CONTACT AND PROXIMITY OF OLDER PEOPLE TO THEIR ADULT CHILDREN: A COMPARISON BETWEEN ITALY AND SWEDEN

Valeria Bordone
e-mail: vbordone@mail.uni-mannheim.de
Tel.: +39-3477790004

PRELIMINARY VERSION

ABSTRACT

This work extends the recent research on contact and geographic distance between older parents and their adult children. After a review of previous studies about this topic and an overview of the geography of the family in Italy and Sweden, multivariate analysis is used to look at the determinants of intergenerational frequency of contact and proximity. In the past Southern-European socio-cultural context, older parents could count on at least one child who remained to live near them, while in Northern-European countries the nuclear weak-family system prevailed. Population ageing and changing socio-demographic trends in Italy raise the question of whether the differences between the "Mediterranean patriarchal model" and the "Northern European model" still exist or whether there is convergence towards patterns in vanguard countries such as Sweden. The main question addressed in this paper is "which variables account for the different levels of kin contact and spatial proximity in Italy and Sweden?". Of particular interest is the role played by education in the determination of proximity and contact of older parents to their adult-children in the two countries using SHARE data. Logistic regression models show that, although cultural patterns are still strong, numerous socio-demographic variables have similar impacts on contact and proximity in the two countries.

KEYWORDS

Intergenerational relations – Cross-national comparison – Older people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Social and political effects of population ageing have become a major concern in developed societies, particularly regarding those structures that should provide support for older people [Grundy and Murphy, 2006]. Family has been for centuries an "institution of age-heterogeneity" and a "link along the generational lineage" [Kohli *et al.*, 2005]. Contact with children is an important source of support, with spatial distance having a significant role in the provision of specific types of intergenerational exchange [Crimmins and Ingegneri, 1990]. However, European countries have experienced for some decades now what has been called "Second Demographic Transition" [Van de Kaa, 1987], meaning also a shift from family-oriented to individualistic aspirations and behaviours [Goldscheider and Waite, 1991][1].

Besides, children can provide support to older parents only if there are enough to take care of them [Grundy and Murphy, 2006]. Still, recent demographic changes have altered the conditions that determine kin availability at different stages of the life-course (fertility, mortality and migration patterns) and intergenerational "stress may develop […] because there are fewer persons with whom to share the burden of caring for dependent older persons" [Brubaker, 1985, p.65]. This leads to increasing concerns about the availability of informal care for older people from children in the next decades.

Although changes in fertility and household composition patterns are well-documented, trends in the extent of contact between relatives are not so evident. A possible decline in contact and an increase in spatial distance between adult-children and older parents determined by family changes in modern societies and increased mobility will require specific health-related and socio-economic policies providing help in terms of financial support, housing, health and social care [Grundy, 1996]. Previous European research had tended to focus either on proximity [e.g. Lin and Rogerson, 1995; Glaser and Tomassini, 2000; Shelton and Grundy, 2000] or on contact levels [e.g. Grundy ad Shelton, 2001; Tomassini *et al.*, 2004]. Only a few analyses cover both these aspects [e.g. DeWit *et al.*, 1988; Lawton *et al.*, 1994; Hank, 2007]. The dimension of distance, in addition to frequency of contact, is important because close relatives are necessary to provide some types of support [Shelton and Grundy, 2000]. As the European baby-boom generation ages, attention is needed on financial assistance, health care and emotional support required by this cohort during the old age [Rogerson *et al.*, 1993]. Therefore, numerous questions are still unanswered and a useful starting point would be a better understanding of intergenerational relationships.

Frequent family contact as well as co-residence have been traditionally more common in Southern than in Northern Europe [Glaser *et al.*, 1998; Murphy, 1996; Reher, 1998] and the most recent trends in family behaviours have not yet directly affected the current cohorts of older parents [Kohli *et al.*, 2005]. Numerous authors wonder whether differences among European countries will continue or whether to expect a convergence of family trends. As familial forms are not frozen in time [Reher, 1998], frequency of contact and proximity are of particular interest. They have social impact and at individual level they represent

---

[1] Although other authors, such as Coleman [2004] do not agree on the definition of "Second Demographic Transition", it is widely recognized that in modern societies new lifestyle preferences have become important over the last three decades or more, including progress of cohabitation, lone parenthood, childbearing outside marriage and low fertility, new freedom of sexual behavior, the relaxation of traditional norms and constraints.

contemporaneously the main social network for older parents [Scott, 1997; Smith, 1998] and a mean of help for adult-children [Hoyert, 1991; McGlone et al., 1998].

