Generations between Conflict and Cohesion

Marc Szydlik (ed.)

Seismo

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1 Introduction

Marc Szydlik

I have a very, very close relationship with my parents.
I'm infinitely glad that I have them.
(Woman, age 18)

There are only very few people with whom we share as much of our lifetime as we do with our parents. In most cases, mother and father were there from day one, and they can be a part of our lives for many decades. This shared time has even increased considerably. With longevity on the rise, we have ever more opportunities for intergenerational encounters, activities and support. Never before in all of human history have the generations been able to spend so much time with each other as today.

Yet this is only a possibility. Individuals can live alongside one another for decades without having much to do with each other. This can be the case even when living in the same location, and even more so if an adult child left its parents' home a long time ago and, now living far away, is preoccupied with its own life. Such a situation would suggest isolated individuals who have largely detached from their family of origin.

This raises the question of whether adult children actually use the potentially extensive shared lifetime with their parents. Do family generations ultimately remain close over a lifetime, or do they rather prefer to go their own way? The acid test for this is how adult offspring relate to their parents. What happens when a child comes of age and can basically live its own life? Do offspring in this case still remain attached to their mother and father? Does the picture by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner on the cover of this book apply – or is the relationship rather limited to obligatory birthday greetings and a hastily sent Christmas present? Can we assume that the above-mentioned close bond between the 18-year-old daughter and her parents will actually last her entire life?

Whether adults and their parents remain connected over their lifetime is, however, only the first of many questions. Apart from this general assessment, one would also like to know what the bond between adult family gen-

erations looks like precisely. How often and how intensively do they engage with one another? Are the emotions involved stronger or weaker? How often is support provided and what kind? How much time and money are given or received?

Yet even these questions address only a part of the larger issue of intergenerational relationships. The study of cohesion between adults and their parents is of central importance. There are, however, other important issues as well. This includes tensions and conflicts. How harmonious are intergenerational relationships? What disputes do they trigger? At the same time, a close bond does not necessarily imply that sharing each other's lives is free of burdens and worries. Yet how stressful is the relationship between the generations really? Similar questions arise with respect to mixed and changing feelings. Are such ambivalent emotions typical of relationships with one's parents? Another aspect to be considered is detachment. How often do the generations rarely or even never have anything to do with one another?

The extent of cohesion, conflict, ambivalence and distance is a central question of this book. The next question is, who is more likely to experience one type of relationship or the other – and how pronounced are these differences? What role do education and finances play in this? Does age matter? How special is the relationship between daughters and their mothers, and how typical is that of sons and their fathers? Do we see substantial differences due to migration and region?

Ultimately, these comparisons also raise the question of the causes of greater or lesser cohesion, conflict, ambivalence and distance. On what does intergenerational cohesion depend? How can we explain conflict? What causes ambivalence? How does distance come about? We cannot expect all aspects of intergenerational relationships to follow the exact same logic, but we may be able to identify specific patterns. This also involves analysing what in particular shapes the relationship of adults with their parents: Is it the individuals with their opportunities and needs, is it their families, or is it rather societal contexts?

This book provides a comprehensive view on the relationships of adults with their parents. It is about conflict and cohesion, stress and solidarity, distance and attachment. The detailed analyses address mixed and changing feelings, worries and burdens, tension and conflict, indifference and estrangement as well as closeness and contact, coresidence and proximity, help and care, current transfers and inheritances. All in all, there are numerous aspects according to which intergenerational relationships can be viewed, categorised and analysed.

Book and chapters

This is not the usual edited volume in which more or less suitable articles are published under a general theme. Instead, the book has been designed from the very start as a collaborative and coherent body of work in which each chapter builds on the other. The authors also represent the core project team.

In general, empirical studies face problems of comparability. There are often many articles on the same topic that are rather limited in scope and difficult to compare. Even where they refer to the same survey, the individual analyses frequently differ in terms of the selected groups of people, assumed factors and operationalisations of variables. The result is often a hotchpotch of individual parts that do not really fit together. In this book, by contrast, we have taken care to relate the various topics and chapters to one another. To do so, the factors included in the analyses are implemented in the same way. This facilitates cross-referencing between topics and chapters, identifying connections as well as reaching an overarching assessment of the insights gained.

The book consists of two main parts. The first part revolves around the challenges of intergenerational cohesion, that is, ambivalence, stress, conflict and distance. The second part examines intergenerational solidarity, namely, affectual (closeness), associational (contact) and functional cohesion (space, time, money).

The analysis chapters (3 to 10) are all organised in the same way and consist of an introduction, foundations, results and a summary. The foundations involve illustrating the topics, outlining previous research and formulating hypotheses for the subsequent analyses. The results sections introduce the respective survey questions, provide an initial overview and finally present the detailed analyses. The four figures included in each chapter also follow the same pattern. They begin by focusing on four aspects of the intergenerational issue in question. In the next step, two key aspects are selected. The respective figures concentrate on education, finances, age, gender, migration and region. The fourth figure illustrates the results of the analyses by means of plus and minus signs (the coefficients can be found in the Appendix).

Subsequent to this introduction, the book features the following chapters:

Generations can generally be characterised by four types of relationships: cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance. This chapter determines how prevalent these types are and which differences exist between groups of people. The chapter also offers statements from one hundred adults who share their personal experiences.

Ambivalence can generally be depicted in two variants. On the one hand, ambivalence refers to the simultaneous occurrence of cohesion and conflict. On the other hand, it pertains to ambivalent feelings. The chapter by Klaus Haberkern addresses both variants with a focus on mixed and changing feelings toward parents.

Stress also has many faces, and parents can be one source of it. Christoph Zangger investigates worries, expectations, being overwhelmed and burdens. The detailed analyses refer to worries and burdens: Who worries about their mother and father? Which intergenerational relationship is perceived as particularly burdensome?

Quarrel with parents can also be more or less pronounced and can be traced to a variety of causes. In this chapter, Christoph Zangger considers intergenerational disagreement, tension, quarrel and conflict. The two aspects that he examines in detail are latent tension and manifest conflict between adults and their parents.

Distance between the generations is particularly evident in speechlessness, a lack of understanding, indifference and estrangement. Bettina Isengard looks at all of these forms of distance. She devotes special attention to parental indifference in the lives of their offspring and adult children's estrangement from their parents.

Attachment involves two key forms of intergenerational cohesion: closeness and contact. By looking at emotional closeness, Ronny König examines affectual solidarity and, by considering contacts, investigates associational cohesion. In so doing, he distinguishes between all generations and those who no longer live in the same household.

Space, on the one hand, refers to coresidence as a central dimension of functional intergenerational solidarity. On the other hand, spatial proximity offers an important opportunity for intergenerational cohesion. Bettina Isengard analyses both. She examines which generations live together and who then lives how far apart.

Time can be an important form of support between family generations. In his chapter on time, Klaus Haberkern considers both support given and received. At the centre of attention is help provided to parents in maintaining their household and assistance with paperwork as well as caregiving to mothers and fathers.

Money transferred between the generations ranges from small gifts to large inheritances. Tamara Bosshardt investigates the whole spectrum. In her chapter on money, she deals with current smaller and large financial transfers

as well as with substantial gifts and inheritances – including received and expected bequests.

The concluding chapter offers a summary and an assessment of the most important findings. It emphasises the variety of intergenerational relationships while also highlighting relevant patterns in regard to cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance. Moreover, it discusses major challenges for individuals, families and society.

The Appendix provides additional information on the methodological procedures, the sample sizes and the operationalisation of the variables. It also reports the coefficients of the multivariate analyses.

The present analysis volume is complemented by a data volume published in English (König et al. 2023). The latter consists of three parts. The first part provides detailed information on topics, survey design, respondents, sampling, pretests, cover letters, response rates, data maintenance, weighting and cases. The second part documents the questionnaires in the four survey languages (German, French, Italian and English). The third part contains the basic results for all the questions in regard to education, finances, age, gender, migration and region. These results also provide the numbers that underpin the figures of this analysis volume.

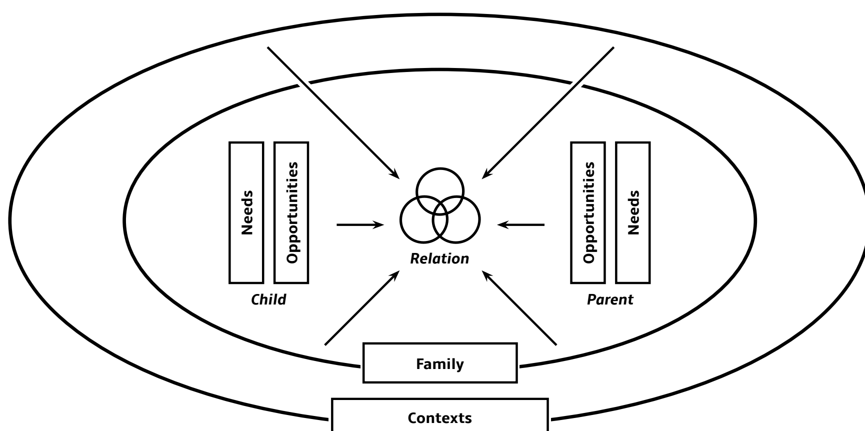
Model and hypotheses

The general foundation for the analyses is the ONFC model (opportunities, needs, family, contexts; Szydlik 2000: 43ff., 2016: 19ff.). It provides the framework for addressing the questions of who engages in what kind of intergenerational relationship and on what stronger or weaker bonds depend. Drawing on this model, we formulate general and specific hypotheses for the subsequent empirical analyses and relate these to a larger context. This is done below using a few examples and then in more detail in the respective chapters for all essential facets of intergenerational relationships, that is, ambivalence, stress, quarrel, distance, attachment, space, time and money.

The three circles at the centre of the ONFC model refer to the central dimensions of intergenerational cohesion, namely, affectual, associational and functional solidarity (Bengtson/Roberts 1991; see Szydlik 2000). They represent emotional attachment, contact and support. Yet the model also allows us to capture and explain the other forms of relationships.

The various factors that account for more or less intense intergenerational relationships are represented by opportunities, needs, family and contexts. By this means, the model differentiates three levels of analysis: micro, meso and macro. The micro level considers the individual opportunities and needs of adults and their parents. The relationship between these individuals is embedded in a family context (meso) and beyond in a societal context (macro).

Figure 1.1: Model



Source: Szydlik 2000, 2016.

Opportunities consist of occasions and resources. They enable, promote, hinder or prevent social interaction. Maintaining relationships requires appropriate ways and means. This applies particularly to the provision of support. In this vein, we can hypothesise that possessing greater financial resources offers more opportunities for intergenerational monetary transfers. Moreover, having money enables one to avoid many a stressful situation. We can also expect residential distance between the generations to be a significant factor. If a person lives nearby, spontaneous contact and reliable help are much more feasible than when that person lives far away.

Needs also include interests, motives, goals, wishes and desires. Interpersonal relationships involve, for instance, the need for closeness and support but also for quarrel with and distance from the other. From a life course perspective, we can, among other things, hypothesise that the need to detach from one's parents rather tends to decrease over time. This suggests that inter-

generational tension and conflict might thereby decline in the long run. At the same time, adult children need more financial support in particular during their education and training, while parents with impaired health have a particularly great need for help and care.

The relationship between (adult) children and their parents is embedded in the respective *family*. This includes family roles and norms, earlier family events as well as family size and composition. With regard to family, one can propose a childhood hypothesis: Conflict with and between parents early in life is likely to lead to more ambivalence, stress, conflict and distance later on, whereas early parental affection can be expected to bolster the relationship over a lifetime. According to a competition hypothesis, offspring having a partner, children of their own or siblings would tend to be associated with weaker attachment to their parents.

Furthermore, families and their intergenerational relationships are influenced by societal *contexts*. These include social, political, economic and cultural conditions along with the rules and norms of institutions and groups. In this respect, we can suppose differences due to migration and region. In line with the safe-haven hypothesis (Szydlik 2016), stressful migration experiences can contribute to family members closing ranks. The spillover hypothesis additionally assumes that neighbouring countries could have an impact on regional contexts. If this proves true, we would expect the closer family bonds in Italy to show up in Italian Switzerland as well.

Project and study

The project builds on two previous studies that resulted in the books "Lebenslange Solidarität?" (Lifelong Solidarity) and "Sharing Lives" (Szydlik 2000, 2016). The first of these two studies addressed selected aspects of the relationships between adults and their parents in Germany. It especially dealt with emotional closeness as well as with current monetary transfers and inheritances (e.g., Szydlik 1995, Motel/Szydlik 1999, Szydlik 2004). This research was based on the German Ageing Survey and the German Socio-Economic Panel. It was embedded in the Berlin-based research project on intergenerational relations headed by Martin Kohli (e.g., Kohli et al. 1997, 2000a, 2000b, Kohli/Szydlik 2000, Künemund/Szydlik 2009).

The second intergenerational research project was initiated in Zurich. It applied a comparative perspective to 14 countries in Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern Europe on the basis of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). Of the project team, Martina Brandt (2009) focused on help, Klaus Haberkern (2009) on care and Christian Deindl (2011) on money. Corinne Igel (2012) examined grandparent-grandchild relationships, Tina Schmid (2014) gender differences and Franz Neuberger (2015) quality of life. Ronny König (2016) studied differences between social classes, Bettina Isengard (2018) spatial proximity and Ariane Bertogg (2018) young adults in Switzerland. In addition to these books, the project team has also published a large number of articles on the subject of generations (e.g., Haberkern/Szydlik 2008, Brandt et al. 2009, Igel et al. 2009, Deindl/Brandt 2011, Igel/Szydlik 2011, Isengard/Szydlik 2012, Neuberger/Haberkern 2014, Haberkern et al. 2015, Bertogg/Szydlik 2016, Isengard et al. 2018; see www.suz.uzh.ch/ages).

Now, in the third major project, the focus is on the relationship of adults in Switzerland with their parents. This new study draws on a survey of our own that has been tailored exclusively to the issue of intergenerational relationships and thus enables much more comprehensive opportunities for analyses than general surveys that may also ask a few questions on generations among many other things. This broadens the perspective in several ways. First, all adults from the age of 18 onward are included. Second, the survey not only considers current intergenerational relationships but also previous ties to parents who have since passed away. Third, by distinguishing between German-, French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland, the study also takes regional aspects into account. Fourth, it includes all relevant generational questions in the same survey. Fifth, it addresses further topics of key significance and, in so doing, embarks on new terrain. All this enables new scientific insights.

A total of 10,623 adults between 18 and 100 years of age took part in the SwissGen study. They provide information on altogether 20,866 intergenerational relationships with their mothers and fathers. For this purpose, the project team developed five questionnaires, one addressing the respondents themselves and one each for living and deceased mothers and fathers. The living parents were born between 1913 and 1982, the deceased ones between 1879 and 1972. The questions were first composed in German and then translated into French, Italian and English.

To gain a representative picture, we conducted a hybrid survey. Half of the respondents opted to return the questionnaires by post, while the other

half responded online. The latter were finally asked the open-ended question of whether they would like to say anything else about the relationship with their parents. The quote at the beginning of each chapter is chosen from these responses. The following chapter furthermore presents, categorises and comments on one hundred answers to this open-ended question.

The survey was conducted between September 2018 and February 2019. The addresses were provided by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The three Swiss language regions and all 26 cantons are representatively included. Three-quarters of the respondents live in German Switzerland, one-fifth in French Switzerland (Romandy) and one-twentieth in Italian Switzerland (Ticino).

Acknowledgements

A large project of this kind requires the collaboration and support of many people. First of all, I would like to thank the core project team: Bettina Isengard, Christoph Zangger, Klaus Haberkern, Ronny König and Tamara Bosshardt. Without their commitment, this project would have been impossible. I thank them very much for the extensive and diligent work in preparing the study, conducting the survey and analysing the data, not to forget the numerous constructive discussions, the successful collaboration and the willingness to commit to the conception of this book as a joint process and one requiring close coordination in writing the chapters.

Of course, I would like to extend special thanks to the more than 10,000 respondents who generously volunteered their time, participated in the survey and answered the many questions on intergenerational relationships.

Prior to conducting the study, we received very helpful information, suggestions and comments from our colleagues Vern Bengtson, Ariane Bertogg, Guy Bodenmann, Peter Farago, Corinne Igel, Martin Kohli, Oliver Lipps, Res Marti, Julia Schroedter and Seymour Spilerman.

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Texts and questionnaires were translated by Stephan Elkins, Eric J. Iannelli and John Koster of SocioTrans – Social Science Translation & Editing as well as by Isabelle Bruhin, Cinzia Corda, Marielle Larré and Julia Schaub.

Furthermore, we are very grateful for financial support of this project by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Zurich. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office was extremely helpful in sampling and providing the respondents' addresses. Last but not least, I would like to emphasise the particularly positive experience of collaborating with Seismo Press – as well as the very good working conditions at the Department of Sociology at the University of Zurich.

2 Generations – Of types and statements

Marc Szydlik

You don't choose your parents.
(Man, age 42)

Introduction

Every intergenerational relationship is unique. When daughters and sons encounter their mothers and fathers, this results in specific connections between particular individuals. Yet, at the same time, we also see patterns that emerge repeatedly. This book describes and analyses such similarities. Considering them allows us to identify the rules that govern such intergenerational relationships – and the ones that do not. For instance, how unique is one's own relationship with one's mother and father? Does it correspond with general patterns, or is it exceptional in every respect?

This chapter provides an initial overview. To do so, the types of relationships specified in the book's title – "conflict" and "cohesion" – will be juxtaposed with one another. It discusses to what extent these types are opposites, whether conflict and cohesion can occur at the same time and the range of these relationships. In so doing, this chapter builds a bridge between the first and second part of the book. It also builds another bridge: one between people and numbers. The findings presented in this book are based on a representative study. The respondents and their intergenerational relationships represent not only themselves but millions of people and their relationships. The book gives a summary of individuals and their family relationships in the form of numbers. Quantitative empirical social research has the advantage of being able to provide information that is representative across entire groups of people and even across societies. What is sometimes forgotten, however, is that behind these numbers are individual people, situations and stories.

These individuals, situations and stories can be characterised both by similarity and diversity. On the one hand, many relationships might be similar

and correspond to a few patterns. To capture this, it can be useful to identify types. On the other hand, such types group individuals and their relationships into rather rough categories. The goal is therefore also to use individual statements to learn more about the similarities and diversity of individuals, relationships and types.

This chapter spans an arc from general patterns to individual statements. It begins by introducing the conflict-cohesion model with four types of relationships: cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance. *Cohesion* is characterised by strong attachment in the absence of noteworthy conflicts. *Ambivalence* exists when a close relationship is accompanied by quarrels. Relationships marked by *conflict* are dominated by tension and dispute. *Distance* means no particular attachment while there are hardly any conflicts. These four types are also explored empirically. How frequently do they occur? What differences exist between groups of people in regard to education, finances, age, gender, migration and region? How strong is cohesion? How prevalent is the conflictual type? Which individuals are affected in one way or the other to a greater or lesser extent?

The following step involves listening to the individual voices of one hundred adults. They tell us about their relationships with their parents in their own words. The objective here is not to provide an empirically grounded analysis as in the other chapters of the book. These one hundred statements rather intend to underline that this book is based on numerous individual people and their personal relationships, about each one of whom one could write a book in its own right. The descriptions and analyses thus represent a large number of personal stories and experiences.

At the same time, these one hundred individuals introduce the four types of relationships in more detail. We document 25 statements each to exemplify cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance. The statements pertain to current intergenerational relationships as well as to past ones with now deceased parents. The chapter closes with a summary of the most important findings.

Types

Model

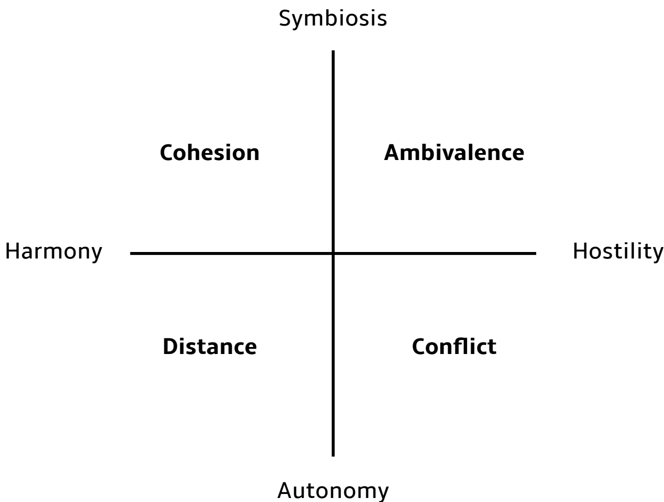
The conflict-cohesion model in Figure 2.1 assumes that intergenerational relationships can be generally categorised along the lines of conflict and cohesion.

One or the other can be more pronounced – and either one can therefore have stronger or weaker consequences for the relationship and the individuals involved. Accordingly, the model distinguishes between a conflict line and a cohesion line (Szydlik 2016: 16ff.).

The conflict line ranges from total harmony to utmost hostility, although in reality both of these extremes occur only rarely. The majority of relationships are situated somewhere in between. Some intergenerational relations are marked by greater and some by lesser conflict. The degree of tension and conflict, along with the factors that account for this, are discussed in the first part of the book.

Cohesion ranges from complete symbiosis to absolute autonomy in the absence of an attachment of any kind. Here, too, most intergenerational relations are somewhere in between the two poles – at different distances from the extremes. The forms, extent and factors of cohesion between adult family generations are the focus of the second part of the book.

Figure 2.1: Conflict and cohesion



Source: Szydlik 2016.

The model results in four general types of relationships that lie in the four fields defined by the conflict and cohesion axes. In the order of the book chapters, these are ambivalence, conflict, distance and cohesion. At the same time,

the model shows the range of intergenerational relationships within each of the four types. Each type can be characterised by greater or lesser conflict or cohesion. Some relationships will thus clearly correspond with one of the four types; others will be positioned more toward the margins of a type and perhaps lean toward a neighbouring type.

How might we characterise the four types? According to Figure 2.1, an ambivalent relationship is marked by the simultaneous existence of conflict and cohesion (Chapter 3). The conflictual type, by contrast, involves less close attachment and is rather dominated by tension and quarrelling (Chapter 5). The distanced generational type strives toward autonomy. Conflicts hardly play a role (anymore), but there is also no particular attachment (anymore) either. The generations involved in such a relationship can be considered more or less estranged (Chapter 6). The close type, by contrast, is marked by strong cohesion. This group experiences less conflict and is mostly characterised by intergenerational solidarity (Chapters 7 to 10).

Types

There are many ways to develop a typology. Intergenerational relationships are no exception in this respect. It therefore comes as no surprise that generational research has proposed a whole range of typologies of intergenerational relationships (e.g., Silverstein et al. 1994, Silverstein/Bengtson 1997, Szydlik 2000, Fingerman et al. 2004, Giarrusso et al. 2005, Gaalen/Dykstra 2006, Fokkema et al. 2008, Steinbach 2008, Ferring et al. 2009, Nauck 2009, Silverstein et al. 2010, Dykstra/Fokkema 2011, Szydlik 2016, Baykara-Krumme/Fokkema 2019, Karpinska/Dykstra 2019, Kim et al. 2020). Most typologies feature similarities, but there are also differences in terms of their theoretical and empirical foundations. This has consequences with regard to the number of generational types, their composition and the percentages calculated for each type.

One of the decisions that play an important role in this respect is which features of the intergenerational relation are selected for developing the typology. For instance, one could easily further differentiate the basic typology in Figure 2.1 by subdividing each of the four groups into those with and without intergenerational support. However, such support could be a momentary snapshot, and its absence might simply be the result of (currently) not needing assistance. Moreover, the goal of this illustrative chapter is to use a typology that is as simple as possible – one that can of course be extended or further differentiated. This chapter therefore abstains from moving current support

to the centre of attention, leaving this aspect to be addressed in Chapters 8, 9 and 10. At the same time, Figure 2.1 indicates that typologies "merely" group more or less similar cases while rather neglecting the range and diversity of people and relationships.

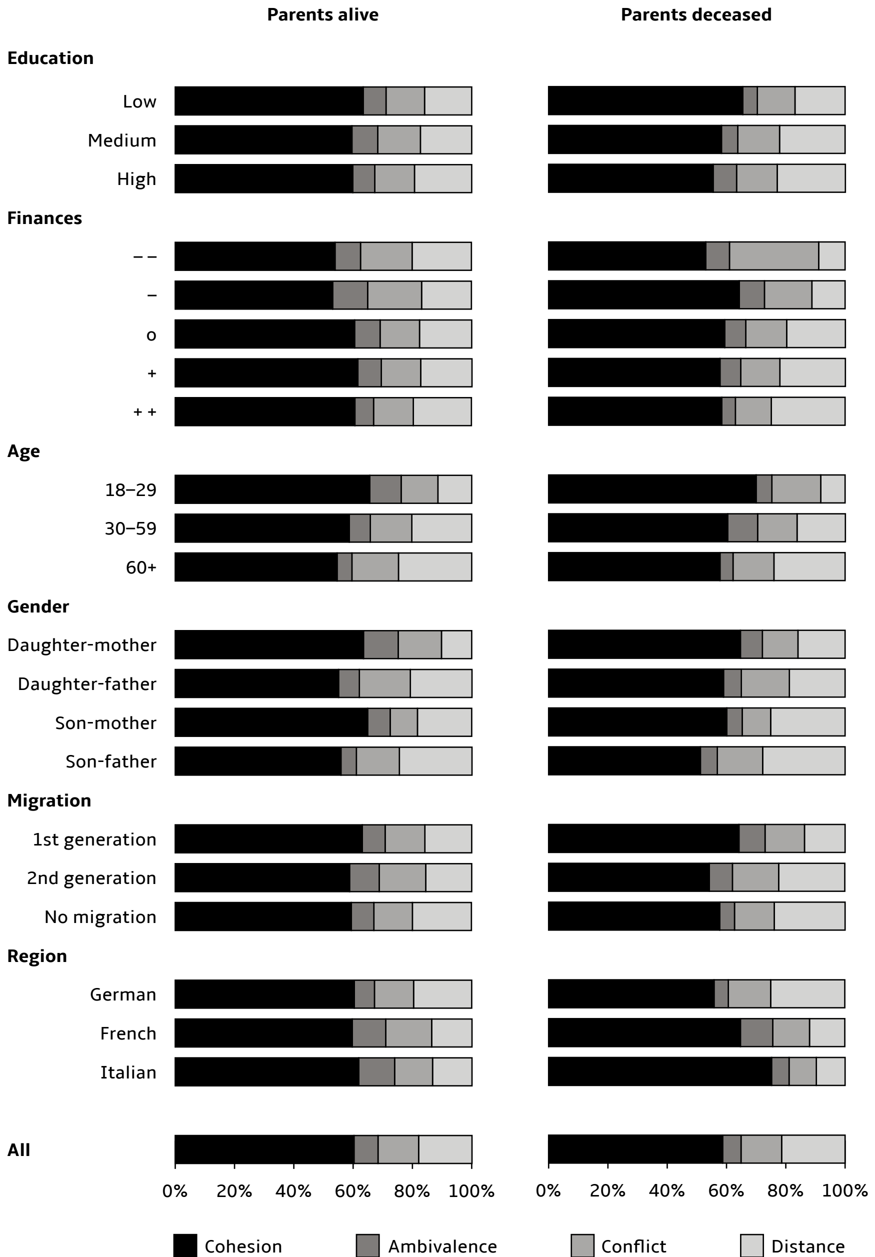
We will now empirically illustrate the four types of the conflict-cohesion model. In so doing, we will determine the frequency of each type. Furthermore, we will assess whether there are clear differences between groups of people.

Conflict and cohesion are traced via two questions in the SwissGen study (for details, see Chapters 5 and 7): "There is conflict between my mother and me" and "How closely do you feel connected with your mother today?" Corresponding questions are used for living fathers, deceased mothers and deceased fathers (see the questionnaires in König et al. 2023). In the following step, we divide the answers to each of these two questions into two groups. To prevent social desirability effects in surveys, we group the responses "Always", "Often" and "Sometimes" to the conflict question into one category (reference: "Rarely" and "Never") and distinguish the responses "Very close" and "Close" to the emotional closeness question from the responses "Medium", "Not very close" and "Not close at all".

Figure 2.2 displays the results. The left side gives the responses from adults with living parents, whereas the right side reflects the last period of time shared with the now deceased mothers and fathers. The figure first distinguishes various groups of people and then provides the total proportions. What we see is the prevalence of the generational type marked by cohesion. Three in five adults feel a close or very close attachment to their living parents and rarely or never have any conflicts with them to speak of. This proportion is the same for the last period of time shared with their now deceased parents. The other three generational types add up to two-fifths accordingly. Ambivalent relationships (close attachment and quarrelling) can be observed for eight and six per cent, respectively. Conflictual intergenerational relationships (quarrel alongside weak attachment) apply to 14 per cent of adults with living and deceased parents alike, whereas distance (neither conflict nor close attachment) describes 18 and 21 per cent of the relationships, respectively.

Differentiation by education, finances, age, gender, migration and region reveals some remarkable connections. These will be analysed in more detail in the respective chapters of this book (additional information can be found in the Appendix). At this point, we can assert that cohesion is the dominant relationship type across all groups of people. There are, however, also some more or less marked differences.

Figure 2.2: Types



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,058 living parents / 6,726 deceased parents).

For education, the differences are less pronounced overall. Higher education, however, is accompanied by somewhat less cohesion. This is especially the case for the last period of time with now deceased parents. Instead, distance generally increases with education. During the last year of parents' lives, we also see ambivalence increasing with higher educational attainment.

With regard to their financial situation, the two groups with the lowest financial means report somewhat lower cohesion with living parents and more conflicts instead. For mothers' and fathers' last year of life, we observe less ambivalent and conflictual relationships when their offspring are clearly better able to make ends meet. In this case, similar to education, distance increases instead.

We see particularly pronounced effects with respect to age. Although even among the oldest age group, more than half of the adults report having few conflicts and close bonds with their parents, this is even more frequent among the younger adults. Conversely, the proportion of distanced relationships clearly increases with age. This applies to one-tenth of those younger than 30 but to a quarter of those aged 60 and above.

The least distanced relationships are between daughters and their mothers. Only one in ten daughters speaks of having a distanced relationship with her mother, whereas this applies to every fourth son's relationship to his father. Daughter-mother relationships are also fairly frequently characterised by ambivalence, that is, by a both close and conflictual connection. Relationships of the conflictual type, in turn, particularly often involve fathers.

With regard to migration, the first generation stands out. Among them, cohesion is strongest. Even if their parents live in another country (König et al. 2023: Tables AD3), the intergenerational relationship remains close across borders. The second generation, by contrast, reports more conflicts. Adults with no immediate history of migration, on the other hand, are more likely to have a distanced relationship with their parents.

In Italian Switzerland, intergenerational ties are stronger overall, especially toward the end of the parents' lives. Distanced generations are most frequently found in German-speaking Switzerland – although the vast majority does not belong to this relationship type here either. French Switzerland generally ranks in between the two other regions.

All in all, the differences between current intergenerational relationships and previous ties to now deceased parents are not substantial. The total percentages for the two groups do not differ much, and, with the exception of a few pronounced differences, this generally also holds true for patterns among the groups of people.

Statements

At the end of the online survey, we asked an open-ended question, which in the four languages was worded as follows: „Möchten Sie noch etwas über die Beziehung zu Ihren Eltern sagen?“ / « Souhaitez-vous ajouter autre chose sur la relation avec vos parents ? » / “Vorrebbe aggiungere qualcosa sul rapporto con i Suoi genitori?” / “Would you like to say anything else about the relationship with your parents?”

Nearly a third (1,713) of the online respondents answered this question (see Introduction and König et al. 2023: Table 5). Some of these answers are short and concise; other responses are very detailed. The statements range from a single word to lengthy elaborations of family history. Some refer to both parents together, others address mother and father separately, while still others focus on one parent.

This subchapter neither intends to present a representative sample nor seeks to provide a detailed analysis of individual cases. The aim is rather to illustrate the four generational types in more detail by means of examples. In a book based on quantitative analyses, this further intends to emphasise that the numbers provided derive from many individuals and their family histories.

From the 1,713 personal responses to the open-ended question, we document a total of 100 statements below, 25 for each generational type ordered by the age of the respondents. Some of these statements have been shortened, and we have omitted personal information to ensure anonymity.

The relationship with one’s mother can differ from that with one’s father. A person can have a close relationship with one parent and a distanced one with the other. In the event that the respondents’ relationships with their two parents were assigned to two different types according to the aforementioned typology, we select the narrative sequence that can be attributed to the respective generational type for describing ambivalent, conflictual and distanced relationships. That is to say, when we describe the distanced type, the corresponding statement refers to the parent involved in that distanced relationship.

Cohesion

This relationship type involves close attachment without notable conflict. In contrast to the other three types, the adults speaking here are exclusively ones whose relationship to both parents can be characterised in terms of “cohe-

sion". Since this is the most frequent generational type, most of the responses to the open-ended question also fall into this category. Here are 25 examples:

1. "To me, my family (parents and siblings) is the most important thing in the world. I would go through fire and water to help one of them out in an emergency." (Woman, age 18)

2. "I love them very much. I would be at a complete loss without them." (Woman, age 19)

3. "The relationship with my parents has always been good. Since I moved out, it's been even better." (Woman, age 23)

4. "Despite their divorce during my early childhood, I always felt secure and had a fulfilling family life." (Man, age 26)

5. "I love my parents. Both of them." (Man, age 29)

6. "I'm grateful to have/have had the best parents. In other families, there is a lot of quarrelling or even hatred, especially after a divorce. My parents were superb in dealing with the situation after they separated. I'm infinitely grateful to them for that." (Woman, age 35)

7. "Sensational, I couldn't imagine it being any better. I'm very, very thankful and very happy that I am/was so fortunate to have/have had such parents." (Man, age 37)

8. "I cherish my parents and I'm grateful to them for everything. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be who I am today. Today, I'm a healthy and happy person with a wonderful family of my own!" (Man, age 40)

9. "The most important thing in the relationship with my parents is our deep trust. There is nothing that I couldn't approach them with, and the same is true the other way around." (Woman, age 44)

10. "We have a very good relationship in our entire family. We are all there for one another, and we never quarrel." (Man, age 47)

11. "I wish everyone such a beautiful relationship like I have with my parents. But there is one drawback. Approaching 50, I am frightened by the thought that I will one day have to live without their backing, because they are still very present in my life, so that I sometimes have the impression of being dependent on them, because they support me a lot in every respect. Can parents who are too close to their children cause a lack of autonomy later on?" (Man, age 49)

12. "My father spent his last years in assisted living. He was able to live there until he died because my sister and I supported him on a daily basis. Our parents were always there for us kids, and when they needed it, we were always there for them as well!" (Woman, age 53)

13. "My parents enabled me to have a beautiful childhood and never put me under pressure. They taught me to be responsible and modest. I hope that they are able to enjoy a long life. Inheriting isn't important to me. They worked for all that they have and should also be able to spend it." (Woman, age 55)

14. "They always let me do my own thing and only rarely interfered even when I was a child. Their praise and recognition lent me a lot of self-confidence early on." (Man, age 58)

15. "We help and support each other whenever there is a need for it. (…) Nowadays, I talk with my mother a lot. Unfortunately, I failed to do that with my father, so that I can now no longer find out anything about his life from him directly. I perceive this as a personal loss. I would have liked to know more about his youth and his experiences." (Man, age 62)

16. "(…) My parents, my father in particular, were my most significant others. Even though my parents have been gone for almost 20 years now, I still miss them every day." (Woman, age 66)

17. "I had fantastic parents! (I would have never exchanged them for any others)." (Man, age 68)

18. "I was very fond of my parents. I considered my mother to be 'irreplaceable'. She'll always be a part of me and I'll be a part of her. A mother is the greatest thing there is." (Man, age 71)

19. "I cherished my parents tremendously. They gave me great freedom. They were a model for me in every respect." (Man, age 75)

20. "I had exemplary parents. I grew up during a time when parents were still an authority, and I don't regret that because it was good that way." (Woman, age 78)

21. "It was a very good relationship with ups and downs, just the way it is actually supposed to be, marked by tolerance and mutual respect." (Man, age 80)

22. "Although they were very different, my parents were role models, who provided guidance and support to my sister and me in our lives as women, wives and mothers. Thank you, Dad and Mum." (Woman, age 84)

23. "My brother and I had loving parents who supported us." (Woman, age 88)

24. "My parents got along admirably well. I had fabulous parents. I was very close to my mother." (Woman, age 93)

25. "I had a wonderful upbringing. We weren't rich, but my parents always had an open hand for people in need. I am therefore so grateful for all that they gave me. If all kids had such a home, there would certainly not be so many young ones who are so badly behaved and so on." (Woman, age 96)

Respondents who constitute the "cohesion" relationship type frequently express great enthusiasm when they speak of their parents and their relationship with them. This is just as true for young adults with regard to their still fairly young living mothers and fathers as it is for (very) old respondents who talk about their long-deceased parents. The statements revolve around very close attachment, love, gratitude, fortune, trust, support, recognition, freedom, tolerance and respect. Time and again, the respondents also underline the good relationship between their mother and father and emphasise their parents' ability to handle the situation successfully in the event of separation and divorce.

Further mention is made of the comprehensive and lifelong support provided by their mother and father as well as help given to parents in turn. What

is also highlighted is the very positive influence of their mother and father on their own personal development. The respondents trace back to their parents positive characteristics that they attribute to themselves, such as a sense of responsibility and self-confidence. Factors mentioned in this respect are the freedoms that they were given, not being pressured, or the praise and recognition they received. Elderly respondents state that they miss their deceased parents to a great degree, emphasise their irreplaceability and characterise them as being great role models.

Ambivalence

The ambivalent generational type is marked by the simultaneous occurrence of conflicts and closeness. Our analysis shows that this is the rarest of the four types. Even so, ambivalent intergenerational relationships must not be neglected. The 25 selected statements are as follows:

26. "Even though I sometimes have disagreements with my parents, I still love them and always support them." (Man, age 18)

27. "Disagreements with my father frequently led to quarrelling or tension. However, he was always there when I needed him." (Woman, age 22)

28. "Although our family was highly intact by comparison, my relationship with my parents is rather distanced. We always lived very different lives, but since I moved out my relationship to my parents feels more natural and, interestingly, also closer." (Woman, age 24)

29. "(…) The tension between me and my mother primarily originates in her always expecting a lot of me (…), and then she very often shows her disappointment with me, especially with how I live my life (…). But she was also always there for me and supported me, particularly financially. Lately, we have been leaving each other more space and privacy, and the relationship between us has become more harmonious. (…)" (Woman, age 27)

30. "The relationship with my mother was emotionally very tense, particularly during my puberty, and there were frequent conflicts. (…) Years later she was diagnosed with some mental health problems (…). Many of

my mother's behavioural patterns during my childhood were early signs or symptoms of the now diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder from her own childhood." (Man, age 29)

31. "I know that my parents love me and vice versa. The strict upbringing that they experienced during their childhood and their life course, however, has led to a lack of openness and communication in my family. The thought of taking care of their personal hygiene makes me feel uncomfortable. Perhaps because I have difficulty accepting that they are getting older and our roles are reversing." (Woman, age 30)

32. "(…) My father suffers from schizophrenia and dementia and is in a nursing home." (Woman, age 34)

33. "I love my parents even if it is not always easy with them." (Man, age 35)

34. "(…) My mother's conservative disposition was not very favourable for our relationship. I was a pronounced freethinker, even as a child, who did her own thing, even in opposition to all the others. Today I understand her actions and opinions and can relate to them. My mother doesn't always understand me still today, but she can accept that I just am who I am." (Woman, age 36)

35. "My mother (…) wants to give so much; she is always there when you need something. But she rarely listens; even if you tell her to just listen for once, she doesn't do that. This often saddens me or ticks me off (…) because there is no room for me anymore. (…) What is more, she wants to spend time with me every day, but I don't want to. I have to constantly set boundaries. It's really a pity because she is a good-hearted person. She'd give me the shirt off her back. (…) Despite these differences, I'm very grateful for all that my parents have done or are still doing for me. (…)" (Woman, age 37)

36. "My childhood was marked by my parents' (…) contentious divorce. Both of my parents wanted us children to live with them. Before the court, we were asked whether we wanted to stay with my mother or move in with my father. Since we had already been living with my mother for quite a while, we decided we wanted to move in with my father. We were only trying to be fair. (…). My mother was crying in the courtroom; my father was

delighted. The feeling of having deeply hurt her was one of worst experiences of my life." (Man, age 39)

37. "My mother was very withdrawn. She hardly ever told me anything about her youth, her emotions and so on. She had cancer, but she never told me what the doctors told her either. (…) Nevertheless, I loved both of my parents very very much." (Woman, age 40)

38. "My mother was very loving, but because of her own severe mental and physical problems, she was not able to be there for me. Among other things, she had an addiction problem (…). Because of this, my relationship with her was sometimes a bit torn. At some point, I eventually detached myself from her to protect myself. (…)" (Woman, age 43)

39. "At the material level, my relationship with my parents is very satisfactory and at the emotional level very deficient." (Man, age 45)

40. "My mother was seriously mentally ill. She took her life through suicide." (Woman, age 50)

41. "I won't change them anymore, and they won't change me – all is wonderful." (Woman, age 50)

42. "I'm currently trying to distance myself more from my parents because I feel responsible for everything that is going on with them … . Of course, I know that I am not …, but that's just the way it is … . However, because of this 'distancing thing', I feel rather tied to my parents and I've even thought about it being 'better' if they were no longer alive, I cannot imagine a life without them … and I don't want to either …" (Man, age 50)

43. "Deep love and caring, in spite of a conflictual childhood." (Woman, age 52)

44. "I have a very close relationship with my parents. Sometimes even too close …" (Woman, age 57)

45. "Difficult with my mother. Very understanding with my father." (Man, age 57)

46. "(…) My mother was always very critical of what I was doing – still today, she does not accept me, who I am – in conflicts at school, work or in life, she always came to the defence of the others and sought fault with me …" (Woman, age 59)

47. "(…) My mother forced me to eat meat every day through my entire childhood (…), even if I had to throw up. I was not allowed to go to school before my plate was empty. Until last year, I was always there for my mother (…). Since then, our relationship has been upset because, despite her age, she makes decisions (…) that are incomprehensible." (Woman, age 63)

48. "A partnership with children is already a huge challenge as it is. An intercultural relationship like that of my parents – of Indian and Swiss origin – is an incomparably greater challenge." (Man, age 65)

49. "In 'my day', manifestations of affections were virtually absent, but my parents were present and loved us in 'their own way'." (Woman, age 70)

50. "A difficult life with one parent being manic depressive and the other one becoming an alcoholic. (…) In spite of all this, they loved us dearly and were brought down by their respective problems." (Woman, age 72)

These statements reaffirm the previous assignment of these respondents to the ambivalent generational type. Again and again, they explicitly speak of the simultaneous occurrence of affection and conflict. The two are often deliberately juxtaposed using corresponding terms such as "even though", "despite", "however". At the same time, it is apparent that the statements reflecting ambivalence exhibit a greater range than the close relationship type. Respondents of the close type primarily emphasise their tight bonds with their parents, very often in identical statements. In the case of the ambivalence type, the respondents rather describe specific intergenerational relationships. These descriptions may also involve longer narrations (in some cases shortened here) to explain complex situations.

The respondents repeatedly attempt to trace the causes of this ambivalent relationship. For instance, they counterpose conservative parents and liberal offspring, too clingy or, on the contrary, withdrawn mothers and fathers, or they mention conflictual divorces, ambivalent support, contradictory emo-

tions between distancing and affection, as well as cultural differences. Sometimes mental problems are identified as primary causes. Most assessments are characterised by a negative attitude; only rarely do they emphasise acceptance of the situation.

Conflict

According to the typology, conflictual relationships are characterised by considerable quarrel between adults and their parents, accompanied by limited attachment. This results in an intergenerational relationship dominated by conflict. Here are 25 examples:

> *51. "The relationship with my parents has changed considerably since I discovered a year ago that my father had cheated on my mother. And in the last three months in particular, the relationship with my father has been really bad because I will never forgive him for what he did."* (Woman, age 20)

> *52. "Because of the cultural difference, my father and I frequently have different opinions. My father is very old-fashioned since he grew up in Kosovo, and that's not me; that bothers him. This conflict will probably result in me no longer wanting to have much to do with my father in the long run if he doesn't accept who I am and what I want."* (Man, age 22)

> *53. "My father was an alcoholic, cheated on my mother; they separated; he never got in touch until he had a new wife. It depresses my mother still today. Because of this, I mostly grew up with a nanny. My father plays happy family with his new wife (…)."* (Woman, age 22)

> *54. "It is a difficult relationship because they believe to know what is best for my life."* (Man, age 23)

> *55. "Both of my parents are perverted narcissistic manipulators. They have abused me and my siblings physically and mentally, and regularly so, during our whole life. (…) I have attempted to detach myself from them because contact with them makes me feel miserable. (…)"* (Woman, age 24)

> *56. "My father no longer exists as far as I'm concerned."* (Man, age 25)

57. "My parents are divorced; the relationship to my father is problematic because I can't accept what he did to my mother financially. (…) I still can't get over the fact that a man can financially ruin a woman – whom he once loved, had children with and a home, friends and a fulfilled life – to a degree that, after so many years of marriage, she has to start all over again. (…)" (Man, age 25)

58. "I feel unfairly treated by my parents compared to my brothers (e.g., they funded their university studies but not mine). Great emotional distance between me and my parents (especially with my mother), which both sides are good at glossing over toward outsiders." (Woman, age 31)

59. "My father refused to pay child support, which is why I had to sue him in court. We haven't been in touch ever since." (Woman, age 37)

60. "Toxic parents." (Man, age 37)

61. "My father cheated on my mother with another woman (…) and humiliated her in the worst possible way. I tried to mediate, organised couple therapy. But his behaviour tore open so many old wounds on my part, which he is not able to address together with me, that I have arrived at the point where I will completely cut ties with him." (Woman, age 42)

62. "They took too little time for us children, worked too much, punished us too often, failed to show enough love." (Woman, age 43)

63. "Terrible. None of my parents ever supported me the way you would want them to. My father a little (you have to give him that). But he has a new family with a woman who is 20 years younger (any questions?)." (Woman, age 44)

64. "The relationship with my mother is really bad because she accepts neither me nor my wife. (…) To save my marriage, I cut ties with her about two years ago after the last attempt at peaceful co-existence. My marriage is perfect, and I can live without my mother. I would have preferred it differently, but my mother does not let anyone help her. (…)" (Man, age 45)

65. "Five years ago, I distanced myself from my mother somewhat because she was very close to me before that, even too close, and it was too much of

a burden. At the time, I felt obliged to be there for her a lot." (Woman, age 49)

66. "My father was the worst person I know." (Woman, age 52)

67. "(…) My father often beat my mother, abused her and had alcohol problems until he died. Because of that, as an adult with a household of my own, I no longer had any contact with him. (…)" (Man, age 55)

68. "I was only able to live a life of my own by escaping the influence of the family tyrant (father) and his second (mother, who probably did not adopt this role voluntarily) and therefore cut off ties of any kind." (Man, age 58)

69. "The relationship with my parents was very difficult, because of my mother, who did not want me." (Woman, age 63)

70. "(…) In my early childhood, my father abused me for the first time! This happened on an irregular basis until late childhood. (…)" (Woman, age 64)

71. "In my perception, I have no parents; was only a mishap." (Man, age 69)

72. "Father pressured me into an apprenticeship as a craftsman. I actually wanted to attend a conservatory. To him that was nonsense. (…) If I were young again, I would carry through with it. In my youth, you were expected to obey." (Man, age 70)

73. "My relationship with my father was really bad. He was authoritarian and brutal also toward his wife, my mother (…). There was never a normal life. That burdens me still today." (Woman, age 73)

74. "My parents didn't have a good relationship; they expected me early on to choose sides or act as a referee. In the process, they lost sight of me as a person. (…)" (Woman, age 74)

75. "My mother was a doormat, and my father was a tyrant. They both had unrealistic expectations of me and my siblings. They did not agree with the wife I chose but compromised and took an interest in their grandchildren. I respected my mother but came to hate my father." (Man, age 76)

A recurrent pattern among the conflictual generational type is parents with marital problems. Most speak of unfaithful fathers and mothers suffering from this. Refusal to pay child support also plays a role. There are also cases in which both parents are described in extremely negative terms. The issues here are injustices and manipulation; physical and mental violence against their mothers, the respondents themselves and their siblings; alcohol addiction, negligence, humiliation and even abuse. Other sources of conflict are parents having taken too little time for their children and having failed to show them sufficient affection. Additional factors are differences in attitudes and life plans as well as onerous demands from mothers and fathers. Some respondents were pressured into undesired roles and occupations by their parents.

The family histories, partly described in great detail (and abbreviated here), attest to the impact of severe childhood experiences far into old age, to sadness and bitterness – and sometimes even to great anger toward both parents or toward one's mother or father. These statements explain why conflict dominates the relationship and detachment from one's parents, or one of them, is imminent or has already happened. Overall, they suggest that pronounced conflict casts doubt on the continuation of the relationship and can thus lead to distancing or even to permanent separation.

