself reinforces solidarity and interdependence between the first and the second generation (Baykara-Krumme and Fokkema 2019). Another explanation for this native-migrant gap in solidarity norms points to cultural differences. Non-European migrant groups often come from more collectivist societies that place a higher value on close family ties and support networks than the more individualistic cultures of Northwestern Europe (Hofstede 2001; Reher 1998). These family-oriented values manifest in both intergenerational downward and upward support.

Migrants and their adult children generally rely less on formal childcare services, preferring family-based care (Biegel et al 2021; Seibel and Hedegaard 2017), including the involvement of grandparents (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2008). It also extends to elder care, where older migrants typically expect their children to look after them in old age (Albertini and Mantovani 2022; de Valk and Schans 2008), and their adult children hold stronger filial support obligations compared to their native peers (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2008).

The strong emphasis on family support among migrant families is also reflected in their residential choices. They often live in closer proximity to one another compared to native families (Compton and Pollak, 2015; Malmberg and Pettersson, 2007; Mulder and Kalmijn, 2006; Reyes et al., 2020). This pattern of geographical proximity is also reinforced by a greater propensity for co-residence (de Valk and Bordone 2019), influenced by both delayed departures from the parental home (Kleinepier and de Valk 2017) and more frequent returns to it (Lei and South, 2016).

Although geographical proximity between parents and their adult children is considered a central domain of family solidarity (Dykstra and Fokkema 2011), empirical studies on intergenerational relationships among migrant families have been restricted to intergenerational co-residence (de Valk and Billari 2007; de Valk and Bordone 2019; Glick and Van Hook 2002) or to other domains, such as conflict, support exchanges, or frequency of contact (Bordone and de Valk 2016; Kalmijn 2019; Baykara-Krumme and Fokkema 2019). The overarching aim of this study is, therefore, to bridge life course research on intergenerational living proximity and research on intergenerational solidarity among migrant families. Specifically, our research question is how living distance between immigrants and their adult children changes with the child's age and in response to family life transitions that require different levels of parental

support, such as partnership formation, family formation, and partnership dissolution. In the processes we also explore group differences in levels and patterns of intergenerational living proximity among three distinct origin groups—Surinamese, Turkish, and Chinese—characterized by different migration histories, cultural orientations, gender roles, socio-economic position and geographical dispersion in the country.

Exploring the evolution of intergenerational living distances over the life courses of children of migrants is socially relevant. Firstly, examining parent-child proximity in different origin groups provides insight into both the opportunities and limitations that migrant families face throughout their lives. Living closer together can offer greater opportunities for mutual support, such as in childcare and informal caregiving. However, it may also present challenges, such as limiting the ability to relocate for education or employment. Secondly, understanding moving behaviors and parent-child distances can partially explain the development and persistence of segregation, a crucial policy matter.

To achieve our aim, we use longitudinal register data from the Netherlands, including all individuals who were born between 1980 and 1988 to at least one parent who was born in Suriname, Turkey, or China<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, our unit of analysis are adult children of immigrants, i.e., individuals who were either born in the Netherlands (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) or migrated as children (1.5 generation) and lived in the Netherlands before age 15. We follow them since 2006 (and with the completion of their formal education) and until 2022<sup>2</sup>, annually measuring their living distance (in kilometers) from their parents. Using panel regression, we explore how living distance to parents changes as individuals age and in response to family life transition (partnership formation, dissolution and parenthood).

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<sup>1</sup> As well as contrasting their results with those observed in overall population.

<sup>2</sup> Between the ages of 22-42.

In this paper, we not only contribute to the understanding of intergenerational relations among immigrant population in the Western European context (Albertini et al. 2019), but also offer a more adequate longitudinal perspective to the evolution of intergenerational living proximity around important family transitions. Although research on the role of life transitions in determining parent-child proximity is to some extent established, our study advances that literature in three meaningful ways. First, previous studies on changes in intergenerational geographical proximity were limited to panel designs of only two points in time (Michielin et al. 2008; Rogerson et al. 1997). We analytically build on recent studies that examined distance to family members from a life-course perspective, utilizing long-term longitudinal data (Choi et al. 2021; Kolk 2017), which, however, were restricted to the analysis of group differences over age. By studying life course *events* over a longer observation period, we can better capture anticipatory and lagged effects on changes in proximity and distinguish between temporary and more permanent changes. Second, we integrate co-residence into the analysis and differentiate between changes in proximity due to leaving or returning home and changes due to further increasing or decreasing distance. This way we can distinguish between the dynamics of co-residence—an extreme form of intergenerational dependency—and other variations in geographical distance, and better understand how life events shape spatial relationships between parents and children. Finally, we explore these processes in three groups to highlight the nuances and variations in these patterns across different demographic and cultural contexts.

Besides exploring the evolution of intergenerational proximity around family life transitions we expect several group differences. For one, based on differences in geographical distribution around higher education institutions we expect a group-based gradient in overall levels of parent-child proximity, with individuals of Chinese origin living the farthest away from

their parents, followed by people of Surinamese and lastly by those of Turkish origin. Another expectation concerns group differences in gender specific patterns. First, based on differences in traditional contexts regarding kinship systems, a more pronounced male-biased gap in intergenerational proximity is expected to be among individuals of Turkish or Chinese origin (kinship systems are structured around patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence), and a more trivial gap among those of the strongly matrifocal Surinamese culture. Furthermore, these differences in the magnitude of the gender-gap are expected to be even more pronounced among couples, especially those with children. Finally, since the location decisions of children of migrants are likely to be influenced by traditional kinship systems (Kaur et al. 2024), we expect to find support for the changing gender dynamics hypothesis (early male- and later-female dominance) only for the general population.