The substantial proportion of elderly people living alone [Grundy, 1996; Barbagli et al., 2003] and the low kin availability [Grundy and Murphy, 2006] in Southern Europe suggest a decreasing multi-generational co-residence there as well [Glaser and Tomassini, 2000]. It might be that the decline in co-residence is a sort of "intimacy at distance" [Rosenmayr and Kockeis, 1963] and that the family hasn't changed its role, only its appearance [Kunemund and Rein, 1999]. Nevertheless, new demographic trends affect the strength of the family tradition [Kohli et al., 2005].

Italy and Sweden have been chosen for this study as sort of symbols of the two main European socio-demographic patterns falling along a North-South divide: the Mediterranean patriarchal model, based on strong-family ties [Reher, 1998], and the weak-family model of Northern societies [Kohli et al., 2005]. Italy has the oldest population structure in Europe (with 18.1% of Italians aged 65 and over in 2000, compared to 17.3% of Swedes) [Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001] and has among the lowest fertility rates. Sweden has gone the furthest in the gender revolution [Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2002] and it is still considered such a forerunner in the development of post-nuclear family structures [Popenoe, 1987] that Bracher and Santow [1998, p.292] describe it as the "face of the future".

Although the general European key-word is "postponement"[2], national peculiarities in terms of family behaviours may better explain the differences between Italy and Sweden that will appear from the current analysis. Legislative policies in Sweden have been working to safeguard the welfare of the parties involved rather than to try to change the trends [Hoem and Hoem, 1988; Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2002]. In Italy, gender equity in the family and in public provisions for the family is still far from being reached, although education and labour market systems have evolved over the last half century [McDonald, 2000].

According to Pearce [2002, p.5], "Astrid[3] and her friends feel more able to have a family than Isabella's crowd. They have an average of 1.6 children", while their Italian counterparts have only 1.2 children. Under the replacement level (about 2.1), decimals are particularly important to avoid population plummeting [Kohler et al., 2002]. The strong solidarity within the Italian family network [Sgritta, 1988] may be both a cause and a consequence of the low supply of public services for children and older people [Tomassini et al., 2004].

The expected more frequent contact and spatial proximity in Italy than in Northern Europe might result also from cultural preferences rather than from the older generation's needs [Glaser and Tomassini, 2000]. It has been recognised that cultural differences at international and intra-national level [Gini and Caranti, 1954] could affect demographic comparisons. Moreover, the issue of spatial proximity requires additional care: Sweden has a small population in a relatively large country (about 9,000,000 in 2005 living in 450,000 Km^2, equating to 20 habitants per Km^2), while Italy is about 300,000 Km^2 and has a population of about 58,500,000 (resulting in a population density of 195 habitants per Km^2) [www.populationeurope.org].

The main questions addressed in this paper are "*what differences exist and which variables account for the different levels of kin contact and spatial proximity in Italy and Sweden?*". This analysis aims to look in particular at the role played by education and marital

---

[2] Postponement of nest-leaving, marriage and childbearing.
[3] Astrid is a typical Northern European name, while Isabella is a Southern European name. They are used by Pearce [2002] to outline the profile of two hypothetical women from Sweden and Italy.

status in the two countries as in modern societies new lifestyle preferences have become important over the last three decades or more, including progress of cohabitation, lone parenthood, childbearing outside marriage and low fertility, new freedom of sexual behavior, the relaxation of traditional norms and constraints [Coleman, 2004].

I use binary logistic regression models with data from the first wave – second release of the *Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe* (SHARE) [Boersch-Supan *et al.*, 2005] to address these questions. After outlining the methods of analysis, descriptive and quantitative findings are presented. It follows a discussion of their implications.

