

Abstract for European Population Conference, Liverpool 2006

Geographical mobility of adult children towards their parents

Francesca Michielin, Clara H. Mulder

University of Amsterdam
Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies
Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130
NL-1018 VZ Amsterdam
E-mail F.Michielin@uva.nl

Proximity of family members is beneficial to providing care and maintaining regular face-to-face contact between them. Proximity might therefore play a key role in the relation between elderly people and their adult children. Living close to the parents is particularly appealing for those adults who have young children, because it not only facilitates the grandparents' participation in taking care of the children, but also frequent visits between the grandparents and their grandchildren. One would therefore expect adults with young children to be likely to move towards their parents, or to refrain from moving away from them. However, in the geographical mobility of adults, there are many other potential triggers for move, related for example to the wish of improving the housing quality or to the labour-market career. In those cases, the aim is not to increase proximity with the parents, but to reach a goal in another parallel life-course career, and the residential location of the parents might not be taken into account in the decision to move.

The aim of this paper is to gain a better understanding of the role of parental residential locations in decisions concerning geographical mobility (both residential mobility and migration). We analyze the influence of the presence and age of children and the occurrence of childbirth on the probability of moving on the one hand, and on the direction of moves (whether or not towards the parents) on the other. We expect the probability of having recently moved as well as the direction of the move to vary according to the living arrangement of the adult, his or her health conditions, and the proximity to parents at the beginning of the considered period of time. We hypothesize that living closer to the parents or having young children is associated to a smaller probability of moving. If a move occurs, we expect it would more likely be directed towards the parents if the distance towards the parents is great or in the presence of grandchildren.

We use data from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS) and logit models. These data allow us to take into account the personal characteristics of the respondent and of his or her partner, characteristics of the parents and whether they are both alive and living together (or, if not, whether they separated and/or when they died), but also the residential locations of brothers and sisters.