Distance

Intergenerational relationships of this kind are neither close nor conflictual. There is no particular attachment, nor do they involve conflict to speak of. Rather, the generations live their own lives more or less independently of one another. These are 25 selected statements:

76. "(…) I have a distanced relationship with my father, but that's ok with both of us." (Woman, age 24)

77. "Our father left us early on and was never there for us (…)" (Woman, age 26)

78. "Was beaten as a child. Grew up in modest circumstances. Was on my own early on." (Man, age 28)

79. "The relationship with my father is rather 'dispassionate'. I do think that he loves me, but he can't show his emotions much. (…)" (Woman, age 30)

80. "It's okay the way it is. Having so little contact doesn't bother me, and they are alright with that too. I have enough family connection with my husband's family." (Woman, age 31)

81. "It's hard to handle if your parents have never been interested in your life. As a child I was a burden to them; today they simply don't care …" (Woman, age 34)

82. "We have grown apart. Large spatial distance. Difficult to maintain a relationship. Grandfather not much interested in his grandchildren." (Man, age 37)

83. "Using the word 'relationship' would be exaggerated. Related is more accurate. They regularly forget that I exist." (Woman, age 38)

84. "Since we have forgotten our native tongue, Vietnamese, and it no longer is the language in which we think, the relationship with my parents has become rather superficial. We nevertheless all love and respect each other. I am grateful for all that my parents endured and did for me and my siblings." (Woman, age 39)

85. "You don't choose your parents." (Man, age 42)

86. "The biggest relationship issues that I had with my parents can be traced back to the conflictual relationship between my mother and father. During my entire childhood, they would 'bark' at each other every day (…), without the situation leading to a divorce, however. This created a very stressful atmosphere at home, with a lot of yelling, and this grim atmosphere led me to move out as soon as possible (just before I turned 18). (…)" (Woman, age 49)

87. "Unfortunately, a cold loveless relationship." (Woman, age 50)

88. "Parents were separated ever since we were kids. Father didn't have any visitation rights since he wasn't paying child support." (Man, age 51)

89. "I'm glad and happy to have no contact." (Woman, age 52)

90. "It was not easy to be their child." (Woman, age 55)

91. "Talking and showing emotions was never an issue in our family. I think that times were different for my parents. Back then, other issues were more important. I often felt like an outsider; that's why I moved away and lived my own life after my apprenticeship." (Woman, age 58)

92. "Today, I would spend more time with my parents, especially once their mobility and health deteriorated." (Man, age 58)

93. "(…) My mother only saw my brother and favoured him; that was very painful. She never showed me her love much; I was unimportant to her." (Woman, age 63)

94. "What are parents? Would have loved to have had some!" (Man, age 64)

95. "I would generally call my father an 'absent father'. My mother was often overwhelmed by six children. (…)" (Man, age 65)

96. "Because my parents were divorced and we kids lived with our father, the relationship was difficult. My siblings were the more important part." (Woman, age 70)

97. "Everyone lived their own life." (Woman, age 71)

98. "Because of the family circumstances (divorce, remarriage), they were busy with their own problems, so I mostly had to find my own way." (Man, age 75)

99. "Sometimes you wish for a different kind of relationship, maybe warmer and opener." (Man, age 77)

100. "Mutual live and let live. No warmth. I felt like the fifth wheel on the cart." (Man, age 81)

The statements illustrate the range among the distanced generations. Some never had any attachment, some have always had a weak connection, others gradually grew apart over time and still others have withdrawn more or less abruptly. Some report the early death of their mother or father, which is why they could not develop a deeper relationship. Others speak of their old par-

ents suffering from dementia for many years, so that questions about their relationship over the last twelve months paint a different picture than when looking back at their decades-long previous relationship.

As in the case of conflict, parental quarrelling, separation and divorce also have an impact on generational distance. Again, fathers are more likely to be mentioned than mothers. Some fathers came into the picture only as biological fathers. They left mother and child early on or, after a later separation, turned their backs on their previous family and also refused to pay child support. In other cases, respondents describe a distanced relationship all along, specifically because of their father's inability to show emotions.

Summary

Intergenerational relationships range from complete symbiosis to absolute autonomy and from total harmony to utmost hostility. These four poles represent the extremes. They do not reflect the majority of intergenerational relationships. Instead, the generations line up between the poles at a greater or lesser distance from these extremes. At the same time, according to the conflict-cohesion model, conflict and cohesion must not be irreconcilable opposites. Rather, they can occur together.

From the cohesion and conflict axes, we can derive four general relationship types: cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance. The model states that there is also a substantial range within these types. In general, the most frequent type is "cohesion". Three in five relationships can be assigned to this generational type. The three other types add up to two-fifths accordingly. Half of these belong to the distanced type. In addition, conflictual relationships are approximately twice as frequent as ambivalent ones.

The prevalence of close attachment between adults and their parents is confirmed for all groups considered. There are, however, also interesting differences. These are less pronounced for education and money. However, attachment does decrease substantially with age, whereas distance increases. Daughter-mother relationships are the least distanced, and sons in particular report a distanced relationship with their father. First-generation migrants exhibit stronger cohesion with their parents, and this is also true for generations in Italian Switzerland.

The four types are also the basis for selecting one hundred statements. These statements serve to illustrate and complement the quantitative study by offering a peek behind the numbers. The personal voices support the previous classification into close, ambivalent, conflictual and distanced relationships.

In the case of the close type, the large difference to the other intergenerational relationships is striking. These respondents do not speak of conflict or distance, of quarrel or indifference. Rather, they describe their parents in markedly positive terms, frequently even with glowing compliments. Time and again, they express their gratitude for the manifold support that their parents provided; they report affection and love, lifelong bonds; and for many, whether younger or older adults, their parents are great role models.

The simultaneous occurrence of cohesion and conflict is also evident in statements about the ambivalent type. While ambivalent relationships are comparatively rare, these statements display a greater range. This applies in particular also to the causes mentioned. Some parents are described as being too clingy and others as being too withdrawn or dismissive. Some respondents mention contradictory support and conflicting emotions. Also notable are cases involving mental health problems.

The conflictual generational type is frequently depicted in particularly dramatic terms. When positioning the generations between conflict and cohesion, this type is dominated by conflict. Problematic family histories specifically demonstrate the immense importance of (relationships with) parents for the lives of adult children. The respondents speak of heavy burdens – both currently and extending far into old age. Causes of conflict that they mention are often quarrels between parents, frequently also unfaithful fathers and sometimes even considerable physical and psychological violence all the way to abuse.

The quotations from the distanced generations speak of a wide range as well. This applies to the extent of estrangement and its causes and consequences. Some respondents never had a bond with their parent(s), whereas for others the loss of attachment was the result of drastic events. Some have ultimately come to terms with the generational distance, quite a few simply do not care, others feel sad about it and speak of great regret and loss, and still others are at ease or even happy about the break-up and the independent life without their parents.

One of the goals of presenting these four types and one hundred exemplary statements in this chapter has also been to gain an impression of the range and diversity of intergenerational relationships – and, in so doing, to

identify some general patterns. The following chapters will trace these patterns more closely.

Generations between conflict …

3 Ambivalence – Of mixed and changing feelings

Klaus Haberkern

I love my parents,
even though it's not always easy with them.
(Man, age 35)

Introduction

Intergenerational relationships can be ambivalent. Close attachment does not preclude conflict. Likewise, conflicting feelings can exist at the same time or follow each other. Moreover, the statements and actions of (adult) children and parents are not always unambiguous. What is the right and what is the wrong thing to do? When is there too much of something, and when is there not enough? Which obligations do adult children have toward their parents and vice versa? Are adult daughters and sons obliged to care for their mothers and fathers in need and, if so, to what extent? Does this still hold true if the children themselves have not received support and affection from their parents? Do the needs of parents outweigh those of their offspring? Must the needs of one's parents be given priority over one's own occupational goals (cf. Betzler/Bleisch 2015)?

The answers to these questions are not always unequivocal. Children and parents can perceive situations differently or have different needs. While a daughter or a son might wish to support their parents, the parents might want to be left alone, or vice versa. Depending on the opportunities and needs of children and their parents, perceptions might also deviate as to what is too little, just sufficient or too much. What is desirable can furthermore be contradictory in itself. Parents may support their adult children in need while simultaneously expecting them to be independent. Adult children may feel obligated toward their parents but also seek to lead their own life. In short,

perceptions and expectations in intergenerational relationships can be ambivalent.

This ambivalence can find expression in mixed and changing feelings. Mixed feelings involve experiencing conflicting emotions; for instance, a need for closeness can go hand in hand with a desire for autonomy. Changing feelings involve emotions shifting in one direction or the other – and back again. For example, close attachment can be followed by a sense of having a distanced relationship with one's parents and reverting back to a sense of close attachment.

This chapter assesses the magnitude of various kinds of ambivalence in intergenerational relationships. This can be done directly or indirectly. Determining ambivalence indirectly might involve, for instance, observing the simultaneous occurrence of support and conflict. Likewise, we might observe relationships that are marked by close emotional attachment and conflict at the same time (Chapter 2). Yet aside from such indirect instances of ambivalence, we can also ask directly about mixed and changing feelings – and determine to what extent such ambivalences occur always, often, sometimes, rarely or never.

The focus here is on mixed and changing feelings. In this context, we also examine the foundations of these ambivalent feelings. Are there differences related to education and financial resources? What role do age and gender play? Is migration or region relevant? We determine the extent to which strong feelings of ambivalence depend on the opportunities and needs of the generations, what role the current and previous family situation play and in what way societal contexts exert an influence. As in the other chapters of this book, we consider both current relationships with living parents and, in the case of deceased mothers and fathers, those during the last year of their lives. In so doing, we also include the history of the relationship at a time in which the parents are approaching the end of their lives and their death has become conceivable.

The chapter begins by laying the foundations. This involves explaining the concept of ambivalence and documenting what previous research has to say. Moreover, we propose our hypotheses for the following analyses. We then introduce the respective survey questions upon which the empirical findings are based and give an overview of the magnitude of ambivalences. This is followed by more in-depth analyses. The chapter concludes with a summary of the most important results.

Foundations

Ambivalence

Ambivalence describes the occurrence or perception of both positive and negative aspects (Lüscher and Pillemer 1998: 416). There are various ways of detecting such ambivalences (cf. Szydlik 2016: 25ff.). Generally, two concepts of ambivalence can be distinguished, and two methods have been established in research to track them, namely, indirect and direct measurements (Lendon et al. 2014).

Indirect measurement captures the positive and negative aspects of a relationship separately and then considers them in relation to one another. For instance, it is assessed separately whether the generations (a) support each other or show close attachment and (b) whether there is conflict between them. This procedure uses the concept of ambivalence for describing apparently contradictory forms of relationship, such as when support and conflict go hand in hand. The procedure is similar for describing emotionally close relationships that are at the same time conflictual (e.g., Bengtson et al. 2002, Steinbach 2008, Ferring et al. 2009, Kiecolt et al. 2011; see also Chapter 2). Ambivalence thus exists when cohesion and conflict occur simultaneously.

Direct measurement of ambivalence can capture mixed or changing feelings. Simultaneity of or alternation between affection and aversion can occur, for example, when financial support from parents that is welcome in principle comes with expectations that are not so welcome. This can result in a sense of being cared for and patronised at the same time. Conversely, caring for parents can be a display of love and affection as well as an overwhelming obligation. Ambivalence can also be the product of conflicting norms in the sense of structural ambivalence: Adult children are expected to detach from their parents on the one hand and actively support them on the other (Connidis and McMullin 2002a/b, Pillemer et al. 2007, Neuberger and Haberkern 2014, Connidis 2015). In this vein, one can speak of ambivalence when an individual harbours both positive and negative emotions toward their mother or father simultaneously or when these change over time.

Whatever the case may be, the distinction of such ambivalences and their measurement is of great significance, especially since only moderate correlations have been found between the various concepts (e.g., Lendon et al. 2014). Whereas indirect measurements infer the presence of ambivalence from various kinds of dimensions in a relationship, direct measurements involve

respondents explicitly mentioning their ambivalent feelings. Connidis (2015) has pointed out that direct measurement might actually tell us more about the individual respondent than about the relationship. Even so, for the people themselves such feelings are real. Moreover, it is useful to distinguish whether individuals experience mixed emotions at the same time – or whether they repeatedly alternate between distinct emotional states. It is further relevant how frequently such ambivalent feelings occur – and what the causes are for more or less pronounced mixed or changing emotions.

Research

The variety of concepts of ambivalence has given rise to a range of empirical approaches that use diverse methods and data accordingly. Overall, previous research has found varying yet rather moderate levels of intergenerational ambivalence (e.g., Suitor et al. 2011, Hogerbrugge/Komter 2012, Lendon et al. 2014).

Steinbach (2008: 120; see also Giarrusso et al. 2005) determines ambivalence via the simultaneity of intimacy and conflict between adult daughters and their parents. For Germany, she concludes that ambivalent relationships constitute the smallest group: 14 per cent of the daughter-mother and five per cent of the daughter-father relationships qualify as ambivalent according to this definition. Silverstein et al. (2010) find shares of ambivalent relationships to be one per cent in Germany, five per cent in Spain, seven in England, nine in both Norway and Southern California and 14 per cent in Israel. Ferring et al. (2009) collected information on various positive and negative feelings toward parents and classify on this basis more than one in five child-parent relationships as being ambivalent. Pillemer et al. (2007) surveyed US-American mothers about their feelings toward their children and found much higher rates. In 37 per cent of the cases, these mothers stated occasionally or frequently having mixed emotions in their relationship with their children, whereas 31 per cent rarely had such feelings.

Previous research has identified a number of factors associated with ambivalence. Mothers report ambivalent feelings less frequently when their children have higher levels of education (Pillemer et al. 2012). Parents being satisfied with their financial situation can lead to less ambivalence toward daughters and sons (Mitchell et al. 2019). As for adult children, they may expect support from their parents in times of financial hardship. However, this can also pose a threat to their independence, which can evoke conflicting feelings as well as both solidarity and conflict at the same time (Pillemer and Suitor 2002;

cf. Willson et al. 2006). According to previous studies, ambivalence is also more frequent when children and parents are in very close contact and have very few opportunities to escape this proximity (Gaalen et al. 2010). In line with this observation, there is evidence that living at a greater distance from one another corresponds with less ambivalence (Lendon et al. 2014).

At the same time, studies point to the significance of burdens. Ambivalence is more likely to be found in relationships with mothers and fathers whose health is impaired, especially when children are involved in helping them or providing care (Willson et al. 2006, Gaalen et al. 2010). Conversely, daughters are more likely to have an ambivalent relationship with their mothers when receiving extensive financial support from them (Steinbach 2008).

Previous research has also shown intergenerational ambivalence to be embedded in the family situation. Studies have determined a connection between ambivalence and the gender of the child and the parent, respectively, with some having observed higher rates of ambivalence in daughter-mother relationships (Gaalen et al. 2010, Pillemer et al. 2012) and among mothers (Willson et al. 2003). On the whole, daughters and mothers engage in closer relationships and are therefore more likely to experience both positive and negative emotions (Fingerman et al. 2020). However, family disruptions are also a potential cause of ambivalence. Parents entering into new partnerships promotes the simultaneous occurrence of intergenerational solidarity and conflict at the same time (Schenk and Dykstra 2012), and difficult relationships with parents in youth seem to evoke conflicting emotions far into adulthood, for instance, when children experienced their parents as rejecting them or even being hostile (Willson et al. 2003).

Moreover, having children of one's own can foster ambivalent feelings toward one's parents (Humboldt et al. 2018). This can involve conflicting expectations toward (grand-)parents that can rarely be fulfilled simultaneously: They are supposed to be present yet not interfere (Mason et al. 2007). In addition, daughters and sons with siblings are less likely to develop ambivalent emotions toward their parents, as these children are more likely to be able to withdraw from their parents and reduce closeness as needed (Gaalen et al. 2010). Children who are the only child, by contrast, can be exposed to an emotionally highly charged relationship, thus giving rise to conflicting feelings (Lendon et al. 2014: 281).

Lastly, previous studies indicate that feelings toward parents can also depend on cultural context, including the common norms and values in a country. This being the case, migration can introduce cultural differences or disparate values into a family. And even if values are shared, migration can

lead to unfulfillable expectations toward oneself or from parents, for example, when adult children do a great deal for their parents despite living far away, but the latter perceive this effort to be insufficient (Şenyürekli/Detzner 2008). Cultural differences can furthermore prove a barrier to family reunion, which may also result in ambivalence (Sun 2017).

Hypotheses

The current state of research indeed indicates that intergenerational relationships between adult family members can be marked by ambivalence. It has also revealed a number of factors that account for more or less pronounced ambivalence. In the following, we propose hypotheses for mixed and changing feelings that build on these observations. These hypotheses draw on the ONFC model (Chapter 1) and provide the basis for the empirical analyses presented below.

With regard to *opportunities*, it is assumed that resources such as education and money open up greater scope for action and reduce unwanted dependencies and thus ambivalence. The higher an adult child's level of education, the more likely it is that the person will be able to pursue their own independent path through life and the better equipped that person can be expected to be to play their part in shaping the intergenerational relationship. This being the case, higher educational attainment should be associated with a lower degree of mixed or changing emotions toward one's parents.

Similar should apply to a person's financial situation. The better daughters and sons assess their monetary situation to be, the more they are able to fulfil their parents' expectations and the more independent they can be from them. Having a solid income can thus be assumed to limit the causes for mixed or changing emotions.

Living nearby can threaten independence and offer more opportunities for ambivalence. Being an adult means being independent, also from one's parents. However, one's mother and father living in close proximity can foster expectations of spending more time together or providing more support than daughters and sons might want or be able to. Living at a close distance to one's parents should therefore rather result in adult children experiencing ambivalent feelings toward their parents.

Needs can also be expected to affect mixed and changing feelings. As adult children grow older, the need for support of their aging parents grows as well. Over time, adult children thus gain greater importance again especially for elderly mothers and fathers – which is not necessarily also true the other way

around. Increasing needs and expectations of parents can meet with a growing desire of adult children to keep their distance – thus giving rise to ambivalent emotions.

As for adult children's needs, an important area to focus on is their gainful employment. For those still in education or training, one can assume a particularly pronounced need for support from parents. This suggests ambivalence between the desire for independence on the one hand and dependence on parents on the other, a tension that could find expression in conflicting emotions.

Health is an important prerequisite for independence. If parents are in poor health, this can be very worrying to children (Chapter 4) and entail considerable help and support (Chapter 9). In particular, severely impaired health of parents, requiring substantial support, can create dependence, be a source of strain on children and thus fuel ambivalent feelings among them.

Monetary transfers from parents can be a double-edged affair. On the one hand, gifts or payments can be a sign of cohesion and affection (Chapter 7). On the other hand, both gifts and financial aid can also come with (perceived) pressure to reciprocate or alter behaviour – and can thus trigger ambivalent emotions. This, too, thus raises the empirical question as to which of these connections are ultimately predominant.

When it comes to *family structures*, gender combinations are likely to play a role. Previous results indeed indicate that ambivalence is particularly frequent in daughter-mother relationships (see above). According to these findings, the emotionally closest and most intensive relationships (Chapter 7) in particular would be more susceptible to mixed and changing feelings than those marked by a less close sense of attachment and (somewhat) less frequent contact.

Parents living in a new partnership is also an indicator of family disruption, which is quite likely to evoke mixed and changing feelings in children. After all, a new partnership implies the dissolution of the parents' previous relationship, be it through separation or death. Parental separation – possibly even because of the new partnership – can leave children with ambivalent feelings. A surviving parent entering into a new partnership can likewise evoke ambivalent emotions, to the point of raising financial questions concerning a future inheritance (Chapter 10). By contrast, there should be fewer mixed and changing feelings toward parents who still live together.

At the same time, the earlier relationship between and with one's parents can also be expected to play a role. If adult children witnessed frequent disputes between their mother and father during childhood and adolescence or when the children themselves were in frequent conflict with their parents,

they are likely to experience an emotional rollercoaster more frequently in adulthood as well. It is easy to imagine that these adult children will have vivid memories of severe conflict and that these intense experiences may be evoked on even minor occasions. Conversely, it can be hypothesised that unequivocal displays of parental affection in childhood and adolescence guard against adult children harbouring ambivalent feelings even decades later in life.

As in the case of parents, adult children's partnership is also likely to affect the intergenerational relationship. A partnership constitutes one's own sphere of life and is a legitimate reason for individuals to distance themselves from their parents and devote themselves more to their own partners. This can also be assumed to be in accordance with parental expectations. The empirical analyses can therefore be expected to show that daughters and sons living in a partnership reduces ambivalence in their relationships with their mothers and fathers.

Children having offspring of their own can likewise be expected to comply with parental expectations. Yet if this involves adult children depending on grandparents for help with childcare, this situation may give rise to conflicting expectations and emotions. At times, there is a thin line between necessary support and unwelcome interference, and grandparents may quickly find themselves straying from the desired path and evoking conflicting emotions among their daughters and sons.

Siblings can find themselves competing for parental attention and affection – but they can also share duties of providing support for parents if needed. Moreover, having siblings can be beneficial in that not all parental hopes, expectations and demands rest on the shoulders of a single child. Here, too, it is thus an empirical question of whether and to what extent the existence of siblings contributes to more or less mixed or changing emotions toward parents. Previous research (see above) suggests, however, that having more siblings generally results in less ambivalence.

Lastly, societal *contexts* are likely to have an influence. In migrant families, different experiences in the country of origin and destination can be associated with different values, attitudes and expectations of parents and children. This should lead to adults with a migration history being more likely to have ambivalent feelings about their parents. At the same time, it will be interesting to see whether and to what extent the first and second generation differ in this respect. Among first-generation migrants, who immigrated themselves, the cultural discrepancy with their parents, who mostly stayed in their home country, is likely to be even greater than among the second generation, who like their parents share experiences of living in Switzerland.

On grounds of different family values and norms, differences between language regions cannot be ruled out either. In the vein of a *too much family* argument, comprehensive family obligations could result in greater ambivalence (cf. Livi Bacci 2001). This is likely to be the case in Italian-speaking Switzerland in particular. It is just as possible, however, that precisely more explicit, more strongly family-oriented values might contribute to less frequent experiences of changing emotions toward parents. It is again an empirical question as to which hypotheses are more likely to be refuted.

Results

Questions

SwissGen allows us to measure intergenerational ambivalence both directly and indirectly. In the following, we will highlight four kinds of ambivalence, two direct and two indirect variants, respectively. The direct measurements form the focus of this chapter. They are designed to capture ambivalent emotions by inquiring into mixed or changing feelings toward parents. These questions, too, ask about current relationships with living mothers and fathers as well as in retrospect about now deceased parents during the last year of their lives. The questionnaires and basic results can be found in the data volume (König et al. 2023).

Conflicting emotions are determined by the following statement:

I have [had] mixed feelings toward my mother [father].

Changing emotions are captured using the following statement:

The emotions I have [had] toward my mother [my father] change[d] from time to time.

The following response options are offered for each parent:

Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never.

The two indirect variants are determined by gathering data on the negative and positive aspects separately, that is, on conflict and cohesion existing at the

same time. Conflicts are identified by asking participants to respond to the following statement:

There is [was] conflict between my mother [father] and me.

For the following analyses, the responses "Always", "Often" and "Sometimes" are grouped into one category and "Rarely" and "Never" into another.

The first indirect variant of ambivalence addresses conflicts in connection with transfers. The relationship with parents is classified as ambivalent when conflicts during the past twelve months or during the last year of the deceased parents' lives coincided with giving or receiving time or money. Time support involves assistance in everyday life (around the house, with shopping, paperwork or similar), emotional support (e.g., advice, consolation), care (e.g., personal care, help with getting up and dressing) and help with childcare. Financial transfers consist of monetary gifts, material gifts or payments. For the analyses, all of these forms of support are grouped into the category of "transfer" if, in regard to the relationship with a parent, one of the following kinds of support were received or provided: (a) at least three different forms of time support (even if only on a single occasion), (b) at least one instance of time support on a daily or weekly basis or (c) at least one financial transfer.

The second indirect variant of ambivalence captures the simultaneous occurrence of conflict and close attachment, as in the previous chapter.

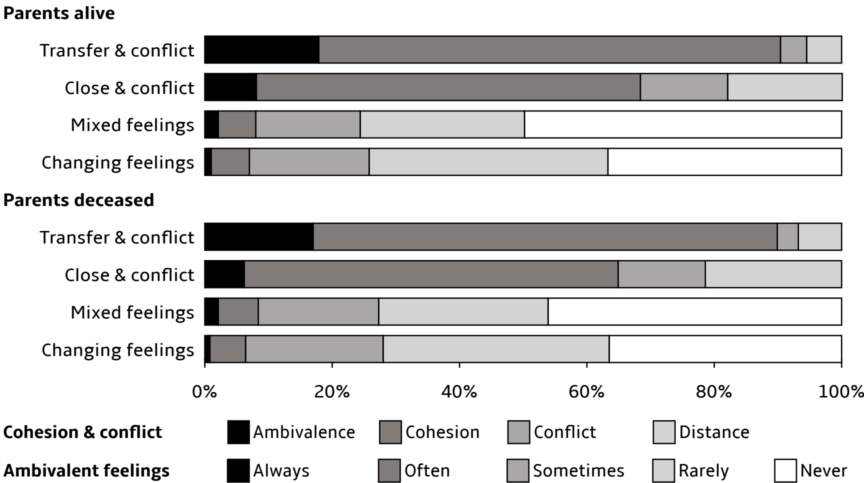
Overview

The four variants of ambivalence are presented in Figure 3.1. The results for the two indirect measurements are presented first, followed by the two direct measurements. The figure illustrates the simultaneous occurrence of transfer and conflict as well as emotional closeness and conflict on the one hand and mixed and changing feelings toward parents on the other. The first part of the "Transfer & conflict" bar shows the percentage of adults who are currently in conflict with their parents while simultaneously being connected with them through transfers.

First of all, it is noticeable that ambivalence is rather limited overall. Fewer than one in five adults (18 per cent) mention transfers of time or money along with conflicts when describing their relationship with their parents. By contrast, nearly three-quarters report (mutual) support without the downside of quarrel. At the same time, intergenerational relationships that do not involve current transfers of time or money are rare – whether with or without conflict.

Adult children's relationship with their parents can also be considered ambivalent when they feel closely attached while having disputes with them as well. This applies to nearly every twelfth intergenerational relationship (eight per cent). By contrast, three out of five mention a close relationship with their parents without considerable conflicts, whereas conflictual and distanced relationships make up almost a third of intergenerational relationships (Chapter 2).

Figure 3.1: Ambivalence



Source: SwissGen.

The next two bars document directly measured ambivalence, which is at the centre of this chapter. They also indicate more or less ambivalent feelings. When we look at pronounced ambivalent emotions – thus the ones that respondents experience "always" or "frequently" – the percentages are lower than if we also factor in the "rarely" experienced ambivalent emotions.

No more than two per cent of adults always have conflicting and only one per cent continuously changing emotions toward their parents. If we add frequent feelings of ambivalence, we arrive at a total of eight per cent – which is the same percentage as in the measurement for closeness and conflict displayed above. Combined with the sporadic experiences of mixed emotions, this amounts to an ambivalence rate of one-quarter. Including the group that

rarely experiences conflicting emotions yields a total of half of the adults. In the case of changing emotions, the total is more than six in ten adults.

In other words, pronounced ambivalence is rare. Less than one out of ten relationships with parents are perceived as always or frequently being ambivalent. That said, every second adult does have occasional mixed emotions toward their parents, and two out of three experience at least rare instances of changing emotions. One can thus maintain that changing emotions occur somewhat more frequently than mixed emotions. However, this difference is mainly due to the instances of rare ambivalence.

Looking back to the last period of time spent with parents who have since passed away yields largely the same picture. The percentages for living and deceased parents hardly differ overall. This holds true for all four variants of ambivalence. It seems that the occurrence of close and conflictual relationships decreases slightly over time, whereas distance increases a bit. Moreover, sporadic mixed emotions increase slightly. Yet these tendencies should not be overrated.

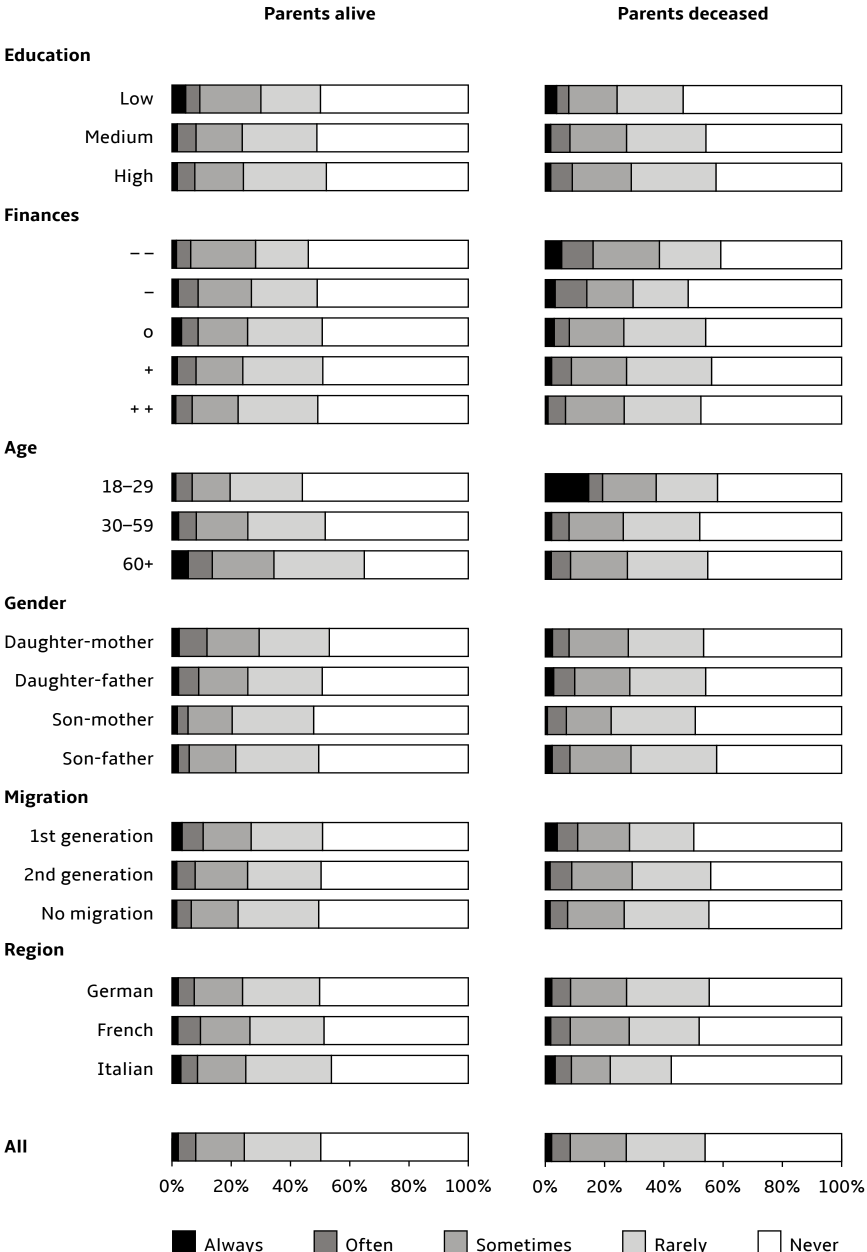
In the following, we discuss in more detail mixed and changing feelings. Who is affected to a greater or lesser degree? Figure 3.2 breaks down the occurrence of mixed emotions by education, finances, age, gender, migration and region. The left column shows the current relationships with living parents, the right one the relationships during the last year with now deceased parents. The numbers for these and the following figures can be found in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD20, 28).

For mixed feelings in relation to education, the patterns are less clear overall. What can be seen is more frequent and occasional ambivalence in current relationships with parents among adult children with lower education and more instances of sporadic ambivalence during the last year with now deceased parents among adult children with higher education.

When we focus on pronounced ambivalence, we observe more conflicting emotions among adult children with financial problems – which points to the importance of financial leeway in their relationship with parents. Yet these differences vanish again once we include those who report rare mixed emotions.

Clear differences emerge between age groups, however. The older the respondents, the more frequently they mention conflicting emotions and the more likely such mixed feelings are to occur even always or often. A fifth of the younger adults mention at least sporadic mixed emotions, whereas this applies to a quarter of those aged 30 to 59 and just over a third among those aged 60 and over.

Figure 3.2: Mixed feelings



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,086 living parents / 6,770 deceased parents).

As for gender combinations, in current relationships daughters are the ones who most frequently experience conflicting emotions toward their mothers, partly also toward their fathers. Sons, by contrast, more seldom experience ambivalence. Every tenth daughter reports often or always having mixed feelings toward their parents – with sons, this applies to one out of twenty. However, this is less so during the last year in the life of parents who have since passed away.

As expected, first-generation migrants experience mixed emotions toward their parents most frequently, which can be associated with the different cultural contexts in the country of origin and destination. This applies to the second generation to a much lesser degree, which is also in line with what one would expect. Overall, first-generation migrants report somewhat lower levels of mixed feelings during the last year with now deceased parents. Yet these respondents also mention particularly strong ambivalence.

With regard to the language regions, the analysis finds fewer noteworthy differences in relationships with living parents, except for somewhat lower ambivalence in German Switzerland. The picture is different for adults with deceased parents. Here, Italian Switzerland stands out with fewer mixed emotions overall. This is, however, mainly due to sporadic and rare ambivalence.

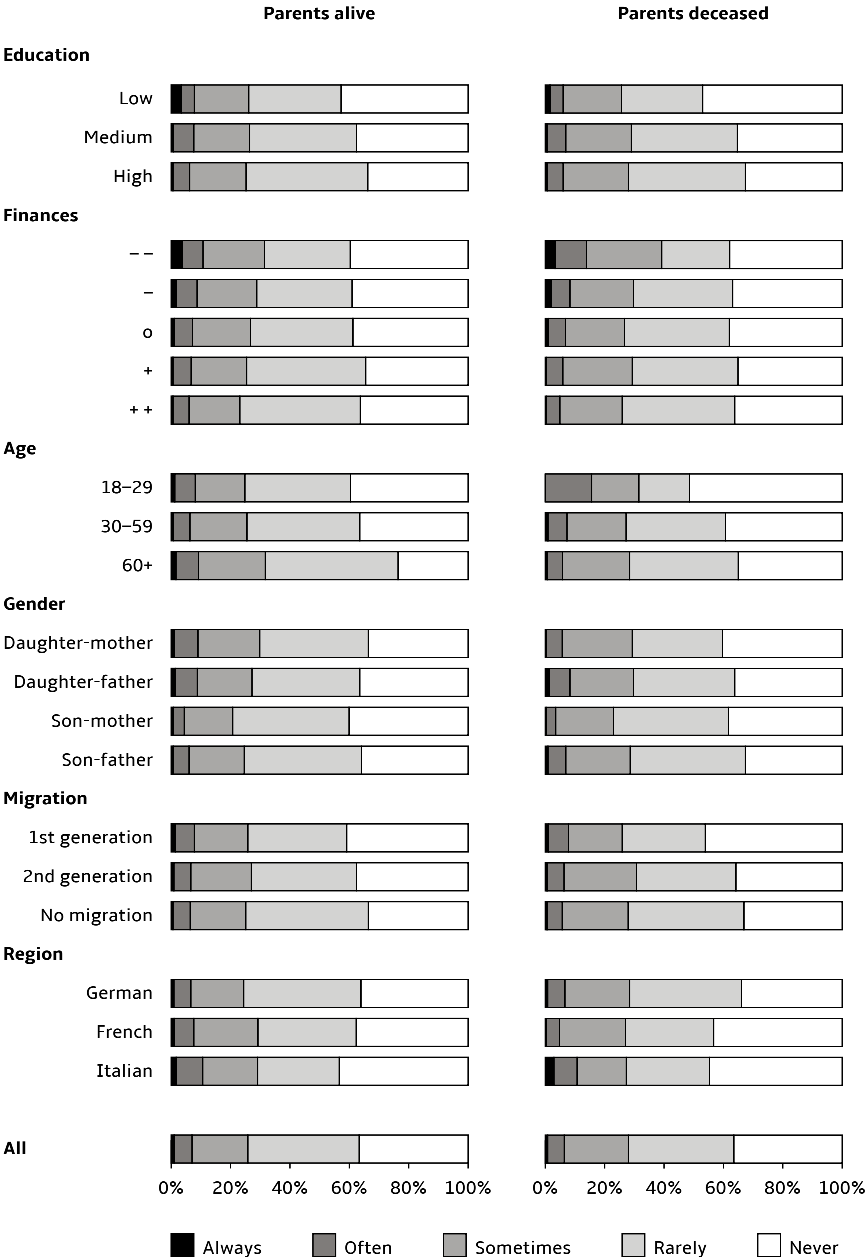
Figure 3.3 is devoted to changing feelings. Education yields an ambivalent picture. Although more respondents with high than with low educational attainment express changing emotions overall, those with lower levels of education are more likely to experience strong ambivalence.

As in the case of mixed feelings, continuously changing emotions are less frequent when respondents have greater financial freedom. When comparing those who assess their financial situation as very poor and those who assess it as very good, we see a similar number of people overall who report changing feelings. However, the better the finances, the rarer is strong ambivalence.

Among the age groups, the findings are similar overall to the ones encountered for mixed emotions. The older the children, the more likely they are to mention changing feelings toward living parents. Among the group aged 18 to 29, this applies to three in five adult children, among those 60 and above to more than three out of four. For the younger respondents with deceased parents, the sample contains so few cases that these results must be treated with particular caution (König et al. 2023: Table 7).

For gender combinations, the results in regard to changing emotions are less clear than for mixed feelings. Nevertheless, there is again some indication that daughters experience ambivalent relationships with living parents some-

Figure 3.3: Changing feelings



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,179 living parents / 6,776 deceased parents).

what more frequently. This also applies to sons' perceptions of their relationships to their now deceased fathers.

The findings for changing feelings and migration are likewise less clear. An interesting observation is that many adults without an immediate migration history do indeed experience changing emotions toward their parents. Especially strong ambivalence, however, is again experienced above all by migrants.

The same picture emerges for the language regions. All in all, adult children have more changing feelings toward parents in German-speaking than in Italian Switzerland in particular. However, in the latter region, more adult children report always or often experiencing changing emotions. This is true for both current relationships and those during the last year with now deceased parents.

Analyses

To what extent do the findings presented in the general overview persist once additional factors are included in the analysis? What role do these other factors play? Figure 3.4 below provides an overview of the results by using plus and minus signs. These are based on the significant coefficients documented in Table A3 in the Appendix. The greater the number of plus or minus signs, the more pronounced the effect. The first two columns report mixed feelings in current relationships with living parents and previous relationships during the last year with now deceased parents. The third and fourth columns provide the findings for changing emotions. Information on the procedures and variables can also be found in the Appendix.

Starting with *opportunities*, the analyses find no significant connection between educational attainment and ambivalent emotions. Education is apparently not a crucial resource that contributes to avoiding mixed or conflicting feelings toward parents. This does not rule out that people with higher levels of education might experience more instances of weaker and fewer instances of stronger ambivalence – which may then be partly offset in the analysis.

The stronger ambivalence in the relationships of poorer people suggested by the previous figures is not confirmed by the multivariate analyses. What is found instead is a connection between the financial situation and conflicts with parents in childhood and adolescence. Adults with financial problems are more likely to report past disputes with parents. Ultimately, it is these conflicts that account for ambivalent feelings, and they are therefore also the reason why an improved financial situation does not reduce ambivalence. Mixed feelings occur even more frequently in the parents' last year of life if their

adult children are in very good financial shape. A factor playing a role here could also be expected inheritances that await wealthier offspring in particular (Chapter 10).

With respect to distance of residence, the analyses reveal a connection with changing emotions. The larger the spatial distance, the less often feelings towards parents change. As expected, a shorter distance is more likely to be associated with ambivalence. A reason for this could be that parents who live in closer proximity might expect more attention and support from their offspring. There may also be a certain amount of perceived parental control that counteracts their adult children's desire for independence. At the same time, however, adult children appreciate contact with their parents and feel connected with them. All of this can lead to changing emotions. In the case of greater distances, there is less opportunity for this. After all, spatial separation also allows for greater emotional distance (Chapters 6, 7).

Needs have a greater impact overall on the prevalence of ambivalent emotions. Both mixed and changing emotions occur more frequently with increasing age (the positive coefficient is weakly significant in the case of changing emotions in current relationships). In this context, the advanced age of parents probably plays a role, as elderly parents require more support, be it emotional or in terms of help and care. At any rate, older adult children worry more about their parents and also feel more burdened in this respect (Chapter 4). On occasion, the generations may have disparate ideas about freedom of choice versus obligation in intergenerational relations, which can evoke, and reinforce, ambivalent feelings accordingly.

Being in gainful employment is generally associated with fewer ambivalent feelings toward parents. Adult children in education, by contrast, report more mixed and changing emotions. This finding is also in line with our expectations. The greater need for support may contradict the desire to lead one's own life. Dependence encounters autonomy. This ambivalent situation nourishes ambivalent emotions.

Conversely, parents also face the threat of dependence when their health deteriorates. The better parental health is considered to be, the less frequently offspring develop ambivalent feelings. Here, too, we see the expected impact of needs on ambivalence. In addition to dependencies and burdens, there may also be different ideas about how much care is appropriate and how much can be expected from one another.

If we look at current monetary transfers without considering other factors, these are associated with lower levels of ambivalence. This suggests that gifts and payments also serve to symbolise cohesion and affection. However, this

Figure 3.4: Mixed and changing feelings

	Mixed feelings		**Changing feelings**	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium				
High				
Finances		+ +		
Distance			–	–
Needs				
Age	+ +	+ +		+
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	+		+ +	+ + +
Not employed		+ +		+
Health of parent	– –	–	– –	–
Money from parent			+	
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father				
Son-mother	–			
Son-father	–			
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	+		+	
Single				
Childhood: parental conflicts	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
Childhood: conflicts	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +
Childhood: affection	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Partnership	–		–	
Child(ren)	+		+	+
Siblings	–			
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	+			
2nd generation				
Region (ref.: German)				
French				–
Italian				

+/−: more/fewer mixed or changing feelings.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A3).

effect disappears, or is even reversed in the case of changing emotions, once affection in childhood as well as parental health is accounted for. Then, financial transfers might come with greater pressure to reciprocate and change one's behaviour, thus fuelling alternation between positive and negative feelings.

Family structures have a particularly strong influence on how people experience their relationship with their parents. Daughters are more likely to report having mixed feelings toward their parents. This underscores the assumption that it is precisely a close intergenerational attachment that can entail conflicting emotions. The effects presented here would be even more pronounced were one to neglect conflicts during childhood. Conflicts from a long time ago and possibly still ongoing seem to play a role here (Chapter 5).

As expected, parents living with a new partner gives rise to more mixed and changing emotions. New partners point to family ruptures, whether they stem from parental separation or the death of a parent. In the event of separation, a new partnership signals a deviation from the alleged ideal of a family with parents who live together. In the case of a deceased parent, a new partner might also be perceived as assuming a position actually belonging to the deceased parent. In the last year of the now deceased parent's life, however, a new partnership does not evoke more frequent ambivalent emotions if conflicts in childhood are taken into account. Generations faced with this particular situation presumably become more involved with one another again and give their relationship greater importance, at least to the extent that the relationship is not burdened by previous conflicts with that parent.

Experiences in childhood and adolescence are of crucial significance for whether and how often adult children experience conflicting and changing emotions toward their parents. The more frequently conflicts occurred between and with parents, the more pronounced are ambivalent feelings in intergenerational relationships (also) later in life. Negative experiences in the past have long-lasting effects. Conversely, positive experiences, such as parental affection enjoyed in childhood and adolescence, lay solid foundations for a relationship without mixed or changing emotions.

Compared with singles, adult children with a partner report fewer ambivalent emotions toward their parents. Parents can rate a child's partnership as positive, and, from the offspring's perspective, it represents a central area of the child's own life and a place of emotional support, thus making it easier to establish an (emotional) distance from its parents.

Having children of one's own, by contrast, reinforces the simultaneous or alternating occurrence of positive and negative feelings toward one's parents. A reason for this can be conflicting expectations in regard to the role of

grandparents. Grandparents are expected to be present, get involved and look after the grandchildren on the one hand, while they should not interfere and implement their own educational ideas on the other.

The more siblings there are, the less relationships with living parents are marked by mixed emotions. Joining forces makes siblings better able to meet parental expectations and provide care for them. Parental hopes and expectations are not focussed on one single individual, thereby giving each adult child the occasional opportunity to withdraw and concentrate on other things. In this sense, siblings provide an option for avoiding ambivalence.

All in all, societal *contexts* have a relatively minor influence on the prevalence of ambivalent feelings. That said, mixed emotions are more frequent among first-generation migrants in current intergenerational relationships. This points to the impact of cultural differences between the countries of origin and destination, which are reflected in the relationships between adults and their parents. However, these differences are not very pronounced and no longer exist in the multivariate model for the second generation. Additional analyses show that more conflicting emotions among the second generation can be traced back to more conflict with parents during childhood. This suggests that cultural differences between the primary socialisation of parents in their country of origin and that of their adult children, who grew up in Switzerland, can be influential from early on.

In French Switzerland, offspring with deceased parents experienced changing emotions less often during the last year with their parents than their counterparts in German Switzerland. Otherwise, the analyses yield no significant differences between the various parts of the country. It is possible, however, that fewer instances of rare ambivalence and more instances of pronounced ambivalence offset one another. Further analyses also show that some differences between the language regions disappear when conflict with parents during childhood is taken into account. This indicates that ambivalence is not only triggered by recent events in adulthood but that it is already rooted in the relationship with parents in childhood and adolescence.

Summary

Clear, pronounced intergenerational ambivalence is relatively rare. The proportion of ambivalent relationships is less than one in five if one includes all

crucial transfers of time and money in both directions, including emotional support and small gifts over the course of one year, while also considering sporadic conflicts. When one pairs (very) close emotional attachment with permanent, frequent or occasional conflict, the proportion of ambivalent relationships is less than one-tenth. The same applies to at least frequent mixed and changing feelings, respectively.

However, the proportion of ambivalent relationships increases considerably if rare ambivalence is also taken into account. Every second adult child reports occasional mixed feelings toward its parents, and even more than six in ten adults mention changing feelings. Thus, most offspring indeed experience ambivalence in the relationship with their parents in one way or another. A closer look reveals, however, that although most are familiar with such emotions, they do experience them only rarely. Only two out of one hundred adults always have mixed and only one out of one hundred experience continuously changing feelings toward their parents.

The frequency of the currently mixed and changing feelings hardly differs from their frequency in the last year of life with now deceased parents. When parents approach the end of their lives and their death becomes conceivable, this apparently does not lead to more or less pronounced ambivalence in intergenerational relationships. This applies to both the indirect and direct variants, that is, to the simultaneous occurrence of cohesion and conflict on the one hand and of mixed and changing feelings on the other.

Yet the analyses show that ambivalence is related to various factors. Opportunities, needs, family structures and societal contexts all have an impact. Changing emotions toward parents occur more frequently among those who live nearby and thus have more opportunities to engage in personal contact. For those who live at a greater distance, there seems to be less cause for changing emotions. This attests to the significance of opportunities.

It is precisely needs and dependencies that contribute to ambivalent feelings. Older offspring report ambivalence much more frequently, which points to the increasing burden of their elderly parents' growing needs. But adult children in education experience more mixed and changing emotions as well. In this case, the need for support can collide with the desire for independence. Parents having health issues is also associated with a pronounced increase in mixed and changing feelings among their adult children. Here, the special needs of parents resulting from their poor health burdens their offspring and can cause them to alternate emotionally between obligation and autonomy.

A factor of particular significance is the family situation. Daughters are more likely to report mixed feelings toward their parents, which again points

to closer bonds. Parents living in a new partnership evokes more frequent feelings of ambivalence among their offspring. Yet, above all, the findings attest to the significant role that socialisation during childhood and adolescence plays in the later relationship with one's parents. Conflict between or with parents leads to conflicting and volatile emotions even long afterwards. This applies even to the last year with now deceased parents. Conversely, positive experiences guard against ambivalence later on. Those who received much affection and thus clearly positive affirmation are much less likely to report mixed and changing emotions toward their mother and father throughout their lives. Adult children living with a partner furthermore reduces their ambivalence toward parents, whereas having children of their own increases such unclear feelings. In the latter case, ambivalent situations between welcome support from grandparents and unwelcome interference can contribute to ambivalent emotional states accordingly.

Compared to family structures, societal contexts have a weaker influence. There is nevertheless evidence that migrants to Switzerland are more likely to have mixed feelings toward their parents. A possible factor is different cultural experiences and expectations between the generations. With regard to language regions, changing feelings during the last year of life with their parents are somewhat less frequent in French Switzerland. Other than that, regional differences are generally limited. However, particularly frequent and rare ambivalence in the regions can offset one another. Furthermore, experiences in childhood and adolescence also have a long-lasting effect in this regard.

4 Stress – Of worries and burdens

Christoph Zangger

They are only human, too.
They love their children
but have their own problems
that can be a burden.
(Man, age 27)

Introduction

Parents can be stressful. Occasionally, they expect more from their children than their offspring are able or willing to fulfil. Sometimes these expectations are simply overwhelming. Mothers and fathers may interfere too much in the lives of their adult children or – on the contrary – give too little advice and support. At times, they may want too much contact. At other times, they may not be available enough and hard to get hold of. There may have been difficult situations and experiences in the past that continue to have an impact to the present day. All of this and much more can be very stressful. At the same time, parents can be a source of considerable worry, for instance, when one's mother and father grow older and more fragile – leading to new challenges and demands.

Nevertheless, it is not clear to what extent and under which circumstances parents cause stress for their offspring. To what degree are intergenerational relationships marked by excessive expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed, worries and burdens? When do parents become a particular source of worry, and what causes burdens? These are important questions, especially since intergenerational stress can have an impact on the ongoing relationship between adults and their parents as well as on one's own well-being (Umberson 1992, Ferraro/Su 1999, Ward 2008, Reczek/Zhang 2016, Heger 2017).

In this context, it makes sense to consider a broader range of topics along three lines. First, it will most likely be useful to look at several types of stress in

the relationship between adult children and their parents. Second, one should take into account as systematically as possible a whole range of potential stress factors to assess their relevance in intergenerational relationships. Third, it would be expedient to investigate the relation between specific events and stress. In addition to current circumstances, such events could be incisive experiences in childhood or during the last months with one's parents before their death.