DATA AND METHODS

The *Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe* (SHARE) is a multidisciplinary and cross-national database about health, socio-economic status and social-family networks of 22,000 individuals in Europe over the age of 50 [Boersch-Supan *et al.*, 2005]. For the purpose of this analysis the modules considered relate to demographic characteristics, children characteristics, physical health and mental health. Data were collected in 2004. As the purpose of the present analysis is to study the interaction between older parents and adult-children, the sample is confined to those aged 50 years and over, whose oldest child (which is the focus of this analysis) was at least 18 years old at the moment of the interview. These restrictions lead to 1,524 and 1,888 individuals over the age of 50 and with at least one adult child (aged 18 or more) in Italy and Sweden respectively. Only the first-born child is considered, first to compare individuals on a common basis.

The *dependent variables* of these analyses are *contact* and *proximity*. Parents co-residing with their adult first-child are included in the category of *daily-contact* [as in Tomassini *et al.*, 2004].

The originally seven-answer categories about *contact* from the questionnaire are collapsed into a binary variable: *more-than-one-contact-per-week* (*frequent contact*) and *one-contact-per-week-or-less*. SHARE does not distinguish face-to-face or other types of contact. Proximity is expected to have a great impact on the frequency of contact and for this reason it is included as an explanatory variable as well as a dependent variable of interest in its own [Hank, 2007]. Several studies measure intergenerational relations only for parent-adult child couples not living together [e.g. Grundy and Shelton, 2001; Hank, 2007]. According to Tomassini and colleagues [2004], for international comparisons that approach could be restrictive, as it hides the impact of co-residence (high in Southern European countries) on strong family ties.

The originally nine-answer categories about *proximity* from the questionnaire are collapsed into a binary variable as well: *distance-less-than-5-Km* (*close proximity*, including co-residence) and *distance-greater-than-5-Km*. The choice of how to divide the original categories into the two of the binary variables has been determined by the need of having balanced proportions of the sample in the different groups and for both the countries.

The *explanatory variables* used in the multivariate analysis include parent's characteristics as well as characteristics of the (first-)child. Parent's characteristics include age, sex, partnership status, housing-tenure, and (self-perceived) physical and mental health. Education has been classified on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Educational Degrees and the number of years of study: *low* includes people with no education

degree or with primary school, *high* refers to university degree or more and *middle* includes all the degree between the extreme categories. The information about the child includes age, sex, partnership status, his/her economic activity, the number of siblings, having own-children, education (classified as for the parent's education) and proximity (living more or less-than-5-Km from the parents). As mentioned before, proximity is used as an explanatory variable in the analysis of contact.

The mean of the analysis is the binary logistic model. To investigate into possible country-specific peculiarities in the strength and the direction of the explanatory variables' effect, separate regressions are run for each country.

RESULTS

Descriptive findings

Table 1 shows the frequencies of the variables included in the analyses referred to both parent and first-child, by country. The distributions by age and gender of respondents are similar in the two country-specific groups, with about half of the sample in the youngest age group and slightly above 50% females. Most respondents are married in Italy as well as in Sweden; however the percentage of divorced respondents is highly different: only 3% of the Italian sample is divorced, against a 12% of the Swedish sample. Differences include a slightly younger child's age distribution and a notably higher proportion of homeowner parents in Italy than in Sweden. The lower education among older Italians is explained by the late introduction of compulsory schooling until age 14; still we can see a convergence in the proportion of medium-highly educated people among the sample of the adult-children.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE.

Both the countries have high proportions of parent-child interaction more-than-once-a-week ("frequent contact"), but Italy reaches 86% (against a 60% of Sweden). The Italian sample has about 68% of respondents declaring a daily contact, against 22% of the Swedes. However, the Swedish sample results skewed towards the categories of "several times a week" and "about once a week", where is concentrated more than half or the answers. The opposite extreme categories (contact "less than once a month" and "never") have been reported by similarly low percentages of respondents in the two countries.

The high proportion of Italians having daily contact can be explained also by looking at the levels of parent-child geographical proximity: about 30% of the Italians in this sample are co-residing with the child taken into account in this analysis, against a 3% of the Swedes. However, even if we exclude the co-residents, about 54% of the Italians (against 27% of the Swedes) still report a less-than-5 km distance from their child. And in the same groups of non-co-residents, 54% and 20% respectively report daily contact.

