

## **Intergenerational transmission of age at entry into parenthood: Evidence from Dutch register data**

Liesbeth Steenhof  
Aart C. Liefbroer

The intergenerational transmission of fertility has been relatively well documented (e.g. in the work of Murphy). However, most attention has been paid to the transmission of fertility quantum, whereas very little attention has been paid to the transmission of fertility timing. This is unfortunate, because transmission of fertility quantum may partly result from transmission of the timing of entry into parenthood and because the shift in the timing of entry into parenthood is one of the most significant demographic trends in Europe. Against this background, this paper wants to address a number of important questions concerning the intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood. These are:

- How strong is the intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood?
- Is the strength of intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood decreasing or increasing across time?
- Is the strength of intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood weakening as children grow older?
- Is the strength of intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood dependent on the age at which parents made the transition into parenthood?
- Is the strength of intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood stronger in intact families than in non-intact families?

Particular attention will be paid to the second research question. Opposing hypotheses on this trend could be formulated. On the one hand, one could argue that, as a result of processes of individualisation, children are less influenced by their parents than in the past, with a decrease in the intergenerational transmission of entry into parenthood as a result. However, results on trends in fertility quantum (Murphy & Wang, 2001) suggest that the intergenerational transmission of fertility quantum is increasing. Our explanation for this increase is that this could be related to the availability of reliable contraceptive since the 1960's. As a result, the timing and quantum of fertility became increasingly under the control of couples and became a clearer expression of their attitudes concerning the timing of entry into parenthood. To the extent that these attitudes of children are influenced by the attitudes of their parents, this could lead to a clearer correspondence between parents and children in their behaviours as well. If so, it could be hypothesized that intergenerational transmission is weakest of both parents and children started their reproductive career before the 1960's and is strongest if both parents and children started their reproductive career during or after the 1960's.

To answer our research questions, use will be made of the parent-child file constructed by Statistics Netherlands based on an intergenerational linkage of Dutch register data. This file contains demographic information of more than 13 million Dutch children and their parents. Descriptive analyses on the timing of entry into parenthood of both parents and children will be presented. In addition, hazard analyses on the timing of entry into parenthood of children will be performed, with the timing of entry into parenthood of their parents and addition variables as covariates.