This chapter determines the prevalence of intergenerational stress. For this purpose, it distinguishes four types of stress: worries, expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens. How often do children worry about their parents, and to what extent are they faced with excessive expectations from them? Is feeling overwhelmed an essential part of connections between generations, and is it justified to speak of the relationship being a continuous burden? What kinds of stress occur more frequently and which ones less so? Are parents always, often, sometimes, rarely or never a source of stress?

Worries and burdens are at the centre of this chapter. A key objective here is to identify causes for more or less intergenerational stress. Which relationships are most affected? Which adult children worry about their parents to what extent, and which parents give cause for this? Which factors are responsible for particularly heavy burdens, and in which families do they rarely occur? As in the other chapters, this chapter, too, sheds light on both current intergenerational relationships and those during the last year with now deceased parents.

We begin by laying the foundations: What is stress? What does previous research tell us about it? Which hypotheses can we derive for the following analyses? The empirical part of this chapter begins with introducing the respective survey questions. The subsequent section reports the prevalence of worries, excessive expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens between the generations. The then following analyses of the factors responsible for greater or lesser intergenerational stress focus on worries and burdens. The chapter closes with a summary.

Foundations

Stress

Stress has many faces, causes and consequences. Depending on the situation, stress can mean different things for different people. In the most general sense,

stress can be understood as a physical response to demands imposed upon an individual (Fink 2017). Causes of stress can be both physical and psychological. When we think about intergenerational relationships, many forms of stress are conceivable as well, among them worries, expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens.

Worrying about another person is a subjective aspect of a relationship, one that attests to an emotional attachment. For instance, relatives who are close to one another can be concerned about each other's well-being. Worrying about another person is a future-oriented emotional state that arises from the anticipation of possible negative events, for example, financial difficulties or the deteriorating health of parents (Hay et al. 2007, 2008). Worries and the uncertainty they reflect can result in stress.

Expectations express hope for a future that may or may not materialise (Manski 2004). Disappointed expectations of parents with regard to the behaviour of their offspring can be a source of stress. This can be the case for parents whose expectations are not fulfilled, but even more so for their (adult) children. They may not only have to justify themselves to their parents but also cope with their parents' disappointment (e.g., Schmeiser 2004).

Feeling overwhelmed can be a reason for stress as well. Here, too, various causes are conceivable in intergenerational relationships. Feeling overwhelmed can originate in parents holding unfulfillable expectations for the occupational careers of their children. Aside from that, the intergenerational relationship itself can be overwhelming, for instance, when children feel pressured or obliged to engage in compliant behaviour, especially if their parents need help and care (e.g., Ganong/Coleman 2005, Corso/Lanz 2013).

Burdens can likewise take several forms. Each one can occur individually but also in a variety of combinations. On the one hand, there are temporal, financial and physical burdens, for instance, as a consequence of providing support. On the other hand, emotional burdens can play an important role. All of this can be very stressful. Burdens are therefore generally seen as a negative expression of intergenerational relationships (Umberson 1992, Reczek/Zhang 2016).

Research

So far, only a few studies have explicitly addressed the extent of and conditions for worries and burdens in the relationship between adults and their parents. For children worrying about their parents, Cicirelli (1981, 1988) finds – in very small studies with fewer than one hundred respondents in the

USA – that adults worry about their parents' health, but in particular also about their role as caregiver.

Whereas Cicirelli focused explicitly on worries associated with health and caregiving, more recent studies have adopted a more general notion of care to include additional aspects of the intergenerational relationship that can impair both parental well-being and the parent-child relationship itself (Hay et al. 2007). This research has detected widespread worries especially among offspring. For example, a study based on 213 families in Philadelphia (USA) reports that only one-tenth of the adult children surveyed did not worry about their parents at all (Hay et al. 2008). Intense worries about one's mother and father, however, seem to be quite rare (Wang et al. 2020). What these studies have in common, apart from the US context, is that they rely on small samples with only a few hundred participants.

More comprehensive in this respect is the German Ageing Survey. It asked nearly 5,000 Germans from 40 to 85 years of age, "Are there people who are currently causing you great worry or distress?" A quarter of the respondents answered "Yes" and primarily mentioned members of their family. For a tenth of 40- to 85-year-olds with parents living in a separate household, great worries revolve around their mother or father (Szydlik 2002a).

As for the factors causing worries and burdens in intergenerational relationships, the research literature so far also offers little reliable knowledge. Yet it does identify some (potentially) influential factors, although here too the findings cannot always be generalised because of the small sample sizes of some of the studies. At any rate, the study by Cicirelli (1988) mentioned above finds that the extent of worries about parents is related to individual resources: Adult children with higher levels of education and those in a better occupational position report worrying much less about them. Whether and to what degree intergenerational relationships are burdensome can also be related to intergenerational distance. In general, intergenerational relationships tend to be less burdensome when the adult children are more detached from the parental home (Stein et al. 1998, Lang/Schütze 2002). In the same vein, other studies indicate that (spatial) proximity can have a restrictive effect and be a burden on the relationship (Umberson 1992, Igarashi et al. 2013).

Generations being dependent on support can cause stress. This is again suggested by anecdotal evidence from qualitative interviews in a study by Igarashi et al. (2013). Another qualitative study of ten daughters and two sons in the Zurich area who look after their old, chronically ill parent also reports offspring experiencing the relationship with their parents as a source of worries and burdens (Karrer 2015). According to the representative Ageing Survey,

worrying about parents or adult children is related to needs. Children who help their parents around the house or even care for them are much more likely to worry about them (Szydlik 2002a). Caring for parents, in particular, is often experienced as a great burden (Robinson 1983, Cicirelli 1988, Martin 2000, Reczek/Zhang 2016). In their qualitative study, Igarashi et al. (2013) observe that worries and perceived burdens are sometimes also triggered by children in financial difficulties who have to be supported. This finding is also confirmed by Hay et al.'s (2008) aforementioned survey of 213 families.

Previous studies have moreover found influences of family structures in the form of gender effects (e.g., Hay et al. 2007, 2008). Daughters worry more frequently about their parents than sons do. Yet, according to a study by Birditt et al. (2009b), daughters and sons differ only slightly in terms of how they deal with stress from these worries and burdens.

Some research furthermore suggests that the extent of worries and burdens can differ substantially depending on the ethnic and cultural background of the family generations (Scott et al. 2002, Hay et al. 2007, Trommsdorff/Mayer 2011). However, on the basis of the existing literature, it cannot be clarified whether such differences persist after migrating to another country.

Hypotheses

Although only a small proportion of intergenerational research has so far addressed potential factors that influence worries and burdens, we can derive hypotheses from the existing literature and by drawing on the ONFC model (Chapter 1). Accordingly, intergenerational stress can be affected by opportunities, needs, family structures and the broader context.

With respect to *opportunities*, one can generally hypothesise that more resources amount to less stress. Worries and burdens further require occasions. If there are none, or problems can be solved using the available resources, intergenerational stress should be limited. In this vein, it is likely that individuals with higher levels of education will have to worry less about their parents. On the one hand, these adults frequently have parents who are themselves better off and thus give less occasion to worry about or be burdened by them. On the other hand, they are more likely to have the means to help parents should problems arise. This can reduce stress between the generations. Yet it is also conceivable that having greater resources at one's disposal allows for more tension among the higher educational classes, which can then affect the extent to which the intergenerational relationship is perceived as a burden (Chapter 5).

Apart from education, financial resources can also be expected to play a role. For one, the parents of adults who are financially better off will typically also be less likely to have financial problems. For another, being in a comfortable financial position can facilitate negotiating many other difficult situations, so that there is generally less to worry about when looking to the future.

The potential opportunities for stress with parents also include spatial proximity. Living in (very) close proximity offers more occasions for worries and burdens. More information on how mother and father are doing in everyday life may give more reason to worry. Moreover, proximity can contribute to more ambivalence, tension and conflict (Chapters 3, 5), which would again increase the burden. Some intergenerational relationships may even be perceived as being too close and thus as stressful. Yet it can also not be ruled out that large spatial distance gives cause for concern and is therefore a burden – if the adult child does not know exactly how their mother and father are doing and then fears the worst.

We can further expect the *needs* of adults and their parents to have an impact. First, age will likely play a role. Older adult children also have older parents. The advancing age, increasing fragility and approaching death of one's parents are likely to contribute to more frequently worrying about and feeling burdened by them regardless of the parents' actual state of health.

The occupational situation could also play a role. The time when children are in education or training should be particularly interesting in this respect. During this period, adult children should probably worry less about their parents. It is, however, precisely in this stage of life that parents and their children are more likely to have disputes about the latter's current situation and professional future that might weigh on the intergenerational relationship (Chapter 5). An aspect that points in this direction is the unbalanced relation between giving and taking along with the dependency and lack of autonomy that this entails (Chapter 3).

Parental health can be expected to play a key role in adult children worrying about and feeling burdened by their parents. Their mother or father being in poor health is likely to considerably heighten concern among children. At the same time, the need for help and care (Chapter 9) can pose a heavy burden on children.

In addition, the offspring's need for money could motivate concern for the well-being of parents as a potential source of monetary transfers. Gifts from parents can also be a sign of close attachment (Chapter 7) and thus be more likely associated with worries. Conversely, children need to worry less about the financial situation of parents who can afford to give money. With regard to

burdens, we can also formulate alternative hypotheses. On the one hand, gifts can strengthen attachment and thus reduce stress between the generations. On the other hand, payments can also symbolise dependence and be tied to demands or even conditions – which can in turn be a burden.

When considering *family structures*, one can expect daughters to worry more about their parents than sons. This is in line with the aforementioned studies as well as the kinkeeper hypothesis (Rosenthal 1985, Rossi/Rossi 1990). Owing to the still prevalent conceptions of gender roles, daughters are probably more exposed to stressful intergenerational relationships than sons. After all, daughters are still much more involved in caring for their parents than sons (Chapter 9).

It will further be interesting to see how the parents' partnership affects stress experienced by their adult children. When parents live together, they can take care of one another, thus limiting the burden on their children. In principle, this also applies to a new partnership in which case a parent then engages with another person. This could entail estrangement between children and that parent (Chapter 6). When a mother or father lives alone, whether as a result of separation or widowhood, this is likely to lead to increased worries and burdens on the children's end.

The family setting includes not only the current situation but also previous experiences in childhood and adolescence. For the following analyses, it is assumed that such experiences can also be a source of generational stress in adulthood (cf. Merz/Jak 2013). Here, too, it makes sense to distinguish between worries about parents to whom one feels close and burdens that arise from difficult situations. Whatever the case may be, we can assume that closer attachment in childhood contributes to worrying more about parents later on – whereas conflicts in childhood can be a burden in the long run.

In addition, the family situation of the adult children must be taken into account, that is, partnership, children and siblings. Offspring living in a partnership can cushion the demands and burdens that arise from parents – this should result in less stress. Yet, in some cases, the adult child's choice of partner may also contribute to stress in the relationship with parents. Nevertheless, we ultimately expect the cushioning argument to prevail (Chapter 5).

Adult children having offspring of their own could strengthen the relationship with (grand-)parents. After all, they continued the family line and control access to the grandchildren. However, attachment to parents can also weaken when children focus on their own children instead (Chapter 7). How adult children having children of their own affects worrying about their parents is thus an empirical question. The same is true for burdens. The middle

generation with offspring of their own faces substantial demands while commanding only limited (time) resources (e.g., Grundy/Henretta 2006). They must provide care for their children on the one hand and should also care for their parents on the other, which amounts to a dual burden. Of course, grandparents can also provide relief in this respect if they help care for grandchildren (Igel/Szydlik 2011, Igel 2012).

Having siblings can reduce worries and burdens for an individual adult child. When there are siblings, it might be easier to fulfil parental needs by sharing the burden, thus entailing less individual stress. However, siblings can also remind each other of their obligations toward their parents and demand support (Chapter 9).

Lastly, societal *contexts* are likely to have an influence on intergenerational stress. The analyses can be expected to show that, apart from migration experiences, especially cultural norms have an impact on familial intergenerational relationships. We assume that particularly first-generation migrants are more frequently affected by worries and burdens. After all, this generation in particular reports a strong sense of obligation to support their parents (König et al. 2023: Tables AD23, 27, 35). This holds true for the second migration generation as well, albeit to a lesser extent. There is hence reason to expect that the second generation will also worry more about their parents.

We also anticipate differences in intergenerational stress between the Swiss language regions because of their linguistic and cultural proximity to their neighbouring countries and thus to the norms and values prevalent there. Due to the stronger family orientation in Italian Switzerland, we assume that adults there worry more about their parents than in German Switzerland. Burdens could also be greater in Italian Switzerland if we consider the more frequent caregiving to parents (Chapter 9). Yet in an environment marked by stronger family bonds (Chapter 7), attending to parents might also be perceived to be less of a burden. Which of these alternative hypotheses holds true is again an empirical question.

Results

Questions

The following analyses draw on four questions about intergenerational stress selected from the SwissGen study. They address worries, (excessive) expec-

tations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens. The analyses consider current relationships with mothers and fathers as well as relationships with now deceased parents during the last twelve months prior to their death. The questionnaires and basic results are documented in the data volume (König et al. 2023).

The following statement captures worry about parents from the perspective of their adult children:

I worry about my mother [father].

For respondents with deceased parents the question is:

I worried about my mother [father].

When asking about intergenerational expectations, the SwissGen-questionnaires take both the perspective of the parents and their adult offspring into account. They address what the mother or father expects and how this is perceived and interpreted by the daughter or son. The focus is on excessive expectations:

My mother [father] expects [expected] too much of me.

To what extent do or did adult children feel overwhelmed by the relationship with their parents? Intergenerational stress rooted in feeling overwhelmed is determined by this statement:

My relationship with my mother [father] overwhelms [overwhelmed] me.

The degree to which the relationship with parents is or was perceived as a burden is also addressed directly by asking the respondent to assess the following statement:

My relationship with my mother [father] is [was] a burden to me.

All four statements offer the same five response options. Thus the answers can be directly compared with one another:

Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never.

The following part of the chapter is devoted to the responses to these statements. The focus is particularly on worries and burdens. We begin with a general overview and then present the analyses.

Overview

In a first step, we determine the extent of worries, excessive expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens. Figure 4.1 documents the proportions of adults for whom this is or was always, often, sometimes, rarely or never the case. The upper half refers to current relationships with living parents and the lower half to those during the last year with now deceased parents. The numbers for the following three figures can also be found in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD18, 29, 36, 40).

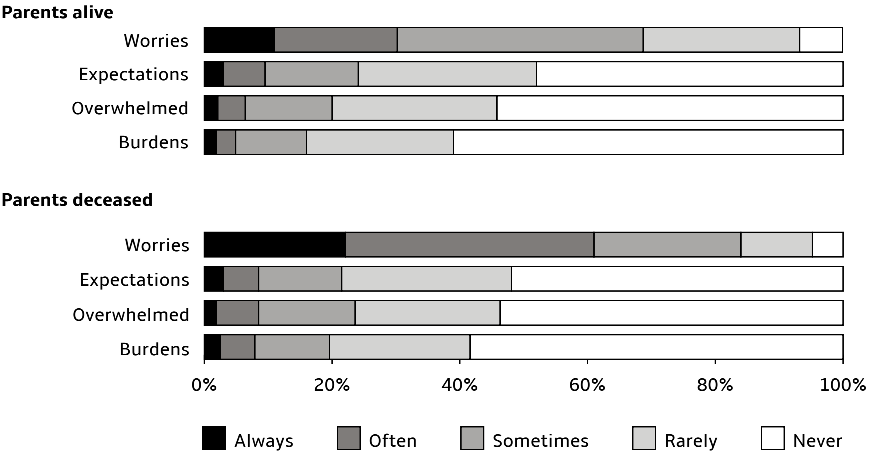
Almost all adults worry about their parents. However, there are also large differences in frequency. A tenth reports always worrying about their living parents, a fifth doing so sporadically and a quarter rarely. If we add up all those who express considerable worries, two out of three adults worry about their mother or father at least some of the time. Three in ten adult children state that they always or often worry about their parents.

Excessive expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens are less frequent by comparison but still substantial. More than half of adult children feel that their parents expect too much of them at least rarely, a quarter do so at least sometimes and a tenth often or always. Moreover, nearly half of adult children feel overwhelmed by their relationship with their parents at least rarely. One out of five do so at least sometimes, and for six per cent this is often or even always the case.

How burdensome are current intergenerational relationships overall? Two in five adults say that they experience their relationship with their mother or father as a burden at least every now and then. Every sixth adult child feels burdened by the relationship at least sometimes, one in twenty does so often or always. These lower proportions are also an indication of intergenerational stress that should not be underestimated.

Against the background of the often anticipated death of one's parents during the last year of their lives, it is not surprising that adult children are particularly worried about them during this period. Six out of ten adults with deceased parents often or always worried about them during this time. Merely one in ten did so only rarely and one in twenty never. Compared with worries, the percentages for expectations, feeling overwhelmed and burdens differ much less between adults with living and those with deceased parents.

Figure 4.1: Stress



Source: SwissGen.

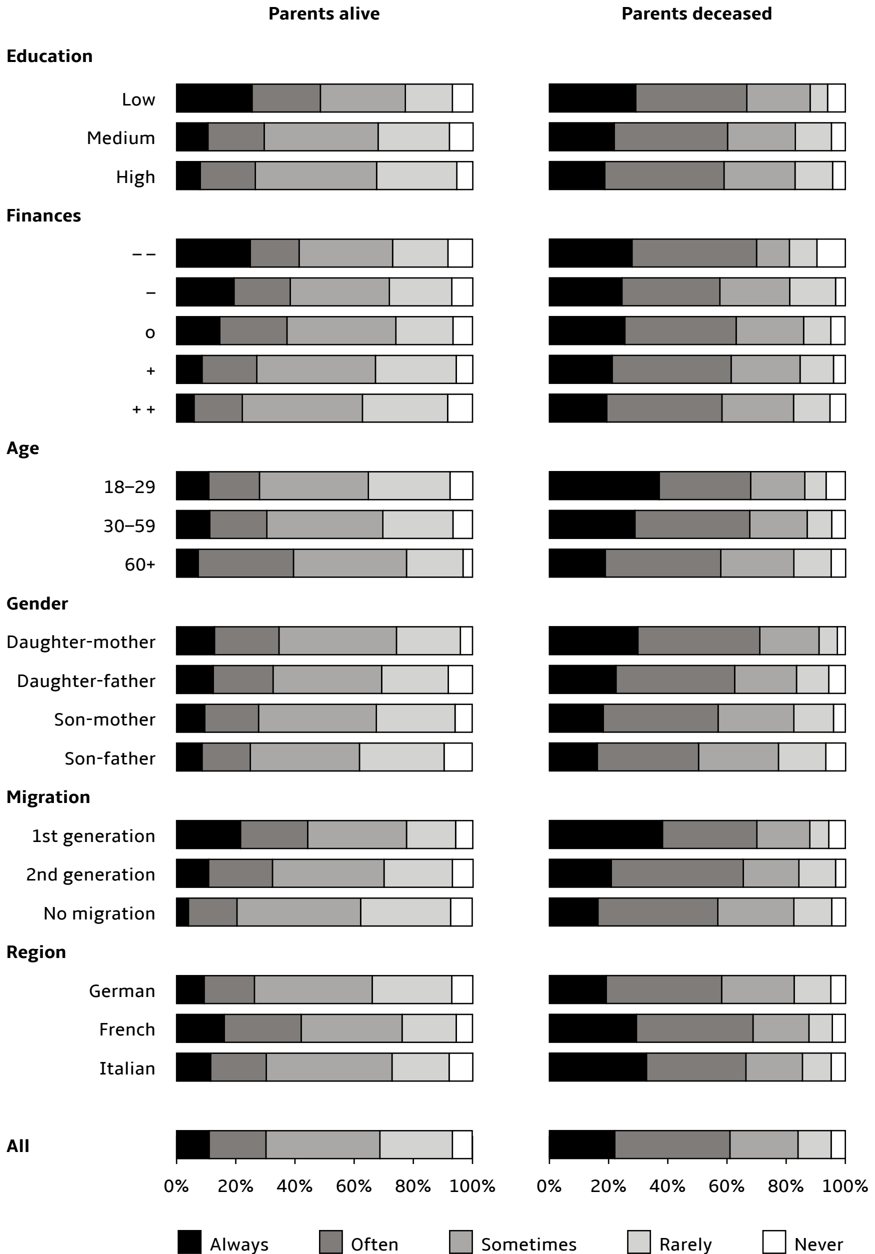
Excessive parental expectations were perceived somewhat less. However, those with deceased parents more frequently experienced the last year with them as overwhelming and burdensome. In retrospect, the relationship overwhelmed nearly every fourth adult child at least sometimes and a fifth felt burdened accordingly.

In the following, worries and burdens will be examined more closely. Who worries more and who less about their parents? Who perceives themselves to be particularly burdened or not so much? The overview considers six potential factors: education, finances, age, gender, migration and region. The left columns of the figures illustrate current relationships with living parents, the right columns the last year with now deceased parents.

Figure 4.2 first shows a connection between worries and resources: The higher the offspring's level of education, the less frequently they report always or often worrying about their parents. The general occurrence of concern is similar across all levels of education. What differs considerably, however, is the intensity of their worries. Whereas nearly every second person with a low level of education worries frequently or always about their parents, only just over one in four do so among those with high educational attainment.

In regard to money, we also see a resource effect. Slightly more than one-fifth of adults in good financial shape report worrying about their parents at least sometimes. But this applies to nearly twice as many among those

Figure 4.2: Worries



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,221 living parents / 6,904 deceased parents).

whose household has difficulty making ends meet. We see this same pattern for money and finances among those with deceased parents, although it is less pronounced.

Older adults are more likely to report worrying about their living parents, who are of course older themselves. However, the oldest among those whose parents are deceased tended to worry less. Although the percentages for the youngest adults must be treated with caution owing to the small sample size (König et al. 2023: Table 7), the middle age group likewise mentions worrying more than the oldest.

Daughters worry considerably more about their parents than sons. Daughter-mother relationships involve the most worries, son-father relationships the least. These differences persist during the last year before a parent's death. Whereas seven out of ten daughters at least frequently worried about their mother during the last year of her life, five out of ten sons did so about their father.

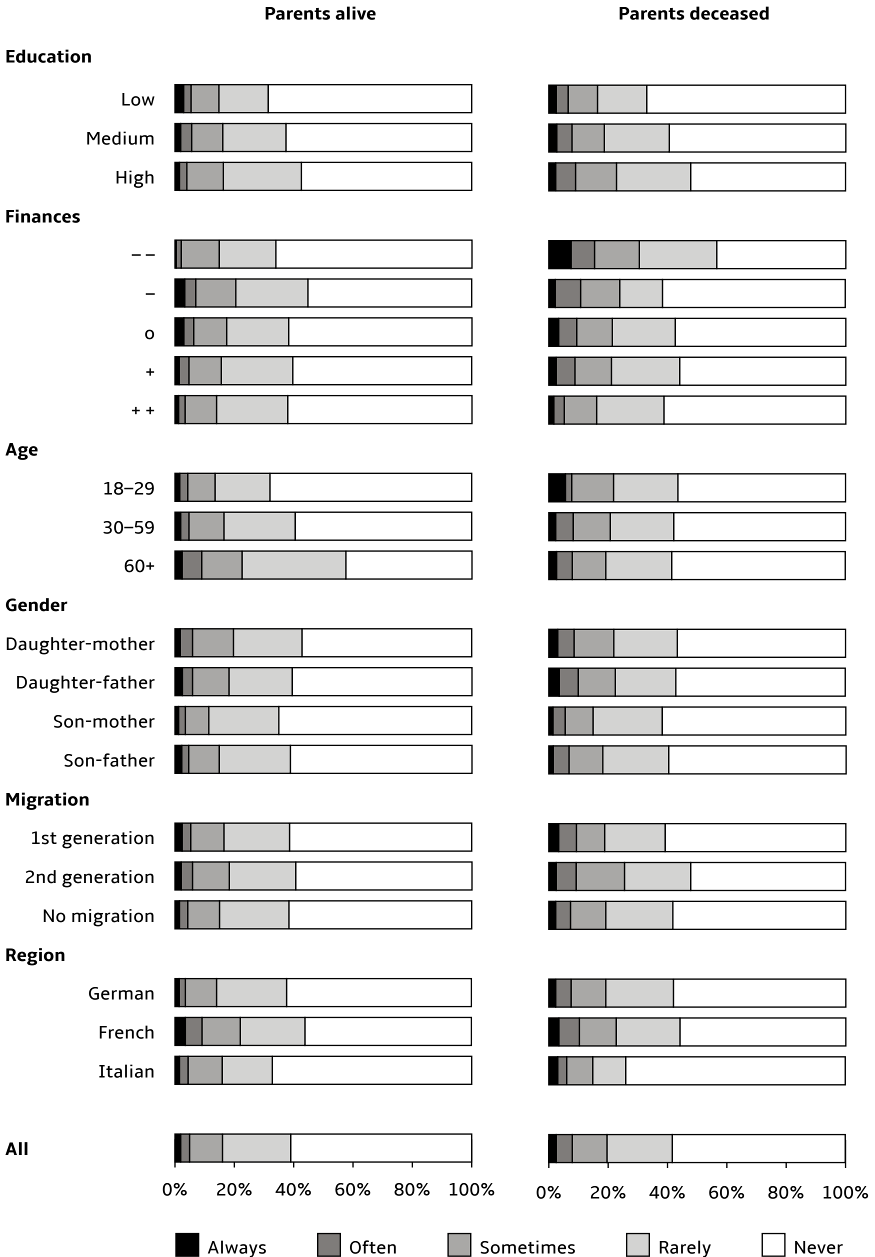
First-generation migrants worry the most: More than four in ten of those who immigrated to Switzerland worry about their parents often or always. This applies to only two in ten among those with no immediate migration history. Among the second generation, the proportion is more than three in ten. We see similar differences for the parents' last months of life.

Current worries about parents are most widespread in French Switzerland. In German Switzerland, the offspring of now deceased parents also worried less during the last months of their parents' lives. There, only every fifth adult child reports permanent worries – in Italian Switzerland this is the case for every third.

Figure 4.3 is devoted to burdens. Overall, those with a high level of education are more frequently affected. A good three out of ten of those with lower education mention that their relationship with their parents has at some point posed a burden to them. Among those with higher education the proportion is more than four in ten. Especially when looking back on the last year with their now deceased parents, those higher up on the educational ladder speak of heavier burdens.

As for the financial situation, more resources are generally associated with less pronounced burdens. The better the adult children's household currently gets by financially, the less the intergenerational relationship is experienced as a burden – with the exception of the lowest income group. In the last twelve months prior to the death of their parents, the financially best-equipped households are also generally less burdened.

Figure 4.3: Burdens



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,132 living parents / 6,791 deceased parents).

The older the offspring and thus the older the living parents, the more frequently the intergenerational relationship is experienced as burdensome. Fourteen per cent of those under the age of 30 state that the relationship with their parents is a burden at least sometimes. Among the oldest, this is true for 23 per cent. However, such differences are not discernible in the last year of parents' lives.

Intergenerational relationships are more burdensome for daughters. This is especially true for their relationship with their mother. Every fifth daughter-mother relationship is at least sometimes experienced as a burden, compared with every ninth son-mother relationship. A look at sons also reveals that it is rather the relationship with fathers that they consider to be burdensome.

Compared to worries, migration effects turn out to be considerably less pronounced when it comes to burdens. In this respect, particularly the second generation's relationship with their parents appears to be somewhat more burdensome. This applies to current relationships, yet is even more pronounced during the last year with now deceased parents.

As in the case of worries, especially adults from French-speaking Switzerland mention feeling burdened by the current relationships with their parents. This pattern also holds true for the last months with now deceased parents, albeit the difference to German Switzerland is somewhat smaller. Furthermore, it is notable that adult children from Italian Switzerland in particular report fewer burdens during this time.

Analyses

The initial overview provided above has revealed some considerable differences in the extent of intergenerational stress. This raises the question of whether these associations persist once additional factors are taken into account – and to what degree these are of particular significance. Figure 4.4 presents the results for worries and burdens in regard to living and deceased parents. The magnitude and direction of associations are indicated by the number of plus and minus signs. The respective cell remains empty if the factors considered have no impact on the extent of intergenerational stress. The variables and coefficients are documented in the Appendix (Tables A2, A4).

With regard to *opportunities*, we hypothesised that more resources entail less stress with parents. In fact, adults with higher education report fewer worries about their parents. Conversely, the less educated worry more – be it because they are less able to support their parents or because their parents also have fewer means to handle difficult situations. For burdens, however,

the picture is different. Here, the highly educated are more likely to perceive the relationship with their parents as burdensome. Figure 4.3 already points in this direction, with the higher educational class in particular much more frequently mentioning rare burdens. This might be due to more tension with parents (Chapter 5). However, subjective perceptions and speaking more openly about sporadic feelings of burden could also play a role.

As for the financial situation, the analyses yield the expected result: Having more money is associated with worrying less. For the last year in the life of now deceased parents, however, the analyses show a weakly positive correlation between the financial situation and the extent of worry. Further analyses indicate that considering the language region reverses the otherwise negative effect. In Italian-speaking Switzerland in particular, people with more money worry much more about their parents, whereas the impact of the financial situation on the extent of worrying is less pronounced in French- and even less so in German-speaking Switzerland. As far as burdens are concerned, we find no significant influence of the financial situation when also considering education. Thus, the education effects mentioned above are most likely to be at work here.

Residential distance consistently shows a negative association with reported worries and burdens. The further away adult children live from their parents, the less they worry about them and perceive them to be a burden. Conversely, spatial proximity and shared everyday experiences create more opportunities for experiencing intergenerational stress.

An indicator of *needs* is age. Older adult children worry much more about their parents, who are older as well, and perceive their relationship as more burdensome. This is also the case when parental health is explicitly taken into account. Factors that might play a role here are parents' emotional need for attention and understanding as well as anxieties and uncertainties owing to their life situation. Furthermore, ambivalent feelings also increase with age (Chapter 3). For the last months of life, however, the previous overview suggests less stress among older offspring. This can no longer be observed once parental health is factored in. At work here is thus less age as such but illness and fragility.

Adult children in education or training often perceive the relationship with their parents as burdensome. At this point in life, they are in greater need of support, thus more strongly depend on their mother and father, and have yet to achieve a satisfying degree of autonomy. In addition, this crucial period for their entire life course involves higher levels of tension and conflict with parents, which can likewise be burdensome (Chapter 5). Moreover, those not

in gainful employment state that they perceived the relationship with their parents to be a greater burden during the last twelve months of their parents' lives. This group consists mostly of retirees who, also on account of their own need for support, were less able to help and care for their parents (Chapter 9) and therefore probably felt more burdened by the situation at the end of their parents' lives.

Parental health is one of the most significant stressors. This confirms previous research and the respective hypothesis (see above). The better parental health is, the less frequently offspring worry about their parents and experience the intergenerational relationship as a burden. Conversely, it is above all parents in poor health that their children worry about and experience as burdensome. This applies to the current relationship with living parents but also to the last twelve months before their death.

Adult children who have recently received gifts or payments from their parents worry about them somewhat more. The child's own need for money might play a role here; hence the child might be worrying about its parents as a source of monetary transfer. Yet gifts can also express and foster emotional bonds – and thus worries. With regard to burdens, we also formulated alternative hypotheses above. The analyses indicate no transfer effect, so that potential influences may offset one another. Additional analyses show that monetary transfers reduce burdens when parental health and children being in education or training are not taken into account. This suggests that monetary transfers can provide relief especially in critical phases of life.

Family structures include gender combinations in intergenerational relationships. Daughters worry substantially more about their parents and feel more burdened by them. Conversely, sons mention intergenerational stress less frequently. Whereas the differences between daughters and sons are somewhat smaller when it comes to burdens, sons worry much less about their mother and father – especially so during the last twelve months before their death. The analyses further suggest that daughters even worry slightly more about their father than about their mother. This only holds true, however, when the analysis includes affection experienced in childhood. Daughters worry slightly more about their father later in life if they received the same amount of affection from him in childhood as they did from their mother.

If parents live in a new partnership, their offspring worry less about them. When parents separate, and especially when a stepmother or stepfather emerge on the scene, this can lead to children distancing themselves from that parent (Chapter 6), which finds expression in worrying less about their well-being. This applies even more so during the last months in that parent's

Figure 4.4: Worries and burdens

	Worries		Burdens	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium				
High	–		+ +	+ +
Finances	–	+		
Distance	–	–	–	–
Needs				
Age	+ +		+ +	
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training			+ +	
Not employed				+
Health of parent	– – –	– – –	– – –	– –
Money from parent	+			
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	+	–	–	
Son-mother	– – –	– – –	–	–
Son-father	– –	– – –	– –	– –
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	– –	– – –	+ +	+ +
Single	+		+ +	+ +
Childhood: parental conflicts	+		+ +	+ +
Childhood: conflicts			+ + +	+ + +
Childhood: affection	+ + +	+ + +	– – –	– – –
Partnership			–	
Child(ren)	–			
Siblings			– –	– –
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	+ + +	+ + +		
2nd generation	+ +			
Region (ref.: German)				
French	+ + +	+ +	+ +	+
Italian		+ +	–	– – –

+/−: more/fewer worries or burdens.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A4).

life. As expected, children worry particularly about a parent who is alone, especially since these parents need more support (Chapter 9). Conversely, the relationship with one's parents is much less of a burden if they continue to live together. In this case, the intergenerational relationship is burdened neither by separation or a new partnership of parents nor by a lone parent's greater need for support.

Another highly relevant factor for intergenerational stress are childhood experiences. Adults worry more about parents who frequently quarrelled with each other earlier in life. This effect can be observed once the analysis includes parental health. When a parent has health problems and can possibly not fully rely on a partner, their children worry more about them. Earlier conflicts between and with parents furthermore result in a much more burdensome intergenerational relationship. This applies both to current relationships and those during the last year with now deceased parents. At the same time, adults clearly worry more about parents who frequently showed them affection earlier in life. Moreover, affection experienced in childhood and adolescence is associated with substantially less burdensome intergenerational relationships in adulthood.

With regard to adult children's current family situation, having a partner, children and siblings can have an impact on stress with parents. Having a partner has no effect on worries, but burdens are definitely reduced. A partner can share and cushion the demands and burdens arising from the relationship with one's parents.

If adult children have children of their own, they worry slightly less about their parents. Children in a sandwich position are apparently more likely to attend to their own offspring than to their family of origin. With regard to burdens, the analyses find no influence of (grand-)children when considering the age of the middle generation. It is possible, however, that the dual burden of caring for children and parents and the relief parents provide by caring for grandchildren partly offset one another.

Having siblings influences the degree to which adults worry about parents only when parental health is not taken into account. Parental health being equal, siblings have no impact on expressed worries. As siblings may allow burden-sharing, they can, however, contribute to reducing intergenerational stress for each individual child. The findings confirm the hypothesis that the more siblings one has, the less burdensome the relationship with one's parents is.

Finally, societal *contexts* also influence the extent of intergenerational stress. Migrants worry significantly more frequently about their parents. This is especially pronounced among first-generation migrants, both with regard to cur-

rent relationships and those during the last months with their now deceased parents. Yet the second generation, too, worries substantially more about their mothers and fathers than adults with no immediate history of migration. Perhaps this is due to the influence of a culturally more pronounced sense of obligation toward parents. In addition, these parents are often exposed to poorer living conditions – be it in their country of origin, be it due to migration experiences and discrimination. All of this can cause worry. However, the analyses show no significant migration effects in regard to burdens if residential distance of the first generation and childhood experiences of the second are included.

Adults in French-speaking Switzerland worry more frequently about their parents than those in German Switzerland. This is also the case in Italian Switzerland during the last year with now deceased parents, whereas such an effect does not exist among those with living parents if migration history is taken into account. A possible explanation for this is that adult children more frequently provide care to their parents in French and Italian Switzerland (Chapter 9). In this context, it is conceivable that greater worries might also be a result of the lesser availability of institutional care of various kinds, which requires that adults more often assume the task of caring for their parents themselves (Bundesamt für Statistik 2018). At the same time, burdens are especially rarely mentioned in Italian Switzerland. This is in line with the particularly high willingness in this part of the country to give care to parents (König et al. 2023: Tables AD35). The fact that intergenerational relationships are described as less burdensome in Italian Switzerland probably also stems from the generally strong family orientation.

Summary

Intergenerational stress is widespread. This pertains in particular to worries about one's mother and father. More than nine out of ten adults worry at least occasionally about their parents. Only seven per cent never do. Excessive expectations, feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens must also not be underestimated. Over half of adult children report that their parents expect too much of them at least sporadically. Slightly fewer than one-half mention feeling overwhelmed. Two in five adults perceive their relationship with their mother or father to be a burden at least sometimes.

However, we must not allow these percentages to obscure the fact that pronounced intergenerational stress is much less frequent. Nevertheless, three out of ten adults always or often worry about their parents, and one out of ten worries all the time. One in ten parents permanently or often expect too much of their children. One in fifteen adult children report feeling at least frequently overwhelmed, and one in twenty always or often perceive the relationship with their parents to be a burden. Only every fiftieth person feels permanently overwhelmed or burdened by the relationship with their parents.

Among those whose parents are deceased, worries in particular increased massively in the last year of their parents' lives. During this time, six out of ten adults always or often worried about their mother or father, two out of ten always. These offspring did face somewhat fewer instances of excessive expectations, but feelings of being overwhelmed and burdens increased.

What causes stress in adults relationship with their parents, and when does such stress occur only rarely? There are many stressors. But some are more important than others. A relevant factor is resources. Higher levels of education and more money protects against worrying about one's parents. Even so, those with a better education are also more likely to perceive the relationship with their parents as burdensome. Spatial proximity leads to more intergenerational stress, and greater distance reduces worries and burdens.

More important, however, are age and health. As adult children and their parents grow older, worries and burdens increase. A particularly influential factor is health. Parents who are ill and fragile cause their offspring great concern and pose a heavy burden. This applies both to living parents and to the last year with now deceased ones. Adult children are also more likely to mention burden during education or training. This, too, suggests that stress between the generations increases in critical phases of life in particular.

Daughters worry about their parents substantially more, and they are also much more burdened by them. Sons perceive less intergenerational stress. They worry less and report feeling burdened less often. Here it is again useful to consider the findings of the other chapters of this book. The close intergenerational relationships of women in particular involve worrying more, and the extensive support that daughters provide to their parents poses a much greater burden. Another aspect of great significance is the broader family situation. When parents enter into a new partnership, children worry less about them – and perceive the intergenerational relationship to be much more burdensome. This also applies to single parents. Of particular importance are childhood experiences. Children who experienced intense conflict between or with their parents in childhood will perceive their relationship with them

to be much more burdensome throughout their entire lifetime. This pertains both to their current intergenerational relationship and in retrospect to the last months shared with their now deceased parents. The opposite is true when parents showed their young children deep affection. This reduces the burdens in adulthood – but increases the worries. Furthermore, adult children having a partner, being parents and having siblings has an impact. Having a partner and siblings can relieve the burden, and when children have children of their own, they worry less about their parents.

How do migration and region affect intergenerational stress? Adults with a migration history worry substantially more about their mothers and fathers. This is especially true for the first generation, whose parents frequently still live in the country of origin. Yet the second generation also reports greater current worries than adults without an immediate migration history. Regional differences are interesting as well. Residents of French-speaking Switzerland worry much more about their parents and feel more burdened. A possible explanation is a lesser availability of institutional care arrangements, which can result in more intergenerational stress as parents grow older. In Italian Switzerland, by contrast, where family orientation is more pronounced, fewer adults report feeling burdened by their parents.

5 Quarrel – Of tension and conflict

Christoph Zangger

My father left raising us kids largely up to my mother.
So we had our conflicts with her.
(Woman, age 44)

Introduction

Quarrel happens in the best of families. If this is true, disputes between adults and their parents would be more or less normal and occur frequently. After all, as the previous chapter showed, various stressors put the bonds between the generations to the test. The personal statements in Chapter 2 likewise attest to various causes of family tension and conflict. In any case, studies indicate that latent or also open conflict can actually be an essential part of intergenerational relationships (e.g., Clarke et al. 1999, Ferring et al. 2009, Katz et al. 2005, Szydlik 2016).

At first glance, however, it seems like a contradiction: On the one hand, relationships between adult family generations are frequently characterised by cohesion. On the other hand, there seems to be friction, disagreements or even open conflict (Chapter 2). It cannot be ruled out that tension and conflict arise specifically in emotionally close relationships (Fingerman et al. 2004). Moreover, conflict must not necessarily lead to ending a relationship or indicate the absence of mutual closeness and support (Bengtson et al. 2002, Bengtson/Oyama 2010). In this vein, concepts of ambivalence have pointed out that positive and negative emotions can coexist in intergenerational relationships (e.g., Connidis/McMullin 2002a/b, Gilligan et al. 2015a; see Chapter 3).

Whatever the case may be, conflicts can entail far-reaching consequences for the relationship as such as well as for individual well-being (e.g., Gilligan et al. 2015a, Agllias 2016). Investigating conflicts within families is therefore worthwhile not only because of their consequences for the individual but also

for intergenerational family solidarity and societal cohesion. This is particularly the case when frequent conflict results in relatives growing further and further apart (Aquilino 1994, Bengtson et al. 2002, Szydlik 2008a, Birditt et al. 2009a; see also Chapter 6).

This chapter determines to what extent the relationship between adult children and their parents is characterised by quarrel. In this respect, it makes sense to take a closer look at various manifestations and forms of intergenerational discord. Differences between family generations can be rare or frequent, but they can also be latent or manifest. Some disagreements lie dormant under the surface and are hardly ever addressed, while others are expressed in open disputes. The spectrum ranges from rare latent disagreements, through sporadic tension and occasional quarrelling, to permanent manifest conflict. Which kinds of intergenerational differences are most pervasive, and how often do they occur?

The chapter focuses on latent tension and manifest conflict between adult family generations. Who experiences greater or lesser tension and conflict with their parents? Are there differences according to education, finances, age, gender, migration and region? What role do opportunities, needs, family structures and societal contexts play? As in the entire book, we analyse both current intergenerational relationships and those with now deceased parents in the last year of their lives.

Again, we begin by laying the foundations: What is quarrel? What does previous research say? Which hypotheses can be formulated? After presenting the survey questions, we give an overview of disagreement, tension, quarrel and conflict. This is followed by analyses and a summary of the most important findings.

Foundations

Quarrel

In a broad sense, quarrel can be understood as a form of relationship between at least two actors that is characterised by actual or perceived incompatibility (Crouch 2001, Bonacker 2018). Quarrel can culminate in terminating contact, but it can also have integrative and associational effects in the event that the conflicting parties engage in constructive interaction (Coser 1961, Szydlik 2008a, Hocker/Wilmont 2014, Bonacker 2018). Quarrel can originate in the

personalities and the behaviour of the people involved, but it can also be rooted in the relationship itself (Birditt et al. 2009a).

Quarrel in a broad sense can take manifold forms and manifestations. It can involve minor disagreements as well as fierce physical fighting. The differences between conflicting parties can vary in severity and frequency. The spectrum ranges from occasional differences of opinion on marginal issues, through sporadic latent tension, to permanent open conflict involving mental and physical aggression (Schwarz 2013, Bonacker 2018). Main forms of differences between individuals are disagreement, tension, quarrel in the narrow sense and conflict.

Disagreements can cause major disputes (Clarke et al. 1999). However, a disagreeing party can also keep their opinion to themselves and thus abstain from directly fighting it out with the other. This is particularly likely to happen when it comes to different views on matters of marginal relevance. In this case, disagreements will tend to fall in the category of latent (intergenerational) differences.

The situation is similar with regard to tension, which does, however, indicate more pronounced differences between individuals. Nevertheless, tension also comprises latent emotions toward other individuals that are not expressed directly (Ferring et al. 2009). In this vein, tension between family members can be very generally understood as perceived irritation in the respective relationship, without this irritation directly resulting in reactive behaviour (Birditt et al. 2009a, 2009b).

In contrast to latent disagreement and tension, quarrel in the narrow sense usually takes a manifest form. Quarrel can be spontaneous and revolve around less relevant issues. Yet it can also involve substantial differences that erupt in open quarrelling.

With regard to the relationship between adults and their parents, conflict can be understood as a form of intergenerational interaction that is rooted in differences in interests, opinions and emotions (Sev'er/Trost 2011). In the family context, conflicts are part of a complex fabric of social relationships, desires and expectations. Conflicts tend to point to a deeper core of discord, especially when they occur frequently.

Research

In addition to the diverse forms of intergenerational cohesion, tension and conflict between adults and their parents are increasingly becoming an object of research. Even so, only comparatively little research has explicitly examined

latent tension between adult family generations. In their study of 158 families in Philadelphia (USA), Birditt et al. (2009a) report that, in 94 per cent of these cases, the relationship between parents and their 22- to 49-year-old children is marked by at least slight tension. At the same time, the intensity of tension is generally rather low. Another study from the United States on the relationship between mothers and their adult daughters confirms this picture (Fingerman 1998). Among the 48 elderly mothers (average age of 76 years) and their middle-aged daughters (average of 44 years), tension only rarely entails any specific change in their relationship. This indicates a generally constructive way of dealing with tension. It is conceivable, however, that these findings reflect the selective composition of the respondents, who are considerably higher educated and more privileged than the population overall.

All in all, manifest conflict between adult family generations seems to occur less frequently. In their study of urban populations aged 25 years and older in Norway, England, Spain, Germany and Israel, Katz et al. (2005) report that between one-third and one-half of the parents surveyed have conflicts with their adult children. However, these conflicts often have "positive" causes: The parents do not want to be a burden on their children.

Analyses based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) find that conflict is indeed an element of intergenerational relationships. That said, permanent disputes are rather rare. In the 14 countries under consideration, only five per cent of those aged 50 years and older frequently engage in conflict with their parents; the share is the same for the relationship with their adult children. When one considers occasional in addition to frequent conflict, this applies to three in ten relationships with parents and more than a third of the relationships with adult children. At the same time, the frequency of conflict varies considerably among countries. With regard to parents, the range is between 13 and 41 per cent. There is less intergenerational conflict in northern Europe (Sweden and Denmark). Switzerland, by contrast, falls in the upper range with 36 per cent (Szydlik 2016: 87).

Previous research has found conflict between family generations to vary among different groups of people. A factor that plays a role here is available resources. Evidence suggests that the frequency of conflict can increase with educational attainment (Szydlik 2008a). A tight financial situation can also cause quarrel (Gaalen/Dykstra 2006).

The generations' needs are relevant as well. Burdens associated with needs – either on the children's or the parents' side – can give rise to conflict. There are indications that younger adults are more likely to engage in intergenerational disputes (Filipp/Boll 1998, Buhl 2000). However, conflict between

the generations also becomes more frequent with parents' increasing need for care (Ferring et al. 2009). Gaalen and Dykstra (2006) additionally report that financial transfers between the generations influence the frequency of conflict (see also Birditt et al. 2009a, 2009b).

Previous studies have shown that family structures have an impact, too. Compared with the intergenerational relationships of sons, daughters' relationships with their parents are described as closer but also as more conflictual (e.g., Filipp/Boll 1998, Birditt et al. 2009a). The parents' partnership status makes a difference as well. Children of divorced parents generally mention more frequent conflict with their parents in adulthood (e.g., Merz et al. 2007, Kalmijn 2013, Lüscher/Hoff 2013). Such conflict is more frequent with the parent with whom the children did not live after the parental separation (Aquilino 1994, Bouchard/Doucet 2011).

When adult children have offspring of their own, this too can result in greater differences with their parents. A possible reason for this could be divergent parenting practices. Moreover, the middle "sandwich generation" might be exposed to greater pressure and obligations (Filipp/Boll 1998, Clarke et al. 1999). In this context, the number of siblings can also play a role. The more siblings there are, the greater the possibility that support for parents can be spread over more shoulders. This can reduce potential controversy between each child and their parents even if it may involve conflict between the siblings (Peisah et al. 2006, Ferring et al. 2009).

Lastly, according to previous research, the extent of quarrels between the generations can vary with the broader cultural and societal context. Studies have found differences associated with migration experience, either of one's own or of one's parents. Kalmijn (2019) observes that adult children in the Netherlands with a Turkish or Moroccan migration history have somewhat more frequent contact with their parents but that this is also associated with more conflict. Furthermore, international studies have shown substantial differences between countries in regard to intergenerational conflict (see above).

Hypotheses

Drawing on the ONFC model (Chapter 1) and previous research, we can derive a number of hypotheses for the following analyses. Tension and conflict between adult family members do not emerge in a void. For them to occur, there must rather be *opportunities* that enable and fuel them. We can thus assume that the frequency of conflict will vary with socioeconomic and spatial opportunity structures. As individuals with higher education tend to

have more resources at their disposal to endure the potential consequences of conflict – for instance, a cessation of financial transfers – they can more likely "afford" to disagree with their parents. In addition, different communication, discussion and conflict styles between educational classes may have an effect as well (Szydlik 2016: 81).

Along with this, one can further assume that financial circumstances will influence the frequency of family conflict. Like higher education, a better financial standing provides greater freedom in dealing with the potential consequences of quarrel. Conversely, financial straits can put a strain on intergenerational relationships. In lacking sufficient funds of their own, individuals can be dependent on support from relatives. Dependency of this kind can contribute to greater tension between family members even if such latent differences do not always erupt in open conflict.