Both the countries show a higher proportion living close to the parents among sons rather than daughters. An explanation may be that co-residence is usually less common for daughters, as they tend to leave the parental home earlier [Billari *et al.*, 2001].

Multivariate analyses are needed to identify associations between particular demographic and socio-economic characteristics and contact or proximity, controlling for the effect of the other variables included in the analysis.

Multivariate analysis: contact

Table 2 shows the models with *contact between older parent and first adult-child* as dependent variable, controlling for parent's characteristics and child's characteristics. The results shown are from models including the main effects. Various interaction terms were included, but they did not improve the fit of the model. To better understand country-specific differences, Sweden and Italy are compared (Model-SE and model-IT).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE.

By looking at the variables of main interest here, the comparison of the two models "Sweden" and "Italy" suggests that the level of child´s education does not affect significantly the frequency of contact in both the countries. Still, the direction of impact in Italy suggests a lower frequency of contact for low educated children than for those with a high level of education. Parental educational level, however, shows a clear negative association with the frequency of intergenerational contact in Sweden. The country divide might be a sign that the socio-economic status in Italy does not determine the intergenerational relationship level. For what it concerns parental education, it has to be acknowledged the low proportion with advanced education in the Mediterranean country under analysis; however I would argue that the higher frequency of contact for Italian parents with highly educated children might be explained by considering two aspects: on one side, high education goes together with high mobility (due to study or work-related reasons); on the other side, Italians are part of the strong-family system, to which they still show their attachment.

After controlling for all the other socio-demographic characteristics, in Sweden as well as in Italy, a higher number of children decreases the probability of having frequent contact with the first-child. Divorce and widowhood in both the countries are associated with a lower probability for the parent to have frequent contact with his/her first child than in case of being married. The not significant odds in Italy might be due to the low number of cases included in the sample that fall in these categories, however the impact seems to be even larger than in the Swedish model.

Parent's gender does not impact on the frequency of contact with the first child. This might be due to the high proportion of married couples that implies a fair frequency of contact between the child and the mother on one side and the father on the other one. However, child's gender shows a clear divide between daughters and sons, where the former are significantly more likely to have a frequent contact with the parents than sons in both the countries included in the analysis.

Health status has a significant impact on contact only in the model about Italy: quite surprisingly, a physical disability of the parent shows smaller odds of frequent contact with the first child.

Eventually, proximity has a larger impact (a bigger β) in Italy than in Sweden. Proximity increases the probability of frequent contact in Italy and in Sweden, but the odds of frequent contact for Italians are five times higher than those for Swedes.

The analysis of contact might lead to a question about what happens if we exclude co-residents from the definition of parents who live less-than-5-Km-away from their children: such a model would not significantly modify the results, still showing lower explanatory power and confirming our previous results. The only change that is worth to be reported is the larger decline of the odds of close proximity in Italy rather than in Sweden; still, this is expected given the higher frequency of co-residence in the Mediterranean country than in the northern one.

Multivariate analysis: proximity

For the investigation of the geographic distance between older parents and their adult-first-children in SHARE, two logit regressions including parents' and children's characteristics and estimating separate models for the two countries (Model-SE and Model-IT) are run, following the same strategy as in the analysis of contact.
The models are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE.

The regressions show slightly higher odds ratios for low rather than high level of parent´s education in Italy, although not significant in the model.
However, by looking at child´s education, the picture is clear: the higher the level, the lower the proximity to parental house in both countries.

In terms of child's employment-status, the multivariate analysis shows that having an unemployed child rather than employed increases significantly the odds of living close only in Italy. Although not significantly, having a child still in education almost double the odds of close proximity in Italy. This might be due to the still common habit to live with the parents during the years of schooling in the Mediterranean country.

Surprisingly, separated or divorced parents appear to be more likely to live less-than-5-Km-away from their first-child than those married, although not significantly, while widowed parents are significantly more likely to live far from their first-child.
However, as expected, parents are significantly more likely to live close to their adult-children if these are separated or divorced.

To control for housing-tenure is usually considered as a way to control for wealth and socio-economic status. The regression results in a significant opposite effect in the two countries: housing-tenure has a negative association with the dependent variable in Sweden, but a positive one in Italy. We have to acknowledge that the comments on this result need care, as there are wide differences between European countries in the dominant tenure patterns. For this reason, homeownership changes its meaning in different countries. Besides, both the countries considered are characterized by a high proportion of older people who are homeowners.