Another opportunity for intergenerational quarrel lies in spatial proximity. One cannot rule out that greater residential distance may also be associated with tension and conflict between the generations or that quarrel may occasionally lead to greater geographical distance. However, the primary causal direction is likely to be the other way around: Spatial proximity provides opportunities for more frequent contact (Chapter 7) and thus more occasions for personal disputes. Conversely, one can expect increasing spatial distance to reduce intergenerational quarrel.

We can further assume tension and conflict to be related to the *needs* of the individuals involved. It seems reasonable to expect the frequency of quarrel to decrease with age – particularly compared with adolescence and early adulthood in which the need to detach from one's parents takes greater priority (Filipp/Boll 1998). Nevertheless, it could also be the case that the dependency and burdens associated with increasing age (Chapter 4) might result in more latent tension or open conflict between the generations. It will thus be interesting to see whether the empirical analyses show differences between current and previous relationships in the last year of the parents' lives.

Adult children in education or training are in particular need of support from their parents. Moreover, this is a period of key importance for the children's future lives, one often marked by crucial decisions and considerable uncertainty. We can therefore expect more frequent tension and conflict with parents during this time.

Conversely, parental needs increase as their health deteriorates (Chapter 9) – and with these needs also the potential for conflict. Parents being in good health should limit the differences with their offspring accordingly. Another issue to be assessed empirically is whether adult children's need for money, and

parents providing the corresponding financial transfers, give rise to tension and conflict. It is also possible, however, that gifts strengthen intergenerational attachment (Chapter 7, 10) and reduce disputes.

When it comes to *family structures*, gender combinations are likely to play a role. In line with the kinkeeper hypothesis (Rosenthal 1985, Rossi/Rossi 1990), women are still expected to show greater commitment in family matters, which can lead to closer but also more conflictual relationships with their parents (Ferring et al. 2009, Cichy et al. 2013). This is likely to be particularly evident in daughter-mother relationships.

Parents' partnership status can also be expected to have an impact. Previous research suggests greater tension and conflict between adult children and their parents when the latter no longer live together (see above). A parent having entered a new partnership can also strain the intergenerational relationship (Chapter 4), which in turn could lead to quarrel.

Experiences in childhood and adolescence are likely to leave a mark on the intergenerational relationship in adulthood. It can be assumed that negative experiences such as conflicts between parents or between parents and their children considerably increase the likelihood of later quarrel. Conversely, positive experiences and an affectionate parenting style can be expected to reduce tension and conflict in adulthood.

One could assume that in some cases the partnerships of adult children can be a reason for tension and conflict with their parents. Some parents might be dissatisfied with their child's choice of partner. Moreover, that partner potentially creates competition for time and attention. However, a child's partnership might also stabilise the relationship with its parents if the adult child's partnership reduces the potential for conflict. Support between the partners could also play an important role by reducing burdens and differences in the intergenerational relationship.

The impact of (grand-)children is furthermore not clear. On the one hand, grandparents depend on having a good relationship with their adult children to gain access to their grandchildren. At the same time, the middle generation often requires grandparents to support them with childcare so that they can reconcile family and employment. These two aspects can reduce quarrel between the generations. On the other hand, disagreements in matters of parenting style as well as the dual obligations of the "sandwich generation" (see above) can be a source of tension and conflict between adult children and their parents. Here, too, empirical analyses are called for to determine which of these effects is the predominant one or whether the two alternative scenarios perhaps offset each other.

With respect to family structures, one can further expect more siblings to be associated with less frequent quarrel with parents. When there are several siblings, the burden on each child is potentially lower overall (Chapter 4) and thus likewise the potential for conflict with their parents.

With regard to societal *contexts*, we can hypothesise that migration experiences contribute to intergenerational conflict. Accordingly, the particular burdens of migration and the situation in the new country can affect family relations. One can also assume that commitment to the new country might entail greater tension and conflict with one's parents. Ultimately, corresponding differences can emerge in both migration generations. This applies to the first generation whose parents stayed in their home country and also to the second generation whose parents were socialised in another country.

Differences are also conceivable between the language regions. The cultural proximity to the respective neighbouring country can have an impact on family relationships in Switzerland. In this vein, a more pronounced familialism in Italian-speaking Switzerland would lead one to expect less controversy in that part of the country. However, stronger family norms also result in individuals facing the pressure of higher expectations, which could lead to discord between the adult family members. The previous chapter also showed particular burdens on intergenerational relationships in French Switzerland. Since perceived stress can oftentimes be a reason for quarrel, we might expect more intergenerational conflict in the French-speaking part of the country compared to German Switzerland.

Results

Questions

SwissGen captures various forms of potential disputes between family generations (see the questionnaires in König et al. 2023). The respective questions are asked to determine the respondents' relationship with their mother and father, both with regard to living and now deceased parents. In the case of living mothers and fathers, the questions address the current situation; for now deceased parents, we ask about the last year of their lives. Four questions have been selected below.

The following statement about disagreements serves to capture less pronounced differences between adults and their parents:

My mother [father] and I have [had] different opinions about things.

Tension can likewise remain latent and must not necessarily take the form of open dispute. It is determined using the following statement:

There is [was] tension between my mother [father] and me.

Quarrel in the narrow sense is a form of engaging in open controversy. This is captured in the following manner:

My mother [father] and I quarrel[led].

Manifest conflict with one's mother or father is also recorded directly, once again for living and deceased parents. The statement reads as follows:

There is [was] conflict between my mother [father] and me.

All of these statements offer the same five response options for differences in declining order of intensity:

Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never.

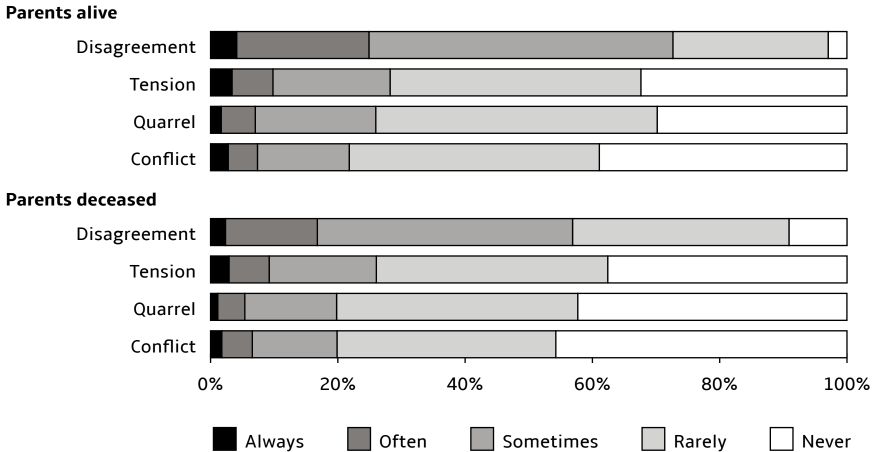
Below, we provide descriptions and analyses of the responses with a focus on tension and conflict.

Overview

How common is controversy between generations? Figure 5.1 shows the percentages of adults who always, often, sometimes, rarely or never experience or experienced disagreement, tension, quarrel or conflict with their parents. We begin with current relationships with living parents and then consider the last year with now deceased parents. The numbers for the following three figures can be found in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD19, 24, 31, 34).

As expected, disagreements are the most common form of intergenerational controversy. More than seven out of ten adults with living parents report having different opinions at least sometimes. In one in four current intergenerational relationships, this occurs often or always. Merely three per cent state that they never disagree with their parents.

Figure 5.1: Quarrel



Source: SwissGen.

Tension occurs much less frequently than differing opinions. Nearly three in ten adults experience tension in the relationship with their living parents sometimes or more often. Every tenth intergenerational relationship is marked by intense tension that occurs often or always.

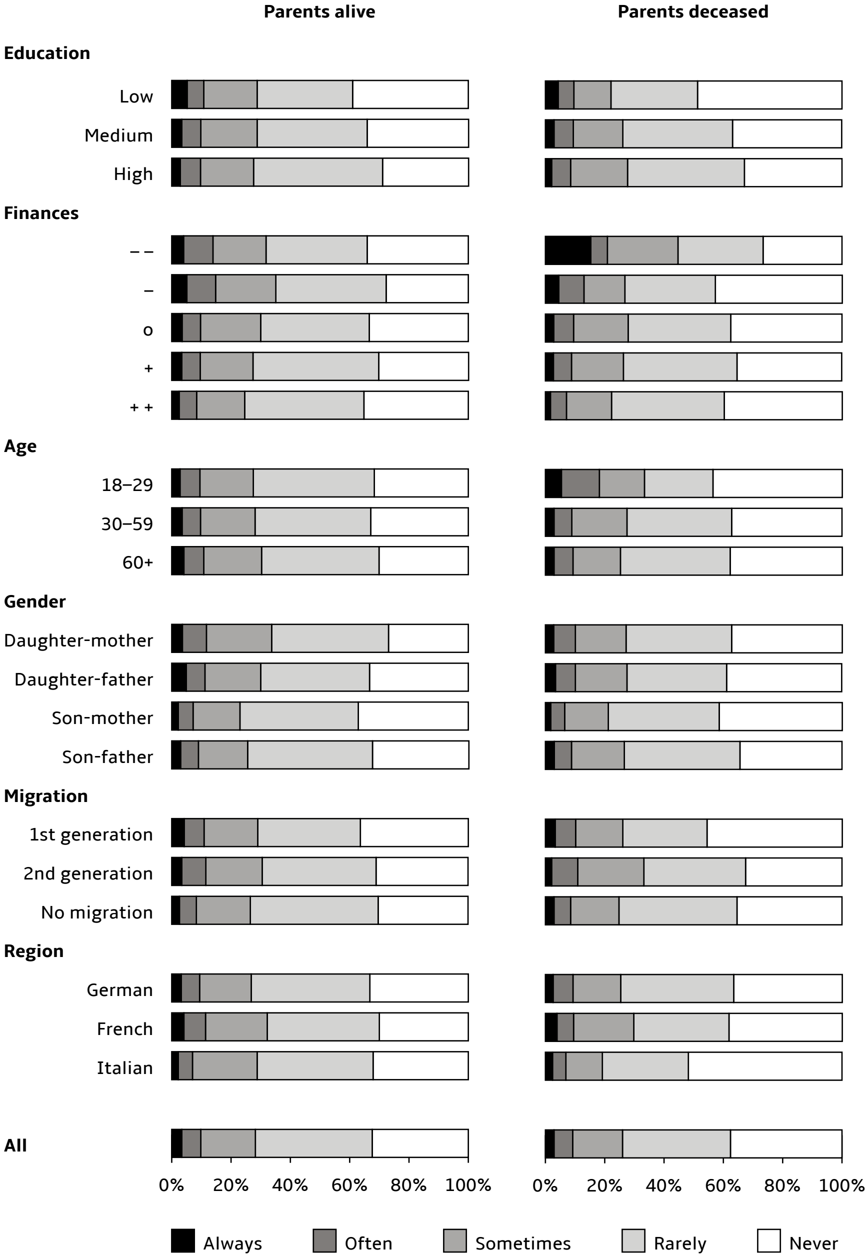
Every fourth adult child reports quarrelling with their parents at least sometimes. Permanent quarrel, however, is quite rare. Seven per cent report frequent or constant quarrelling in current relationships with their parents.

Conflicts are the most intense forms of discord, and they are the least frequent overall. Nevertheless, conflict emerges in every fifth intergenerational relationship at least sometimes. Again, seven per cent of adults mention having conflicts with their parents often or always.

Overall, adults with deceased parents mention fewer differences between the generations in the last year of their parents' lives. The general patterns remain largely the same, though. When looking back on that last year, nearly six in ten adults report at least occasional disagreements. A good quarter of the relationships were sometimes or more often marked by tension. There was also somewhat less quarrelling during the last year of the parents' lives – yet one in five nevertheless quarrelled at least sometimes. The same applies to conflicts.

In the following, we will take a closer look at tension and conflict. First, Figure 5.2 breaks down in more detail the tension between adults and their

Figure 5.2: Tension



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,142 living parents / 6,779 deceased parents).

parents. The left column refers to current intergenerational relationships, the right column to those during the last year with now deceased parents.

Education yields a mixed picture. All in all, tension is more frequent among the more highly educated. But this is mainly due to the rare instances of tension. If we consider permanent tension, by contrast, this most frequently affects those with lower education.

When it comes to finances, the figure generally points in the same direction. The better the household is able to make ends meet, the less likely is tension with parents. Conversely, a tense financial situation tends to be associated with a tense intergenerational relationship.

In current relationships with living parents, tension is somewhat more frequent among older adults. As for the relationship during the last months with a now deceased parent, the percentages for the 18- to 29-year-olds must be treated with caution because of the small sample size (König et al. 2023: Table 7). Not affected by this limitation are the older adults, who report somewhat less tension with their now deceased parents during this time.

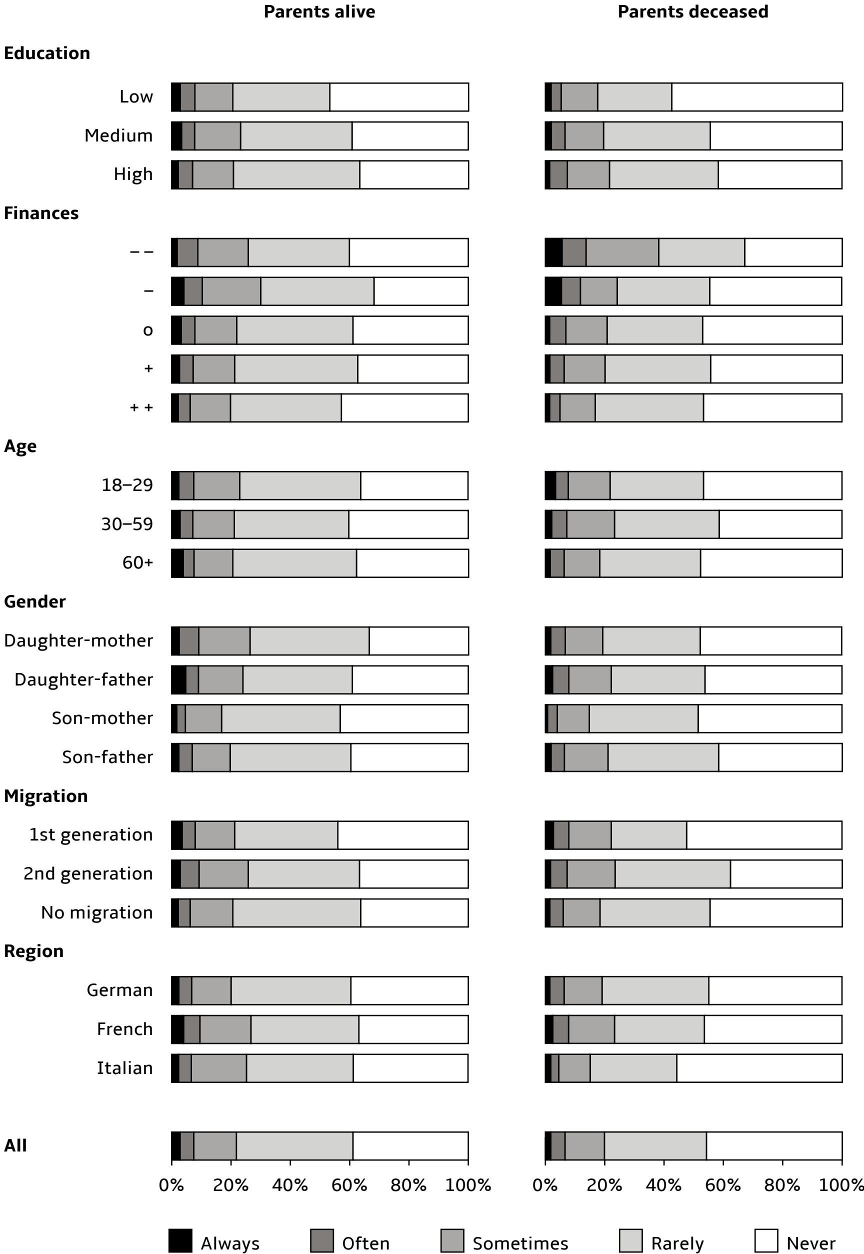
The relationship of daughters with their parents is much more often shaped by tension than those of sons. Every third daughter mentions at least occasional tension with her mother. This applies to fewer than every fourth son with his mother. Adult daughters also have a more tense relationship with their fathers. This pattern can be observed during the last year with now deceased parents as well, although in this case the gender-specific differences are somewhat less pronounced.

We also see differences related to migration experience. More people with an immediate migration history than without speak of at least occasional tension with their parents. This is the case for frequent and permanent tension as well and applies even somewhat more so to the second migration generation. There is no essential difference in this respect between current relationships with living parents and those during the last twelve months before the death of now deceased parents.

As for the language regions, somewhat more tension is apparent in French Switzerland. This is true overall, but also for the more intense differences. The instances of permanent and frequent tension add up to a total of eleven per cent in French Switzerland, whereas the percentages for German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland are nine and seven per cent, respectively. When the adult children look back on their parents' last year of life, Italian Switzerland stands out with particularly little reported intergenerational tension.

Figure 5.3 documents intergenerational conflict. The extent of conflict in relationships with living parents that occurs always, often or sometimes dif-

Figure 5.3: Conflict



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,104 living parents / 6,756 deceased parents).

fers only slightly by education of the adult children. It is only in the case of rare conflict that the highest educational class predominates. Higher-educated offspring in general mention having more frequent disputes in the last twelve months before the death of their parents.

The differences are sharper when it comes to the financial situation. Every fourth person who is in poor economic circumstances reports at least sporadic conflict with their parents. This applies to only every fifth adult child with excellent finances. These differences are even more pronounced in the last year of the parents' lives. During this time, nearly four out of ten intergenerational relationships are characterised by occasional or more frequent conflict among those who consider their financial situation to be very poor – whereas this applies to substantially fewer than two in ten adults among those in the best financial circumstances.

Between the age groups, there are currently no major differences in terms of conflict. For the last year with now deceased parents, the information for the youngest offspring is again less meaningful because of the small number of cases (see above). When one compares the two other groups, there is somewhat less conflict among the oldest offspring. It is rather the middle-aged adults who engage in conflict with their parents during that last year in their lives. This is true especially for sporadic conflict.

Daughters mention intergenerational conflict with their parents more often than sons. Disputes occur most frequently between daughters and mothers and least often between sons and mothers. More than every fourth daughter – as opposed to every sixth son – is in conflict with their mother at least sometimes. When considering the last year with a deceased parent, the offspring report conflict especially with their fathers. Disputes between sons and mothers are again particularly rare during this time.

According to the figure, adults with a migration history are more likely to have conflicts with their parents, which is especially the case for the second migration generation. When it comes to at least frequent conflict, first-generation migrants are overrepresented as well compared to people with no immediate migration history. This applies both to current relationships and to those during the last year with now deceased parents.

We also find differences by language region. In French and Italian Switzerland, (more than) a quarter of adults report having conflicts with their parents sometimes, often or always. In German Switzerland, it is one-fifth. The picture is somewhat different, however, for the last twelve months before the death of one's parents. For this period, offspring in Italian Switzerland mention much less conflict.

Analyses

To what extent do the findings outlined in the overview hold up when other factors are taken into account? What relevance do these other potential factors have? The results of the analyses are shown in Figure 5.4. The first two columns refer to tension, the latter two to conflict. Again, it is about relationships with living mothers and fathers, followed by those during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents. Plus signs indicate more and minus signs less quarrel, depending on the corresponding factor. The respective coefficients can be found in Table A5 in the Appendix. More detailed information on each variable is also provided in the Appendix.

In terms of *opportunities*, we hypothesised that individuals with higher levels of education have more resources to absorb the potentially negative consequences of tension and conflict (e.g., lower or no intergenerational transfers). Adults with higher educational attainment indeed report more tension with their parents. This latent tension does not, however, seem to result in more frequent manifest conflict. Accordingly, adults with medium or higher educational attainment do not differ significantly from lower-educated offspring in terms of reported conflict. The effects of education that were observed in the figures above for the last year in the lives of now deceased parents disappear when conflicts with parents during childhood are taken into account. Against the backdrop of the still close connection in Switzerland between the education of parents and their children (Becker/Zangger 2013), this indicates that conflicts during childhood in particular vary by educational background and have a lasting impact on the relationship with one's parents (König et al. 2023: Tables AD 5, 6, 43).

The relationships of the financially better-off with their parents offer less cause for tension and conflict during the last months of their parents' lives. This suggests that financial difficulties can put a strain on intergenerational relationships, especially since help and care often also involve monetary costs (Chapter 9). Moreover, dependency can have a negative effect. For current relationships with living parents, however, the analyses no longer find an independent influence of the financial situation. Additional analyses show that the differences depicted in the figures are explained by the childhood variables. This again indicates that childhood experiences and, in particular, early conflicts between and with one's parents have a long-lasting impact on the intergenerational relationship.

The closer adult children and their parents live to one another, the more often they interact and the greater the opportunities for quarrelling. The anal-

yses confirm this association both for tension and conflict: The further away offspring live from their parents, the less often they report intergenerational differences. This association is consistent for relationships with living parents as well as for those during the last year with now deceased parents.

As for *needs*, the analyses first consider age. For current relationships, they show decreasing intergenerational tension and conflict with age. This supports the hypothesis of a greater need for detachment in young adulthood. Perhaps the generations also develop greater serenity as they grow older. The main factor that explains the difference to the pattern seen in Figure 5.2 is the state of parental health. As long as the parents are still in good health as they grow older, the relationship tends to be more relaxed. During the last year of the parents' lives, however, older children in particular experience greater tension. The increasing needs of very old parents coming up against the decreasing ability of older offspring may play a role here. Yet these latent tensions hardly lead to more open conflicts.

Adult children in education much more frequently report current disputes with their parents. This finding underlines that the need for support can lead to tension and conflict. What is more, the period of education or training in particular involves crucial life decisions that can fuel intergenerational differences. As only very few respondents who are in education or training have parents who are already deceased, it is not surprising that we do not observe corresponding effects for this group.

We also expected an influence of parents' needs owing to their health situation. The analyses confirm this: The relationship of children with parents who are in better health is marked by less tension and conflict, whereas poor health leads to more differences. This applies particularly to current relationships with living parents. When it comes to the last year in the parents' lives, the generations seem to be more reluctant to engage in controversy.

The analyses further demonstrate that gifts and payments from parents to their children do not affect the level of tension and conflict. However, it could also be that gifts as a "bonding agent" on the one hand and the need for money as a source of strain on the other offset one another to some extent.

With regard to *family structures*, the analyses confirm that the particularly close and caring daughter-mother relationships involve more current tension and conflict. Conversely, controversies are especially rare between sons and mothers. This was also already visible in the previous figures. However, we see no gender-specific pattern for the period immediately preceding the death of the parents, with the previous son-mother effect being explained by conflicts

Figure 5.4: Tension and conflict

	Tension		Conflict	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium				
High	+			
Finances		–		–
Distance	–	–	–	–
Needs				
Age	– –	+ +	– –	
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	+ +		+	
Not employed				
Health of parent	– –		– –	
Money from parent				
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	– –		– –	
Son-mother	–		–	
Son-father	– –		– –	
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner		+ +		+ +
Single	+			
Childhood: parental conflicts	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ + +
Childhood: conflicts	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +
Childhood: affection	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Partnership	–		–	
Child(ren)				
Siblings	– –	– –	– – –	–
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	+		+	+
2nd generation				
Region (ref.: German)				
French	+	+	+	+
Italian		– –	+	– –

+/–: more/less tension or conflict.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A5).

with parents during childhood. This again suggests that earlier patterns of conflict are perpetuated.

When a parent has entered into a new partnership, we observe more tension and conflict with offspring particularly toward the end of that parent's life. Apart from issues around care and rivalry over inheritances, access to parents with fragile health may occasionally also play a role in this respect. In addition, we see more tension with single parents, which again suggests that burdens have an effect (Chapter 4). Additional analyses also reveal more current tension and conflict with parents in a new partnership, especially when excluding conflict between parents during the respondents' childhood. This again is evidence that earlier experiences have a lasting impact.

Particularly impressive indeed are the long-term consequences of childhood. Offspring who experienced higher levels of conflict between or with their parents until the age of 16 consistently report more frequent intergenerational tension and conflict in adulthood. This effect applies to the relationship both with living parents and during the last twelve months before the death of the parent. In this context, earlier conflict with one's parents has an even stronger impact than disputes between them. If parents frequently showed their underage child affection, by contrast, this results in a less tense and conflictual current relationship with their now adult children. These, too, are particularly strong and robust long-term effects.

Adult children in a partnership have fewer differences with their parents. This finding does not suggest that having a partner generally leads to competition for time and attention – or to conflict because of the partner. On the contrary, a partnership tends to stabilise the intergenerational relationship. However, this association does not apply to the last year in the parents' lives if the financial situation is taken into account.

Adult children having children of their own does not seem to influence the extent of differences with their parents. It is possible, however, that factors that promote and reduce conflict offset one another (see above). Further analyses show that grandchildren can in fact reduce quarrel but that this effect disappears once parental health is considered. This can be taken as a sign of the dual burden of the middle generation mentioned above: When adults have to look after parents in poor health in addition to their own children, this offsets the conflict-reducing effect of grandchildren.

As expected, adults with more siblings report less tension and conflict with their parents. This suggests a lesser burden on each individual child and thus less potential for controversy with their parents. The importance of siblings

for the relationship with parents holds consistently for tension and conflict, both currently and in the last year of parents' lives.

With regard to societal *contexts*, we assumed influences of migration and language region. As expected, tension and conflict are more frequent among first-generation migrants, that is, among those who immigrated to Switzerland. This finding supports the assumption that the new context is associated with more controversy with parents. In contrast to the previous figures, the analyses show no effect for the second migration generation. Here again, childhood experiences are central: Conflict in childhood with or between parents explains more frequent differences between adults of the second generation and their parents.

Adults in French-speaking Switzerland report more controversies with their parents – a finding already indicated in the previous figures. According to additional analyses, this is due to the intergenerational relationships of daughters. In the case of sons, there is no difference in the frequency of tension and conflict between French- and German-speaking Switzerland. Further analyses reveal that the differences between the language regions can be explained by parental expectations. Parents' higher expectations toward their offspring in French Switzerland (König et al. 2023: Tables AD29) thus lead to more tension and conflict. The fact that these expectations affect daughters most is not surprising in light of the kinkeeper hypothesis.

In Italian Switzerland, it is likewise primarily daughters who currently have more conflicts with their parents. This is in line with the hypothesis that the cultural proximity to neighbouring Italy with its pronounced familialism leads to particularly high expectations toward daughters in Italian Switzerland as well – which can then result in intergenerational conflict. The less frequent conflict with parents in Italian Switzerland in the last year of the parents' lives can also be attributed to daughters. When parents' health is fragile, daughters apparently comply more strongly with family norms and avoid intergenerational dispute accordingly. With regard to the less pronounced level of tension in Italian Switzerland, however, the analyses detect no gender differences.

Summary

Controversy is an essential element of intergenerational relationships. Nearly three out of four adults have disagreements with their parents at least some-

times. Tension, quarrel and conflict are much less frequent but also not unsubstantial. After all, nearly three in four offspring experience tension with their parents at least sometimes, while a quarter report quarrel and more than one-fifth conflict. Even when looking back on the last year in the lives of their now deceased parents, more than one-half of adult children remember at least sporadic disagreements, one-quarter recall tension and one-fifth each note quarrel and conflict, respectively.

Even though controversy occurs in the large majority of intergenerational relationships, frequent tension, quarrel and conflict are limited to a smaller group of people. Every tenth adult child speaks of frequent or permanent tension with their parents; in the case of quarrel and conflict, this still applies to seven per cent. Only very few constantly quarrel with their parents. Merely four per cent report permanent disagreements, and the percentages are even lower for constant tension, quarrel and conflict.

Looking back on the last year with their now deceased parents, adults generally mention fewer intergenerational differences. This is particularly so for disagreements but applies also to tension, quarrel and conflict. It should also be emphasised that open conflict is much less frequent overall than latent differences.

Which factors contribute to more tension and conflict? The findings attest to the importance of opportunities and needs, family structures and societal contexts. High levels of education are associated with greater tension between the generations. This can be rooted in discussion and conflict styles but also in greater freedom in dealing with the potential consequences of quarrel. Conversely, financial security protects against controversy, especially in the last phase of parents' lives when they need more support. Another factor of importance is residential distance: The further away offspring live from their parents, the less frequent are tension and conflict. Spatial proximity, by contrast, provides more occasions and opportunities for differences.

At the same time, it is rather younger adults who currently have disputes with their parents. The need for independence and detachment from the parental home might play a role here. Intergenerational tension and conflict also increase considerably when children are still in education or training and are therefore more dependent on parental support. This also applies when parents are in poor health. The greater the need for support, the more there is quarrel. When parents are in good health, there are fewer differences with their offspring.

Family structures are particularly important. This is where the strongest effects emerge overall. What the analyses show, first of all, is that the daugh-

ter-mother relationship in particular is shaped by tension and conflict. The closest relationships are precisely the ones most prone to controversy. Another striking observation is that a new partnership of a parent is particularly associated with problems in the last phase of the parent's life. An even more important factor, however, is childhood experiences: Parents often quarrelling with each other or with their children before the latter reach the age of 16 increases the frequency of tension and conflict in adulthood substantially. Parents showing their children affection during childhood, by contrast, strongly protects against differences later in life. In addition, adult children living in a partnership and having siblings also has a positive impact. Those who live in a partnership and have more siblings report fewer quarrels with their parents. When burdens can be spread over more shoulders, this reduces intergenerational controversy.

Finally, the societal context has an influence as well. Migration and region can have an impact on differences between family members. Those who immigrated are more likely to report tension and conflict with their parents. Migration experiences, expectations and burdens as well as cultural discrepancies between the country of origin and of destination might have an effect here. But there are also differences between the language regions that should not be overlooked. Overall, daughters have more disputes with their parents in French Switzerland. This reflects the parents' higher expectations towards their offspring. In Italian-speaking Switzerland, too, higher demands on daughters come with more frequent intergenerational conflict in current relationships. However, the opposite picture emerges for the last year in the lives of now deceased parents: During this time quarrel was rather avoided.

6 Distance – Of indifference and estrangement

Bettina Isengard

I wish the relationship were better.
But I have come to accept it the way it is.
My parents don't care to change it.
We have grown too far apart.
(Woman, age 56)

Introduction

People can distance themselves from one another. Some grow apart over time, others end a relationship at a moment's notice, and still others never developed a bond in the first place. Distance can be the desire of one person alone, or both parties may equally not want a connection. Separation can be dramatic and painful, or it can also come with a sense of relief. It can be final and complete or temporary and partial. Whatever the case may be, the statements documented in the second chapter attest to a variety of reasons, causes, consequences and assessments of the distanced type of intergenerational relationship.

Moreover, there are different kinds of distancing. Generally speaking, it can involve weak emotional attachment, rare contact and sometimes also living far apart from one another (see the two following chapters). When it comes to specific forms of distance, apart from a lack of communication and mutual understanding, the main issues are above all indifference and estrangement. Taking interest in the other person is an important prerequisite for attachment. When one person does not matter to another, it is difficult to maintain a relationship.

Indifference can have existed from the beginning. Estrangement rather assumes turning away from cohesion. Both have potentially far-reaching consequences. This applies particularly to adult family generations, who could in principle lead their own lives. The proverb "out of sight, out of mind" points in this direction. In any case, indifference and estrangement between independent adults in particular can be expected to reduce the potential for reliable support considerably. For a comprehensive view of intergenerational relationships, however, it makes sense to consider not only complete termination of a relationship and absolute autonomy. What we want to do as well is explore the different shades of greater or lesser distance between the generations.

This chapter explores how frequently the various forms of distance occur between adults and their parents. This involves speechlessness, lack of understanding, indifference and estrangement. Speechlessness addresses the question of whether the generations have anything at all to say to one another. Do they engage in meaningful conversations in which they talk about things and thus cultivate a bond? Lack of understanding refers to the limits of interpersonal communication. People can talk a lot with one another, but without understanding the other person, they will fail to connect. Indifference indicates whether family generations take an interest in each other at all or whether they mostly do not care about one another. Estrangement, too, is an expression of pronounced interpersonal distance, especially when people have completely grown apart.

Our focus here is on parental indifference and estrangement of adult children. To what extent do individuals and relationships differ in this respect, and how does this explain greater or lesser distance between adults and their parents? Here, too, we are concerned with characteristics of individuals, families and contexts. What role do opportunities and needs play? Are there causes in childhood and adolescence that have had a lasting impact on the relationship with one's parents? To what extent do migration and region matter? Once again, we analyse the current situation as well as the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.

This chapter offers two main sections: foundations and results. Laying the foundations involves a discussion of intergenerational distance, previous research and hypotheses for the subsequent analyses. With regard to the results, we introduce the questions, give an initial overview and present the findings of the in-depth analyses. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Foundations

Distance

Distance between generations can manifest itself in many ways. In principle, one can initially distinguish between emotional and physical distance (Gilligan et al. 2015b, Agllias 2018, Arránz Becker/Hank 2022). Emotional distance can involve only weak emotions toward another person or no emotions at all. Physical distance can take the form of only rare or no contact whatsoever, possibly at great spatial distance. Emotional and physical distance can occur at the same time but do not have to. For instance, a person can participate in ritualised family events without being particularly emotionally involved.

Distancing can be complete or gradual (Figure 2.1). At the same time, it can be permanent or dynamic. Some generations have never had anything to do with one another at any point in time. In other cases, distancing has been the result of a sudden event. In still other cases, it has been a process of growing apart over time (Agllias 2016, Scharp 2019). Moreover, distance can be caused by one generation or by both. Some relatives distance themselves from each other or end the relationship abruptly because one of the parties chooses to do so. In other cases, detachment is consensual. Nevertheless, distancing can result in individuals suffering from it – be they neglected children or abandoned parents. Yet it is also possible for it to trigger feelings of relief and liberation (cf. statements of the distanced type in Chapter 2).

Emotional intergenerational distance includes speechlessness, lack of understanding, indifference and estrangement. Family generations are distanced when they rarely speak with one another or not at all. If individuals have little to say to one another, this not only indicates a lack of communication but also involves the absence of meaningful, personal conversations beyond general small talk.

A lack of understanding is an expression of emotional distance as well. It involves a lack of empathy and willingness to perceive the other person as an autonomous individual and understand their motivations and actions. This in turn affects the degree to which adult children feel understood by their parents or not.

Indifference is a particularly pronounced form of interpersonal distance. To what extent does a person take interest in the other? For instance, do the parents care about their children at all? And if so, how strong is their interest?

In this context, one person's indifference can be perceived as emotional apathy by the other.

A key form of expressing distance between individuals is also estrangement (see Sukov 2006, Agllias 2016). When one feels estranged from another, this attests to a deep emotional chasm. Yet here, too, we must distinguish between more or less intensive distancing, whether it occurs always, often, sometimes or only rarely.

Research

Previous studies have mostly assessed intergenerational distance via closeness and contact. When one asks about emotional attachment and frequency of interaction, the responses also provide information about those intergenerational relationships in which individuals do not feel closely attached and are only rarely or never in contact. We can thus also interpret findings on closeness and contact inversely with regard to emotional and physical distance (Chapters 2, 7).

Studies on emotional attachment consistently find that the majority of family generations are marked by close ties and thus, by implication, only rarely by emotional distance. Accordingly, nearly four out of five young adults in Switzerland describe their relationship with their parents as being at least close. Conversely, more than one-fifth speak of a less close connection. As much as seven per cent report not having a very close or having no close attachment at all (Bertogg/Szydlik 2016: 50, Bertogg 2018: 140).

Studies on contact between adults and their parents likewise attest to generally strong cohesion. But here, too, there is a non-negligible proportion of relationships in which adults and their parents fairly seldomly meet, talk or send messages (see also Chapter 7). Analyses based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) show that nearly four in five people aged 50 and over are in contact with their parents at least weekly. Conversely, one-fifth see, talk with or write to each other less frequently (Szydlik 2016: 68f., Isengard 2018: 201).

In contrast to emotional closeness and frequency of contact, the current state of research is sparse with regard to the forms of intergenerational distance that are at stake here. Speechlessness, lack of understanding, indifference and estrangement have hardly been examined by representative studies, which is primarily due to a lack of suitable data. That said, a few (social-)psychological studies in the English-speaking world, based on a rather small number of cases and qualitative methods, have attempted to identify the causes of generations

growing apart (e.g., Scharp et al. 2015, Agllias 2016, 2018; for an overview see also Blake 2017).

Given the sparse research on indifference and estrangement, the search for possible explanations of intergenerational distance must largely rely on evidence derived from studies on emotional closeness and frequency of contact. This research suggests that one possible cause of distance between the generations is a lack of opportunity for personal interaction. Estrangement in the form of rare contact would then mainly occur when the generations live far apart. The farther apart adults live from their parents, the more they lose sight of and the less they have to say to each other (Szydlik 2002b).

As far as age is concerned, the study by Blake et al. (2015) suggests that generations can grow apart at any time throughout their lives. Termination of contact is more frequent in younger years until the age of 30 – which does not rule out, however, that the total instances of intergenerational distance add up with age. Along with this, (age-related) declining health can distance the generations from each other. Maintaining regular contact is more difficult in this case, while emotional distance can increase as well (Chapter 7). Moreover, the responsibility to provide care poses additional burdens on offspring (Chapters 4, 9).

There is also some evidence that points to the relevance of family structures to intergenerational distance. Gender plays an important role in this. Mothers stay in touch with their adult children more frequently, and daughters are also more often in contact with their parents (e.g., Hank 2007, Bordone 2009). Women act as so-called kinkeepers in the family (Rosenthal 1985, Rossi/Rossi 1990, Gerstel/Gallagher 1993). In this vein, previous studies have shown that the relationships between male family members are more likely to be affected by estrangement and termination of contact (Szydlik 2002b, Conti 2015, Arránz Becker/Hank 2022).

When parents separate, this can also lead to estrangement from their children (Daatland 2007, Meier 2009, Blake 2017, Köppen et al. 2018). Apart from distancing that arises more or less unconsciously in the wake of parental separation or divorce during their offspring's childhood and adolescence, children can also consciously and deliberately distance themselves from their parents (Scharp et al. 2015, Agllias 2016). There is also evidence indicating that intergenerational relationships between adults are affected by earlier conflicts, whereas tight emotional bonds between adolescents and parents result in less estrangement later on (Kim 2006, Merz/Jak 2013, Agllias 2016, Blake 2017). In addition, the existence of many siblings (or more children from the

parents' perspective) can involve each individual child having less contact with its parents (Szydlik 2002b; see also Chapter 7).

Previous research suggests that family generations with a history of migration are emotionally more closely attached and, when one considers residential distance, are also more frequently in touch (Bertogg/Szydlik 2016, Szydlik 2016, Kalmijn 2019; see also Chapter 7). We also see regional differences. For example, young adults in Italian Switzerland perceive the relationships with their parents as being much closer than those in the German- and French-speaking parts of the country (Bertogg 2018). This is in line with international comparisons, according to which family generations in Italy are much more frequently in touch with one another than, for example, in Germany and France (e.g., Szydlik 2016, Isengard 2018).

Hypotheses

According to the ONFC model (Chapter 1), *opportunities* can contribute to family generations growing apart. As for education, both connections are conceivable depending on the parents' or their offspring's perspective. Parents might be less likely to turn their back on adult children who have a higher education. After all, better education offers offspring more opportunities to provide support, for instance, in the form of assistance in administrative matters. Conversely, a higher level of education puts adult children in a better position to pursue their own interests while being less dependent on their parents. In this case, they might be less afraid of intergenerational distance and more willing to accept tension with their parents (Chapter 5).

Similar could apply to adult children's financial situation. Money provides greater freedom to distance oneself and maintain one's autonomy, yet it is also an important resource for providing support. Moreover, financial means can protect against problems and thus reduce reasons for intergenerational distancing. However, it cannot be ruled out that parents tend to show more concern for children who have fewer resources and thus require more emotional and practical support. It is therefore an empirical question which of these connections is more prevalent or to what extent they might offset one another.

Less ambiguous is the hypothesis concerning residential distance: The farther away children live from their parents, the greater the emotional distance between the generations. Lives lived far apart foster separate paths. In this case, the generations no longer share the same environment and therefore are less aware of the life of the other (Chapter 8). After all, greater residential

distances come with much less attachment, both emotionally and in terms of contact (Chapter 7).

With regard to *needs*, age can play a role. Different hypotheses are conceivable in this respect. On the one hand, one can assume that the generations gradually grow apart over their life course, so that intergenerational distance tends to increase over time (life course hypothesis). On the other hand, older people in particular have a greater need for attention and thus might increasingly attempt to prevent the family generations from growing apart (age hypothesis).

Employment status can also be expected to have an influence. This applies especially to adult children who are still in education or training. According to the previous chapter, the offspring's need for support in combination with parental demands and their children's desire for independence may result in higher levels of tension and conflict. This can lead to greater emotional distance. However, age effects must also be taken into consideration here.

Parents being in poor health requires that their children spend more time supporting them (Chapter 9). However, poor health comes with fewer opportunities for shared activities. At the same time, health issues amplify ambivalence, burdens, tension and conflict (Chapters 3, 4, 5). This being the case, poor parental health is more likely to lead to distancing.

Monetary transfers from parents to their offspring also attest to needs. On the one hand, adult children with financial needs can be expected to be less interested in distancing themselves from their parents while also being less able to do so. On the other hand, gifts and payments can be viewed as a "bonding agent" between relatives (Chapter 10). In any case, financial transfers can be assumed to stabilise relationships and counteract generations growing apart.

Family structures should also have an impact on whether generations distance themselves from one another. A likely factor of relevance in this context is gender combination. As women often act as so-called kinkeepers (see above), especially the daughter-mother relationship should be the one least likely to show indifference and estrangement. Sons and fathers, by contrast, can be expected to most frequently grow apart.

When parents separate, this can also affect their offspring and the relationship with them (see the literature cited above). Distancing is most likely to occur when a parent has entered a new partnership. After all, this results in a new family situation that can overlap with and thus impair the previous one.

We can further hypothesise that parents' behaviour toward their children in childhood and adolescence has an impact on their relationship later on.

Earlier conflicts between the parents and with their children can be expected to have a lasting negative influence on their bond in adulthood. In this case, the generations are more likely to grow apart compared with intergenerational relationships built on affection early on.

As with tension and conflict in the previous chapter, we can formulate different hypotheses for the impact that adult children living in a partnership of their own has on intergenerational distance. Distancing can result from parents being discontent with their child's choice of partner and the child now devoting less time and attention to its parents. However, parents can also welcome their child's partnership (e.g., in light of the prospect of grandchildren), and supportive partners can have a stabilising effect on the intergenerational relationship.

With regard to adult children's own children, we can also formulate opposing hypotheses. On the one hand, a focus on one's own children can reduce the attention devoted to one's parents. Different beliefs in matters of child-rearing can also contribute to greater distancing. On the other hand, close ties between grandparents and grandchildren can guard against estrangement between the elderly and the middle generation. This is especially true when one considers that the middle generation determines their parents' access to their grandchildren and, when gainfully employed, is glad to make use of (grand-)parental services in matters of childcare (Igel 2012). It is again an empirical question which of these assumptions is more likely.

From the perspective of an individual adult child, having siblings could increase the likelihood of estrangement in the relationship with one's parents. This would apply if the siblings were rivals for parental time and attention. Yet siblings can also stabilise family ties and, for instance, coordinate in providing support for their parents. Once again, sorting out which of the hypotheses comes closer to reality calls for empirical analyses.

Finally, societal *contexts* might influence intergenerational distance. Such a context could be migration history. In this respect, it seems useful to distinguish between first and second migration generations and to take residential distance into account. Once spatial proximity is considered, parental distancing may be even less common among the first generation due to cultural norms, helpful support and stressful migration experiences. It is, however, just as well conceivable that differences between parents who remain in the country of origin and their migrant adult children would lead to estrangement between them. In addition, the first generation might continue to orient itself more strongly towards their country of origin, whereas the second generation

might align itself more towards Switzerland as their own country of birth – which would increase the likelihood of parents and children growing apart here.

We also consider potential regional differences. It seems plausible to assume a stronger family orientation in Ticino in particular due to its geographical and cultural proximity to Italy. This being the case, family generations would be less likely to grow apart there than in the other regions. However, the previous chapter also revealed considerable intergenerational conflict in Italian Switzerland. It will therefore be interesting to see what role the perspectives of parents and adult children play in this case.

Results

Questions

SwissGen offers a number of ways for assessing distance between adults and their parents. Weak or absent emotional ties as well as rare contact or none at all are addressed in Chapter 7. This chapter now focuses on four statements presented to the respondents concerning their personal intergenerational relationships. They pertain to speechlessness, lack of understanding, indifference and estrangement. The respondents are asked about the current relationship with their living mothers and fathers or about the last year in the lives of their now deceased parents. The questionnaires are documented in König et al. (2023).

To avoid social desirability, the statement to assess speechlessness is phrased the other way around. It considers attachment or distance from the perspective of both generations:

My mother [father] and I have [had] a lot to say to each other.

The statement to capture a lack of understanding adopts the perspective of the adult child. It therefore centres on the daughter's or son's point of view. Indirectly, however, it also pursues the question of whether the parents show or showed understanding:

I feel [felt] like my mother [father] understands [understood] me.

The following statement on indifference is rather about the parents' perspective. It is also phrased the other way around. The statement determines to what extent the parents take or took an interest in the lives of their children:

My mother [father] is [was] interested in my life.

The statement addressing estrangement once again focuses on the respondent. To what extent has the person detached from their mother or father? This directly addresses the adults' emotional distance to their parents:

I feel [felt] estranged from my mother [father].

All of these statements offer the same five response options so that the corresponding reactions to them are directly comparable with one another:

Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never.

In the following, the responses to the first three statements are recoded so that they reflect intergenerational distance in descending order from "always" to "never". We will first provide an overview of all four types of distance. We will then have a closer look at indifference and estrangement.

Overview

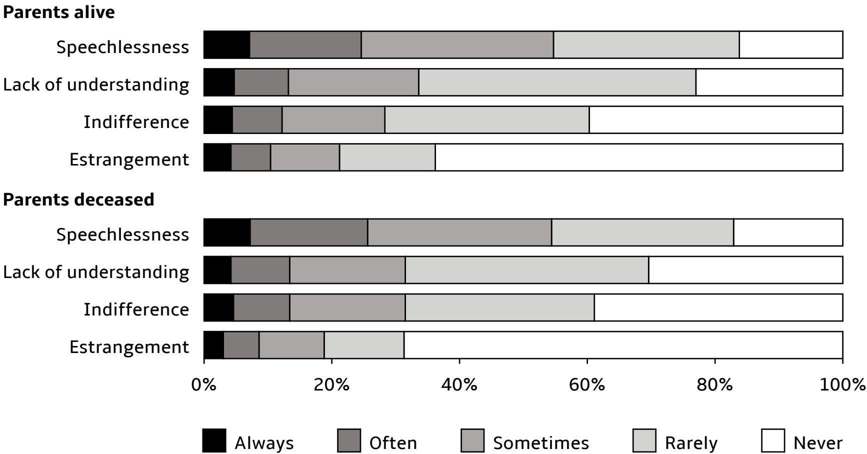
Important aspects of intergenerational distance are weak emotional attachment and rare contact. The next chapter shows that more than one-tenth of adults feel only weakly attached to their parents or not at all. One-tenth rarely or never have contact with their parents. However, intergenerational distance involves more. Figure 6.1 documents the responses to the four statements presented above separately for adults with living and with deceased parents. The corresponding numbers for this figure and the following two can be found in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD21, 25, 39, 41).

The first bar refers to speechlessness. Seven per cent of adults have practically nothing to say to their parents. Among another 18 per cent, this is frequently the case. Taken together, this amounts to every fourth adult child reporting that meaningful conversations with their parents are rarely or never possible. To more than half, this applies at least sometimes.

Compared with speechlessness, lack of understanding is less frequent. Even so, in a substantial proportion of intergenerational relationships, adult chil-

dren do not feel understood by their parents. After all, every twentieth adult child never feels understood by its parents. Nearly one out of ten adults states that this is often the case, and one in three that it is true at least sometimes.