The presence of siblings seems to decrease the likelihood of close proximity between the parent and the first child, significantly in Italy.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that, independently of most of parents' and children's characteristics considered, Italians continue to behave according to the so called "Mediterranean model", confirming the divide strong-weak family countries between Northern and Southern Europe.

The negative association proximity-contact is more pronounced in Italy than in Sweden: living far in traditional-family countries might be a sign of poor parent-child affection, while in weak-family societies it is simply a common arrangement.

This study confirms more frequent contact for parents with less *education* rather than with high education levels in Sweden. The not clear trend of the effect of education on contact in Italy may be explained by the strong-family behaviour determined by cultural reasons: it seems that in Italy the frequency of contact is determined more by cultural aspects than other variables included in our models. However, the impact of child's education on the geographic distance between parents and children in the two separate models has a similar, large and strong impact. Although at every level of education Italian people are significantly more likely to have frequent kin contact than Swedes are, it is shown that an increasing proportion of adult-children with high level of education here as well would suggest a future increase of spatial distance between older parents and their adult-children.

The larger negative impact of divorce in Italy rather than in Sweden can be explained by the lower diffusion of marital disruption in the Mediterranean area: the less common divorce in Italy than in Sweden makes it affecting the bond between parents and children in a stronger way in the Mediterranean country rather than in the Northern European one. Although still not significant, the divorce seems to be positively associated with proximity in both the countries under study. According to Grundy and Murphy [2006, p.4], "on one hand divorced parents without a partner may be perceived to have greater needs for support and social exchange with their adult children […]; on the other, adult-children may have weaker or less positive bonds with parents if there is a history of marital conflict between parents".

Due to the Mediterranean habit to leave the parental home mainly to get married, never married Italian adult children are more likely to co-reside with their parents than those in other marital statuses, even after controlling for key socio-economic variables.

By looking at the results for the control variables, we can still have some interesting hints. The absence of gender dimension to kin contact and proximity, found also by Tomassini [Tomassini *et al.*, 2004], might be explained by the high percentage of married individuals in the sample and by the role of mothers in mediating father-child's contact. Against the expectations created by Warnes' study [1984], child's gender does not have a significant impact on proximity neither in Italy nor in Sweden (confirming what has been found by Clark and Wolf [1992], Rogerson *et al.* [1993], Lawton *et al.* [1994]). However, daughters seem to maintain the role as "keen keepers" [Gerstel and Gallagher, 1993], having more frequent contact with parents than sons.

The decline of co-residence with ageing might explain the. Child's age probably captures the expected negative association between parent's age and proximity, due to the

decline of co-residence with ageing: younger children (18-29) have higher levels of both contact and proximity than those aged 60 years or older. A cause of the increasing distance between parents and children with children ageing can be a longer period in which children make successive moves [Rogerson *et al.*, 1993]. However, it has been shown that older parents make some moves in order to increase proximity to children [Warnes, 1986; Clark and Wolf, 1992]. Moreover, the larger odds ratio for 18-34 versus 60+ in Italy than in Sweden suggests the high rate of co-residence of adult-children until marriage and the late age at leaving parental home in Italy. Although older age may be associated with support needs which might increase frequent contact, it is important to remind that the youngest parents might still have children at home, especially in Southern Europe where age at nest leaving is high [Tomassini *et al.*, 2004].

Sibship size has numerous possible implications for kin contact and proximity [Shelton and Grundy, 2000]. The present logistic regressions suggest a significant negative effect of the number of siblings on intergenerational relationships. Since we are considering only the oldest child, a plausible explanation of our results can be that when parents have only a single child, he/she is the eldest and therefore there is a higher probability of contact with this specific child. With increasing number of children the probability of having contact with that specific child may decrease, as well as the probability of living close to him/her. Moreover, it is plausible that children from a big family feel less obliged to live near their parents [Shelton and Grundy, 2000]. From the parents' point of view, it can be seen as the need of dividing their time between children. According to Grundy and Shelton [2001], as in the future there will be a higher proportion of adults coming from small sibships, the proportion of parents-children with frequent contact may increase. However, other variables (i.e. highest levels of education and the kin unavailability) are expected to work in the opposite direction.