Figure 6.1: Distance



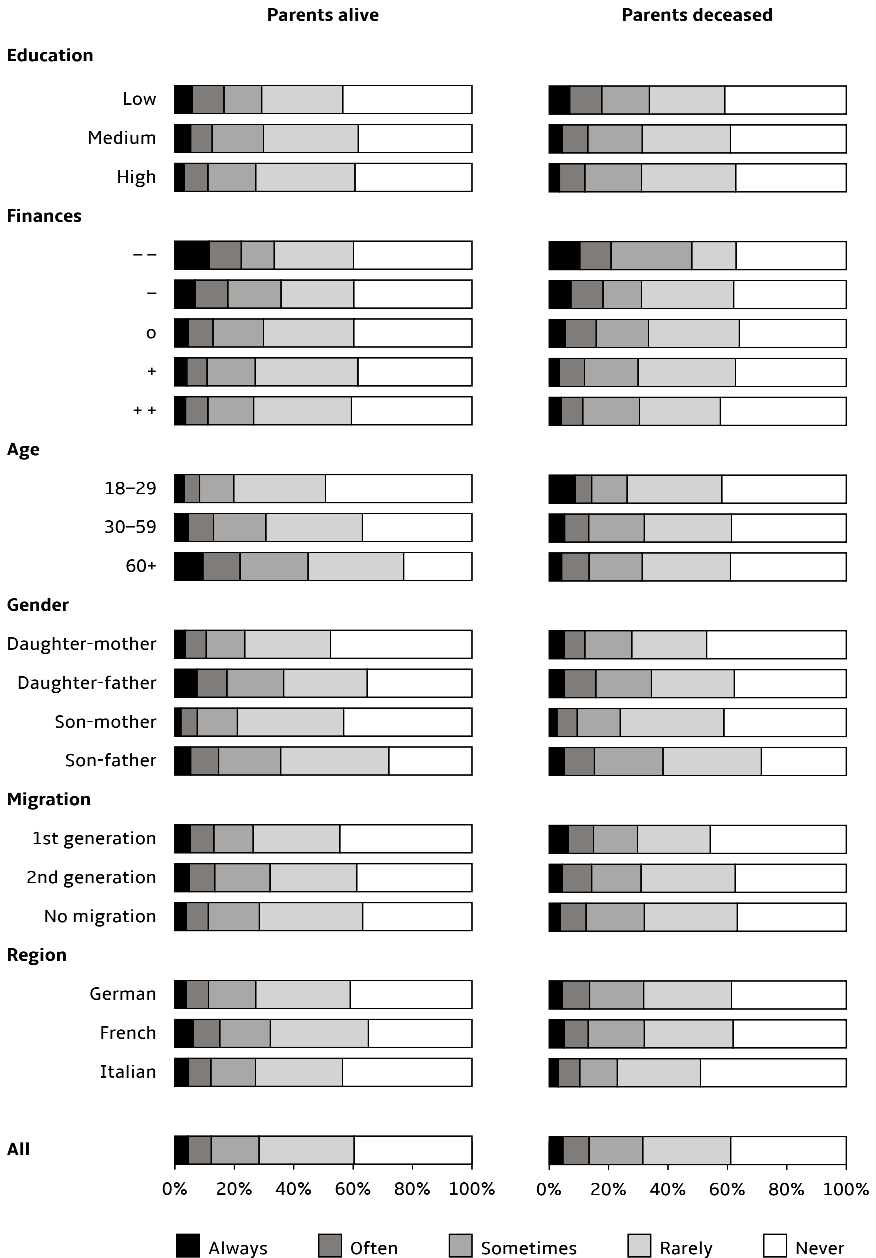
Source: SwissGen.

How often do adults report that their own parents take no interest in them? Once again, the findings attest to different degrees of intergenerational distance. Four out of one hundred adults perceive their parents as being indifferent towards them all the time, and eight per cent speak of a frequent lack of interest. Nearly three in ten adults perceive this to be the case at least sometimes.

Overall, offspring are least likely to report estrangement – which represents a particularly great intergenerational distance. Four per cent of adults feel completely estranged from their parents, six per cent often. This means that one-tenth of all intergenerational relationships are clearly defined by estrangement. Among a good one-fifth, this is the case at least sometimes, and a total of over one-third experiences at least rare instances of feeling estranged from their parents.

During the last year in the lives of now deceased parents, the occurrence of intergenerational distance was more or less similar. The proportion of speechlessness is the same. As for indifference, there is only a slight shift from "rarely"

Figure 6.2: Indifference



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,156 living parents / 6,816 deceased parents).

to "sometimes". A lack of understanding and estrangement are mentioned somewhat less when looking back on the last twelve months prior to one's parents' death. This is due in particular to rare distancing but also to substantial estrangement.

Figure 6.2 documents further findings on parental indifference to the lives of their adult children for various groups of people. The left column depicts the findings for living parents, the right one for the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.

Education yields a mixed picture. On the one hand, the middle and higher educational classes mention parents' lack of interest somewhat more often. However, this is on account of sporadic and infrequent indifference. The highly educated are particularly rarely affected by greater intergenerational distance. This is currently the case and also during the last year of their parents' lives.

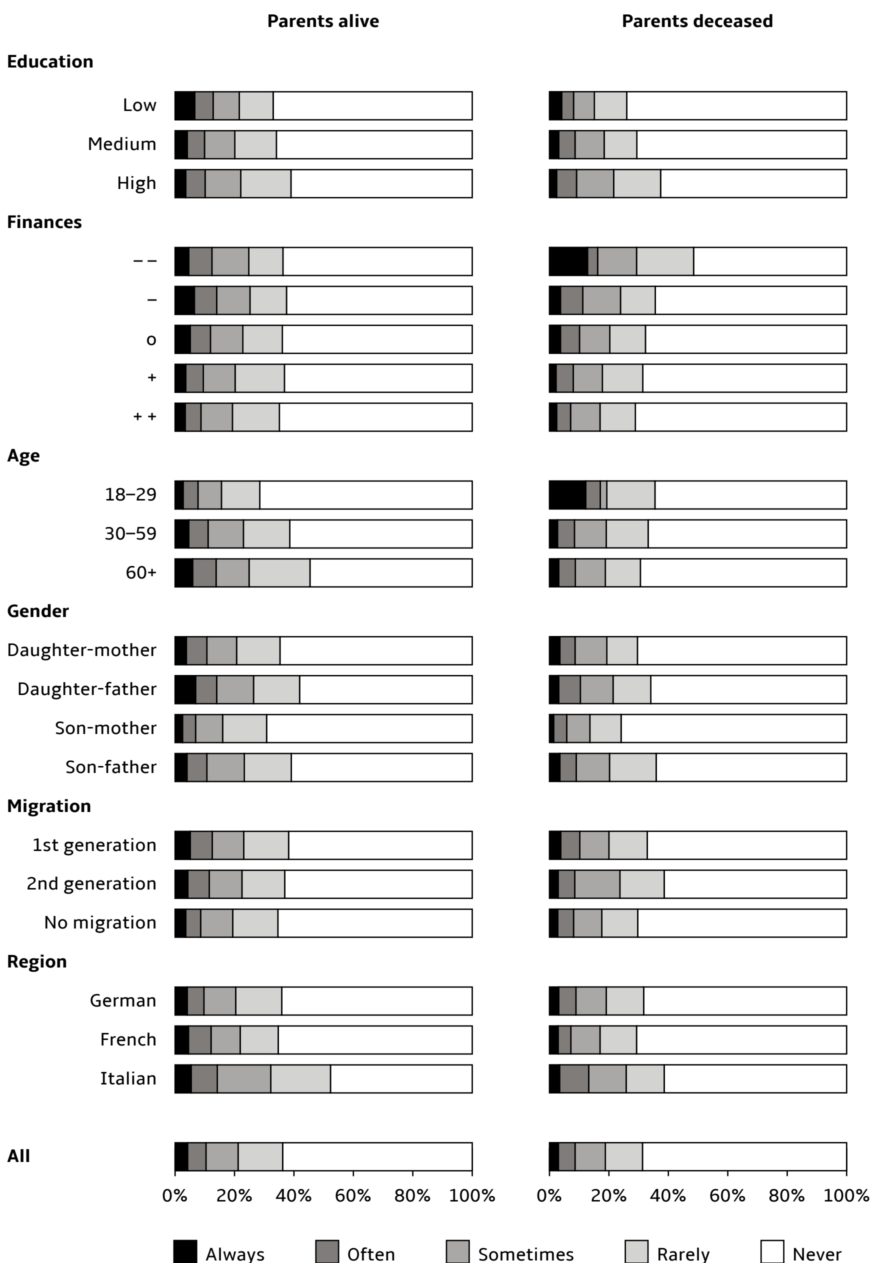
The groups with the least financial means much more frequently report that their parents often or even always take no interest in them. This applies to more than one-fifth of adults with tight finances compared with a good tenth of those who have abundant monetary resources. This is true for those with living parents as well as those referring to the last year with their now deceased parents.

We also see age-specific patterns: Parental disinterest increases with age. Among the oldest, indifference is three times as frequent as among the youngest. If we also take frequent lack of interest into account, less than one-tenth of the youngest and more than two-tenths of the oldest adults experience their parents as being indifferent. The few cases of young adults with deceased parents are inconclusive (König et al. 2023: Table 7). Between the middle-aged and the oldest group, however, there are no particular differences.

Furthermore, the figure also documents gender-specific differences. Relationships with mothers are much less frequently characterised by a lack of interest. This is true for both daughters and sons. Whether parents take an interest in their children apparently depends more on the gender of the parents than on that of the child. This can be observed for the last year in the parents' lives as well.

Those who migrated to Switzerland report less parental indifference overall. Instead, their offspring – that is, the second migration generation – are more likely to perceive a lack of interest. However, this is not due to permanent but only to sporadic indifference. Overall, it is the group with no immediate migration history that reports a parental lack of interest most frequently, and this can largely be traced to rare instances of indifference.

Figure 6.3: Estrangement



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,152 living parents / 6,817 deceased parents).

We also see different tendencies between the language regions. Parental disinterest is somewhat more frequent in French Switzerland. This holds true for indifference overall as well as for a permanent and an occasional lack of interest. By contrast, emotional distance of parents during their last year of life was the lowest in Italian Switzerland – once again both overall and in each category.

Next, Figure 6.3 addresses feelings of estrangement among adult children. Education again yields a mixed picture, similar to that of indifference. The highest-educated adult children are overall more likely to speak of estrangement. However, this is due to sporadic and rare feelings thereof. When it comes to permanent estrangement, the lowest educational class is overrepresented. This is also the case during the last year of their parents' lives.

More money goes hand in hand with less estrangement between the family generations. This applies both currently and when looking back on the relationship with now deceased parents. The financial situation has a particularly strong impact during the last year of parents' lives. For this time, those in the lowest income group report permanent estrangement particularly often.

Estrangement also depends on age. Among current relationships, we see generations growing apart particularly among older people. Among those with deceased parents, we must once again treat the information for the youngest respondents with caution. When one compares the middle-aged and the oldest group, the proportion of rare estrangement decreases only slightly among the latter.

Adult children are more often completely estranged from their fathers rather than from their mothers. Accordingly, intergenerational distance is most pronounced between daughters and their fathers. Feelings of estrangement are the least frequent among sons toward their mothers. This holds true both currently and during the last year with now deceased parents.

Adults with a migration history more frequently state that they feel or felt estranged from their parents. Strong feelings of estrangement are even more pronounced among first-generation migrants, whereas the second generation rather reports sporadic estrangement. This pattern is particularly evident when looking back on the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.

As for language regions, it is interesting to note that estrangement between the generations is more frequent in Italian Switzerland. This is true for current relationships with living parents as well as for those during the last year with now deceased ones. The least distance to parents then is reported in French Switzerland.

Analyses

We now turn to multivariate analyses to determine whether the findings observed above hold up when additional characteristics are considered and whether these other factors also influence generations growing apart. The first and second column of Figure 6.4 show the results for indifference both for the current situation and the last year with now deceased parents. The third and fourth column present the detailed findings for estrangement for these two groups. The strength and direction of connections are indicated by plus and minus signs. The respective procedures, variables and coefficients can be found in the Appendix (Tables A2, A6).

The findings underscore that *opportunities* can have an impact on intergenerational distance. Although the analyses find no significant influence of level of education among current relationships, parents of higher-educated offspring show less indifference during their last year of life. It is precisely during this time that the resources of better-educated adults with their greater opportunities for support can have an impact (Chapter 9). Conversely, higher-educated offspring feel more estranged from their parents in the last year of their parents' lives. According to Figure 6.3, this owes itself particularly to sporadic and rare feelings of estrangement. We can also not rule out different degrees of candidness in response behaviour across educational classes in this respect.

If one takes childhood experiences of conflicts with and affection from parents into account, financial background becomes less important (otherwise having more money is associated with lesser intergenerational distance in all four analyses). Adult children with less money more frequently report having had conflicts with their parents earlier in life and never having received affection (König et al. 2023: Tables P29, AD47). The offspring's current financial situation is thus less important than their childhood experiences. Nevertheless, adults with greater financial means feel less estranged from their parents during the last year of the latter's lives. This too points to the relevance of resources in difficult times.

Generations growing apart is related to their distance of residence. Although this does not apply to current indifference of parents overall, spatial distance clearly has an effect when looking back on one's parents' last year of life. Distance of residence has a particularly pronounced impact on estrangement of offspring. Living far apart offers more opportunities to lose sight of one another. The less one shares the same living environment with one's par-

ents, the more estranged one feels from them. This holds true both currently and retrospectively during their last year of life.

Needs also play a major role when it comes to explaining indifference and estrangement. In terms of age, the findings confirm both perspectives, that is, both a life course and an age effect (see above). According to the life course hypotheses, some generations gradually develop a distance to one another: Indifference tends to increase over time. Among current relationships, this clearly also holds true when other factors are considered. In the case of estrangement, however, the finding shown in Figure 6.3 is reversed when parental affection during their offspring's childhood is taken into account. This points to a cohort effect. Among the youngest cohort, over half of the children always experienced affection from their parents; among the oldest cohort, this applied to only a good quarter (König et al. 2023: Table A47). Considering early affection by cohort thus reduces estrangement in line with the age hypothesis: Age is an important indicator of an emotional need for closeness, and increasing serenity may also reduce the need for autonomy and separation – and thus the potential for estrangement.

Age also affects employment status. When this is taken in account, we find that adult children in education or training are more likely to have a distanced relationship with their parents. This is in line with the more frequent tension and conflict that the previous chapter identified in this phase and supports the hypothesis that the need for support, parental demands as well as adult children's desire to detach from their parents can result in intergenerational distance.

Parental health strongly influences the relationship with their children. This is evident both currently and in retrospect for parents' last year of life. The better the health of mothers and fathers, the less indifference and estrangement. Parents who are in good health are also better able to actively participate in shaping the relationship with their adult children and to maintain it in the accustomed manner. Deteriorating health increases distance substantially.

Conversely, financial support fosters intergenerational bonds. Parents giving money can alleviate their adult children's economic needs and prevent the generations from growing apart. Gifts can also play a special role in this context. In any case, offspring much less often mention parental indifference when their parents have given them something during the past year. This also applies to feelings of estrangement and does so both currently and retrospectively in regard to deceased parents.

Family structures also prove to be extremely important. As expected, daughter-mother relationships are the least likely to be marked by indifference. Lack

Figure 6.4: Indifference and estrangement

	Indifference		Estrangement	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium		– –		
High		– –		+ +
Finances				–
Distance		+	+ +	+
Needs				
Age	+ + +		– – –	
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	+ +		+ +	
Not employed		+		+
Health of parent	– –	–	– – –	– –
Money from parent	– – –	– –	–	–
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	+ +	+		
Son-mother	+ +	+ +		
Son-father	+ + +	+ +		
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +
Single	+		+	+
Childhood: parental conflicts	+	+ +	+ +	+ +
Childhood: conflicts	+	+ +	+ +	+ + +
Childhood: affection	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Partnership			–	
Child(ren)				
Siblings	+		– –	– –
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	–	–		+
2nd generation	+		+	
Region (ref.: German)				
French	+	+	–	
Italian		– –	+ + +	+ + +

+/−: more/less indifference or estrangement.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A6).

of interest is more frequent among the other gender combinations. However, we no longer see the gender-specific differences in estrangement shown in the previous figure when we include intergenerational conflict and affection during childhood. This leads us to conclude that gender-specific patterns in early intergenerational relationships have a lifelong impact on estrangement reported later. These connections can be observed both currently and for the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.

When parents have separated, their adult children much more frequently report indifference and estrangement. This applies particularly when the parent has entered into a new partnership. In this case, the new family situation reduces that parent's interest in its own child considerably. At the same time, their children feel much more estranged from that parent as well. It cannot be ruled out that these two effects mutually reinforce one another.

Early family conflicts are also particularly relevant. Mother and father frequently engaging in disputes during their offspring's childhood and adolescence increases the likelihood of long-term indifference and estrangement. The same holds true if the children frequently had conflicts with their parents. By contrast, having affectionate parents in childhood provides strong protection against the generations growing apart. These connections are very pronounced and apply to both current relationships with living parents and previous relationships with since deceased parents.

As for partnership, it could be that the different hypotheses offset one another to some degree. In any case, the analyses overall do not reveal that a child having a partner has an influence on parental indifference. When age and residential distance are taken into account, however, this does reduce the likelihood of estrangement. This suggests a stabilising effect of a child's partnership on its relationship with its parents.

Overall, (grand-)children have no significant influence on indifference and estrangement once earlier conflicts with parents and affection in childhood are factored in. This again attests to the long-term consequences of earlier intergenerational relationships, which influence later events. In the case of indifference, age also has an effect: Parental disinterest grows over time (see above), and older adult children are more likely to have children of their own (König et al. 2023: Table P17). However, we again cannot rule out that the different assumptions offset one another to some degree.

Siblings affect the distance to one's parents. If the parents have several children, the individual offspring are more likely to perceive parental indifference. This speaks to the aforementioned competition hypothesis, according to which siblings must share parental affection and time (see also the following

chapter). However, having (more) siblings makes estrangement from one's parents less likely. This supports the assumption of greater cohesion in larger families.

Finally, societal *contexts* can have an impact on family generations growing apart. This includes migration history. Parents of the first migration generation take a stronger interest in the lives of their children, which becomes particularly apparent when residential distance is taken into account. Spatial distance is also responsible for the more frequent instances of estrangement in current relationships between the first generation and their parents shown in Figure 6.3. For the last year in parents' lives, we see a corresponding effect, which suggests that migration-related estrangement increases over time. Members of the second generation are more likely to perceive parental indifference and also more often feel estranged from their parents. A stronger orientation toward the country of origin among the first generation might be playing a role here, whereas their children, the second generation, are more likely to be aligned towards their birth country Switzerland. Estrangement during the last year of parents' lives documented in the previous figure can again be traced back to childhood experiences.

Region also plays a role. In this respect, we see different tendencies from the parents' and the children's perspectives. Parents in French Switzerland take somewhat less interest in their adult children. Yet, at the same time, their adult children feel less estranged from their parents. In Italian Switzerland, the findings tend to point in the opposite direction. Here, parental indifference is particularly rare in the last year of the parents' lives. This underlines the traditionally stronger family ties, which have an impact particularly in critical stages of life. However, substantially more offspring in Italian Switzerland report estrangement. This finding points to the potential for distancing within a strong family context.

Summary

Distance occurs in most intergenerational relationships – at least sometimes. Four out of five adults report at least rare instances of speechlessness and a lack of understanding. In situations of this kind, those involved have little to say to one another, and one generation also does not feel understood by the other.

Three in five parents display indifference toward their offspring at least sometimes. Over one-third of adults feel occasionally estranged from their parents.

However, these percentages include rare instances of distance between the family generations. If we consider only frequent speechlessness, lack of understanding, indifference and estrangement, these clearly occur less often. Yet the proportions are between one-quarter and one-tenth of intergenerational relationships. Complete indifference and estrangement apply to four per cent each. Overall, the occurrence of distance in current relationships with living parents does not differ substantially from that in previous relationships with since deceased parents.

All in all, the findings underscore that only relatively few family generations have grown far apart or had permanently distanced themselves from each other at the time of the parents' death. Yet these cases are in no way negligible, and the same holds true for temporary distance between adult children and their parents.

Who has distanced themselves from the other? Which parents display indifference toward their offspring? Who feels estranged from their mother or father? With regard to opportunities, there are indications that those who have been financially better off since childhood experience less intergenerational distancing. Of particular importance for current and previous intergenerational relationships, however, is distance of residence. Out of sight, out of mind – this proverb is confirmed by the findings. The farther apart parents and adult children live, the more likely they are to be estranged from one another.

Apart from space, time too has an influence. In line with a life course effect, parental indifference toward their offspring gradually increases with age. Another relevant factor is whether adult children are still in education or training and thus in greater need of parental support. In this case, we see greater intergenerational distance when considering age. This also applies to parental health. Impaired health inhibits parents' ability to maintain their relationship with their children and increases the likelihood of the generations growing apart. Monetary transfers to adult children, by contrast, act as a bonding agent: Gifts and payments attest to parents taking an interest in their offspring and result in less frequent estrangement.

Family structures are also especially important. The findings underpin that the daughter-mother relationship in particular is rarely marked by indifference. Partnership of parents is also highly relevant. When parents separate, this often entails increasing intergenerational distance to their children. This is especially so if they live with a new partner. Moreover, conflicts between

and with parents during childhood impair the intergenerational ties considerably, thus causing the generations to increasingly grow apart. Early parental affection has the opposite effect: It guards against indifference and estrangement later on. This applies to both current intergenerational relationships and to those during the last year with now deceased parents. In terms of family structures, the number of siblings plays a role as well: When there are several siblings, they must share parental attention. Yet we also see that being part of a larger family guards against estrangement.

Finally, contexts have an influence as well. The parents of the first migration generation are particularly interested in the lives of their offspring. The second generation, by contrast, currently experiences greater distance to their parents, both in terms of indifference and estrangement. This speaks to family generations drifting apart on account of their different cultural backgrounds and a stronger or weaker orientation towards the country of origin. With regard to regional differences, we observe more frequent indifference of parents in French Switzerland. However, what stands out is Italian Switzerland, where we find greater estrangement of adults from their parents. Here, we see tendencies of intergenerational detachment among offspring that we do not see among their parents.

… and cohesion

7 Attachment – Of closeness and contact

Ronny König

I love them more than anything else in the world
and will always be there for them.
(Woman, age 24)

Introduction

Closeness and contact are signs of strong attachment. People's feelings of being closely connected to each other signal a high degree of subjective attachment. Those who are in frequent contact with each other experience strong objective cohesion. Conversely, weak feelings and rare contact indicate that individuals are largely separated from one another. To what extent does this apply to adult family generations? How close are they? How connected do they feel? How often are they in contact with each other? The first part of this book dealt with ambivalence, stress, conflict and distance between generations; now, the focus turns to attachment and cohesion.

Generally speaking, there are three main forms of intergenerational solidarity (Chapter 1). While functional solidarity involves multiple ways of giving support in the forms of space, time and money (see the three following chapters), the focus here is on affectual and associational solidarity. The study of emotional closeness and contact is thus devoted to two of the three central forms of cohesion between individuals. Affectual solidarity, or emotional closeness, refers to the feeling of connection to another person. The essential concern here is emotional dispositions, which are generally stable and permanent rather than spontaneous and changeable (Kossen-Knirim 1992). Associational solidarity, on the other hand, refers to interactions with other people. There is a remarkable range when it comes to forms of contact, communication channels, occasions, manifestations, frequencies, consequences and evaluations.

In this respect, it is helpful to distinguish between relatives who live together and those who live apart. Those who live together in the same household will always – inevitably, so to speak – cross paths. These interactions are often not actively planned and initiated. The question of contact therefore arises especially for adult family members who no longer live together in the same home. To what extent does the saying "out of sight, out of mind" apply to them? It is particularly when personal exchange must be actively sought and maintained across household boundaries that the degree of real attachment becomes apparent. Here, not only the mere fact of intergenerational contact is important but also, and in particular, the frequency of interaction.

This chapter explores the question of how closely adults feel emotionally connected to their parents and how often they are in contact with each other. Distinguishing between all generations and those living in separate households, we investigate whether adult children feel very close, close, medium close, not very close or not close at all to their parents – and whether they see, speak or write to each other daily, weekly, monthly, rarely or never.

We are also interested in explanations for the degree of intergenerational attachment. What role do opportunities, needs, family structures and societal contexts play? When it comes to contact, our focus is on interactions across household boundaries. At the same time, this chapter is not limited to current intergenerational relationships but also looks at previous attachments to parents who have already passed away. This allows us to identify similarities and differences between current and previous relationships.

In the following, we first elaborate the meanings of closeness and contact. Then we discuss the current state of research and offer hypotheses for the empirical analyses. The introduction of the respective survey questions is followed by the empirical findings. We first provide a general overview before presenting the analyses. The chapter concludes with a summary of the most important findings.

Foundations

Attachment

When it comes to attachments between generations, it is helpful to distinguish between personal subjective emotion and interpersonal objective interaction. The former has to do with emotional bonds in the sense of affectual intergen-

erational cohesion. The latter has to do with frequent contact between individuals, which is a key expression of strong associational solidarity (see above).

Emotions are an omnipresent feature of everyday life and are characterised by a psychical – affectual – experience (Frenzel et al. 2009). Furthermore, a distinction can be made between short-term emotions such as joy and anger and long-term feelings such as love and hate (Collins 2004). Emotions can be experienced unconsciously or consciously and reflected back to the person who triggers them (Brody 1999).

The affectual connection between family generations can be understood as a long-term emotion. Expectant parents develop feelings for their unborn child early on during pregnancy, and emotions are the first form of communication between parents and children from birth onwards (Maccoby 1992). Families are therefore the place where feelings first arise and are experienced and lived (Jurczyk et al. 2014). We can therefore assume that perceived emotional closeness persists into adult life in the form of an emotional disposition. The topic of this chapter is the strength of these emotions across generations, including patterns and factors that contribute to a greater or lesser degree of subjective attachment.

Contact can take many forms across a variety of communication channels. This includes face-to-face meetings, handwritten letters and communication using electronic devices such as telephones or the internet. While face-to-face meetings will usually involve direct interaction as well as physical contact (handshakes, hugs), non-face-to-face exchanges (postal or electronic) are generally a less direct form of interpersonal encounter. There is also a considerable range of such less direct encounters, however, extending from brief text messages and multi-line emails to extensive telephone calls and video conversations. Furthermore, contact can occur more or less automatically, it can happen spontaneously or be planned long in advance, and it can be rare or frequent. It can last for a short or long period of time and be perceived as either superficial or as extremely intense.

All this also applies to contacts between family generations. They can take place without a special reason, be linked to family or cultural traditions and events (e.g., birthdays, baptisms, weddings, funerals), and they can also be accompanied by a variety of forms of support (e.g., advice and consolation, accommodation and household help, looking after one another and providing care). Contact with family may be voluntary, desired or obligatory; it may prove harmonious, conflictual or contradictory; and it may evoke corresponding feelings of affection, aversion, estrangement and ambivalence (Chapters 3, 6). Interactions with loved ones can likewise protect against loneliness

but also trigger stress, tension and conflict (Chapters 4, 5). Some contacts can be accompanied by heavy burdens and feelings of being overwhelmed, such as when extensive caregiving is required (Chapter 9). In any case, frequent interaction is not "positive" per se, nor does rare contact necessarily imply a "negative" relationship.

Research

Previous studies have generally indicated strong emotional bonds between adult family generations. According to the TREE study, eight out of ten 26-year-olds in Switzerland consider the relationships with their parents to be at least close (Bertogg 2018: 139f.). The German Ageing Survey concludes that three quarters of 40- to 85-year-olds feel at least closely connected to their parents living in a separate household. This proportion has also been confirmed by the German Socio-Economic Panel (Szydlik 2000: 106, 215). Other studies have indicated similarly strong emotional attachments between family generations. Kaufman and Uhlenberg (1998), for example, show on the basis of the National Survey of Families and Households that on average up to 80 per cent of adults in the USA describe the quality of relationships with their parents as (very) good.

Contact has been studied much more widely than emotional closeness. According to previous studies, adult family generations generally are in regular exchange with each other (DeWit et al. 1988, Rossi/Rossi 1990, Hank 2007, Bucx et al. 2008, Steinbach/Kopp 2008, Bordone 2009, Mahne/Huxhold 2017). By expanding the possibilities of communication, modern technologies are facilitating the maintenance of relationships even over great distances (Hoff 2006).

The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) has shown that the majority of adult family generations across Europe see, speak or write to each other frequently (Hank 2007, König 2016, Isengard 2018). Overall, almost eight out of ten adult children aged 50 and over are in contact with their parents at least weekly. Connections are particularly strong in southern European countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece. In Switzerland, too, most generations are in frequent contact. However, daily contact in particular is less frequent here. In Switzerland, one-seventh of those aged 50 and over are in daily exchange with their parents; in Italy, nearly half of them are. Nevertheless, in Switzerland more than two-thirds of this age group are in contact with their parents at least once a week; in Italy, the proportion is even nearly nine-tenths (Szydlik 2016, Isengard 2018).

Previous research suggests that attachments between adult family generations depend on their opportunities. Young adults show somewhat closer emotional ties to wealthy parents (König 2016, Bertogg 2018). Those with higher levels of education and greater resources can also be observed to have more frequent contact (König 2016, Isengard 2018). Residential distance, however, plays a particularly important role: Living further apart contributes to much weaker ties and fewer contacts (Bertogg 2018, Isengard 2018).

Need can also impact affectual and associational intergenerational solidarity, according to previous research. Young adults still in education or training are less likely to report a close bond with their parents (Bertogg/Szydlik 2016). Ambivalence, tension and conflict in the wake of financial need and efforts to gain independence from one's parents can also play an important role (Chapters 3, 5, 6, 10). Research additionally emphasises the relevance of interdependencies between different forms of intergenerational solidarity. It shows that financial transfers between generations can go hand in hand with more frequent contact (e.g., König 2016; on the connection between money and help, see also Chapters 9, 10).

Empirical studies demonstrate that the family situation has clear effects on intergenerational attachment. Women in particular – daughters as well as mothers – keep family members together by acting as so-called kinkeepers (e.g., Rosenthal 1985, Rossi/Rossi 1990). This ranges from making frequent calls and visits to providing practical help and comprehensive personal care (Chapter 9). In any case, mothers and daughters have been found to have emotionally closer relationships and more frequent contact, while relationships between sons and fathers show the comparatively lowest subjective and objective connectedness (e.g., Szydlik 2000, 2016, Bertogg 2018).

Previous studies have additionally emphasised the burdensome consequences of parental separation and divorce (Amato/Booth 1996, Berger/Fend 2005, Peris/Emery 2005, Amato/Afifi 2006). Such experiences result in emotionally weaker ties and fewer contacts between the generations in adulthood (Bertogg/Szydlik 2016, König 2016). Furthermore, stressful childhood experiences such as conflict and violence can have a lasting negative impact on the extended family in adulthood, while early experiences of reliability and support result in closer family ties (Merz/Jak 2013). In this vein, Bertogg (2018) shows that young adults have closer attachments to their parents when their earlier relationships involved conversations and help with homework.

According to previous studies, additional family members have an impact on child-parent relationships. The TREE study finds that young married adults and those in steady partnerships report closer emotional bonds to their

parents compared to single adults, which generally indicates they are more family-oriented (Bertogg 2018). Conversely, analyses based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe indicate that adult children's partnerships can compete for time and attention and thus lead to less contact with their parents (Yahirun/Hamplová 2014, Isengard 2018).

Furthermore, having children of their own reduces the emotional attachment of young daughters to their father, while no significant effects could be found for other gender combinations (Bertogg 2018). However, having offspring of one's own can increase the frequency of contact with one's parents (Hank 2007, Bordone 2009, Isengard 2018). This is especially true in the early stages of life following the birth of grandchildren (König 2016). Having siblings does not appear to directly influence how adults perceive the closeness of their relationship with their parents (Szydlik 2000). When it comes to frequency of contact, however, having more siblings seems to reduce exchange between each individual adult child and their parents (König 2016, Isengard 2018).

Finally, societal influences can be noted. One important factor are migration experiences. Previous studies have shown that families with a history of migration have closer attachments (Bolzman et al. 2003, Bertogg 2018, König/Isengard et al. 2018, Steinbach 2018). If the much greater residential distance is taken into account, migrant families engage in even more frequent intergenerational exchange (König 2016, Szydlik 2016). In addition to the country differences noted above, intergenerational attachments may also differ by region within a single country. In Italian Switzerland, for example, bonds between young adults and their parents have been observed to be particularly strong (Bertogg 2018, 2020).

Hypotheses

The findings of previous studies can be used in connection with the ONFC model (Chapter 1) to generate hypotheses. To begin with, the cohesion of family generations is likely to depend on their *opportunities.* Contact across household boundaries often involves costs. Those who have more resources can also use them to pay for visits and shared activities, for instance. Moreover, people with lower education are less likely to use modern technologies to stay in contact with their families, especially when they live far away (König/Seifert et al. 2018, König/Seifert 2020). Greater resources also make it easier to provide support to parents by giving one's time, which leads to correspond-

ingly more frequent contact (Chapter 9). Similarly, a better financial situation can motivate family generations to stay in touch more often.

Contact can also take place via telephone, post or electronically. Given the findings noted above, however, spatial distance can be assumed to be one of the most important factors for emotional attachment and interaction. Spontaneous and especially meetings in person are much easier if they do not require long-term planning and long-distance travel. Reliable household help and caregiving are in any case limited to short distances. In addition, sharing a living environment, which involves exposure to similar influences and experiences, can strengthen attachments (Chapter 8). The further one lives from one's parents, the more cursory the intergenerational relationship is likely to be.

With regard to *needs,* age is likely to be important for affectual and associational attachment. From a life course perspective, it can be assumed that adult children's need for parental attention decreases over time. As they grow older, children increasingly lead their own lives and thus tend to detach from their parents. This would suggest that attachment decreases with age. Conversely, the need for detachment and independence may also decline over time and be overridden by a need for attachment to the other generation, also for the sake of support and avoiding loneliness. This can apply to both generations. Emotional and associational attachment could therefore increase with age. Which of these assumptions is more accurate is thus an empirical question.

The period of adult children's education or training can also play a prominent role in this context, as there is a particular need for support during this time (Chapter 10). Adult children in this special phase also experience an increasing need to lead their own lives and detach from the parental home. In any case, ambivalence, stress, tension and conflict with parents become more apparent during this time (Chapters 3, 4, 5). In general, one can therefore expect adult children in education or training to have a less close attachment to their parents.

Even though poor parental health leads to a greater need for help and thus a greater need for contact (Chapter 9), good health is associated with more potential for shared activities as well as significantly less stress and quarrelling (Chapters 4, 5). Mothers and fathers being in good health should therefore contribute to closer ties and more contact with their daughters and sons.

Forms of solidarity can also be linked by the interplay between attachment and money. Previous and current research (see above) provides a basis for hypothesising that monetary and material gifts or payments from parents are associated with closer emotional attachments and more frequent interaction between adult children and their parents. Whereas gifts can strengthen

attachments, greater emotional and objective connectedness can lead to more attention in the form of monetary transfers.

Intergenerational relationships between adults and their parents are embedded in *family structures*. According to previous research, gender combination plays a particularly important role in family ties (see above). This being the case, it can be assumed for the following analyses that daughter-mother relationships are considerably closer and involve more frequent contact.

The family's history, with its positive and negative events and experiences, is also likely to be important. Adults with parents living in a new partnership can be assumed to have a significantly weaker bond with them. At the same time, conflicts between one's mother and father perceived in childhood are likely to have an impact on later intergenerational attachments. According to attachment theory (Bowlby 1982), however, not only the relationship between one's parents but also one's own early relationship with them is likely to have an effect into adulthood. Accordingly, adult children who experience conflict growing up should report a weaker emotional bond and less frequent contact with their parents later in life. Conversely, it can be hypothesised that frequent experiences of parental affection during childhood and adolescence strengthen bonds with them during adulthood.

The existence of additional family members can lead to contradictory hypotheses. On the one hand, adult children having a partner, their own children and siblings can generally indicate a greater family orientation and thus also closer ties to their parents. Furthermore, partners and siblings can relieve each other when it comes to assisting with problems and providing support. This can also promote the subjective and objective bond between generations. On the other hand, living in a partnership and having children of one's own can also force a detachment from one's family of origin, and siblings may compete for their parents' time as well as financial and emotional attention (Deindl 2011, Igel 2012). Depending on the hypothesis, the existence of additional family members may predict stronger or weaker intergenerational attachments.

As far as societal *contexts* are concerned, hypotheses can be formulated regarding migration and region. Although migrants often live far away from their parents (Chapter 8), families with migration experience may have stronger ties, according to both the safe-haven hypothesis (Chapter 1) and the findings of previous research (see above). Cultural differences between the country of origin and of destination, as well as the challenges and uncertainties of the migration experience and the situation in the new country, can contribute to closer intergenerational relationships. Especially for the

first migration generation, however, regular personal meetings are limited by greater distances across national borders. When distances are taken into account, migrants can nevertheless be expected to have even more frequent exchange with their parents. For the second generation, by contrast, growing up in Switzerland could also entail weaker attachments to their parents, given that the latter were socialised in a different country.

The geographical, linguistic and cultural proximity of Ticino to Italy, of German Switzerland to Germany and of Romandy to France leads us to assume, on the basis of the spillover hypothesis (Chapter 1) and previous research findings (see above), that intergenerational relationships in Italian Switzerland are even closer and involve more frequent contact. In contrast, bonds between adults and their parents in German-speaking Switzerland are probably somewhat less pronounced.

Results

Questions

SwissGen asks about emotional closeness and frequency of contact with living parents as well as in the past with since deceased mothers and fathers (the questionnaires can be found in König et al. 2023). Affectual attachment to living parents is assessed with the following question:

> *How closely do you feel connected with your mother [father] today?*

In the case of deceased parents, the question is accordingly:

> *How closely did you feel connected with your mother [father]?*

The same five response options are provided for each parent:

> *Very close – Close – Medium – Not very close – Not close at all.*

This question-and-response formulation explicitly targets affectual intergenerational solidarity and thus avoids confusing or equating emotional attachment with frequency of contact. The latter question reads accordingly:

> *During the last 12 months, how often have you had contact with your mother (e.g., in person, by phone, by mail, text, e-mail)?*

For deceased parents, the question refers to the last year of their life:

> *During the 12 months prior to her [his] passing, how often did you have contact with your mother [father] (e.g., in person, by phone, by mail, text, e-mail)?*

In all four cases (living and deceased mothers or fathers), frequency of contact is measured according to seven categories in descending frequency:

> *Daily – Several times a week – About once a week – About once every 2 weeks – About once a month – Less than once a month – Never.*

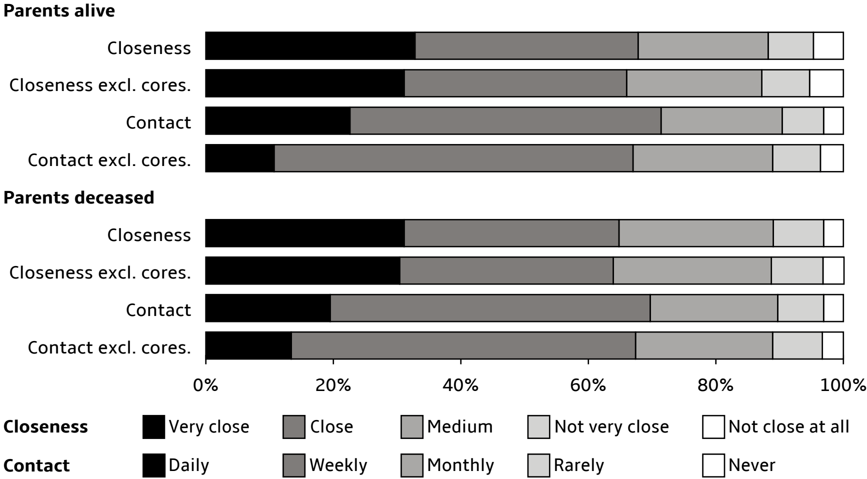
For the following descriptions and analyses, we summarise the responses under five contact frequencies: daily, weekly, monthly, rarely and never. Daily contact is adopted unchanged. The two response options "Several times a week" and "About once a week" are combined into at least weekly contact. Similarly, the two categories "About once every 2 weeks" and "About once a month" are subsumed under at least monthly exchanges. The remaining responses "Less than once a month" and "Never" are adopted unchanged as "Rarely" and "Never".

The survey does not ask those living with their parents in one household explicitly about their frequency of contact. Rather, it assumes that this living situation involves daily contact more or less as a matter of course. From Figure 7.3 onwards, the focus of contact is on actively initiated interactions between generations not living in the same household.

Overview

First, we provide an overview of the degree of attachments between adults and their parents. Figure 7.1 presents the total proportions for emotional closeness and contact, distinguishing between current relationships with living mothers and fathers and the last period of time with parents who are now deceased. The first bar in each case includes all generations, the subsequent one those no longer living in the same household. The numbers are documented in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD12, 17).

Figure 7.1: Attachment



Source: SwissGen (excl. cores.: excluding coresidence).

More than two out of three adults speak of an at least close emotional attachment to their living parents. Every third person even rates their relationship as very close. These are remarkable findings. Conversely, however, more than one-tenth of relationships are considered to be not very close or not close at all.

When generations living in the same household are excluded, this slightly reduces very close emotional ties and increases in particular the proportion with medium emotional closeness accordingly. Furthermore, the proportions of emotional closeness vary only slightly according to whether the generations live together or in separate households.

As with emotional closeness, the figure also shows strong associational solidarity between family generations. More than seven out of ten adults are in contact with their parents at least once a week, and almost every fourth adult child even has daily contact. Conversely, seven per cent of adults are in contact with their parents less than once a month, and another three per cent had no contact with them at all in the last twelve months.

When generations living in the same household are not considered, daily contact in particular is of course reduced. Nevertheless, associational cohesion remains pronounced. Two-thirds of adults report at least weekly exchanges with their parents, and more than one-tenth are even in daily contact – even though they live in separate homes.

The findings for current emotional closeness hardly differ from those for previous relationships with now deceased parents – though with an even smaller proportion having no attachment at all. In terms of contact, the percentages for living and deceased parents do not differ much either, except for slight shifts in daily and weekly exchanges.

How strong are emotional bonds with parents in different population groups? Figure 7.2 distinguishes between education, finances, age, gender, migration and region. The left side shows current, the right side previous intergenerational relationships. The total percentages at the bottom correspond to the previous figure.

In general, differences between educational classes are limited. Adults with lower education describe the relationship with their parents as very close somewhat more frequently. This can be seen in current relationships and even more so when looking back on those with deceased parents. Between medium and higher levels of education, however, there are no differences in regard to close bonds. Nevertheless, the proportion reporting cursory relationships tends to increase with education.

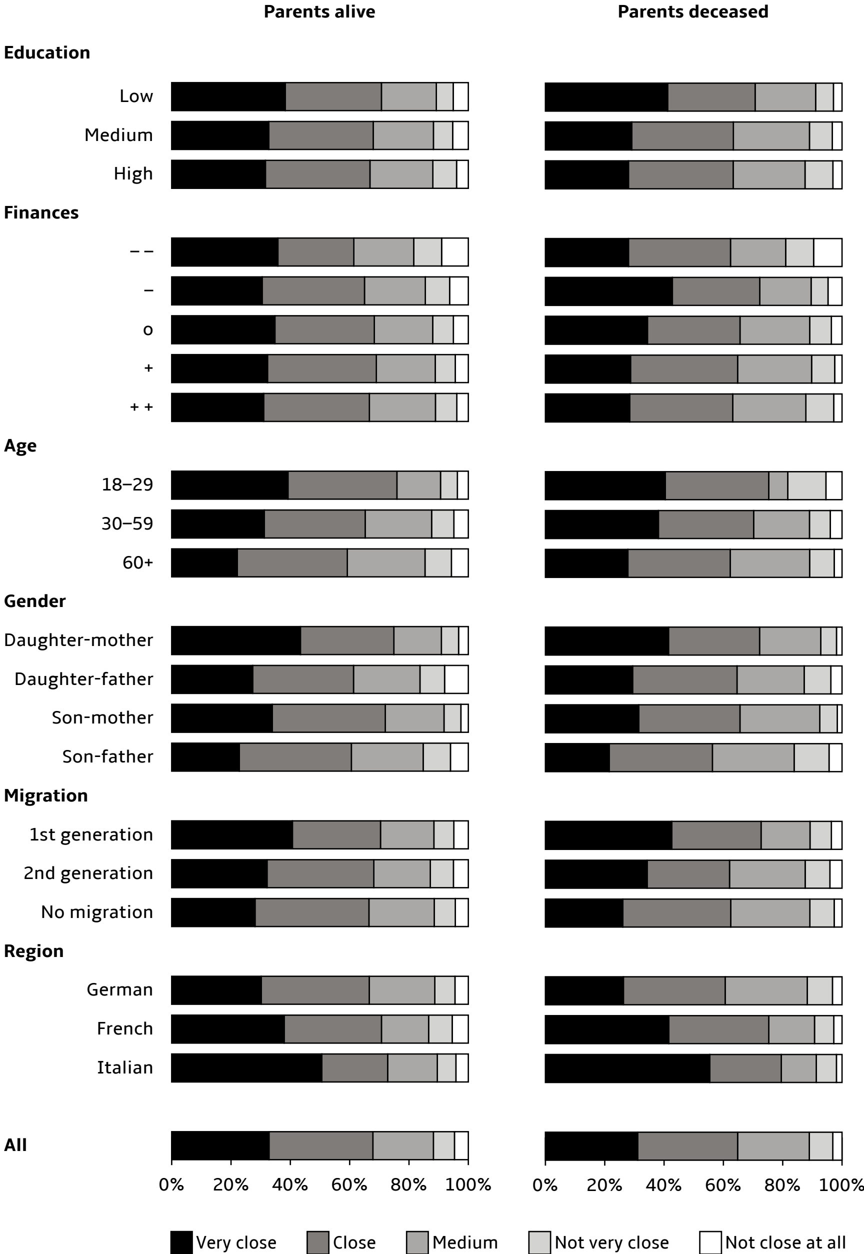
With a view to finances, no consistent pattern can be found among very close intergenerational relationships. Accordingly, economic security or insecurity does not by itself lead to pronounced cohesion. The proportions with weak attachments do decrease, however, as the financial situation improves. But this is again less clear in the case of deceased parents.

According to the figure, age differences play a more important role. The younger the adult children are, the closer they (still) feel to their parents. Two out of five younger adults report very close emotional bonds. Among the oldest adults, it is still a good one in five. This pattern also holds true for deceased parents, although the proportions of the youngest adult children should be treated with caution due to the small number of cases (König et al. 2023: Table 7).

Daughter-mother relationships are by far the closest. More than two out of five daughters report a very close emotional bond with their mother. The same applies to just over one in five sons in relation to their father. Sons perceive their attachment to their mother as emotionally closer than daughters perceive theirs to their father.

Four out of ten migrants currently feel very closely connected to their parents. Among those with no immediate history of migration, the share is just under three in ten. For those looking back on the last period of time with now deceased parents, this discrepancy is even somewhat greater. The second migration generation is in between.

Figure 7.2: Closeness



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,257 living parents / 7,061 deceased parents).

Furthermore, clear regional differences can be noted. While half of the adults in Italian Switzerland describe the relationship with their parents as emotionally very close, this applies to almost four in ten in French Switzerland and three in ten in German Switzerland. Although these regional differences decrease when close attachments are included, they increase again when looking back on relationships with now deceased parents.

The findings on emotional closeness also include coresidence. The following descriptions and analyses of contact now refer to generations that do not live in the same household or did not do so at the time of their parents' passing. The focus is thus on contact that for the most part must be actively initiated and does not automatically result from the living situation.

According to Figure 7.3, adults with a high level of education are less likely to be in daily contact with their parents. Overall, however, higher education is associated with more frequent intergenerational contact. This owes to a greater proportion of the better educated having at least weekly encounters, conversations or sending at least weekly messages – but also because there are distinctly fewer generations from the higher educational classes who are barely on speaking terms.

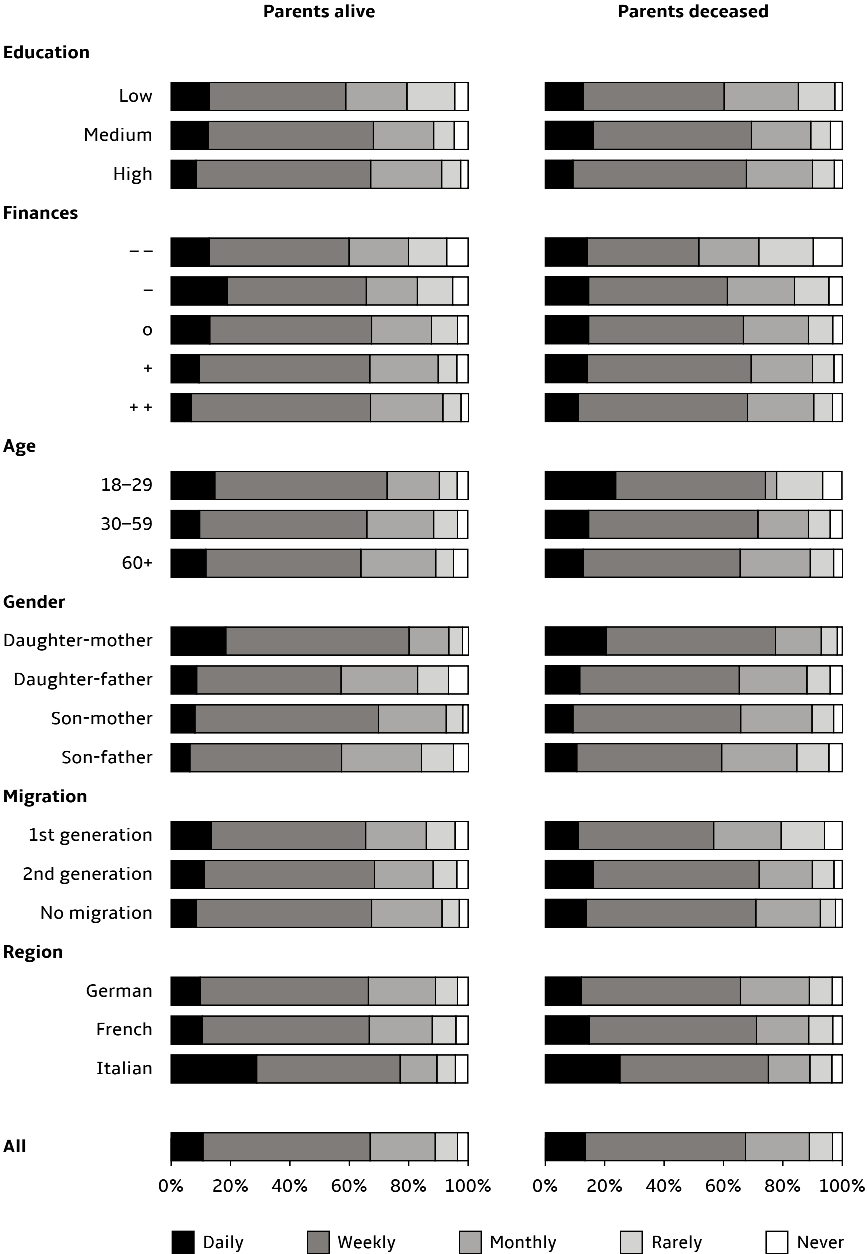
As finances improve, current daily contact with parents likewise becomes less frequent. But here, too, the general picture tends to point in the other direction. At least weekly exchange is more common in the higher income groups. Rare interaction and termination of contact, by contrast, occur much more frequently in financially weak families. This is more pronounced in the parents' last year of life.

Over the life course, meetings, conversations or messages between the generations decline somewhat overall, with a transition from weekly to monthly contact. In the case of deceased parents, the results for the youngest age group are based on only very few cases (see above). Frequency of contact also decreases considerably from the middle to the oldest group, however.

Daughters and mothers are by far the ones most often in contact with each other, both currently and in retrospect. The son-mother relationship is also characterised by relatively frequent interaction. Relationships with fathers, by contrast, involve less contact currently for daughters and sons alike. In the parents' last year of life, this especially applies to son-father relationships.

According to the figure, the effects of migration can run in both directions. On the one hand, a particularly large number of migrants currently reports daily exchange with their living parents. On the other hand, they exhibit the highest proportions of rare contact and no contact at all. This is particularly

Figure 7.3: Contact



Source: SwissGen (n: 9,641 living parents / 6,404 deceased parents).

noticeable in the twelve months prior to the parents' death. Here, too, the second migration generation is in the middle overall.

As with emotional closeness, frequency of contact is also much more pronounced in Italian Switzerland than in other parts of the country. In German and French Switzerland, one-tenth of adults currently have daily contact with their parents, even if they no longer live in the same household. In Italian Switzerland, by contrast, this is the case for almost three times as many adults.

Analyses

What factors do attachments between adult children and their parents depend upon, and to what causes can differences in closeness and contact be attributed? In the following, we answer these questions using multivariate analyses. Figure 7.4 presents the results, which are also used to test the hypotheses specified above. Plus signs indicate that a relationship is closer or involves more frequent contact, whereas minus signs indicate weaker emotional bonds and less frequent contact. The greater the number of plus or minus signs, the stronger is the connection. The corresponding coefficients are listed in Table A7. Information on the procedures and variables can also be found in the Appendix.

Regarding *opportunities*, we can first note that education has a limited effect on affectual cohesion (even if further analyses suggest that less-educated daughters had closer attachments to fathers who have since passed away). However, frequency of contact generally increases with education (a tentative effect on current contacts of the highly educated turns out to be only weakly significant when the number of siblings is considered). In any case, this supports the corresponding hypothesis that a higher level of education is a resource for more frequent contact with one's parents.

According to the figures above, financial health can contribute to maintaining attachment to one's parents. Yet this no longer holds true when health, gender and childhood experiences are taken into account. Hence, these factors play a more important role than the economic situation.

As expected, residential distance is of particular relevance. It is strikingly apparent that as spatial distance between generations grows, the emotional distance between them increases as well. This is even more clearly the case for frequency of contact. Although, in principle, technological tools make communication possible regardless of place of residence, increasing distances prove to be an obstacle to frequent exchange with one's parents.

In addition, *needs* can influence intergenerational relationships. From a life course perspective, the need for close connection with one's parents can be assumed to decrease over time. This is confirmed in the case of parents who have since passed away. For living parents, this correlation is initially also evident when other relevant characteristics are not included. However, this may have less to do with the effects of age than of parenting styles. After all, it is the younger adults who experienced the most parental affection in childhood (König et al. 2023: Table A47). When this is taken into account, emotional closeness even tends to increase somewhat with age. This corresponds to the decrease in tension, conflict and estrangement between generations over the life course documented in Chapters 5 and 6 while also pointing to an increasingly diminished need for detachment and independence.

Adult children still in education or training are less likely to report close emotional bonds with their parents. This is mainly due to younger adults who are still more dependent on the financial support of their parents during their education and who mostly live with them (Chapters 8, 10). This finding thus suggests that younger trainees and students have a greater need to lead their own lives and detach from the parental home. In contrast, those not employed – predominantly those who are not gainfully employed and pensioners with greater time flexibility – have more frequent contact with their parents when residential distance is accounted for.

When parents are in better health, their need for support is reduced (Chapter 9), which increases the potential for shared activities and subsequently leads to closer bonds and more frequent meetings, conversations or messages. In parents' last year of life, however, poorer health is associated with an intensification of contact.

Money transfers are also very important. Those who have received gifts or payments from their parents during the last year report substantially stronger subjective and objective attachments. On the one hand, financial transfers can foster emotional closeness and contact. On the other hand, a strong attachment can be the basis for gifts and reliable support when monetary needs arise.

Family structures include first of all the gender combinations of adult children and their parents. The results confirm earlier findings while also considering additional factors: As proposed by the kinkeeper hypothesis, relationships between daughters and mothers are characterised by the greatest degree of emotional closeness and frequent contact. In all other intergenerational relationships, attachments are comparatively less close and involve fewer contacts.

Figure 7.4: Closeness and contact

	Closeness		Contact	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium			+ +	+
High				+ +
Finances	–			
Distance	– –	– –	– – –	– – –
Needs				
Age	+	– – –		– –
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	– –			
Not employed			+	
Health of parent	+ +		+	–
Money from parent	+ +	+	+ +	+ +
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Son-mother	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Son-father	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –
Single				
Childhood: parental conflicts	– –	– –	–	– –
Childhood: conflicts	– –	– – –		
Childhood: affection	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +
Partnership			–	
Child(ren)	–			–
Siblings			– –	– –
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	+ +	+ +	+ + +	+ +
2nd generation	+		+	+
Region (ref.: German)				
French	+ +	+ + +		+
Italian	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +

+/−: more/less closeness or contact.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A7).

Furthermore, parents' partnerships have a lasting influence on their relationships with their children. Adult children report both significantly weaker emotional attachments and much less frequent contact with parents living in a new partnership. This can be due to a reorientation on the part of the parent, which also becomes apparent in greater indifference towards the child (Chapter 6). A further effect may be attributed to disappointment and rejection on the part of adult children in response to parents separating and beginning a new partnership (Chapter 2).

Childhood experiences have major implications for intergenerational relationships in adulthood. Frequent conflict between mothers and fathers during their offspring's childhood and adolescence later leads to weaker emotional ties and less frequent parental contact. In addition to the quality of the partnership between mother and father, the parent-child relationship while growing up also proves to be extremely important for the later intergenerational relationship. Earlier conflicts with parents contribute to significantly weaker subjective attachment to them. However, in relationships that are simultaneously characterised by affection, frequent conflict loses its negative impact on later contacts. Accordingly, early affection has a particularly lasting influence on the parent-child attachment in the form of considerably greater emotional closeness and more frequent interaction.

Above, we presented conflicting hypotheses about additional family members. Now the findings suggest that having a partner, children of one's own and siblings tends to reduce adult children's attachment to their parents. When gender combination is taken into account, a partnership of adult children has no effect on their emotional closeness to their parents overall. However, frequency of contact does decrease with partnership when earlier parental affection is considered. Having children of one's own also reduces current subjective attachment to living parents and, in retrospect, the frequency of contact in the last year of their parents' lives. In any case, this suggests that living in a partnership or having children involves a certain detachment from one's family of origin.

In families with many children, when there was less early conflict between parents and their underage child, their emotional attachment in adulthood is not weaker despite multiple siblings. Frequency of contact, however, does decrease with the number of sisters and brothers. This indicates that parents with multiple children (have to) divide their time and attention among them. Conversely, adult children can allow themselves more freedom from their parents and, for example, share support tasks when they have multiple siblings.

Remarkable patterns also emerge when it comes to societal *contexts*. The analyses confirm the results shown in Figure 7.2. First-generation migrants feel particularly close to their parents. The second generation also reports greater emotional closeness to their living parents (the positive coefficient for deceased parents documented in the Appendix is weakly significant). Figure 7.3 had already provided a more nuanced picture for contacts. In any case, many migrants live far from their parents, most of whom live in their home country (Chapter 8), and accordingly have a lower frequency of contact with them. However, considering residential distance results in a markedly higher frequency of intergenerational exchange. This, too, supports the safe-haven hypothesis, according to which migration experiences can lead to stronger family ties (Chapter 1). Such effects are also present in the second generation, that is, among the Swiss-born children of migrants, but they are less pronounced. It appears that in successive generations, migration-related patterns tend to align increasingly with those of families with no immediate history of migration.

As expected, regional differences are evident in the comparatively weaker emotional closeness between adults and their parents in German-speaking Switzerland. In accordance with the spillover hypothesis, family generations in Italian Switzerland do in fact not only feel more emotionally connected but also have more frequent contact with each other. This applies both to current relationships and to previous relationships with parents who have since passed away. Family generations in French-speaking Switzerland fall in between German and Italian Switzerland for emotional closeness, and the same is true for contacts in the parents' last year of life. This all confirms the findings displayed in the previous figures.

Summary

Overall, there are strong emotional ties between adults and their parents. Two-thirds rate their relationship as at least close. One-third even speaks of very close attachments. At the same time, most adult family generations are in frequent contact. This includes face-to-face meetings but also phone calls and messages. Nearly a quarter of adults are in touch with their parents every day, seven out of ten at least once a week.

These are the proportions including generations that live together. If we focus on attachments beyond household boundaries, frequency of contact declines somewhat, of course, but is still very pronounced: One-tenth is in daily contact, and two out of three family generations see, call or message each other at least once a week. This certainly contradicts a general drifting apart after moving out of the parental home.

In addition to generally strong intergenerational bonds in the form of emotional closeness and frequent contact, however, it is also true that cursory relationships are not negligible outliers. More than one in ten adult children reports a relationship with their parents that is or was not very close or not close at all. Moreover, one-tenth has only rare or no contact at all. These are not trivial percentages. Such generations live largely independently of each other. There is no emotional bond to speak of, and interaction is also very limited – if it occurs at all.

What are reasons for weaker or stronger intergenerational bonds? The analyses identify individual, familial and societal factors for subjective and objective attachment in current as well as previous intergenerational relationships. For example, more education tends to go hand in hand with more frequent contact with one's parents. Resources can come into play here. When it comes to emotional closeness, however, the impact of education is limited. One's financial situation is also less significant, whereas residential distance does have a strong impact. It is not surprising that spatial distance between generations has a decisive influence on the quality and quantity of family relationships: The closer adult children live to their parents, the stronger is their attachment.

Those whose parents are in better health tend to feel more connected with them while also engaging in more frequent contact. However, greater health needs of parents in their last year of life are associated with more frequent intergenerational contact. Monetary transfers have an even more pronounced effect. Gifts and payments from parents to their adult children contribute to significantly stronger subjective and objective bonds. Of course, parents may also give more if they have a closer relationship with their children.

The most important factors are found in the family. First, the findings confirm clear gender-specific patterns. Daughters and mothers have the most intensive relationships by far in terms of both emotional closeness and frequency of contact. When parents enter into a new partnership, the relationship with their offspring suffers. Adult children whose parents continue living together feel a substantially stronger connection with them throughout their lives while also engaging in significantly more frequent exchange. In addition,

it is strikingly apparent that the foundation for intergenerational attachment is laid in childhood and has a lifelong impact. Early conflict between parents as well as quarrel with their underage children considerably weaken intergenerational solidarity in the long term. Conversely, adults are particularly close to parents who clearly expressed affection towards them in childhood. In contrast, having a partner, children of their own and siblings tends to reduce adult children's bonds with their parents.

Societal influences must also not be neglected. This is evident from looking at migration and region. Migration experiences strengthen attachments with one's family of origin in accordance with the safe-haven hypothesis: Family offers an important retreat in challenging situations. Moreover, the relationships in Italian-speaking Switzerland, which are closer by comparison and involve more frequent contact, support the spillover hypothesis (Chapter 1). Accordingly, cultural patterns in neighbouring countries influence the regional characteristics of intergenerational bonds.

8 Space – Of coresidence and proximity

Bettina Isengard

I am one of six siblings,
the other five all live near our parents.
I live far away and always have.
They are well taken care of,
and I am the prodigal son :)
(Man, age 58)

Introduction

Spatial proximity keeps generations together. Living close together makes it easy to meet spontaneously and often in person – sometimes even running into each other more or less by chance. When living together in the same village or district, one shares a living environment, a local situation, enjoys or laments the same weather, shops at the same bakery, perhaps goes to the same hairdresser or the same doctor's office, has mutual acquaintances, and when local news are discussed, one knows the people involved and their backstories. At the same time, spatial proximity holds important potential for intergenerational solidarity (Szydlik 2000, 2016). Living in close proximity is of course an indispensable condition for being able to provide regular in-person support such as direct help and care for elderly parents (Brandt 2009, Haberkern/Szydlik 2008, Haberkern 2009, Igel 2012; see also Chapter 9).

In considering spatial proximity, it makes sense to distinguish between coresidence and living at further distances. Adults living together with their parents in one household constitutes a special living arrangement with specific advantages and challenges. One can avoid loneliness and save on housing costs that would be much higher for separate households (including rent, heating costs and household appliances). However, coresidence comes into conflict with normative expectations and the desire for independence in the case of "nestlings" who stay with their parents in the long term. Classical ide-

al-type attributions such as "internal closeness through external distance" or "intimacy at a distance" (Tartler 1961, Rosenmayr/Köckeis 1965) also assume that adult generations do not share the same four walls in the long run.

It is also helpful to go beyond a general distinction between generations living together or apart. Spatial proximity is not limited to coresidence. Rather, the distance between the households needs to be examined in greater detail. There is an immense range here. Adults and their parents can live very close to each other or very far apart. There is quite a difference between living in the same neighbourhood, where a face-to-face visit is just a few steps away, and having to travel many hundreds of kilometres. In the one case, spontaneous, in-person encounters are possible, including help on short notice, whereas the other case requires coordination, preparation and long-distance travel.

This chapter assesses how close or far from each other adult family generations reside. It first examines all intergenerational relationships – and then those living apart. The extent of coresidence is investigated – as well as the distances separating those not living together in one home. How many adults can see their parents spontaneously in the course of their daily lives in contrast to those who must plan and undertake a longer journey?

Above all, this chapter also determines who is more likely to live with their parents and identifies explanations for differences in residential distance after departure from the parental home. Why do adults live with their parents, and why do they live closer or further away after moving out? To this end, the analyses consider individual characteristics, family structures and societal contexts. Furthermore, they investigate the question of how current and previous intergenerational relationships differ in terms of spatial proximity.

As in the other analysis chapters, this one first lays a foundation by clarifying concepts, summarising previous research and formulating hypotheses. After presenting the respective survey questions, the chapter continues with a general overview of more or less distant relationships, followed by detailed analyses. It concludes with a summary of the key findings.

Foundations

Space

In general, space can be defined in line with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz as the distance "between physical bodies" (Lehmkuhl 2019: 20). In the following,

spatial distance between generations is represented by the residential distance between adults and their parents. On the one hand, this includes those living together in the same household, or "coresidence" for short. This term is derived from the Latin *con* (with, together) and *residere* (to sit down, to settle). On the other hand, the distance between people not living together can be determined by the spatial proximity or distance between their households.

Alongside the giving and taking of time and money, coresidence is one of the three forms of functional intergenerational solidarity between adult family generations (Chapters 1, 9, 10). At the same time, the provision of housing can also equate to an indirect monetary transfer. This is the case, for example, when adult children live with their parents more or less rent-free (Isengard et al. 2018).

There are basically four forms of coresidence in adult family generations (Szydlik 2016: 94f.). First, some adult children continue living with their parents and are sometimes called "nestlings" when this period becomes extensive. Second, there are adult children who return to their parents after a period of spatial separation. They are also called "boomerang kids" (e.g., Pickhardt 2011). Third, parents may move in with their adult children. They may do so to care for grandchildren, or they may be motivated by their own need for help or care (Qureshi/Walker 1989, Engstler/Huxhold 2010). Fourth, generations may move into a shared residence, for example, to reduce costs, avoid loneliness or to foster their relationship.

Besides coresidence in the sense of living together in one household, "near coresidence" is also a form of close spatial proximity (Kohli et al. 1997). In this case, family generations live in separate residences in the same building. This includes largely independent households, such as separate rental flats, but also connected living arrangements such as a granny flat in the children's or parents' house. In principle, the four aforementioned forms of coresidence can also apply to near coresidence – whether in the case of home ownership or that of multiple rental flats in one building.

While coresidence is a form of (functional) intergenerational solidarity, residential distance can be considered an important potential to enable it (Szydlik 2000). Spatial proximity can be relevant to the occurrence and extent of diverse forms of intergenerational cohesion but also of ambivalence, stress, quarrel and estrangement. Residential distance is therefore included in all the other analysis chapters of this book as a potentially significant opportunity. All these chapters contain empirical findings relevant to the significance of spatial proximity for intergenerational relationships between adults and their parents.

Research

Previous findings suggest that adults and their parents living together in the same household is not a rare phenomenon. Studies based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) conclude that a good three out of ten parents aged 50 and over share a household with at least one of their adult children. When near coresidence is included, four out of ten parents live under one roof with an adult child. If the perspective is shifted to look at all relationships of parents aged 50 and over with their adult children, the corresponding proportions are of course lower at just under a fifth or a quarter. At the same time, it becomes clear that coresidence occurs much more frequently than near coresidence. There are also considerable differences between countries. In northern Europe, adult family generations rarely live together, but in the south it is quite common. Switzerland is somewhat below average in this respect with a coresidence rate of twelve per cent for all intergenerational relationships among adults (Szydlik 2016: 101f., Isengard 2018, Isengard et al. 2018).

Studies have also pointed out that family generations living apart tend to reside relatively close together (e.g., Hank 2007, Leopold et al. 2012, Isengard 2013, Choi et al. 2020). In Europe, six out of ten parents aged 50 and over reside no more than 25 kilometres away from their adult children who live in a separate household. Here, too, there are considerable differences between countries. Again, distances are significantly greater in the north, while generations in the south of Europe live relatively close together even when residing in separate households. Switzerland is again somewhat below average, with just under a third living no more than five kilometres apart and six out of ten no further than 25 kilometres away from each other (Isengard 2018: 125).

Research to date has found various factors centrally influencing coresidence and spatial distance between generations. These include, first of all, individual opportunities. Education has proven to be significant. A higher level of education leads to less coresidence while it increases spatial distances between generations after children move out of the parental home (Lauterbach 1995, Kalmijn 2006, Isengard 2018). Financial resources can also play a role. Economic independence enables adult children to leave the parental home earlier (Glaser/Tomassini 2000, Giannelli/Monfardini 2003, Le Blanc/Wolff 2006).

The generations' need for living space and proximity is essential. This is apparent not least with regard to age-related effects: Younger adults depend much more heavily on being able to live with their parents – and geograph-

ical distance also increases with age (Lin/Rogerson 1995, Ward/Spitze 2007, Compton/Pollak 2013, Isengard 2018). Often, however, a person's first move away from the parental home does not take them very far (Bendit/Hein 2003). Studies for Germany based on the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) have shown, for example, that adult children move just under ten kilometres away on average when they leave their parents' household for the first time (Leopold et al. 2012).

Employment status also has an effect in this context. Adult children who are not yet employed and are still in education or training are much more likely to live with their parents (Aassve et al. 2002, Choi 2003, Isengard/Szydlik 2012, Isengard 2018). Conversely, parents' health status may reflect their support needs. Previous findings on this have not always been consistent, however. On the one hand, it has been shown that parents in poorer health are more likely to coreside with or live at shorter distances from their adult children (Stone et al. 1987, Soldo et al. 1995, Michielin/Mulder 2007). Parents who benefit from coresidence are often older, single and in poor health (Choi 2003). On the other hand, there have also been studies that did not find this connection. Compton and Pollak (2013: 23f.), for example, have shown for the USA that coresidence is not related to maternal health but to age and marital status (see also Speare et al. 1991, Mulder/Kalmijn 2006).

Family structures also play a role. Previous research in this context has focused on gender differences in particular. Women have always entered into committed partnerships earlier than men (Höpflinger 2020: 180). This means that sons generally leave the parental home later than daughters (Dommermuth 2008) and therefore have correspondingly higher rates of coresidence (Wagner 1989, Billari et al. 2001, Iacovou 2001). There is hardly any evidence of clear gender differences for residential distances between generations living in separate households (Isengard 2018).

Furthermore, the parents' partnership can have an influence on their spatial proximity to their children. If parents have separated or are living in a new partnership, the probability of coresidence decreases while residential distances increase (Aquilino 1990, Isengard 2013). For adult children, living in a partnership is one of the most significant causes of spatial distance from their parents. In any case, most adult children leave their parents' home upon entering into a long-term partnership (Iacovou 2001, Isengard/Szydlik 2012, Isengard 2018). If they then have children of their own, coresidence with their parents becomes increasingly unlikely. Residential distances, however, may well decrease on account of grandchildren (Pettersson/Malmberg 2009, Igel 2012, Isengard 2013).

When siblings must compete for scarce parental resources such as time, money and space, a greater number of sisters and brothers can make coresidence with parents less likely (Lois 2014, Isengard 2018). At the same time, this can also entail an increase in the spatial distance to parents (Shelton/Grundy 2000, Hank 2007, Malmberg/Pettersson 2007). This is consistent with the findings of Rainer and Siedler (2009, 2012), according to which children without siblings move shorter distances away from their parents than children with siblings.

Finally, migration and region can influence the spatial proximity between generations. According to previous findings, there are two opposing trends in migration. On the one hand, residential distances can be significantly greater if adult children live in a different country than their parents as a consequence of migration (Isengard 2013). This is also supported by the generally greater mobility of people with a history of migration (Treibel 2011). On the other hand, empirical evidence also shows that generations with a migration history who do live in the same country are more likely to share a residence or do not live very far from each other (Baykara-Krumme 2007, Mulder 2007). This also makes it easier to draw support from a network of relatives and friends with the same migration history (Aslund 2005).

Previous findings on country differences have already been mentioned above. According to these findings, societal conditions have a significant influence on intergenerational relationships. Economic insecurity increases intergenerational coresidence, whereas welfare state support reduces the rate of cohabitation among adult family generations. At the same time, in countries with pronounced familialism, more adult children and parents reside in the same household (Isengard 2018: 162). This also corresponds to findings on regional rates of coresidence in Switzerland: Young adults in Italian Switzerland are significantly more likely to still be living with their parents than in other Swiss regions, and they subsequently move less far away (Bertogg 2018: 220ff.).

Hypotheses

Against the background of previous research and the ONFC model (Chapter 1), a number of hypotheses can be made about coresidence and distance. Spatial proximity may initially depend on *opportunities.* For those who no longer wish to be dependent on living in their parents' household, more education should provide more possibilities for independent living – and thus lead to less coresidence. For residential distance, it could be assumed on the one

hand that less qualified adults have to travel greater distances for work. On the other hand, the greater occupational mobility of the more highly qualified can also entail greater spatial mobility and thus distance from the parental home.

Opposing hypotheses can also be put forward regarding the impact of finances. On the one hand, having more resources makes adult children more likely to have their own household, thus reducing the likelihood of coresidence with their parents. On the other hand, wealthy parents can offer their children more incentives to stay with them for longer. Conversely, having limited financial resources limits one's ability to choose where to reside, while more money means more options. This too can lead to generations living further apart or closer to each other, depending on their preferred distance. In this respect, the residential distance between family generations with greater resources can also provide information about their desired living situation.

Needs should be particularly relevant to spatial distance between family generations. Here, age is likely to play a central role. The older and thus more independent adult children are, the less likely they should be to still live with their parents and the further away they are likely to live from them. The need for living space and proximity is also linked to employment status. We expect employed people to live less frequently with their parents. Conversely, for those in education or training, coresidence with their parents is likely to be a frequent form of living. In the case of separate households, however, residential distance between generations may increase if the adult children attend a more distant educational or training facility.

Parents may experience an increased need for spatial proximity especially if they are in poor health. Accordingly, one would expect parents experiencing health challenges to live more frequently with their adult children or at least closer together. However, previous findings on parental health are rather inconsistent (see above). After all, providing intense care to parents in the same home does not necessarily correspond to the needs of adult children.

Moreover, children can be assumed to have a twofold need, for both space and money. However, since providing housing constitutes a monetary benefit, it could also result in fewer additional payments. For generations living apart, greater spatial distance may on the one hand entail weaker attachments and thus probably also fewer gifts and payments. On the other hand, money can also flow over greater distances and thus strengthen the intergenerational relationship across the spatial divide. The question of which connections prevail here is therefore an empirical one.

In addition to individual factors, *family structures* are likely to influence spatial proximity. Gender can have an effect. Sons are likely to show somewhat

higher coresidence rates due to staying with their parents longer. If one moves less far away initially, leaving the parental home later could correspondingly contribute to a slightly lower overall distance between generations living in separate households. However, daughters might generally move less far away from their parents owing to their closer attachments to them (Chapter 7).

Family situations also include separation, conflict and competition. Spatial proximity to parents is to be expected particularly when mother and father remain living together. Their separation, by contrast, should lead to less coresidence and greater distance. Potential reasons for this include one parent moving out and away, but also the strained intergenerational relationship (Chapter 4). This should hold true especially if the parent has entered into a new partnership.

It will also be of great interest to see how childhood experiences affect spatial proximity. In general, one can hypothesise that conflicts experienced in childhood between or with parents reduce the desire to continue living together and thus promote moving out of the parental home sooner. Subsequently, spatial distance could also increase. Conversely, parental affection experienced early on should promote living together during adulthood and reduce distance.

The existence of additional family members is likely to be particularly significant. These include partners, children of one's own and siblings. Having a partner should greatly reduce an adult child's likelihood of coresidence with its parents. Those living in a partnership would rather not share the same four walls with their parents or in-laws. Having children of one's own should also make remaining in the parental home unlikely. Grandchildren, however, could bring adult generations living in separate households spatially closer together. Grandparents would like to spend time with their grandchildren, and this helps the middle generation reconcile family and work. Siblings, on the other hand, may find themselves in competition for their parents' resources, and they also have to share the available space. The presence of many siblings is therefore likely to reduce long-term coresidence.

Finally, it is necessary to examine the extent to which societal *contexts* affect intergenerational coresidence and proximity. Migration-related influences can come into play here. It may be helpful to distinguish between the first and second migration generation. The vast majority of the parents of migrants to Switzerland do not live here (König et al. 2023: Tables AD3). This means coresidence with them is likely to be limited and spatial distances are likely to be great. For the second generation, however, it was their parents who immigrated. Considering their stronger family ties and the challenges

of the migration experience, one can certainly assume a higher frequency of coresidence. In addition, it will be interesting to see how far away from their parents the adult children of migrants live when residing in separate households. On the one hand, parents may move back or move on in the sense of a mobility hypothesis, and adult children with migration experience may also be spatially more mobile like their parents (see above). On the other hand, the above-mentioned kinship and friendship networks may indicate shorter distances.

In addition, one can expect to find regional differences in the spatial distance between adult family generations. If economic uncertainties generally delay the departure of young adults from their parental home and the previous findings for younger adults are confirmed overall, one is likely to find higher rates of coresidence in Italian Switzerland. Furthermore, the geographical and cultural proximity to Italy, with its stronger family ties, should contribute to shorter distances between adults and their parents living in separate households in Italian Switzerland.

Results

Questions

SwissGen asks one question each about coresidence and residential distance for living and deceased mothers and fathers (the questionnaires are documented in König et al. 2023). For living parents, the survey asks about current spatial proximity. If the mother or father is already deceased, it asks about the residential distance at the time of their passing. In each case, it is first determined whether the generations are living or have lived in the same household. Then the spatial distance is determined between adults and their parents living in separate households.

First, respondents are asked to answer the coresidence question with "yes" or "no":

Do you live with your mother [father] in the same household?

If respondents' parents had already passed away, the corresponding question reads as follows:

At the time of her [his] passing, did you live with your mother [father] in the same household?

If respondents live in separate residences, they are also asked about spatial distance. In the case of living mothers and fathers, the question is:

How far away does your mother [father] live from you?

Analogously, in the case of deceased parents the question is:

At the time of her [his] passing, how far away did your mother [father] live from you?

Respondents can choose from seven options:

In the same building – Less than 1 kilometre – 1 to under 5 kilometres – 5 to under 25 kilometres – 25 to under 100 kilometres – 100 to under 500 kilometres – 500 kilometres or more.

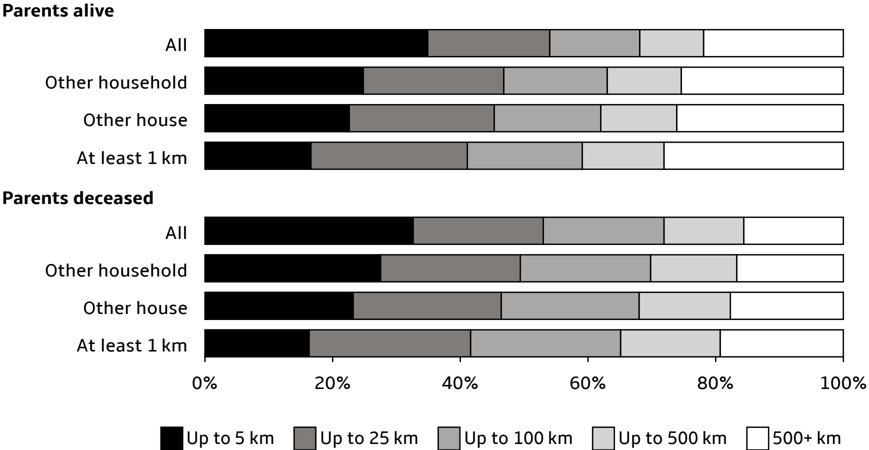
In the following, the responses are grouped depending on the question. For Figures 8.1 and 8.3 and the distance analyses, the categories are as follows: up to 5 kilometres, up to 25 kilometres, up to 100 kilometres, up to 500 kilometres and at least 500 kilometres. Figure 8.2 offers the following options: coresidence, building (i.e., near coresidence), up to 5 kilometres, up to 25 kilometres and at least 25 kilometres.

The coresidence analyses distinguish two alternatives: Either the adult child lives with the parent in the same household or does not. The descriptions and analyses on residential distance focus on adults who do not live under one roof with their parents (neither coresidence nor near coresidence).

Overview

What follows is a first look at the spatial proximity between generations. The upper part of the first figure deals with living mothers and fathers; beneath it provides the corresponding information for parents who have since passed away. First, all adults and their parents are considered, then the generations who do not live in the same household, do not live in the same building or do not live within a radius of one kilometre.

Figure 8.1: Space



Source: SwissGen.

Figure 8.1 documents a wide range of distances between adult children and their parents. A good third lives in the immediate vicinity, no further than five kilometres away. For just under a fifth, the distance is between five and 25 kilometres. Taken together, this means that meeting up briefly or on short notice is quite feasible in more than half of all intergenerational relationships. More than two-thirds of adults live under 100 kilometres away from their parents. By contrast, just under a third are separated from each other by greater residential distances. For a good fifth, the distance is even at least 500 kilometres.

How great is spatial distance if coresidence is excluded – that is, if the focus falls on intergenerational relationships beyond the household? A quarter of adults then live no more than five kilometres away from their parents, and almost half live within 25 kilometres. However, well over a third have to travel at least 100 kilometres each way to see their mother or father. Every fourth adult child must even cover 500 kilometres or more for the one-way trip.

The next step is to look at adult daughters and sons who no longer live in the same building with their parents. This also excludes near coresidence. Nevertheless, a strikingly high number of generations continue to live close to each other. Almost a quarter can visit each other within five kilometres. Despite no longer living under one roof, 45 per cent reside under 25 kilo-

metres and 62 per cent under 100 kilometres away. On the other hand, more than a quarter live at least 500 kilometres from their parents.

Of course, the rate of close spatial proximity decreases if, in a last step, the immediate vicinity within one kilometre is also excluded. But even then, more than four out of ten parents live within 25 kilometres. In this case, for six out of ten intergenerational relationships, the distance is at most 100 kilometres, whereas for almost three out of ten, it is at least 500 kilometres.

The general patterns in the top and bottom parts of Figure 8.1 are similar. Neither is there a great discrepancy between the rates of close residential distance for living and deceased parents at the time of their death. However, fewer adult children lived very far – that is, at least 500 kilometres – from their parents in the period just prior to their death. What we do see is that medium distances become more common during this time.

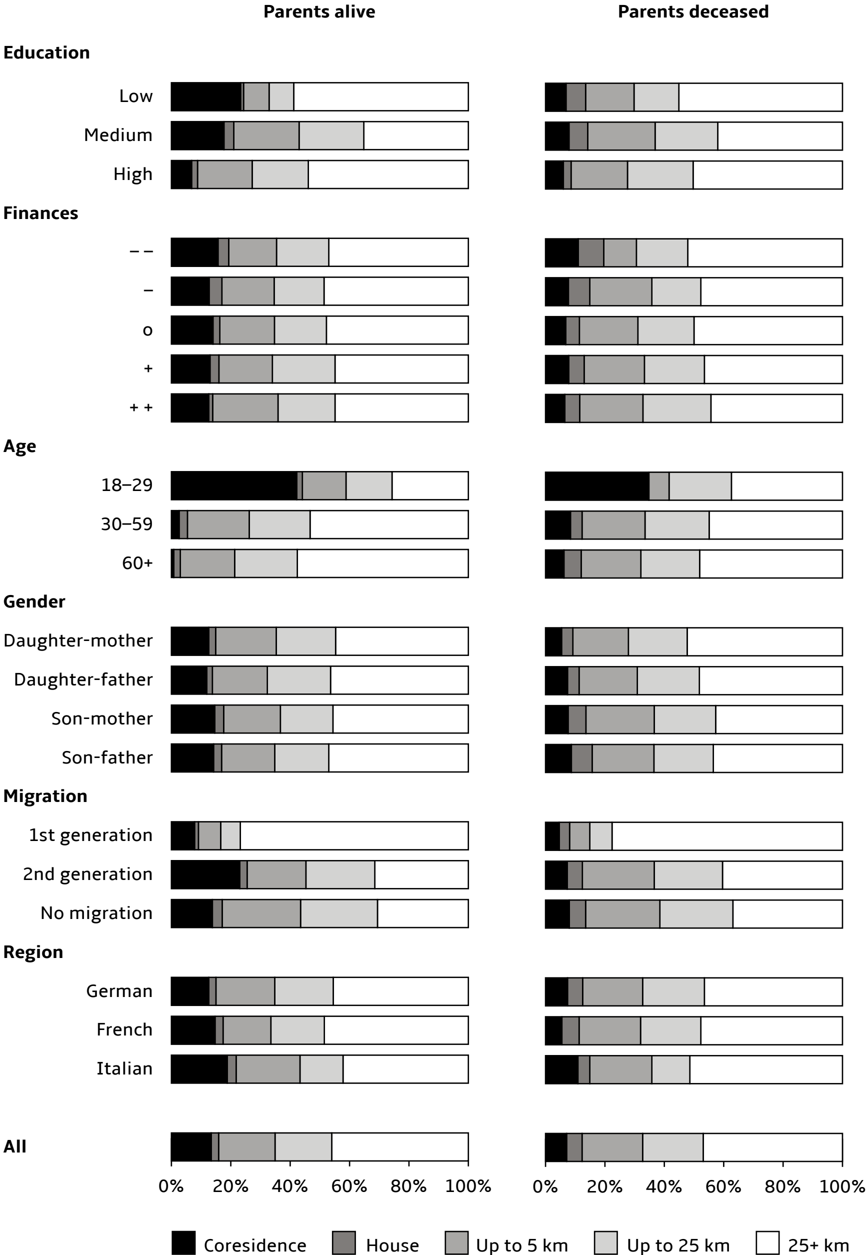
The focus of Figure 8.2 is on coresidence, but it also presents information on near coresidence as well as further distances while also distinguishing between different groups of people. The left side represents spatial proximity to living parents; the right side looks at the same for the last period of time with now deceased mothers or fathers. Finally, overall rates are documented at the bottom. The total rate of coresidence is currently 13 per cent; for now deceased parents, it was seven per cent at the time of their passing. Near coresidence plays a rather minor role with three and five per cent respectively. The overall rates for distances up to five and 25 kilometres were already shown in the previous figure. The numbers for this and the following figure can be found in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD14, 16).

As the level of education increases, the rate of coresidence decreases. Adults with low education are particularly likely to live with their parents in the same household. They are followed by those with medium education and finally by those with the highest education. Almost every fourth person with a low level of education lives within the same four walls with their parents – compared to every fifteenth highly educated person. For now deceased parents, however, no particular differences appear at the time of their passing.

Disparities between income groups are much smaller compared to education. Among households with very poor finances, 16 per cent of adults currently live with their parents. In the group with very good finances, the figure is 13 per cent. The lowest income group stands out among those with now deceased parents; otherwise there are again hardly any differences.

The age of the offspring plays a central role in coresidence. More than four out of ten adults under 30 still live with their parents in the same household. After that, this is rarely the case. In the middle age group, it is still three per

Figure 8.2: Coresidence



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,115 living parents / 6,928 deceased parents).

cent before dropping to only one per cent at age 60 and beyond. Since young adults seldom have deceased parents, the number of these cases is predictably low (König et al. 2023: Table 7). In any case, especially few older offspring lived with their parents shortly before their death, although more did so than are currently residing with their living parents.

Gender differences are modest by comparison. However, slightly more sons than daughters live with their parents. The lowest rate of coresidence shows up among adult daughters in regard to their fathers, the highest among sons living with their mothers (15 per cent). For adult children looking back on the last period of time with their now deceased parents, the greatest disparity emerges between daughter-mother and son-father relationships.

Migration to a new country is associated with much less coresidence with parents. Less than one-tenth of migrants to Switzerland live in the same household with one of their parents, whereas almost a quarter of their adult children live with them. Adults with no immediate history of migration fall between the two migration generations. However, this is not evident shortly before the death of the parents.

Compared to the other Swiss language regions, coresidence is most common in Italian Switzerland. This applies to relationships with living parents as well as to previous relationships with now deceased parents. Every eighth intergenerational relationship between adults in German Switzerland is currently characterised by coresidence – in Italian Switzerland, it is almost every fifth.

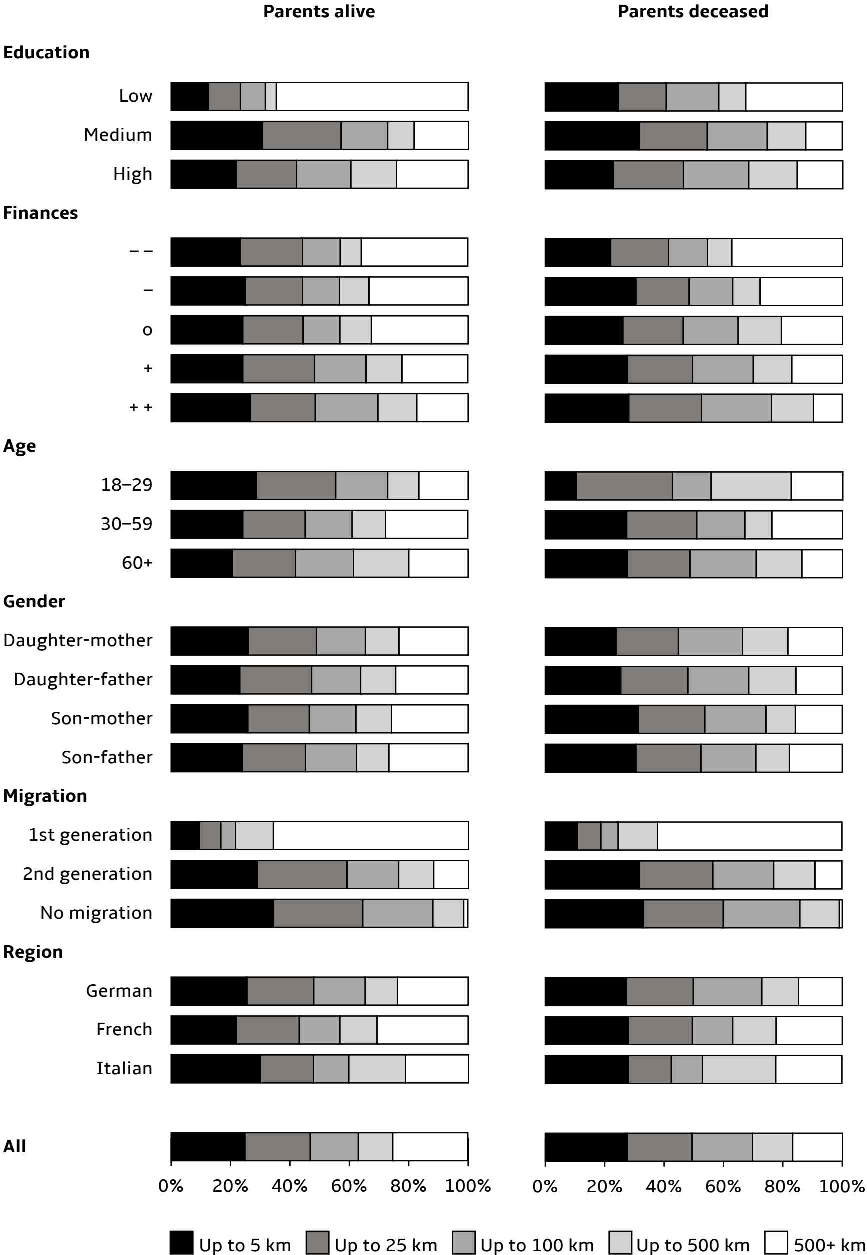
Figure 8.3 takes a closer look at spatial proximity between adult generations who no longer live in the same household. The total rates correspond to the respective second bars for living and deceased parents in Figure 8.1.

Adults with lower education live particularly far from their parents. Currently, almost two-thirds of this group live at a distance of at least 500 kilometres, and one-third did so near the end of their parents' lives. Those with a medium level of education, however, live in separate households relatively close to their mother or father. This is evident for both living and deceased parents.

With regard to the financial situation, rates for close distances differ less overall. Those who have very little money are somewhat less likely to live near their parents than adults who are financially well off. At the same time, those who have difficulty in making ends meet report the greatest distances.

Spatial distances between generations increase with age. Almost three out of ten adults under the age of 30 remain within a radius of five kilometres after leaving their parents' home. From the third to fifth decade of life, this still

Figure 8.3: Proximity



Source: SwissGen (n: 9,627 living parents / 6,414 deceased parents).

applies to one in four, after that to only one in five persons. However, a certain trend towards fewer very long distances can also be observed among those aged 60 and over, especially for the last period of time with now deceased parents (the information for the youngest age group is not conclusive as there are too few cases).

For current distances, gender differences remain modest, even though spatial proximity to mothers is somewhat more frequent, and sons are more likely to live at very great distances. During the period prior to their mother's or father's death, sons especially are more likely to live in closer geographical proximity.

Migration results in striking differences. More than three-quarters of the first generation live at least 100 kilometres from their parents; for two-thirds, it is even 500 kilometres or more. The differences between the second generation and those with no immediate history of migration are much smaller. Once again, however, there are fewer adults residing very close to their parents and considerably more living at very great distances.

Furthermore, the generations in Italian Switzerland live closer together than in the other two regions, even when residing in separate households. Among current relationships, there are more close and fewer very great distances. For the period preceding the end of now deceased parents' lives, however, Italian Switzerland shows higher rates of greater spatial distances requiring travel of at least 100 kilometres (each way).

Analyses

This section takes a closer look at how well the above findings on coresidence and distance hold up when other factors are considered – and what impact these factors have. The first two columns of Figure 8.4 show the results for coresidence, both for living and deceased parents. The third and fourth columns document the findings for distances between households. Minus signs indicate generations living together less frequently or in closer proximity, depending on the factor. Conversely, plus signs indicate more frequent coresidence or greater spatial distance. The coefficients are documented in Table A8. Additional information on variables and procedures can be found in the Appendix.

First, the analyses attest to the influence of *opportunities*. Highly educated adults are significantly less likely to live with their parents. This suggests that adults generally do not prefer coresidence, and those who have greater opportunity to live on their own take advantage of it. In separate households, those

with a medium level of education live closer to their living parents. This indicates that the least and most highly qualified experience greater work-related geographical mobility. When employment status is taken into account, the analyses further show that the most highly educated lived the furthest from their parents at the time of their death.

According to the previous figures, better finances tend to be associated with somewhat less coresidence and shorter residential distances. Thus, the tendency of a person with greater monetary resources would be to no longer live with their parents but also to not move too far away. When education is considered, however, a person's financial situation no longer results in significant effects. The disparities between levels of education overlay the influence of financial means for independence and spatial proximity.

Needs play a major role in spatial proximity. A particularly relevant factor is age. As in the figures above, the analyses likewise show that the likelihood of adult children to move out of their parents' home increases with age. Younger adults have a much greater need for affordable housing provided by their parents. After moving out, the offspring often stay nearby but then gradually move further away over time.

A person's need for housing is also strongly related to their employment situation. Employed persons live relatively seldom with their mother and father. In contrast, many of those in education or training still live with their parents – or relatively far away from them. So long as the distance to their place of education or training permits, living with their parents continues to be an affordable option. Otherwise, moving out of the parental home – for example, to study – is associated with greater distance. Furthermore, pensioners have moved further and further from their parents over the course of their lives.

The health of living parents influences neither coresidence nor distance when age is taken into account. However, adult children were somewhat more likely to live with their parents just prior to their parents' death if the latter were in better health. The findings confirm that intergenerational coresidence is more common among younger adults and that it is less common for adult children to return to living in the same household with their sick, elderly parents.

At greater residential distances, now deceased parents made fewer monetary transfers near the end of their lives (this is only weakly significant for current intergenerational relationships). This speaks to a general decline in intergenerational attachments at greater spatial distances (Chapter 7).

The analysis of *family structures* first of all considers gender combinations. In particular, adult daughters whose parents are separated live less frequently

Figure 8.4: Coresidence and proximity

	Coresidence		**Proximity**	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium			–	
High	– – –			+ +
Finances				
Needs				
Age	– – –	– – –	+ + +	+ + +
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	+ +	+ + +	+ + +	
Not employed	+ +		+ +	
Health of parent		+		
Money from parent				–
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	– –			
Son-mother		+		– –
Son-father		+		– –
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	– – –	– – –	+ +	+ + +
Single	–	– –		
Childhood: parental conflicts				
Childhood: conflicts	–	– –		
Childhood: affection	+		–	
Partnership	– – –	– –		
Child(ren)	– – –	– –	–	–
Siblings		–		
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation		– – –	+ + +	+ + +
2nd generation	+ +		+ +	+
Region (ref.: German)				
French		–		
Italian			– –	– –

+/−: more/less coresidence or distance.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A8).

with their father than with their mother. Furthermore, younger men's later entry into partnership and parenthood explains, as expected, why sons coreside more frequently with their living parents, as shown in Figure 8.2. Accordingly, it was mainly younger sons who were living with their mothers and fathers at the time of their death or had not yet moved very far from the parental home.

Parents who no longer live together are also much less likely to coreside with their adult child. This is true for single mothers and fathers, and even more so for parents in a partnership with another person. The latter also reside especially far away from their children who live outside the household. On the one hand, adult children feel less attached to parents who are newly partnered (Chapter 7). On the other hand, such parents are probably more likely to accept living at greater distances from children from a previous partnership. In any case, these findings apply both to current relationships with living parents and to previous relationships with now deceased parents.

When early intergenerational conflict as well as parental affection are taken into account, conflict between parents does not lead to a significantly lower rate of coresidence, nor does it have an overall effect on residential distances after the children have moved out. However, earlier conflict between young children and their parents reduces the probability that they will be living in a shared household in adulthood. Those who quarrelled frequently in childhood and adolescence would prefer to avoid this situation if possible. This is also true for deceased parents in the time prior to their death. However, this generally does not influence residential distance between separate households. In contrast, adult children stay with their parents longer and subsequently also move less far away if their earlier relationship with their parents was characterised by strong affection. Towards the end of parents' lives, however, this effect loses importance.

As expected, partnered adults and those with children of their own rarely ever still live with their parents. This is true both for living and for now deceased parents. When migration history is accounted for, later residential distance is no longer influenced by partnership. Apparently, migration-related distances overlay the effects of partnership. Having grandchildren, however, leads overall to generations in separate households living closer together. If no other factors are considered, having additional siblings reduces the probability of any one child coresiding with their living parents. This suggests that having additional siblings increases the likelihood of competition for parental resources. However, this effect is no longer evident when age is taken into account. Having several siblings nevertheless reduces the probability of any

one adult child taking in their parents near the end of their lives. In such cases, there are other adult children who can also be called upon.

Societal *contexts* also have an influence on the spatial proximity between adults and their parents. Migration history clearly has an impact. If age is taken into account, no effect can be detected for the first generation. This generation has, so to speak, mostly outgrown the age range typical of coresidence (König et al. 2023: Table P1). In the time just prior to the death of their parents, however, the first generation, owing to their migration, was much less likely to live with their mother and father. Not surprisingly, the distance to parents remaining in the home country is also much greater in the case of separate households. The adult children of migrants, by contrast, remain living at home with them for longer. This may be due to culturally closer family ties, but also to migration conditions. In the case of separate households, the second generation also exhibits greater residential distances to their parents. This supports the above-mentioned mobility hypothesis, according to which the greater distances between migrant family generations can be attributed to the return or onward migration of the parents as well as to their children's greater mobility.

If in addition to partnership and parenthood, the financial situation of adult children is considered, the disparities in coresidence between Italian and German Switzerland decrease considerably. The greater frequency of coresidence in Italian Switzerland is thus also due to the fact that more households here are less well off (König et al. 2023: Table P9). When migration history is taken into account, Italian Switzerland again stands out with short distances between households. Among those living in this region, an especially high number of adult children and parents were born in the neighbouring country – in this case in Italy (König et al. 2023: Tables P3, AD2). There too, closer family ties usually result in shorter residential distances (see above).