Intergenerational support is not only in the direction children to older parents. The effect of the presence of grandchildren on increased proximity suggests the importance of intergenerational support also in the opposite direction: from parents to children, even when parents get older. This is due to the demand for grandparents to provide child care for the offspring of a (likely to be in modern societies) two-worker household [as suggested by Lee, 1980; Krout, 1988].

These results do not lead to the idea of a "crisis" in family contact and proximity. Rather, they show that modern societies with highly educated people and increasing divorce rates may face a decrease in contact and an increase in geographic distance between parents and children. The present analysis improved the knowledge of this topic by taking into account a significant amount of variables, compared to previous studies. However, a number of issues are still waiting for detailed studies. For example, the association between health status of the older parents and intergenerational relationships still needs further analyses to be cleared up. Future research is therefore advised in this direction and, especially if based on SHARE data, to consider more deeply the health-related conditions of the older parents.

Table 1. *Descriptive sample statistics*.

	%(Italy) – N = 1,524	%(Sweden) – N = 1,888
PARENT'S CHARACTERISTICS		
Gender: Female	58.0	54.6
Age: 50-64	51.8	52.9
65-69	17.7	15.0
70-74	14.2	11.4
75-+	16.3	20.7
Marital-status: Married	76.2	71.4
Divorced	3.0	12.2
Widowed	20.3	13.6
Never married	0.5	2.8
Education: Low	77.5	29.6
Medium	15.2	41.8
High	7.4	28.6
Homeownership: Yes	74.3	54.0
Sad/Depressed: Yes	45.0	33.6
Physical disability: Severely limited	13.0	14.3
Limited	28.4	29.8
No	58.7	55.9
CHILD'S CHARACTERISTICS		
Gender: Daughter	48.4	49.4
Age: 18-34	39.2	34.2
35-44	37.4	33.7
40-59	20.9	27.5
60+	2.5	4.5
Marital-status: Married	60.0	69.6
Divorced	3.8	5.7
Widowed	0.7	0.6
Never married	35.5	24.1
Siblings: 0	21.6	16.1
1-2	65.2	66.5
3+	13.3	17.4
Employment-status: Working	70.9	79.2
Unemployed	5.4	4.5
In education	4.7	7.9
Own-children: Yes	54.1	66.0
Education: Low	34.8	10.3
Medium	40.7	48.4
High	24.5	41.4
Proximity: Co-residence	30.6	3.4
Same building	7.6	0.5
<1 km	14.2	8.4
1-5 km	15.5	16.7
5-25 km	15.1	22.1
25-100 km	6.7	19.1
100-500	3.5	18.5
> 500	4.3	6.9
Another country	5.6	4.3
Contact: Daily	68.3	22.3
Several times a week	18.0	37.8
About once a week	7.3	22.4
About every two weeks	1.9	7.7
About once a month	0.9	5.2
Less than once a month	2.6	3.0
Never	1.2	1.8

Source: SHARE 2004 – release 2, author's calculations.
Notes: Employment status and Homeownership have also a residual category.

Table 2. *Analyses of contact: odds ratios from logistic regression analyses of variation in the frequency of contact between older parents and adult-children.*

	Model-SE	Model-IT
Gender: Female (Male)	1.011	1.235
Age: 50-64	1.093	1.288
65-69	0.936	0.799
70-74 (75+)	1.035	1.345
Marital-status: Separated/Divorced	0.721	0.519
Widowed	0.568***	0.534
Never-married (Married)	1.025	1.005
Education: Low	1.215	1.350
Medium (High)	0.994	1.448
Homeownership: Yes (No)	1.421**	1.194
Don't know/Refusal	1.413	0.825
Physical disability: Severely limited	0.969	0.632
Limited (Not-limited)	1.039	0.504***
Sad/Depressed: Yes (No)	1.043	1.143
Child-gender: Daughter (Son)	1.839***	1.909**
Child-age: 18-34	2.043	3.189
35-44	1.090	2.398
45-59 (60+)	0.896	1.307
Child-marital-status: Separated/Divorced	1.444*	1.134
Widowed	0.916	1.027
Never-married (Married)	1.242	0.950
Siblings: 1	0.649**	0.719
2+ (0)	0.239***	0.411**
Child-employment: Unemployed	0.768	1.456
In education	1.489	0.861
Other (Working)	1.502*	0.931
Child-education: Low	0.842	0.604
Medium (High)	1.254	0.996
Own-children: Yes (No)	1.392*	1.043
Proximity: <5Km (>5Km)	3.784***	15.910***
Constant	0.527	0.733

Significance: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***P>0.001.
Source: SHARE 2004 – release 2, author's calculations.