Summary

In regard to spatial proximity, three groups can be distinguished, each of which corresponds to about one-third of intergenerational adult relationships: Slightly more than a third live within a radius of less than five kilometres. Almost half of these even live in the same building. Such situations enable direct encounters, everyday conversations and in-person help without

further ado. Exactly one-third live between five and one hundred kilometres apart. Taken together, this means that more than two-thirds of generations live within a radius of less than one hundred kilometres. On the other hand, just under a third live further apart, with more than a fifth living at a distance of even five hundred kilometres or more. Everyday encounters in the same living environment are thus no longer possible, and getting together in person requires a longer lead time.

Coresidence, that is, living together in the same household, is the current living arrangement for a total of 13 per cent of adult generations. At first glance, this appears to be a modest proportion. However, this is the most intimate living situation, entailing frequent in-person encounters, regular coordination and assistance. Furthermore, younger adults exhibit much higher rates: More than four out of ten 18- to 29-year-olds still live with their parents.

Many daughters and sons remain in the vicinity of their parents' home even after moving out. A quarter live within a radius of five kilometres. Almost half need to travel less than 25 kilometres to see their mother or father in person. A good six out of ten adults live less than a hundred kilometres away from their parents if they reside in separate households. Conversely, however, almost four out of ten have to cover a greater distance for a visit – and the same distance home. A quarter even live 500 kilometres away or further.

Who lives with their parents, and who moves particularly far away when they move out? The analyses confirm that opportunities play a role in residential distance. The more highly educated are much less likely to live within the same four walls with their parents. If possible, adult generations do not continue living in the same home. After moving out of the parental home, the least and most highly educated live especially far from their mothers and fathers.

Young adults under 30 have a much greater need to continue living with their parents. Beyond that age, however, coresidence becomes a very rare phenomenon. The distance between separate households also increases over the course of life. Those in education or training display two sides: Many still live with their mother and father, whereas those who do leave during this phase often move further away.

The family situation is also of great importance. Sons are somewhat more likely than daughters to still be living with their parents. A major reason for this is that young men enter into partnership and parenthood later and accordingly remain longer in their parents' home. An especially relevant question is furthermore whether the mother and father are separated and living in a new partnership. In this case, adult children are significantly less likely to live with

that parent, and they also tend to reside considerably further away. Children's relationships with their parents in childhood and adolescence also have a lasting influence on their subsequent housing situation. Conflict between young children and their parents reduces their probability of living together in adulthood. However, parents who frequently expressed affection for their children early on are more likely to share a home with them later – and to live less far away thereafter. Current family relations also have a particularly strong effect. Adult children in partnerships and with their own children hardly ever live with their parents anymore.

Finally, contexts also have a significant influence on the spatial proximity of family generations. Migrants live with their parents much less often, and they also live much further away from them. This is not surprising because when adult children migrate to another country, their parents often stay behind in the home country. By contrast, adult children of migrants live with their parents longer. After moving out, however, distances are again greater. Within Switzerland, there are regional disparities in spatial proximity. In Italian Switzerland, more adults live with their parents. The findings underline that, as in Italy, this is not least for financial reasons. The stronger family cohesion in Italian Switzerland is furthermore reflected in shorter distances between households.

9 Time – Of help and care

Klaus Haberkern

I also took care of my father before he died.
But as an experienced nurse, I saw
that he would soon die,
yet I didn't stay at the hospital.
I couldn't.
(Woman, age 60)

Introduction

Time is precious. It cannot be got back and reused. Even this very moment has already passed. The good news, however, is the great increase in lifespan. In the last 150 years alone, life expectancy in Switzerland has doubled, from 43 years at birth in 1876 to 85 years for those born in 2019 (Bundesamt für Statistik 2019). This means that we have significantly more time at our disposal today than we did in the past. This applies not least to intergenerational relationships. Living longer also increases the joint lifetime of parents and children – especially in adulthood. However, it is important to know whether, and how, this potentially shared time is in fact used.

Parents devote a particularly large part of their time to their underage children (e.g., Sayer et al. 2004). But what happens after they grow up? After all, the findings documented in Chapter 7 show strikingly frequent contact between adults and their parents. Intergenerational cohesion thus also entails a considerable amount of shared time together. This raises the question of how this time is used. Is it spent "merely" on shared leisure activities, or is there more to it? Time is especially precious when it is used to provide support. The contact is there. But what about help? Support given specifically in the form of time is a central dimension of so-called functional intergenerational solidarity (Chapter 1).

Further, there is the question of whether care ebbs away over time. Are parents still there for their adult children later on? Does it also go the other way

at some point, with the children giving time back, so to speak? Do they help their parents around the house and care for them in their old age? If so, how often and in what arrangements? Whether and how often parents benefit from their children's time in the form of help and care can also determine whether their needs for support are met (Haberkern 2009). Especially at a time when the population is ageing with an increasing share of older people in need of support, the time adult children give to their parents can be of immense importance (e.g., Höpflinger/Hugentobler 2005).

This chapter examines in detail the extent to which adults and their parents give time to each other. On the one hand, we look at practical help around the house with tasks such as shopping and paperwork. On the other hand, we consider care: assistance in getting up, washing, going to the toilet, getting dressed, eating and so on. We first look at both directions: time given to and by parents. In so doing, we distinguish between help given and help received as well as care given and care received. How frequently is such support provided? Does it occur daily, weekly, monthly, rarely or never? How widespread are help and care between family generations in the first place?

The primary focus is on the help and care that adults provide for their parents. We investigate which factors favour adult children spending time supporting their parents. What role do the opportunities and needs of each generation play? At the same time, we examine the importance of the family and the extent to which differences exist that are related to migration and region. We consider current support for living parents as well as help and care provided to parents in the period just prior to their death.

This chapter on time follows the same structure as the other chapters. First, we provide a more detailed description of support in the form of time, outline relevant previous research and put forward hypotheses for the analyses that follow. Next, we present the corresponding survey questions, an overview of the frequency of help and care, and the analyses. The chapter concludes with a summary of the most important findings.

Foundations

Time

Time support comes in a variety of forms. In addition to emotional support and looking after grandchildren (for SwissGen findings, see König et al.

2023), personal help and care provided between generations are particularly relevant (e.g., Haberkern 2009, Igel et al. 2009).

It makes sense to distinguish between help in the narrower sense and care (Brandt et al. 2009). Here, help means support with practical tasks around the house. This includes assistance with housework and shopping but also with paperwork such as tax returns, insurances or applications for benefits. Care, on the other hand, refers to assistance with so-called activities of daily living such as personal hygiene or getting up and dressing.

This distinction between practical help and physical care is important in several respects. Helping around the house, with shopping or with paperwork fall below the care threshold. These are characterised by a wider range of activities and also include small favours like repairs or occasional errands when one is going shopping anyway. Help can be reciprocal, and sometimes it can be provided over greater distances, for example, when it comes to paperwork or ordering goods.

Care is generally characterised by greater necessity, urgency, reliability, one-sidedness, intimacy, burden and presence. Personal hygiene and support in getting up and getting dressed are necessary, can hardly be postponed and therefore require reliability. Further, care tends to be one-sided, with one person supporting another who is no longer able to get up, wash themselves or eat on their own and is therefore dependent on care. At the same time, physical care is characterised by greater closeness and intimacy and is therefore especially burdensome. In addition, such care requires physical presence.

Various types of support also require different amounts of time. Care is usually much more time-consuming than help around the house or with paperwork. It therefore limits the caregiver's opportunities much more than help in the narrower sense does.

Support in the form of time differs not only in type and direction (received versus provided) but also in intensity or frequency. A well-founded analysis of intergenerational solidarity in terms of time thus not only distinguishes between relevant forms of support but also considers different frequencies. We therefore distinguish in this chapter between help and care provided daily, weekly, monthly, rarely or never.

Research

Previous research has shown a substantial amount of time support between adult children and their parents in European countries (e.g., Brandt et al. 2008, 2009, Brandt 2009, Haberkern 2009, Igel et al. 2009, Haberkern/

Szydlik 2010, Haberkern et al. 2011, 2015, Szydlik 2016). However, there are some significant differences between countries. The shares of practical help provided by persons aged 50 and over to their parents within a year range from 14 per cent in Portugal to 36 per cent in Sweden. In Switzerland, it is 21 per cent (Brandt et al. 2009). Help from parents to their adult children who live outside their household ranges from two per cent in Spain to eleven per cent each in Denmark and Belgium. Here, too, Switzerland falls in between with five per cent (Brandt 2009: 85). However, these numbers do not consider coresidence. Living together almost inevitably entails intergenerational help. Overall, the percentages are therefore likely to be much higher (cf. Chapter 8).

Since care is more closely tied to a corresponding need, the shares of current care for parents are of course much lower. But here, too, there is strong support with considerable differences between the countries examined. For example, rates of regular care for elderly parents across Europe range from four per cent in Sweden to ten per cent in Italy. In Switzerland, five per cent of those aged 50 and over have cared for their mother or father over the course of one year, while for very elderly parents the figure is as high as ten per cent (Brandt et al. 2009, Höpflinger et al. 2011).

Whether and to what extent adult children provide help or care to their parents depends on various factors at the individual, family and societal level. Empirical studies indicate that higher-educated adults are more likely to help their elderly parents (Haberkern/Szydlik 2008, Brandt 2009, Brandt et al. 2009). At the same time, financial resources make it easier to spend time supporting one's parents since help and care can involve monetary costs (Deindl/Brandt 2011). Spatial proximity is an additional factor of importance for giving time. Living only a short distance away makes it much easier to care for parents in person or take over household chores (Igel et al. 2009, Haberkern/Szydlik 2010). Sometimes parents (or their offspring) even move closer together or into the same household to enable provision of comprehensive support (Vergauwen/Mortelmans 2020).

Older people need more help or care and accordingly tend to receive more time (Haberkern 2009). Studies on the relationship between employment and time transfers between generations have also shown that adults without competing obligations such as a full-time job tend to care for their parents more frequently. Conversely, women sometimes reduce employment when they have extensive care responsibilities, especially in countries with strong normative obligations towards parents and a limited supply of professional care services (Saraceno 2010, Naldini et al. 2016). It is undisputed that parents' health has a marked influence on intergenerational time transfers. The poorer

the health of the parent, the more likely the adult children are to provide time support and to do so more regularly (Haberkern et al. 2015). Studies have also highlighted reciprocal support. The exchange of "time for money" occurs often, with the children usually giving time to their parents and receiving financial benefits from them in return (Brandt et al. 2008, Deindl/Brandt 2011, Mazzotta/Parisi 2020).

Family structures also influence patterns of support (Kahn/Antonucci 1980, Haberkern 2009, Schultz Lee 2010). Women in particular are expected to provide care and do so (Schmid et al. 2012). Accordingly, daughters give more time than sons; conversely, mothers receive more frequent support than fathers (Brandt 2009, Schmid 2014). Further, adult children feel obliged to help and provide care especially when their mother or father lives alone and can no longer count on the support of a partner (Haberkern 2009). This is less frequently the case, however, for parents living in a new partnership and thus in a supportive social arrangement, which can also compete with the intergenerational relationship (Houdt et al. 2018). Interestingly, there have been hardly any in-depth studies on the effects of the family situation during childhood and adolescence on later intergenerational help and care. The long-term consequences of earlier conflict between or with parents for time transfers overall has remained largely unexplored. This also applies to the question of how parents showing affection to their underage children influences their later provision of help and care in adulthood.

It is also still unclear whether children's partnership reduces or promotes time transfers to their parents. On the one hand, partnerships, being the centre of a person's life, compete with relationships with one's parents; on the other hand, partners can also provide important support for the provision of services to parents (Gerstel/Gallagher 2001, Grundy/Henretta 2006, Sarkisian/Gerstel 2008, Haberkern 2009, Schenk/Dykstra 2012). Having children of one's own, however, can tie up time resources that are no longer available for parents (Pesando 2019). Siblings are another possible factor in family constellations. Previous research indicates that some siblings support each other in caring for their parents, thus enabling them to remain living in their familiar environment (Tolkacheva et al. 2010). However, responsibility for parents is sometimes also passed between siblings (Luppi/Nazio 2019).

Furthermore, previous research points to the importance of cultural contexts. Empirical studies have shown that adult children support their parents with money and time also after emigration (e.g., Wolff/Dimova 2006). Even so, whether and to what extent growing up with migrant parents entails more or less help and care has not yet been adequately researched. More-

over, cross-national studies have shown major differences between European countries and regions (see above), suggesting a complex interplay of families, cultural norms and welfare state institutions (Esping-Andersen 1990, Reher 1998, Bettio/Plantenga 2004, Haberkern 2009, Saraceno/Keck 2010). In general, sporadic help is more common in countries with a generous welfare state and few family obligations, while intense care is more common in countries with rudimentary welfare state services and strong filial obligations (Brandt 2009, Igel et al. 2009, Klimaviciute et al. 2017). Denmark, for example, offers a comprehensive range of outpatient care services, so that parents hardly expect care from their children but often do receive help. This is in contrast to Italy, where cash-for-care benefits as well as family obligations make regular intergenerational care much more pervasive (Haberkern 2009).

Hypotheses

In this section, we put forward hypotheses for the subsequent analyses of help and care on the basis of previous research and the ONFC model (Chapter 1). Let us turn to *opportunities* first. Education can be understood as a resource for dealing with legal and bureaucratic matters. Higher-educated people are more often aware of their rights and also know better how to assert them vis-à-vis health insurance companies, doctors and care providers (cf. OECD 2019). We therefore assume that a higher level of education leads to more comprehensive help, though not to a stronger commitment to care, which requires different competencies that do not depend on education.

Help and care are not only time-consuming but often also associated with costs, such as for traveling to see parents, running errands, shopping and for repairs. Accordingly, children with higher incomes are better able to support their parents in terms of time. However, people with abundant financial resources also have the opportunity to avoid high care burdens by paying for external services (cf. Haberkern 2009, Klimaviciute et al. 2017). We therefore assume that better finances lead to more frequent help but not to more intense care.

At the same time, living closer together facilitates both spontaneous help around the house and regular physical care. Accordingly, the further away adult children live from their parents, the less likely they are to provide both help and care.

With regard to *needs,* it can first be assumed that elderly parents have a significantly greater need for support. It is therefore likely that, as life goes on,

adult children will (have to) increasingly support their ageing parents. This is likely to apply to both help and care.

Whether adult children help or care for their parents may also depend on their own needs. In this respect, one can assume among trainees and students a greater willingness to help around the house and in the garden or with shopping and paperwork. Conversely, adult children's other time commitments, especially gainful employment, are likely to inhibit giving extensive time to their parents.

Since parents in poor health have special needs, health problems are likely a central and self-evident reason for adult children to provide time support. This should apply to care in particular, which implies an especially severe impairment of health.

Adult children may be "compensated" for their services with monetary transfers, so that gifts and payments provide an incentive to spend time supporting their parents. Accordingly, we assume for the following analyses that adult children are more likely to give time, and more of it, when they receive money or material gifts.

Regarding the importance of *family structures*, previous findings lead us to expect that daughters provide help and care much more often than sons – and that mothers receive more time transfers than fathers. This is probably due to the closer relationships between daughters and mothers (Chapter 7) on the one hand and to social expectations that still assign help and especially care work primarily to women on the other (see above). Gender combinations are thus likely to have a considerable influence on time transfers.

Although daughters shoulder a large portion of help and care, they are often not the first persons from whom support is expected when it is needed (cf. Kahn/Antonucci 1980). Usually, partners are called upon first and are also first to respond. This is probably also true for new partners. Accordingly, single parents are likely to receive more help and care from their adult children. Furthermore, since attachments to parents in a new partnership are weaker, their children are likely less willing to reliably support them should they need help or care (Chapters 6, 7).

The long-term effects of the quality of relationships between and with parents in childhood and adolescence have remained largely unexplored (see above). However, the present study shows that frequent early conflict between parents and with their underage children puts a strain on subsequent intergenerational relationships (Chapter 4). It can therefore be presumed for the time analyses that parents who were frequently in conflict before the children's sixteenth birthday receive less support in old age. In addition, parent-child

conflicts can entail emotional injuries while growing up, which may also reduce the children's later willingness to provide comprehensive services to their parents. Conversely, early parental affection later contributes to increased concern about parents and a close long-term intergenerational bond (Chapters 4, 7). Thus, the more often the underaged child has received affection from a parent, the more likely it is to provide help and care to that parent in adulthood.

However, adult offspring may also turn to other people. Living in a partnership can limit the time and attention available for one's parents, but it can also serve as an important form of support in looking after them. Empirical evidence will show which is more likely to be true. Having children of one's own is generally likely to shift one's focus to the next generation and to tie up the corresponding resources.

The more children parents have, the more likely it is that their needs for help and care can be met at home, allowing them to remain in their usual environment (see above). Consequently, a greater number of siblings should generally result in parents receiving more time. Conversely, having many siblings also allows individual children to abstain from help or care without endangering the provision of support to their parents overall. Which argument is more likely to apply or which situation occurs more often must also be determined empirically.

Finally, societal *contexts* are likely to influence time transfers. First-generation migrants in particular have strong feelings of obligation towards their parents and particularly close intergenerational bonds (König et al. 2023: Tables AD23, Chapter 7). It can therefore be assumed that the first generation is generally more willing to provide time support for their parents – as long as they do not live too far away. The second generation, on the other hand, was born in Switzerland and is thus likely to act more similarly to people with no immediate history of migration – while at the same time still bearing cultural influences of their parents and generally exhibiting closer family ties in the sense of the safe-haven hypothesis (Chapter 1).

Furthermore, one can expect differences between the language regions within Switzerland. Beliefs and values are conveyed via language and proximity to respective neighbouring countries. Each language region is expected to demonstrate similarities to its neighbouring country of Germany, France or Italy as well as differences to the other regions within Switzerland. International comparative studies (see above) suggest that pronounced family obligations are likely to make time-intensive, regular care more common in Italian Switzerland than in German or French Switzerland.

Results

Questions

SwissGen captures in detail time transfers between adults and their living or deceased parents (König et al. 2023). This includes help and care received or given. The current situation is considered as well as the last year with now deceased parents.

First, received support is taken into account:

> *During the last 12 months, how frequently have you received the following help from your mother [father]?*

In the case of deceased parents, the initial question is accordingly:

> *During the last 12 months before her [his] passing, how frequently did you receive the following help from your mother [father]?*

Four forms of time transfer are then listed, alongside emotional support and help with childcare:

> *Help around the house, with shopping, paperwork or similar.*

> *Care (e.g., personal care, help getting up and dressing).*

This is followed by the questions on support given:

> *During the last 12 months, how frequently have you given the following help to your mother [father]?*

Analogous questions are asked about deceased parents:

> *During the last 12 months before her [his] passing, how frequently did you give the following help to your mother [father]?*

In addition to emotional assistance, the corresponding forms of support are once again:

> *Help around the house, with shopping, paperwork or similar.*

Care (e.g., personal care, help getting up and dressing).

The same response options are offered for all forms of time transfer:

Daily – Weekly – Monthly – Rarely – Never.

The first two categories thus include (very) frequent and reliable support. Next, sporadic time transfers are considered. "Monthly" still describes largely regular services. "Rarely", on the other hand, also includes help or care provided once a year, such as filling out a tax return or briefly supporting caregiving during a Christmas visit.

In the following, "help" is based on the responses for help around the house or with shopping and paperwork. "Care" refers to services such as personal care, assistance getting up and dressing.

Overview

Figure 9.1 documents help and care between adults and their parents. Living mothers and fathers are addressed first before turning to now deceased parents in their last year of life. The first bar shows, for example, that four per cent of adults helped their living parents daily in the last twelve months around the house or with shopping, paperwork and similar. The numbers on which the three following figures are based are provided in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD50-1, 50-3, 51-1, 51-3).

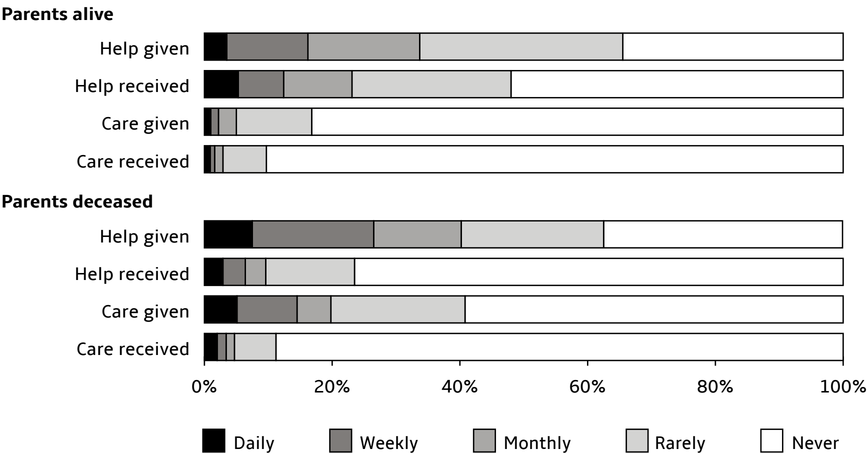
Intergenerational time transfers are widespread. Two-thirds of adults with living parents supported them around the house or with shopping, paperwork and similar in the past year. A period of longer than one year would result in even higher rates, and this also applies if additional forms of support are included. Conversely, frequent help is provided by fewer children. One-third helped at least monthly, one-sixth at least once a week.

Help from parents is less frequent but not negligible. Many parents continue to support their adult children with time. Almost half of adults have currently received help from their parents, just under a quarter at least monthly, an eighth weekly and one-twentieth on a daily basis.

Care is much less frequent in current relationships, in line with the corresponding need. Every sixth adult child with living parents provided support in getting up, dressing, washing, eating and similar in the past year. Five per cent of children provided care at least monthly; one per cent did so daily.

As expected, parents who provide care are even rarer. Nonetheless, one-tenth of adult offspring received such support from their parents at least once in the last year. This also includes support during brief illnesses not requiring long-term care. Monthly, weekly and daily care are especially limited at one per cent each.

Figure 9.1: Time

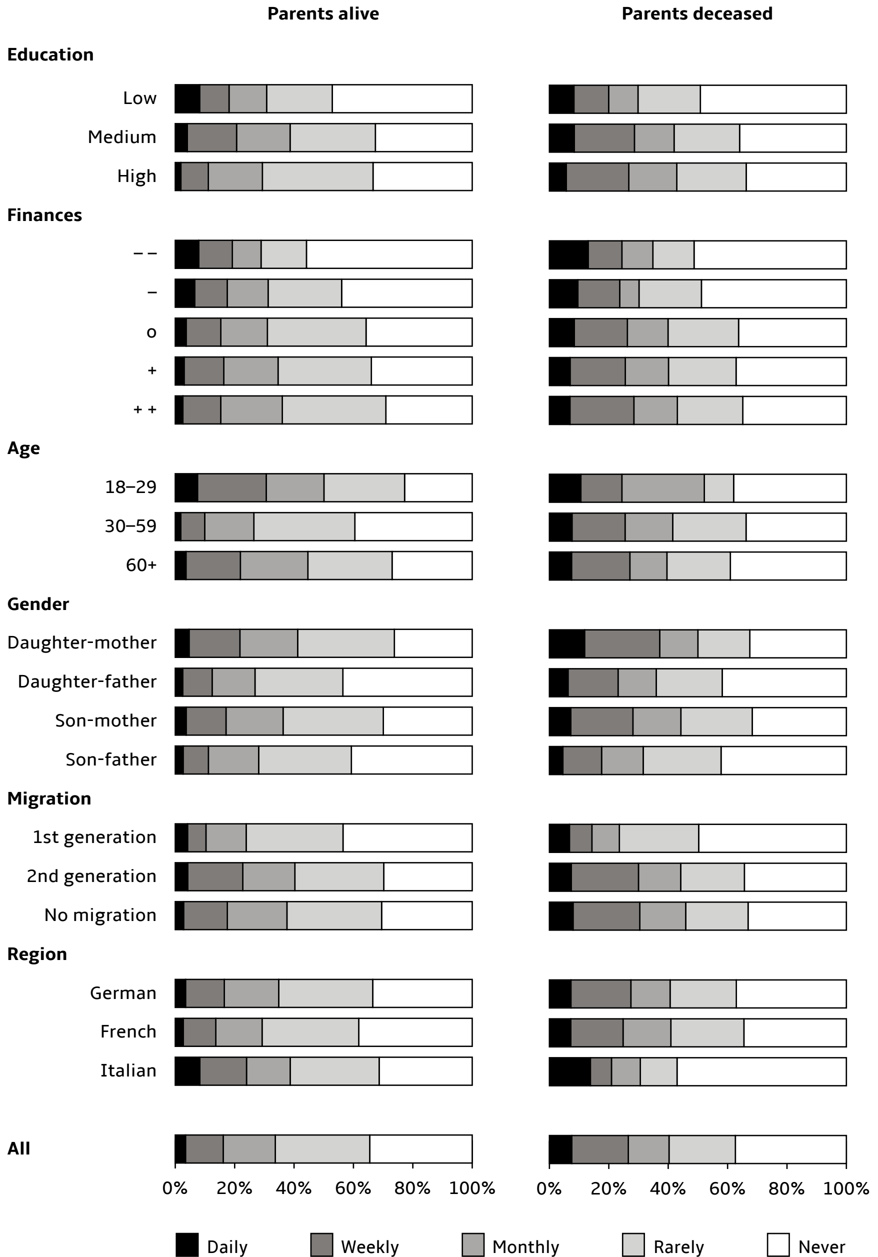


Source: SwissGen.

In the last year of the parent's life, adult children provided regular support particularly often. Over a quarter helped at least weekly, while one in seven provided at least weekly care. Conversely, children received less help during this time, as expected. Nonetheless, every tenth adult child received help around the house at least once a month. Parents even provided regular care somewhat more frequently in the last year of their lives. This indicates that there are also some adult offspring who are permanently dependent on care during the later stages of their parents' lives.

In the following, we take a closer look at help and care for parents. Figure 9.2 compares various groups of people when it comes to help around the house. The left side of the figure refers to current assistance to living parents while the right part documents help provided in the last year in the lives of now deceased mothers and fathers.

Figure 9.2: Help



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,142 living parents / 6,829 deceased parents).

The results for education yield an ambivalent picture. The less educated are overrepresented in daily help. Overall, however, it is the adults with medium and higher education who more frequently report helping their parents. This applies to living parents as well as to the last year in the lives of now deceased ones.

This picture is also confirmed by the financial situation. If the household is currently struggling financially, more daily help is given to parents. Overall, however, more of those who are better-off support their parents in household matters. This mainly goes back to sporadic support.

As far as age is concerned, offspring help their parents especially in their younger and later years. These are ages when many are still living with their parents (Chapter 8) or when their parents are already in greater need of support. The parents of young adults are only very rarely deceased, so these rates are not very meaningful (König et al. 2023: Table 7). However, older age groups provided somewhat more regular and less sporadic help.

Mothers are more likely to receive support and receive it more regularly than fathers, especially from their daughters. More than every fifth daughter helps her mother at least weekly with household chores, shopping or paperwork. The corresponding share for son-father relationships is only half as high. In the last year of the parents' lives, this gap widens even further.

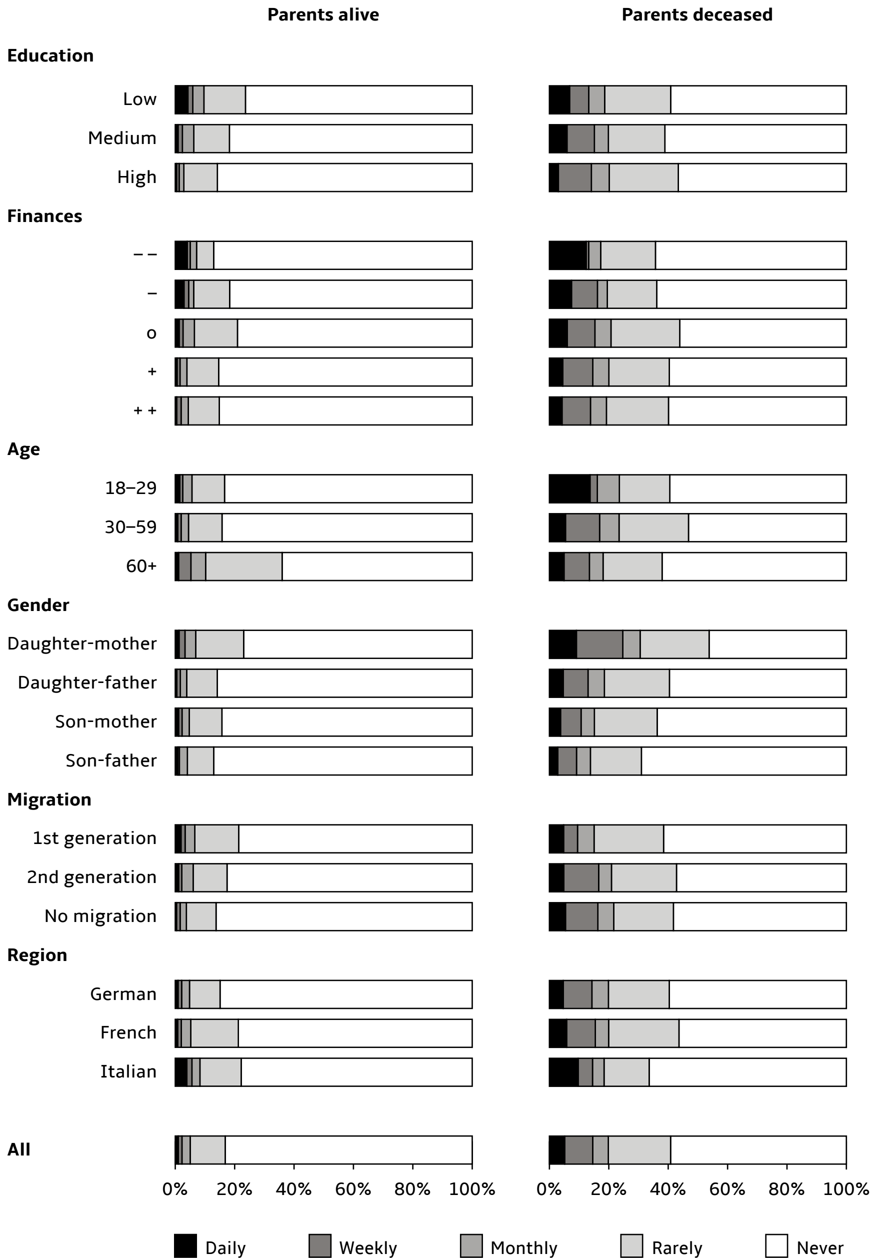
First-generation migrants help their parents less. According to further analyses, this applies only to parents living in their country of origin, in which case in-person support is impeded by residential distance. Moreover, the second migration generation currently supports their parents more often than adults with no immediate history of migration. During the last year in the lives of now deceased parents, however, there are no differences.

Rates of regular help are higher in Italian Switzerland, where almost a quarter of adults with living parents support them at least weekly – in contrast to a seventh in French Switzerland. In the last year of life, daily help was again particularly pronounced in Ticino, but with considerably less weekly, monthly and rare support.

Figure 9.3 deals with care for parents. The more highly educated currently take care of their parents less often than offspring with a lower education. The picture is not so clear-cut, however, for the last year in deceased parents' lives. While it is true that again fewer of the highly educated provided daily care, overall the amount of care provided in the last phase of the parents' lives is also considerable among those with medium and higher levels of education.

When it comes to finances, the picture is again divided. Daily care for parents is provided mainly by offspring who are having financial difficulties.

Figure 9.3: Care



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,134 living parents / 6,822 deceased parents).

This is true for current relationships with living parents as well as for those during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents. However, during this time sporadic support increased considerably in the case of a better financial background.

Naturally, there are especially clear differences between age groups. Those aged 60 and over provide care in more than one in three intergenerational relationships, which is markedly more often than younger people. Older adults have older parents who accordingly are more often in need of care. The high rate of daily care provided by young adults in the last year with now deceased parents should be treated with caution because of the very small number of cases (see above).

The most frequent care is that provided by daughters to their mothers. This is currently the case and also applied to the last year in the lives of now deceased parents. Almost one in four daughters reports current caregiving for their mother – this is true of only one in eight son-father relationships. Frequent and reliable care, that is, care that takes place at least weekly, was also provided by one in four daughters in the last year of their mother's life – compared to one in eleven sons in regard to their father.

First-generation migrants report giving somewhat more care to their living parents. However, this difference is due in particular to infrequent care that might also be provided during visits to parents in their home country. In the last year of their parents' lives, the first generation generally provides care less often, with weekly care being especially seldom.

Last but not least, we take a comparative look at the different language regions. It is in Italian Switzerland that adult children are most likely to provide intense daily care. This applies both to living parents and during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents. Non-daily care, on the other hand, is reported for this period somewhat less frequently in Italian Switzerland. In addition, more parents in French Switzerland receive sporadic care from their offspring than in German Switzerland.

Analyses

The initial overview has already revealed clear differences between groups of people. Now we are interested in seeing which differences remain even when other factors are taken into consideration – and what relevance they have. Plus signs indicate more time, minus signs less time given for support. The first two columns in Figure 9.4 present the findings for help, the third and fourth the results for care. Here, too, we distinguish between current support for living

parents and past time transfers to parents who have since passed away. The corresponding coefficients can be found in Table A9 in the Appendix, which also gives information on the procedure and variables.

First of all, the analyses point to the importance of *opportunities*. Adults with medium to high education help their parents more often than those with less education. After all, higher education can make it easier to overcome administrative hurdles. In the case of personal care for living parents, education no longer has a significant effect compared to the previous figure when other factors such as employment, migration and language region are considered. However, this does not apply to the last year of the parents' lives. During this time, higher-educated offspring are more likely to provide care when gender combination is accounted for. This may be due particularly to sporadic support in combination with professional care, whereas less educated offspring are more likely to provide intense care on their own.

Help in the form of time often entails monetary costs (see above). Thus, a better financial situation enables more time-related help. Looking back at the last year of now deceased parents, however, we find no significant influence of finances overall. Since need is then likely to be more urgent, time support is provided despite the additional financial burden. Furthermore, the greater amount of intense help provided by families with less money and the more frequent sporadic support given by financially stronger adults may offset each other to some extent.

As residential distance increases, significantly less time is spent on in-person help and care. This is currently clearly the case and is equally true in the last year of a parent's life. Short distances offer many more opportunities for in-person support. In addition, adult children who are less emotionally attached and more estranged generally live further away from their parents, while greater geographical distance may also result in weaker subjective ties (Chapters 6, 7). Thus, time support can be limited by both spatial and emotional distance.

Needs also have a powerful impact on the provision of support. As offspring grow older, they give significantly more time to their parents. Older adult children have older parents with correspondingly greater need for support. This is reflected in more help and care, both currently and in the last year of now deceased parents' lives.

At the same time, the frequency of time transfers differs according to employment status. Trainees and students devote more time to their parents than employed offspring do. This may be related to their greater need for reciprocal support from their parents in the form of housing and reliable pro-

vision of time and money (Chapters 8, 10) but also to more available time. In the last year of their parents' lives, those who are not gainfully employed give less help and especially less care. Since pensioners are particularly prevalent among those who are not employed, this may also be attributable to their own greater need for support.

Parents' health is a central indicator of their needs for help and care. The better their parents' health, the less time adult children spend supporting them. Conversely, parents in poor health receive help particularly frequently. This is especially true for care, which is provided even more for health reasons than help is.

Monetary transfers by parents are also of interest. Adults who received monetary gifts, material gifts or payments from their parents in the past year are more likely to provide help. This also applies to help and care in the last year of their parents' lives. Adult children's need for financial assistance can thus encourage them to provide reciprocal support by giving time. In any case, the findings point to reciprocity in the form of money and time (see also Chapter 7 on contact and Chapter 10 on current transfers and inheritances).

Family structures also clearly matter for intergenerational time transfers. First of all, gender combination has an effect. Daughters most often support their mothers, both with help around the house and with personal care. This emphasises the particularly close familial ties between women as well as gender-specific norms and behaviours. Daughters are more likely to be aware of the need for support, are asked more often for help or care and are substantially more likely to provide both. In the last year of parents' lives, the disparities in caregiving between daughters and sons increase even further.

Adult children are less likely to provide time support to parents who are separated and living in a new partnership. Single mothers and fathers, by contrast, are more likely to receive support from their offspring. Thus, on the one hand, children spend more time on parents without a partner to support them. On the other hand, cohesion with parents in new partnerships is generally much weaker (Chapters 6, 7). For care in parents' last year of life, the corresponding coefficient is only weakly significant when residential distance and the affection shown by the parents during childhood are taken into account. Parents in new partnerships tend to live further away from their adult children (Chapter 8), and they have also shown less affection in the past.

The quality of the early relationships between and with one's parents during childhood has a long-term effect on time support later in life. Offspring who experienced frequent conflict between their mother and father before the age of 16 are currently less likely to help or care for their parents. Frequent

Figure 9.4: Help and care

	Help		Care	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	+ +	+ +		
High	+ +	+ +		+ +
Finances	+ +			
Distance	− − −	− − −	− − −	− − −
Needs				
Age	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	+ +		+ +	
Not employed	+	−		− −
Health of parent	− −	− −	− − −	− − −
Money from parent	+ +	+ +		+
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	− − −	− − −	−	− −
Son-mother	− −	− − −	− − −	− − −
Son-father	− − −	− − −	− −	− − −
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	− − −	− −	−	
Single	+ +	+	+ +	
Childhood: parental conflicts	−		−	
Childhood: conflicts	−			
Childhood: affection	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
Partnership	− −		− −	
Child(ren)	− −	−	−	
Siblings			+	+ +
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	+ +		+ + +	+
2nd generation	+		+	+
Region (ref.: German)				
French	−		+ +	
Italian		− − −	+ +	

+/−: more/less help or care.

Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A9).

early conflict between children and parents also results in negative long-term consequences for later help. By contrast, if the parent often showed affection for the underage child, the adult child is much more likely to reciprocate later in life by providing help and care. Affection plays an even greater role than conflict, both currently and in retrospect for the last year with now deceased parents.

In addition, adults who have a partner or children of their own are currently less likely to give time to their parents. Partnership and children are therefore rather competing centres in one's life, each with its own comforts and demands. This limits time and attention for parents. However, there is no influence on care in the last year of parents' lives.

The existence of siblings does not result in less help for parents when adult children having offspring of their own is considered. Adults thus do not help their parents less often because sisters or brothers (could) assume the task. Rather, the findings suggest that parents with several children receive more time in the form of care. When health needs are equal, adults with siblings care even more frequently for their parents in their last year. Having sisters and brothers can therefore be a condition that permits a parent to be cared for at home instead of in a care facility – where many older people do not want to be (Hedinger 2016: 150).

With regard to societal *contexts*, it makes a difference whether the offspring or their parents immigrated. First-generation migrants provide help and care more often – when residential distance is taken into account. Further analyses confirm the assumption that the lower rate of support by first-generation migrants shown in the previous figures indeed owes itself to their greater spatial distance to their parents. Accordingly, the intergenerational ties of adults with a history of migration can increase their time transfers. This is likely to apply to an even greater extent to migrants from cultures with stronger norms of obligation. For the second generation, this is less evident overall, though they still give more help and care compared to those with no immediate history of migration. This suggests that migrants and their children tend to stick together on the basis of migration experiences and cultural norms.

The findings also indicate differences between the language regions. Adult children from French Switzerland currently provide help less frequently than those from German Switzerland. In Italian Switzerland, fewer offspring overall helped their now deceased parents in the last year of their lives. Adult children in the French- and Italian-speaking regions, by contrast, are currently more often involved in intergenerational care, which may also be due to the lower density of inpatient care facilities compared to German Switzerland

(Bundesamt für Statistik 2018). In addition, there are much stronger feelings of obligation towards parents in Italian Switzerland (König et al. 2023: Tables AD23). For the last year of life, when the need for care increases, there are no significant regional differences in intergenerational care overall. In keeping with the previous figure, this does not preclude more daily and less sporadic care in Italian Switzerland.

Summary

Intergenerational time support is widespread. Two out of three adults help their parents around the house or with paperwork – at least from time to time. Rates of intense help are lower, of course, but still considerable nonetheless: One in six adult children helps their parents on a daily or weekly basis. More than six in ten adults helped their parents in the last year of their lives, with more than a quarter doing so at least once a week.

Care is naturally less common, as it depends on corresponding need and includes personal care as well as assistance in getting up and dressing. Nevertheless, one in six adult children currently cares for their mother or father – at least sporadically. Four in ten did so in the last year of their parent's life. This again includes rarely providing care. Two per cent of current intergenerational relationships involve at least weekly caregiving, while every seventh adult child provided at least weekly care in the last year of their now deceased parents' lives.

Time tends to flow from adult children to their parents rather than the other way around. Nevertheless, daughters and sons also receive help in particular, sometimes even care. This happens even in the last year of their parents' lives. These are all impressive indicators of intergenerational solidarity. They show once again how important children are for their parents even in adulthood, and vice versa, how important parents are for their adult daughters and sons. It is especially impressive to see how much time is given and how many adults provide help and care for their parents.

Time support for parents is demanding. It depends on opportunities and needs, the family situation and the broader context. The more resources daughters and sons have at their disposal, the more likely they can help their parents. A higher level of education, for example, facilitates providing support with paperwork. Similarly, better finances offer more opportunities for help

around the house and with shopping since this often involves costs. Education and money are thus not only means to one's own ends; they also translate into important opportunities for time transfers to one's parents. At the same time, residential distance plays a central role: The closer the generations live to one another, the more they can help and care for each other in person.

Help and care are based on needs. The need for support naturally increases with age. The older the offspring – and thus their parents – the more help and care are given. This is especially true when parents are in poor health. Help and especially care are provided particularly often when mothers and fathers need appropriate support for health reasons. However, it is also evident that time for parents is associated with the flow of money in the opposite direction. This speaks for a reciprocity of time and money, with financial need encouraging the provision of support in the form of time.

When it comes to family structures, daughter-mother relationships in particular are characterised by frequent help and care. However, the extent of support also depends on the parents' relationship status. As long as the mother and father live together, they are less dependent on their children's support, which is accordingly less frequent. This is all the more evident for parents living in a new partnership. Another highly significant factor is how adult children experienced childhood and adolescence with their parents. Conflict with and between parents can reduce the time spent supporting them even decades later. Conversely, early affection has a positive effect on help and care over the entire life course. Commitment to parents is also determined by whether the adult children themselves live in a partnership or have children of their own. Both bind attention and time, leaving fewer resources for the parents. In contrast, having more siblings may contribute to more care for parents.

Furthermore, there are broader contexts to consider. First-generation migrants support their parents more frequently when residential distance is accounted for, and the second generation is also more involved in help and care. This reveals closer ties and norms of obligation. There are also differences between the language regions. In Italian and French Switzerland, adult children provide intense care more frequently. This is probably due not least to the cultural context and care infrastructure.

10 Money – Of current transfers and inheritances

Tamara Bosshardt

Inheriting isn't important to me.
They worked for all that they have
and should also be able to spend it.
(Woman, age 55)

Introduction

Children cost money. This is obvious in the case of underage children. In addition to direct expenses, there are also considerable indirect costs due to loss of income and unpaid work. Costs vary by age and the number of underage children (e.g., Gerfin et al. 2009, Craviolini 2017). However, to focus on underage children and adolescents neglects the later expenses for adult children. After all, financial expenditures represent one of the three central forms of functional intergenerational solidarity, alongside space and time (Chapters 1, 8, 9).

Money can flow between generations in several ways. Current gifts and payments are of special importance. For example, gifts of money or goods can be a display of concern during important life events. Even small gifts can signal appreciation and commitment. Larger amounts can be welcome support and help in financially difficult times. Parents' contributions to the cost of their children's education or training can also be seen as an investment in family prestige. A good education promises future economic gains for the offspring and thus guards against the family's social decline (Albertini/Radl 2012). Furthermore, gifts and payments may trigger future reciprocity, for instance, support in the form of time. In any case, money can express affection, evoke gratitude and strengthen intergenerational relationships (already Simmel 1908; cf. Kohli/Künemund 2003).

Parents give their children money not only during their lifetime but also as inheritances. These build a bridge between family generations even beyond death. Bequests can provide valuable support from one generation to the next. At the same time, inheritances can encourage commemoration of the testators and thus strengthen family memory (see already Halbwachs 1925). Moreover, some inheritances involve the transfer of immense sums (Brülhart 2019: 5). Bequests thus also raise the question of the connection between intergenerational family solidarity and social inequality (Szydlik 2000, 2016).

This chapter explores to what extent adult family generations are connected by money. What monies flow between parents and their adult children? We consider current gifts and payments received and given as well as large gifts and inheritances. In which direction do the transfers primarily flow, and what are the amounts? Is it mostly a matter of small presents, or are large sums being passed on?

The focus is on transfers currently received as well as on past and future inheritances. The aim is to clarify who benefits most – and who gains less – from financial transfers during their parents' lifetime and after their death. Thus, we are not concerned merely with the question of whether money flows and how much. Rather, we pay special attention to the factors that contribute to greater and lesser cash flows: What role do resources and needs play? How important are family structures for intergenerational transfers? Which societal contexts can be identified? In addition, we look for patterns particular to adults with living or deceased parents.

As in the other chapters, we begin by establishing the foundations, followed by a presentation of the empirical findings. What are intergenerational transfers, what do we already know about them, and what hypotheses can we put forward for the subsequent analyses? We then present the survey questions, an overview of intergenerational cash transfers and finally the analyses. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Foundations

Money

Intergenerational transfers of money cover a wide spectrum, ranging from smaller gifts and birthday presents to regular payments, substantial gifts for

weddings or real estate purchases all the way up to inheritances worth millions. A fundamental distinction can be made between transfers during the parents' lifetime and those occurring afterwards in the form of inheritances. In addition, we must consider transfer amounts and the timeframe of giving and receiving. Furthermore, there are different directions of transfer along the generational line: Monetary benefits may flow upwards from children to parents or downwards from parents to children.

In considering current transfers during the parents' lifetime, it is helpful to include smaller gifts. These may signal attachment and be understood as tokens of attention and affection, thus strengthening the relationships. Gifts show that people think of one another and want to keep in touch. Even small, personal gifts in kind can be of particular importance.

Gifts and payments even of lesser value can add up over the years, however, and have a relevant impact on the recipients' financial situation. Cash transfers are often appreciated, if not necessary, forms of support. They can mitigate or prevent emergency situations. But they can also enable new opportunities and contribute to a considerably improved quality of life. This is the case especially when larger amounts are involved. Besides regular payments, one-time gifts can also play a major role. These may be given as early inheritances, but they can also serve as welcome support on special occasions such as the birth of a (grand-)child or when buying property.

Transfers while parents are living may occur once, several times or regularly. Furthermore, the timing of giving can play an important role: Financial transfers from one generation to the next can be an essential support earlier in the life course, for example, when adult children are in education or training. In contrast, an inheritance from a deceased parent occurs once – if at all – and involves that parent's death. Thus, inheritances are usually received in the second half of life, when most offspring have long achieved independent lives (Szydlik 2016: 148).

In order to depict monetary flows between generations as comprehensively as possible, this chapter examines transfers both during the parents' lifetime and after their death while also determining the respective amounts. This includes gifts, both small and large. For current monetary transfers, the observation period is one year. When it comes to large gifts, we consider all such transfers ever received. This also applies to inheritances, for which we look both back in time and into the future, including smaller bequests. Non-cash benefits such as housing and practical support are dealt with in detail in Chapters 8 and 9.

Research

As a central component of functional solidarity, current monetary transfers and inheritances have long been a subject of intergenerational research. Nonetheless, there is no uniform answer to the questions of how often and how much money currently flows between living family generations. This results not least from differences in the wording of questions and between the groups of people included in the empirical studies as well as from considerable differences between countries (e.g., for France, Attias-Donfut/Wolff 2000; for Germany, Motel/Szydlik 1999, Szydlik 2000; for Sweden, Fritzell/Lennartsson 2005; for Finland, Majamaa 2013, Hämäläinen/Tanskanen 2019). International studies also show sizeable country differences when it comes to intergenerational transfers of money. According to the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), over one year a fifth of parents aged 50 and over gave at least 250 euros to their adult children living in a separate household. The spectrum ranges from seven per cent in Spain to 31 per cent in Sweden. Switzerland falls in the middle with 21 per cent (Szydlik 2016: 119).

Despite their immense societal and economic importance, inheritances have been studied less intensively so far. This may also be due to the tendency in many studies to avoid sensitive questions about wealth and the death of parents. Nevertheless, there are also some findings on bequests (e.g., Szydlik 2000, 2004, 2011, Künemund/Vogel 2008, Leopold/Schneider 2010). International comparisons again reveal substantial country differences. According to SHARE, in Europe a total of 15 per cent of people aged 50 and over inherited at least 5,000 euros from their parents. Poland has the lowest inheritance rate at six per cent and Switzerland the highest at 32 per cent. With regard to anticipated future bequests, Sweden is in first place with more than two-thirds, but in Switzerland, too, more than half of respondents expect to inherit in the future (Szydlik 2016: 150). Stutz (2008: 86) has reached similar conclusions, according to which one-third of Swiss citizens state that they have already received an inheritance and almost half are still expecting one. Although this does not consider only inheritances that children received from their own parents, these do account for most of the bequests received.

Previous research also suggests that monetary transfers between family generations depend heavily on financial opportunities. Thus, current transfers are much more frequent in higher social classes (König 2016), and the same is true of inheritances (e.g., Künemund/Vogel 2008, Szydlik 2011). The more highly educated usually earn more, and those who earn more can also pass

on more. Conversely, more highly educated adult children also receive more monetary transfers from their parents, which underscores the importance of lifelong intergenerational solidarity. Parents of higher social classes often also enable their children to obtain a higher level of education – and can also leave a significantly larger bequest at the end of their lives (Szydlik 2012). In addition, there are indications that residential distance can have an influence on current intergenerational transfers of money (Brandt/Deindl 2013, Deindl 2011, 2017).