Table 3. *Analyses of proximity: odds ratios from logistic regression analyses of variation in the proximity between older parents and adult-children.*

	Model-SE	Model-IT
Gender: Female (Male)	1.087	1.067
Age: 50-64	0.748	0.678
65-69	0.916	0.575*
70-74 (75+)	0.875	0.668
Marital-status: Separated/Divorced	1.249	1.385
Widowed	0.686*	0.250***
Never-married (Married)	1.028	0.827
Education: Low	0.964	1.217
Medium (High)	1.015	0.987
Homeownership: Yes (No)	0.699**	1.289
Don't know/Refusal	0.576*	2.301**
Physical disability: Severely limited	1.344	1.066
Limited (Not-limited)	1.234	0.941
Sad/Depressed: Yes (No)	0.895	1.019
Child-gender: Daughter (Son)	0.884	1.019
Child-age: 18-34	3.125**	1.716
35-44	2.518*	1.115
45-59 (60+)	1.611	0.870
Child-marital-status: Separated/Divorced	1.749***	3.567***
Widowed	1.149	0.996
Never-married (Married)	1.108	1.209
Siblings: 1	1.027	0.588***
2+ (0)	0.767	0.633*
Child-employment: Unemployed	1.149	2.089*
In education	1.027	1.963
Other (Working)	0.963	0.978
Child-education: Low	1.834***	1.906**
Medium (High)	1.651***	1.323
Own-children: Yes (No)	1.713***	1.087
Constant	0.111	1.163

Significance: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***P>0.001.
Source: SHARE 2004 – release 2, author's calculations.

REFERENCES

Barbagli M, Castiglioni M, Dalla Zuanna G (2003) *Fare famiglia in Italia. Un secolo di cambiamenti*. Il Mulino, Bologna

Bernhardt E, Goldscheider F (2002) Children and union formation in Sweden. *European Sociological Review* 18: 289-299

Billari FC, Philipov D, Baizan P. (2001) *Leaving home in Europe: the experience of cohorts born around 1960*. MPIDR Working Paper 14, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research

Boersch-Supan A, Brugiavini A, Juerges H Mackenbach J, Siegrist J, Weber G (eds) (2005) *Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe – First Results from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe*. Mannheim: MEA

Boersch-Supan A, Juerges H (2005) *The survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe – Methodology*. Mannheim: MEA

Bracher M, Santow G (1998) Economic independence and union formation in Sweden. *Population Studies* 52: 275-294

Brubaker T (1985) *Later life families*. Sage, Beverly Hills, CA

Clark RL, Wolf DA (1992) *Proximity to children and elderly migration*. In: Rogers A (ed) *Elderly migration and population redistribution: a comparative study*. Belhaven, London, pp. 77-96

Coleman D (2004) Why we don´t have to believe without doubting in the "Second Demographic Transition" – some agnostic comments, *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*

Crimmins E, Ingegneri D (1990) Interaction and living arrangements of older parents and their children. *Research on Ageing* 12: 3-35

De Wit DJ, Frankel BG (1988) Geographic distance and intergenerational contact: a critical assessment and review of the literature. *Journal of Aging Studies* 2: 25-43

Gerstel and Gallagher (1993) Kin keeping and distress: gender, recipients of care, and work-family conflict. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55: 598-607

Gini C, Caranti E (1954) The family in Italy. *Marriage and Family Living* 16: 350+355-361

Glaser K, Hancock R, Stuchbury R (1998) *Attitudes in an ageing society*. Research sponsored by age concert England for the millennium debate of the age. Age Concern Institute of Gerontology, London

Glaser K, Tomassini C (2000) Proximity of older women to their children. A comparison of Britain and Italy. *The Gerontologist* 40: 729-737

Goldscheider FK, Waite LS (1991) *New families, no families?*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA

Grundy E (1996) *Population ageing in Europe*. In: Coleman D (ed) *Europe᾽s population in the 1990s*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 267-296

Grundy E, Murphy M (2006) *Kin availability, contact and support exchanges between adult children and their parents in Great Britain*. In: Lindley B et al. (eds) *Kin matters*. Hart publishing

Grundy E, Shelton N. (2001) Contact between adult children and their parents in Great Britain 1986-99. *Environment and Planning* 33: 685-697

Hank, K (2007) Proximity and contacts between older parents and their children: a European comparison, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69: 157-173

Hoem B, Hoem J (1988) The Swedish family: aspects of contemporary developments. *Journal of Family Issues* 9: 394-424

Hoyert D (1991) Financial and household exchanges between generations. *Research on Ageing* 13: 205-225

Kinsella K, Velkoff VA (2001) *An ageing world*. US Census Bureau, Series P95/01-1. US Government Printing Office, Washington DC

Kohler HP, Billari FC, Ortega A (2002) The emergence of the lowest-low fertility in Europe during the 1990s. *Population and Development Review* 28: 641-680

Kohli M, Kunemund H, Ludicke J (2005) *Family structure, proximity and contact*. In: Borsch-Supan A *et al.* (ed) *Health, ageing and retirement in Europe – First results from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe*. MEA, Mannheim, pp. 164-170

Krout JA (1988) Rural versus urban differences in older parents' contact with their children. *The Gerontologist* 28: 198-203

Kunemund H, Rein M (1999) There is more to receiving than needing: theoretical arguments and empirical explorations of crowding in and crowding out. *Ageing and Society* 19: 93-121

Lawton L, Silverstein M, Bengston V (1994) Affection, social contact and geographic distance between adult children and their parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56: 57-68

Lee GR (1980) Kinship in the seventies: a decade review of research and theory. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42: 923-34

Lin G, Rogerson PA (1995) Older parents and the geographic availability of their adult children. *Research on Ageing* 17: 303-331

McDonald P (2000) Gender equity, social institutions and the future of fertility. *Journal of Population Research* 17: 1-16

McGlone F, Park A, Smith K (1998) *Families and kinship*. Family Policies Study Centre, London

Murphy M (1996) The dynamic household as a logical concept and its use in demography. *European Journal of Population* 12: 363-381

Pearce F (2002) Mamma mia. New Scientist 2352

Popenoe D (1987) Beyond the nuclear family: a statistical portrait of the changing family in Sweden. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 49: 173-183

Reher DS (1998) Family ties in Western Europe: persistent contrasts. *Population and Development Review* 24: 203-234

Rogerson PA, Weng RH, Ge Lin (1993) The spatial separation of parents and their adult children. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83: 656-671

Rosenmayr L, Kockeis E (1963) Propositions for a Sociological Theory of Ageing and the Family. *International Social Science Journal* 15: 410-426

Scott J (1997) Changing households in Britain: do families still matter?. *Sociological Review* 45: 591-620

Sgritta G (1988) The Italian family: tradition and change. Journal of family issues 9: 372-396

Shelton N, Grundy E (2000) Proximity of adult children to their parents in Great Britain. *International Journal of Population Geography* 6: 181-195

Smith G (1998) Residential separation and patterns of interaction between older parents and their adult children. *Progress in Human Geography* 22: 368-384

Tomassini C, Kalogirou S, Grundy E, Fokkema T, Martikainen P, Van Groenou M, Karisto A (2004) Contacts between older parents and their children in four European countries: current patterns and future prospects. *European Journal of Ageing* 1: 54-63

Van de Kaa D (1987) Europe's second demographic transition. *Population Bulletin* 42: 1-57

Warnes A (1984) *Residential separation and visiting between retired persons and their sons and daughters*. In: Broomley D (eds.) *Gerontology: social and behavioural perspectives*. Croom Helm, Ken, pp. 213-219

Warnes A (1986) The residential mobility histories of parents and children, and relationships to present proximity and social integration. *Environment and Planning A* 18: 1581-94

ON-LINE SOURCES

- www.populationeurope.org
- SHARE web-site: www.share-project.org.