As children age, their need for support also changes. Accordingly, it has been found that the likelihood of financial benefits from parents decreases as children get older (Hartnett et al. 2013). With regard to the age structure of the inheritors, two developments are noticeable: On the one hand, younger cohorts inherit more frequently (Leopold/Schneider 2010); on the other, the age of inheritance is increasing (Stutz 2008). From the perspective of the offspring, their need for financial support from their parents is linked to their employment status. Adult children receive monetary transfers particularly during their education or when they are unemployed (Schenk et al. 2010). If parents experience health problems, however, their own financial needs may increase, which can entail a reversal of the flows of money from children to their parents (Schaller/Eck 2019). Previous research has also indicated that money, as a universal means of exchange, can also be given in family relationships in return for help received (Norton/Houtven 2006, Brandt et al. 2009; see also Chapter 9).

Family constellations are an additional factor that has proved helpful in explaining current transfers and inheritances. Previous research suggests that daughters receive gifts and payments somewhat more often than sons (Lennartsson 2011). While no significant gender differences can be found in the actual receipt of bequests, daughters sometimes tend to give a lower estimation of their chances of future inheritance. Daughters might be somewhat less inclined to speculate about the death of their parents, not least due to closer attachment (Szydlik 2004, 2011). Furthermore, if parents enter a new partnership, this can reduce the financial support they give to their offspring (Clark/Kenney 2010). The extent to which earlier intergenerational ties affect later financial support has so far rarely been explicitly investigated. What has been observed is that adult children with many siblings are not only less likely to receive gifts of money or goods (Emery 2013) but also have lower chances of inheriting (Leopold/Schneider 2010).

Previous empirical studies have also shown that adults with a history of migration benefit less frequently from current transfers from their parents

(Isengard et al. 2018), and they also inherit significantly less (Szydlik 2011). Country differences have also proved to be important. The higher a country's level of prosperity, the better are one's chances of profiting from an inheritance (Szydlik 2016).

Hypotheses

What mechanisms contribute to current financial transfers and inheritances between generations? First, we put forward hypotheses on the basis of previous research and the ONFC model (Chapter 1). As far as *opportunities* are concerned, families from higher social classes have significantly more resources, which should also be reflected in corresponding intergenerational transfers. The close connection between parents' and their children's education also suggests that current transfers and inheritances increase with the offspring's level of education (Becker/Zangger 2013). Likewise, adult children who are already in a more comfortable financial position should be more likely to benefit from gifts of money and goods, payments and inheritances.

With regard to residential distance, different hypotheses can be put forward. On the one hand, short distances may provide adult children with opportunities to induce their parents to provide financial support. On the other hand, monetary transfers over greater distances may serve to cement relationships. Gifts are considered capable of maintaining friendships, and this can also apply to family relationships (Bonsang 2007, König 2016; see also Chapter 7).

Needs can activate support norms and altruism. Age provides a first indication of this. Adult children's dependence on financial support from their parents is likely to decrease as they increasingly stand on their own two feet. In addition, the normative pressure to provide regular financial support to older offspring decreases since support norms apply especially to young adulthood (Hartnett et al. 2013).

Adult children are particularly dependent on financial support from their parents during their education or training (Fingerman et al. 2015). Fokkema et al. (2008) attribute greater support during this period also to long-term expectations of reciprocity, as better-educated offspring may be expected to provide more transfers themselves in the future. This is reinforced by legal and social support norms and parents' inclination to invest in their children as a means of maintaining or improving the family's status (Attias-Donfut/Wolff 2000, Albertini/Radl 2012, Majamaa 2013). After all, most adult students and trainees pursue a tertiary degree (Bula/Segura 2019).

When it comes to parental needs, health is an important factor. Since health problems often entail high costs, those with greater needs of their own are likely to provide fewer current intergenerational transfers. By contrast, those who maintain good health into old age generally have fewer costs to bear and consequently more to bequeath.

At the same time, practical support from children to their parents may elicit financial compensation in accordance with a norm of reciprocity (Leopold/Raab 2011). This may involve current transfers or, in the long term, bequests. If attachments are stable, the help may even have been received some time ago, and a monetary reward may be expected only in the distant future (Kohli/Künemund 2003). We therefore also assume that children who help their parents are given special consideration when it comes to inheritances (Bernheim et al. 1985). However, it is precisely those parents requiring private care who are less able to afford professional support. It is therefore reasonable to assume that occasional practical help is more likely to be rewarded with monetary transfers, whereas this is less so for care, which is much more demanding.

The influence of *family structures* refers initially to the gender combination of the parent-child relationship. The kinkeeper hypothesis assumes that women and especially mothers are more involved in family life and foster strong family cohesion (Rosenthal 1985, Rossi/Rossi 1990; see Chapter 7). This can also mean more gifts. Sons, by contrast, are more likely to talk about future inheritances (see above). In the case of bequests actually received, however, it can hardly be assumed that parents still make a distinction between daughters and sons. This is also supported by legal regulations. In Switzerland, too, it is difficult for parents to deprive their children of their legal share, which in the Swiss case corresponds to three-quarters of their statutory share in the parental estate (Wolf/Hrubesch-Millauer 2017).

Parents who live together may give their children more (joint) gifts. They can remind each other of occasions such as birthdays, point out the children's needs for support, help each other choose, buy and wrap suitable presents, and also suggest payments. In addition, one is likely to expect a larger bequest from parents who live together, especially as there will have been no previous division of the family assets. Conversely, if one parent outlives the other, the children are likely to inherit less initially as the assets will be divided between them and the surviving parent.

Experiences in childhood and adolescence can also be assumed to have an effect on later intergenerational transfers. With regard to early conflict between parents and children, opposing hypotheses are possible: On the one hand,

such conflict may put a lasting strain on children's relationships with their parents and contribute to estrangement (Chapters 4, 6). This could reduce gifts and payments. On the other hand, parents who have subjected their underage children to severe conflict might later feel particularly obligated to give more money. Further, one may hypothesise that a positive family climate during childhood results in more current intergenerational transfers in adulthood. This is likely to be especially true for affection shown: Parents who feel more emotionally connected with their child early on are probably more likely to give gifts and support later on. Stricter legal regulations are likely to weaken the impact of childhood experiences on inheritances, although it cannot be ruled out.

It will also be of interest to see what influence additional family members have on intergenerational transfers. If adult children live with a partner and manage their own household, this could be a reason for parents to reduce their own financial contributions. Those who have brought children into the world may be "rewarded" by parents for continuing the family line and receive financial support for their additional expenses. Grandparents, however, could also give money or goods directly to their grandchildren, thus skipping the middle generation. Siblings may also prove to be rivals for parental benefits. The more children parents have, the less likely they can provide comprehensive financial support to each of them (see above). In the case of inheritances, too, one's own children and siblings are potential competitors for one's parents' bequest. Since siblings rank equally in legal succession and grandchildren are not among the compulsory heirs, siblings in particular can be expected to reduce one's chances of inheriting.

In regard to societal *contexts*, migration history can be important. Migration often occurs for economic reasons. First-generation migrants can therefore be assumed to receive significantly fewer financial transfers from their parents. This applies especially to inheritances. Substantial fortunes are often accumulated over several generations. The second migration generation should hence also have comparatively lower chances of inheriting.

We also investigate possible regional differences. Disparities in wealth are likely to play a role in this context. One can thus expect most current transfers and inheritances to occur in the economically strong German-speaking part of Switzerland and correspondingly lower rates in Italian Switzerland. On the other hand, there are especially close family ties in Italian-speaking Switzerland (Chapter 7). The extent to which regional differences affect current transfers is thus again an empirical question.

Results

Questions

SwissGen addresses current transfers, large gifts and inheritances between the generations for those whose parents are still alive as well as those whose parents are deceased (König et al. 2023). Money provided by both parents jointly is attributed half to the mother and half to the father. With respect to current transfers during the parents' lifetime, the following question is asked:

During the last 12 months, have you received monetary gifts, material gifts or payments from your mother [father]?

In the case of deceased parents, this question refers to the last year of their life:

During the last 12 months before her [his] passing, did you receive monetary gifts, material gifts or payments from your mother [father]?

Transfers given are assessed by an analogous question:

During the last 12 months, have you given monetary gifts, material gifts or payments to your mother [father]?

For deceased parents, the corresponding question is:

During the last 12 months before her [his] passing, did you give monetary gifts, material gifts or payments to your mother [father]?

Respondents are to first choose a response of either "No" or "Yes, total: …", followed by the amount:

Up to 500 CHF – Up to 1,000 CHF – Up to 5,000 CHF – Up to 10,000 CHF – 10,000 CHF or more.

Large gifts are captured as follows:

Did you ever receive one or more large gifts from your mother [father] (e.g., money, valuables, property)?

This question is worded identically for both living and deceased parents, as it includes all large gifts ever received. Here, too, respondents are to first choose between "No" and "Yes, total: …". The subsequent amount categories are higher than those available for current transfers:

> *Up to 5,000 CHF – Up to 25,000 CHF – Up to 50,000 CHF – Up to 100,000 CHF – Up to 250,000 CHF – Up to 500,000 CHF – Up to 1,000,000 CHF – 1,000,000 CHF or more.*

With regard to inheritances, questions are asked about bequests expected and received from living and deceased parents, respectively. The question for inheritances expected from living parents is:

> *Do you think that you will receive an inheritance from your mother [father] at some point?*

For bequests received from deceased mothers and fathers, the question is instead:

> *Did you receive an inheritance from your mother [father]?*

The same response options are provided as for the question about large gifts. For expected inheritances, the option "Don't know" is additionally offered.

The two highest amount categories for current transfers are summarised below. Large gifts and inheritances are also presented in five groups: from 250,000, up to 250,000, up to 50,000, up to 5,000 CHF and no transfer.

Overview

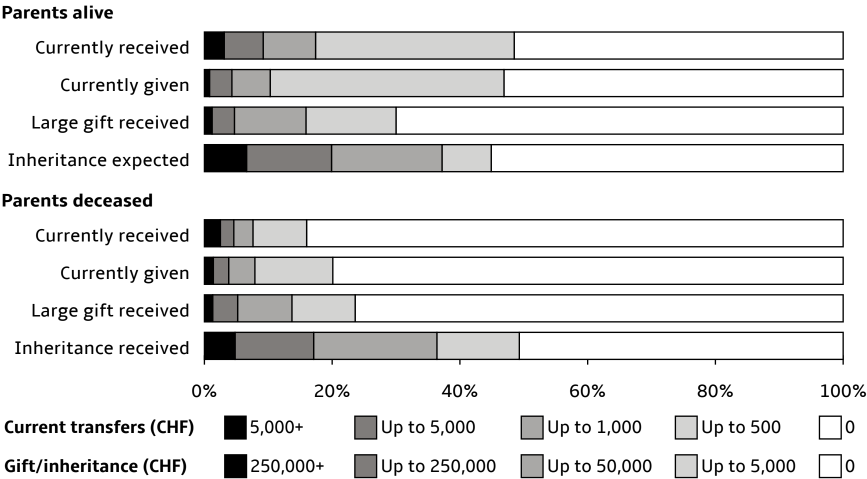
How frequently does money flow between generations, and who benefits most? Initial answers to these questions are provided in Figure 10.1, which documents current transfers as well as large gifts and inheritances. The numbers for the following three figures are provided in the data volume (König et al. 2023: Tables AD52, 53, 55, 56).

Almost half of adults with living parents received money, goods or payments from them in the last year. However, it is equally clear that large amounts are limited to a much smaller group of people. Almost two-thirds of current gifts or payments received amount to less than 500 Swiss francs per

parent over the whole year. Only three per cent of adults received more than 5,000 francs from their parents.

Current transfers to parents are substantially lower: Money mainly flows down the generational line, from older to younger people. Adult children do also give their parents small gifts. Really noteworthy amounts are seldom, however. Only four per cent gave at least 1,000 francs over one year, and only one per cent gave 5,000 francs or more.

Figure 10.1: Money



Source: SwissGen.

Large gifts are much less common than inheritances. This indicates that parents generally do not want to let go of their possessions too early. At the same time, it is rare to see large amounts among gifts received. Five per cent of adults already received a large gift of 50,000 francs or more from their living parents. One per cent received at least 250,000 francs.

Almost half of adults with living parents expect an inheritance from them. However, the really large sums are again attributable to a relatively small group of people. Nonetheless, one-fifth still expect at least 50,000 francs, and seven per cent anticipate receiving a quarter of a million francs or more. According to further results, one-and-a-half per cent count on receiving half a million to a million. A good one per cent of adults anticipate at least one million.

Those whose parents had died received considerably fewer transfers from them in their last year together. Small gifts in particular play a much smaller role in this period. Most impressive, however, are the inheritances received. Half of those with deceased parents inherited something from them. Nevertheless, here too, large amounts are limited to only a few heiresses and heirs. One-sixth of adults received 50,000 francs or more, one-twentieth at least 250,000 francs. According to further results, out of one hundred adult children, only two inherited more than half a million and only one received at least one million francs from a deceased parent.

In the following, we examine in greater detail current transfers received as well as expected and received inheritances. Figure 10.2 shows the distribution of current gifts and payments among various groups of people. The left side refers to adults with living parents, the right side to the last year in the lives of now deceased parents. As in the previous figure, the latter depicts the generally lower rate of transfers in this period.

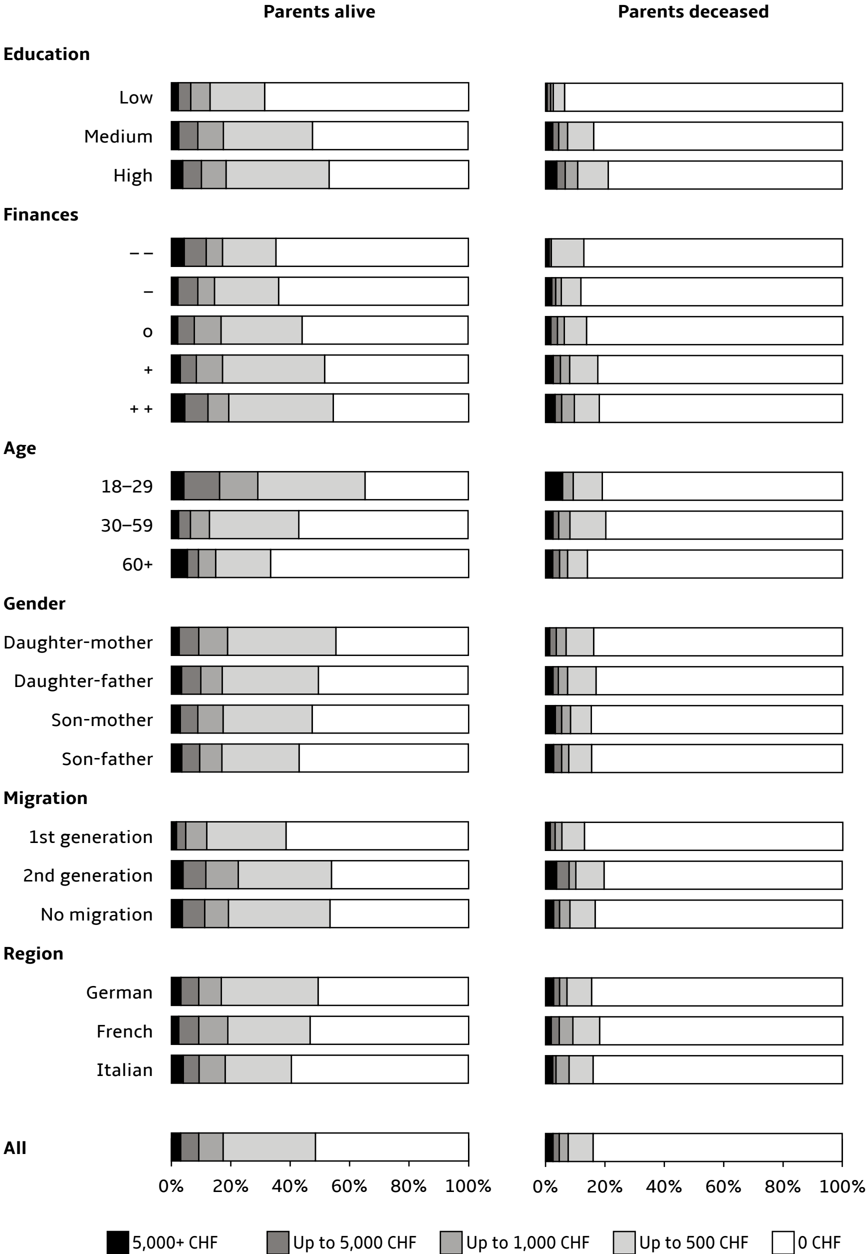
The higher educated are much more likely to receive money from their mother or father. Less than a third of adults with a lower level of education received something from their parents in the last year. Among the highly educated, it is over half. Substantial gifts and payments also increase with education. This is even more so in the last year of parents' lives.

People with better finances also benefit more frequently overall from current intergenerational transfers than those who have difficulties making ends meet. The disparities are especially pronounced in the case of smaller sums. Less than one-fifth of adults from the least well-off group receive up to 500 Swiss francs per year – among especially well-off adults, it is over one-third. This does not hold true for those with deceased parents, however.

At the same time, the frequency of gifts and payments decreases considerably with age. Almost two-thirds of those under 30 receive current transfers from their parents, but this applies to only one-third of those over 60. Larger sums are also more likely to go to younger than to older adults. In the case of deceased parents, the results for the youngest adult children must be taken with caution because of the small number of cases (König et al. 2023: Table 7). In any case, the oldest offspring rarely received smaller gifts.

Daughters currently receive more transfers than sons. This is particularly obvious when comparing the daughter-mother with the son-father relationship. The differences are mainly on account of small amounts. For large sums, however, there are no prominent gender differences. This applies generally to the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.

Figure 10.2: Current transfers



Source: SwissGen (n: 11,032 living parents / 6,904 deceased parents).

First-generation migrants currently receive the least money from their parents. This applies to both small and large transfers. When it comes to larger amounts, the second generation does not differ from those with no immediate history of migration. If one considers the last year in the lives of now deceased parents, first-generation migrants are again at a disadvantage. At the same time, the second generation received the most transfers during this period.

There are also differences between the language regions. Overall, adults in German Switzerland most often receive money from their parents – although these transfers are rather smaller amounts of up to 500 francs over twelve months. In the last year of the parents' lives, French-speaking Switzerland stands out somewhat. This is due to transfers of up to 5,000 francs.

Figure 10.3 is devoted to inheritances. The left side shows which adults expect to receive a bequest from their living parents. The right side documents inheritances actually received from deceased parents.

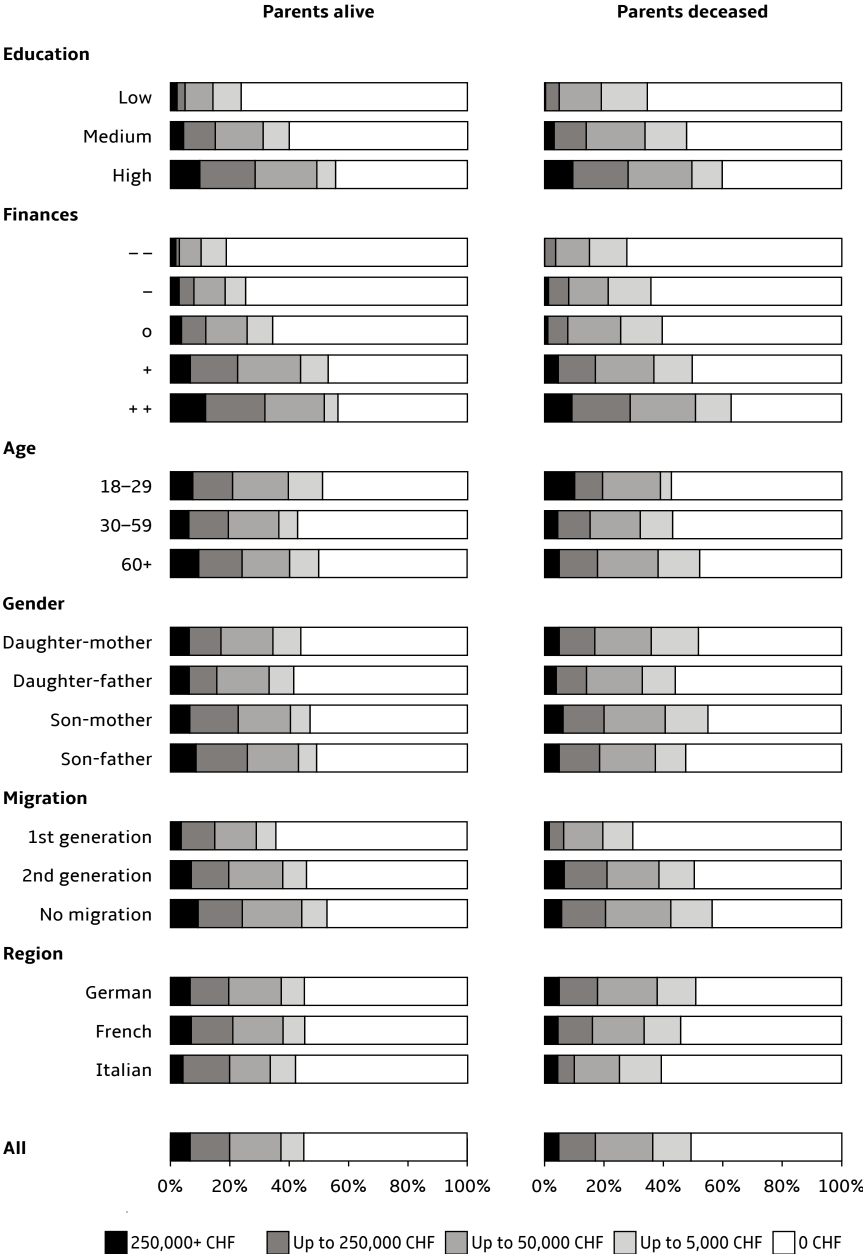
Inheritances increase with education. Less than a quarter of the lower educated expect an inheritance – among the most highly educated, it is well over half. A good third of people with lower education actually inherited something – but so did six out of ten among the highly educated. Not even one-hundredth of the lowest educational class received at least 250,000 francs – in contrast to one-tenth of the highest class.

There are also very clear differences by financial background. Both the likelihood and the amounts of inheritances increase drastically as one's financial standing improves. Those who get by very well on their income expect even much more from their parents in the future – or have received a larger bequest from their deceased parents. Those in precarious financial standing inherited much less – and also expect far less in the future.

When it comes to age, however, the patterns are less clear. In general, younger and older people seem somewhat more likely to expect a future inheritance. Yet the largest sums are expected above all by those aged 60 and over. Accordingly, inheritances received by the oldest group are especially frequent and large. As only very few of those under 30 have deceased parents, the small number of cases renders these results not meaningful.

Overall, sons find it somewhat easier to report future bequests expected after the death of their parents. In the case of inheritances actually received, however, gender differences are rather to be found on the parents' side. Overall, bequests of mothers were more frequent and somewhat larger than those of fathers. Men tend to pass away earlier, so that the wife (also) inherits first, from whom the children then receive more.

Figure 10.3: Inheritances



Source: SwissGen (n: 6,914 living parents / 6,791 deceased parents).

Those with a history of migration expect and receive fewer bequests not only in the first but also in the second generation. First-generation migrants, however, inherit particularly little. Six per cent of the first generation inherited at least 50,000 francs, while this applied to more than three times as many adults in the other two groups. First-generation migrants are also at a clear disadvantage in regard to expected bequests, followed by the second generation.

The differences between the language regions are rather small when it comes to future inheritances, even if expectations are somewhat lower in Italian Switzerland. For inheritances received, the regional differences are greater. In German Switzerland, half of adults with deceased parents inherited something from them, while two-fifths did so in Italian-speaking Switzerland. Larger inheritances were also less frequent there.

Analyses

In the following, we analyse whether the described connections persist when additional factors are taken into account – and what role they play. In doing so, we also test the hypotheses put forward above. Figure 10.4 presents the results of the multivariate analyses. The first two columns refer to monetary transfers in the last twelve months from living or deceased parents. The third and fourth columns document the analyses in respect to bequests expected from living mothers and fathers and inheritances received from deceased parents. Factors associated with more frequent and larger transfers are illustrated by plus signs. Minus signs indicate rarer or smaller amounts of financial benefits. The corresponding coefficients can be found in Table A10 in the Appendix. Additional information on the procedure and variables is provided there as well.

With regard to *opportunities*, we anticipated that the more highly educated would benefit more from both current transfers and inheritances. The findings clearly confirm this expectation. The higher the offspring's education, the more money they receive from their parents. This again underscores the major importance of social origin: Parents with more resources not only contribute to their children's attainment of a higher level of education but also continue providing financial support, from current transfers to larger bequests.

When we turn to finances, the previous hypotheses and figures are also confirmed. Those in better financial standing benefit more from intergenerational transfers. We cannot rule out that a better financial situation is also a result of current payments or an inheritance from one's parents. However, it is precisely the better-off who expect future inheritances. This suggests

that intergenerational family solidarity reproduces or even reinforces social inequality.

If no other factors are considered, shorter residential distance between the generations is associated with more gifts or payments from parents. Accordingly, short distances can also encourage transfers. Even so, non-migrant mothers and fathers living together give more money to adult children who live further away. Thus, gifts in cash and kind or bank transfers can also serve as an alternative to more frequent in-person contact and help and thus stabilise intergenerational relationships over greater distances. In contrast, residential distance has no significant impact on inheritances overall.

In considering *needs,* we first examine age. The older adult children are, the fewer gifts and payments they receive from their parents. This finding is in line with the greater monetary needs of young adults and underscores the hypothesis of age-specific support norms. When it comes to inheritances, however, a different picture emerges. When we take the parents' health into account, the expectation of inheriting increases considerably with age. On the one hand, the death of one's parents becomes more foreseeable as one gets older. On the other hand, healthy older parents in particular also had more time to accumulate (inheritable) wealth. If one considers the parents' partnership in addition to their health, there are no longer age differences in inheritances received. Older adults probably inherited more, and more often, than younger ones, because with increasing age it is more likely that both parents have already passed away.

Adult children in education or training receive current transfers from their parents significantly more frequently than those who are employed. This probably comes down simply to their greater need. In addition, from parents' point of view, well-educated daughters and sons are likely to need less financial assistance in the long run and could in turn be in a better position to support their parents if necessary. Moreover, there are legal and social norms as well as parents' desire to maintain their status. Furthermore, adult students and trainees more often expect future inheritances. An explanation for this would be that the children of wealthy parents have better chances of higher education.

Healthier parents are more likely to give money to their adult children. They are also more often expected to leave bequests, and offspring do in fact inherit more from parents whose health was less poor in the last year of their life. All this suggests that parents in better health can provide more intergenerational transfers because they need fewer resources for their own health care.

Figure 10.4: Current transfers and inheritances

	Current transfers		**Inheritances**	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	+ +	+ + +		+ +
High	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +
Finances	+	+	+ + +	+ + +
Distance	+			
Needs				
Age	− − −	− −	+ + +	
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	+ + +		+ +	
Not employed		−		
Health of parent	+ +	+ +	+ + +	+ +
Help to parent	+ +	+ +	+ +	+
Care to parent				
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−			
Son-mother	− −	− −	+	
Son-father	− −		+ +	
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	−	− −	− −	+ +
Single	−		−	+ + +
Childhood: parental conflicts	+			
Childhood: conflicts			+	
Childhood: affection	+ +	+ +	+	+
Partnership				+
Child(ren)	+			
Siblings	− − −	−	− − −	− −
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	−		− −	− − −
2nd generation			−	−
Region (ref.: German)				
French	+	+ +	+	
Italian				

+/−: more/fewer current transfers or inheritances.
Source: SwissGen (see Appendix, Table A10).

In addition, money can be given in return for help received. This is evident for both current transfers and inheritances. Those who help their parents are more likely to receive money from them, both during their lifetime and afterwards. However, this is less so overall for care, which is particularly time-intensive and stressful, and often provided by professionals from outside the family if resources permit (cf. Chapter 9). It is above all parents in poorer financial situations who depend on their children for personal care, yet without being able to offer them monetary compensation accordingly.

Family structures also play an important role in regard to intergenerational transfers. Daughters receive more gifts (and payments) especially from their mothers, which again underscores the closer intergenerational ties of women in the family. Sons are somewhat more likely to talk about bequests expected after the death of their parents. However, there are no gender differences when it comes to inheritances actually received. With respect to bequests, parents nowadays no longer discriminate between daughters and sons, and legal regulations also restrict any preferences. Contrary to the description in the previous section, mothers do not bequeath more once age and parents' partnership are taken into account. The previous differences can therefore be attributed to indirect inheritances from usually older fathers initially going to the mothers.

Adult children receive more current transfers from parents who are still together. Such parents may be more likely to remember to give something to their offspring – or are reminded to do so. Parents with new partners, on the other hand, often neglect to provide gifts or payments – presumably they devote more attention to the new relationship instead. Adult children also expect fewer inheritances from parents in new partnerships and from single parents. A new partnership can be assumed to shift the priorities of a future testator, and single parents may have fewer assets. If parents lived together until one of their deaths, their children receive less (initially), especially since the other parent then also inherits.

Childhood experiences have a lasting influence on current intergenerational transfers and inheritances. Adults who experienced more previous conflicts between their parents are more likely to receive gifts or payments from them later on (if we consider affection in childhood). Some parents may give more later because they regret subjecting their underage children to interparental conflict and want to make up for it. Those who experienced conflict with their parents in the past generally also expect a somewhat larger inheritance. However, this is not reflected in the inheritances actually received to date. On the other hand, adult children whose parents showed them more

affection during childhood receive significantly more gifts, payments and bequests. Early emotional closeness thus has a long-term effect on intergenerational transfers of money.

When age is taken into account, children's partnership has no influence on current monetary transfers from their parents. When it comes to inheritances, however, offspring with partners have an advantage. Those who have brought children into the world receive somewhat more money from their parents, probably owing to continuing the family line and the additional expenses that this entails. As expected, siblings reduce the financial transfers individual adult children receive from their parents, and considerably so. Further analyses show that the competition effect becomes especially noticeable when there are three or more siblings. Accordingly, the higher expenses of families with many children can in the long term have a negative impact on the parents' asset situation and their bequests.

In turning to societal *contexts*, we take a closer look at migration and region. Even when education and financial standing are taken into account, first-generation migrants receive fewer current transfers from their parents. Inheritances, however, are particularly striking. The first generation expects and receives particularly few bequests, but their children are also at a disadvantage compared to those with no immediate history of migration. The accumulation and passing on of wealth over several generations is likely to play a decisive role in this.

The difference between German and Italian Switzerland is only weakly significant when the households' financial situation is considered. This speaks to the importance of regional differences in wealth. Generally, French Switzerland stands out in comparison: Adult children in this region currently receive somewhat more money from their parents and are also more likely to expect an inheritance once their financial standing is taken into account. These findings correspond to the greater burdens experienced by offspring in French-speaking Switzerland (Chapter 4), which are thus possibly compensated by more monetary transfers. This is particularly true of gifts and payments from now deceased parents in their last year of life. When the financial situation is accounted for, however, there are no longer significant differences between the three regions with regard to previous inheritances. In any case, it is precisely those who are already better off who inherit more, which can further improve their financial situation. Accordingly, many households in German Switzerland in particular are doing very well financially (König et al. 2023: Table P9).

Summary

Money is an important part of intergenerational relationships. It connects family members and does so by flowing in different forms and at different times in life: The spectrum includes smaller gifts of money or goods, regular payments to cover living costs and larger gifts up to inheritances at the end of mothers' and fathers' lives.

Nearly half of adults with living parents received gifts of money, goods or payments from them in the last year. Almost the same proportion gave something to them. These are impressive rates, and they would have been even higher over a longer period of time. Most of these current transfers add up to no more than 500 francs per parent over the year. But smaller gifts are also relevant and may have great emotional importance. Gifts underscore and strengthen the cohesion between generations, and over a longer period of time the amounts add up.

Compared to inheritances, large gifts are much rarer and are also smaller. Parents are reluctant to let go of their possessions too soon. Bequests are therefore particularly important. Almost half of adults with living parents expect to inherit something from them in the future. In fact, half of the offspring with deceased parents received an inheritance from them. The highest amounts, however, are limited to a small group of people: Only five per cent report at least a quarter of a million francs.

Who receives the most? The analyses demonstrate the importance of opportunities, needs, family structures and contexts. They clearly show that offspring who are already in a privileged position most often benefit from their parents' financial transfers. Those who are anyway best off receive the most: people with higher education and better financial standing. They receive significantly more current transfers and, above all, larger inheritances. This applies to both previous and future bequests. Intergenerational transfers during parents' lifetimes and especially afterwards can thus reinforce social inequality.

Young adults are especially likely to receive current support. This answers to their greater need for money in early adulthood, but social norms may also be at work. In addition, parents support their offspring especially during education or training, and in this way also invest in family prestige. This support initially reduces financial disparities between young adults in education or training and those who are already earning money themselves. However,

such investments in education are likely to increase inequality again in the long run. Furthermore, parents' health has an effect: When they have health problems, their adult children receive fewer financial benefits. In such cases, health requirements may leave fewer resources for their offspring. Even so, adult children who spend time helping their parents are indeed rewarded with current transfers, and they also expect and receive more inheritances.

Family structures are important as well. The closer bonds between daughters and mothers also find expression in more frequent smaller gifts. By contrast, sons are more likely to speak of bequests they expect to receive once their parents die. When it comes to actual inheritances, however, parents no longer distinguish between daughters and sons. Mothers and fathers who are still together currently give more to their adult children. At the same time, early intergenerational ties have an impact on monetary benefits in adulthood. Parents who often showed their children emotional affection in childhood and adolescence also provide more financial transfers later on. Having (many) siblings is also highly relevant. Siblings may find themselves in competition for their parents' scarce financial means – both for current transfers and for bequests.

There are further contexts that also have an effect. As expected, first-generation migrants in particular have significantly lower chances of inheriting, and the second generation also inherits less than those with no immediate history of migration. Wealth is often accumulated and passed on over several generations. Parents of migrants are much less likely to bequeath anything. In addition, adults in French Switzerland currently receive more money from their parents. This is likely also in acknowledgement of the burdens mentioned in Chapter 4. In German Switzerland, however, inheritances generally occurred more frequently and were larger, which corresponds with the households' better financial standing.

11 Conclusions – Of conflict and cohesion

Marc Szydlik

Relationships with parents are never easy.
(Woman, age 25)

Diversity

Generations live between conflict and cohesion. There is an enormous variety of intergenerational relationships with huge differences among them. They range from immensely happy relationships to extremely unhappy ones. We observe the closest of connections and unbridgeable divides. There is harmony and hostility, symbiosis and autonomy, cohesion and conflict. Generations support one another but also let each other down. Some separate, others cannot let go. Parents provide strong support and create the worst drama. You can rely on them blindly or be completely exploited.

The great diversity of intergenerational relationships is also reflected in the respondents' personal statements about their parents. The spectrum ranges from "I love them very much", "I always felt secure", "sensational", "irreplaceable", "exemplary", "admirable" through "different lives", "emotionally tense", "uncomfortable", "saddens me", "torn", "incomprehensible" all the way to "terrible", "brutal", "the worst person", "a tyrant", "toxic parents", "perverted narcissistic manipulators". Their offspring report happiness, trust, recognition and gratitude but also cheating, bitterness, rage and hate. The quotes attest to lifelong unconditional affection and support – as well as to violence and abuse. One's mother and father can be the closest of allies or the worst of enemies.

60–8–14–18. According to the conflict-cohesion model, these are the general proportions of cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance (Chapter 2). This finding, too, attests to the diversity of intergenerational relationships. The majority can be described as "cohesion", followed with considerably less frequency by distance and conflict, and finally by ambivalence. Three

in five relationships with one's parents are characterised by close emotional attachment without noteworthy conflicts. This is therefore the dominant relationship type. Against the background of contemporary diagnoses such as individualisation and atomisation, this is a remarkable finding. Most family generations have most certainly not cut their ties. However, the three other types of intergenerational relationships are not negligible either. It would be exaggerated to mention only the close bonds between adults and their parents. After all, two out of five relationships do not fall into this category. Just under one-tenth can be described as ambivalent in the sense of close ties alongside disputes. In almost every seventh intergenerational relationship, conflict predominates without much attachment. Nearly one-fifth of adults are comparatively distant from their parents, that is, mostly without conflict and close ties.

For a long time, little research was conducted on the relationship of adults with their parents. This might have also been due to assertions such as the claim by Talcott Parsons (1942: 615f.) that, on account of marriage and occupation, adult children no longer maintain a lasting bond with their parents. Later empirical studies, however, have shown that strong ties continue to exist between most adult family generations, and this applies across household boundaries and even for life (e.g., Rossi/Rossi 1990, Bengtson/Harootyan 1994, Kohli et al. 2000a, Szydlik 2000). As research advances – to which the present study also contributes – we can now paint a more detailed picture: Most intergenerational relationships between adults are indeed close while there also exists a considerable amount of loose and even cut ties. The present study thus also devotes close attention to those intergenerational relationships that are characterised by ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance.

Figure 11.1 provides an overview of key features of intergenerational relationships between adults. For this purpose, one feature is selected from each analysis chapter (whereas the following discussion extends beyond this figure). Ambivalence is represented by mixed feelings, stress by burdens, quarrel by conflict and distance by estrangement. Attachment is depicted by contact, space by proximity, time by help and money by inheritances. Detailed information can be found in the individual chapters; the corresponding numbers are provided in the data volume (König et al. 2023).

Ambivalence can find expression in the simultaneous existence of close cohesion and pronounced conflict but also in mixed and changing emotions. For those affected, ambivalent feelings can constitute difficult intergenerational relationships that involve the ups and downs of an emotional and situational rollercoaster. However, the findings also indicate that pronounced ambivalence is relatively limited. Just under every fifth relationship is char-

acterised by both support and conflict. This also includes smaller gifts and sporadic disputes. Fewer than one-tenth of adults experience the relationship with their parents as being close and conflictual at the same time. Pronounced mood swings are similarly rare. Frequent instances of mixed and changing feelings toward one's parents are limited to a small minority of adult daughters and sons. Three-quarters state that they rarely or never have mixed or changing feelings toward their mother or father.

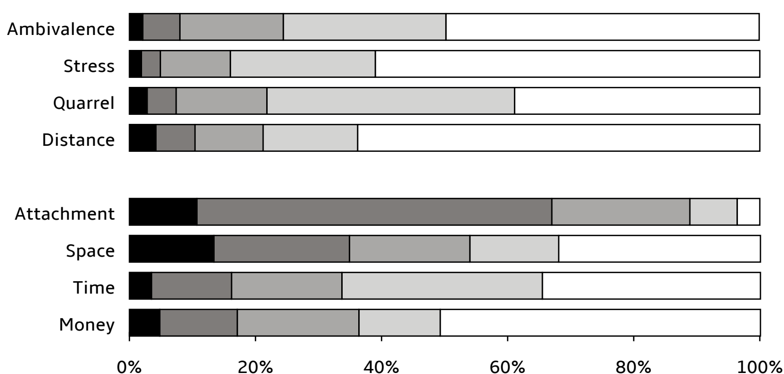
Stress between the generations has many faces. Among them are worries, overly high expectations, being overwhelmed and burdens. In terms of intergenerational stress, worrying about parents plays the largest role. Among three in ten adults, these worries are omnipresent, that is, they are always or often on their minds. The same proportion, however, rarely or never worries about their parents. Hence, this finding, too, attests to the diversity of intergenerational relationships. In addition, parents' expectations can simply be too high for their offspring to live up to. The feeling of being overwhelmed can be particularly dramatic. At times, rules are to be followed, wishes to be fulfilled, support to be given and tasks to be carried out that are simply unaccomplishable. All this – and much more – can be a heavy burden. Every twentieth relationship is currently characterised by parents frequently or even permanently being experienced as a burden.

Quarrel happens even in the best of families. Controversy ranges from rare differences of opinion in minor issues through general tension to permanent massive conflict. Potential for quarrel between adult children and parents is widespread but in most cases does not result in major disputes. Differences of opinion are in fact common in the vast majority of intergenerational relationships. In only three per cent of the relationships is this never the case. For as much as a quarter, differences of opinion are a part of everyday life and occur always or often; for three-quarters this is accordingly not the case. Tension, quarrel and conflict are less pronounced overall. A tenth of adults mention at least frequent tension with their mothers or fathers. Seven per cent of adult children are currently engaged in quarrels or conflict with their parents often or always. At any rate, these are intergenerational relationships that require special attention.

Distance likewise shows in many ways. Adult children and their parents may have little or nothing to say to each other, they may not feel understood, parents may not take interest in their offspring and children may feel estranged from them. Many generations are characterised by being very close, others by an extreme distance. Among one-quarter, speechlessness is a frequent phenomenon – yet, in nearly half of the cases, it barely occurs at all.

A lack of understanding is common among more than one-tenth – but not among two-thirds. Parental indifference is an experience that more than every tenth adult child has at least often – whereas this is hardly the case for nearly three-quarters. Estrangement is a frequent or permanent experience for one-tenth – while rarely or never so for four out of five offspring. Overall, there is thus no indication of the generations drifting apart. Nevertheless, we also see a substantial minority with great distance.

Figure 11.1: Diversity



Ambivalence: mixed feelings. *Stress:* burdens. *Quarrel:* conflict. *Distance:* estrangement (always/often/sometimes/rarely/never). *Attachment:* contact excluding coresidence. *Time:* help given (daily/weekly/monthly/rarely/never). *Space* (coresidence/up to 5/25/100/100 km or more). *Money:* inheritance received (250,000 or more/up to 250,000/50,000/5,000/0 CHF).

The range and diversity of intergenerational relationships is also reflected in features that can be subsumed under "cohesion": attachment, space, time and money.

Attachment can be expressed in terms of affectual and associational intergenerational solidarity as emotional closeness and contact. When an adult child feels closely connected to their mother and father and sees them, talks with them or writes to them frequently, this attests to strong cohesion. Here again, there is a considerable range. Most daughters and sons nevertheless have close emotional ties to their parents in adulthood, one-third even very close ones. By contrast, every sixth adult child speaks of having little or no connection. These proportions hardly vary whether the adult child still lives with their parents or not. The generations who do not live in the same house-

hold represent the acid test for cohesion, especially when it comes to contact. Even in this case, one-tenth of the generations see, speak with or write to each other every day. Another tenth, however, are rarely or even never in contact with their parents.

Space, in terms of living in the same household, is, like time and money, a feature of functional intergenerational solidarity. This applies to 13 per cent of adults, a relatively small proportion at first glance. However, coresidence strongly depends on age and mainly applies to adult daughters and sons in their twenties. Two in five adults under the age of 30 still live with their parents. Thereafter, this is hardly the case anymore. This raises the question of how far apart the generations in separate households live from each other. We once again see diversity: A quarter still live within a five-kilometre radius and can thus easily meet and provide help. For more than a third of the generations who live apart, however, the distance between them is at least 100 kilometres and for a quarter even 500 kilometres or more. In these cases, meeting in person and providing assistance require coordination, preparation and travel back and forth.

Time is one of the most precious things that a person can give another. This is even more so when this involves giving support in the form of help and care. In terms of time, helping parents with household chores and paperwork is clearly much more widespread than the provision of care. One-sixth of adult children currently help their parents every week, one-third at least monthly. Another third of adults, however, never help their parents at all. Of course, time support heavily depends on needs. If parents currently do not need help, their offspring will not provide such support. This is particularly apparent when it comes to care. In current intergenerational relationships, only one per cent of adults provide daily care to their parents; five per cent do so at least monthly. However, these proportions clearly increase with age. Moreover, care is a very intense and time-consuming form of support with special physical and mental demands.

Money flows between the generations according to the cascade principle: from top to bottom, from the older to the younger generation. This applies to smaller and larger gifts and payments throughout their lifetimes and to inheritances thereafter. The giving and taking of money, too, can express connection between generations. Small gifts maintain friendship, and smaller and larger monetary transfers strengthen bonds between the generations. Moreover, financial contributions often constitute important support. In any case, half of the adults have recently received gifts or payments from their parents. Nearly a third have already received a large gift, and one-half of adults with

deceased parents have inherited something from them. That said, the amounts of current transfers tend to be rather limited. There is a wider range when it comes to large gifts and inheritances. However, the particularly high amounts are again limited to a small group.

When one compares current relationships with living parents to past relationships with now deceased ones, the proportions of the "cohesion" and "conflict" types are about the same. Ambivalence was a little less frequent among past relationships; distanced relationships were slightly more frequent instead. Among the features that characterise intergenerational relationships, the differences are limited with regard to mixed and changing feelings, emotional closeness and contact. In the last year of the parents' lives, however, their adult children worried about them particularly often and also experienced more feelings of being overwhelmed and burdened. On the other hand, there were fewer differences of opinion and less tension, quarrel, conflict and estrangement. At the time of parental death, the generations lived in the same household less frequently but more often in the same building or less far away. Adult children clearly provided more help and care for their parents during this period while receiving less help themselves and with fewer gifts being exchanged.

Patterns

This book is about diversity and similarity. Every intergenerational relationship is unique – we can nevertheless see patterns. Generations have many faces – yet they often resemble each other. In this respect, the ONFC model claims that opportunities, needs, family and contexts play a crucial role (see Introduction).

The social sciences are not about laws but rather about regularities. If we drop a stone under normal conditions a thousand times, the law of gravity will cause it to fall a thousand times. When intergenerational relationships follow certain patterns, this does not apply to all cases to the same extent. Many adults and their parents deviate from the general scheme. The empirical results can nevertheless tell us whether one's own intergenerational relationship is in line with the observed regularities or not.

Figure 11.2 provides a selected overview of such patterns. The figure adopts one key feature of intergenerational relationships from the fourth fig-

ure in each analysis chapter (while the following discussion is not limited to this aspect only). The impact of each factor is once again represented by plus and minus signs. It also proves beneficial that all the analyses in this book have largely followed the same procedure. This allows us to directly relate the findings to one another. More extensive information and explanations can be found in the individual chapters and in the data volume (König et al. 2023).

Opportunities can be identified via education, finances and spatial distance. Education has a limited influence on ambivalence, quarrel, distance and attachment overall but is strongly related to stress, space, time and money. Adults with higher education are more likely to feel burdened by their intergenerational relationships, live less often with their parents, but more frequently provide help. It is particularly noticeable that the higher educated receive substantially more money from their parents, both currently and in the form of bequests. This applies to inheritances that have already been received as well as those that are still expected.

According to the descriptive figures, those who are better able to make ends meet tend to report less ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance. There are, however, also other factors at work here, such as education and childhood experiences. Spending time to help one's parents frequently also involves monetary costs, which are easier to shoulder when one is financially better off. In addition, there is a connection between one's own financial situation and money from one's parents. Gifts and payments from parents can have a positive impact on their offspring's financial situation. At the same time, these adults also receive more inheritances.

Spatial distance between the generations is a particularly important factor in determining the intensity of intergenerational relationships. Those who live further away from their mother and father feel less burdened by them, argue with them less often, are more estranged from them and are in contact with them less frequently. At the same time, in-person help with household chores and particularly caregiving is much less possible given large spatial distance. Conversely, living at closer proximity comes with more stress, quarrel, attachment and giving more time. Monetary transfers, by contrast, do not depend on spatial proximity.

Needs are reflected in age, education, health and monetary transfers. The greater need of older parents for attention can overall be seen in their offspring having more mixed feelings, worries and feelings of being burdened. What tends to decrease over the life course, however, is intergenerational conflict, which is more prevalent in younger adulthood. Moreover, younger adults are more likely to still live with their parents before their thirtieth birthday and

receive more gifts and payments from them as well. In turn, adult children provide substantially more help and care when their parents get older and their need for such support increases.

Compared to those in employment, offspring in education or training report experiencing much more ambivalent feelings toward their parents. In this crucial phase of life, need for support meets the desire to go one's own way. Accordingly, adult children in education or training feel more burdened by the intergenerational relationship. In this phase, tension and conflict are also more frequent, as is a more distanced relationship with one's parents along with less close emotional attachment. Adults in education or training often still live with their parents or nearby, devote more time to their parents and receive more money from them.

When parents are ill and frail, their offspring experience ambivalent feelings toward them particularly often. This also applies to worries and burdens, tension and conflict as well as indifference and estrangement. Conversely, offspring of healthy parents experience distinctly less ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance. Better health also goes hand in hand with more intergenerational contacts and closer emotional attachment. That said, adults do provide help and care particularly to their health-impaired parents. Yet they receive more money from parents who are themselves less financially burdened by health-related needs.

Monetary transfers from parents to their adult children indicate financial needs. In this case, changing feelings and worries arise somewhat more frequently. Overall, there is no impact on intergenerational conflict, although the need for money and gifts, as a bonding agent, might offset one another. At any rate, adults are much less likely to perceive their parents as indifferent and feel estranged from them if they have received money from them. Conversely, emotional closeness and intergenerational contacts are also much more intense in that case. At the same time, there is a connection between money received and help provided.

Family structures can first be identified through the gender combination of the intergenerational relationship. Daughters are more likely to report mixed feelings toward and worries about their parents. Daughter-mother relationships are particularly intense, and this is true in both directions. They are more prone to burdens, tension and conflict. Yet, in line with the kinkeeper hypothesis, these relationships are also by far the closest and those with the most frequent contact. This also involves providing comprehensive help and care. Daughters also receive more gifts, but gender differences are limited when it comes to inheritances.

Figure 11.2: Patterns

	Ambivalence	Stress	Quarrel	Distance	Attachment	Space	Time	Money
Opportunities								
Education		+ +				– – –	+ +	+ + +
Finances							+ +	+ + +
Distance		–	–	+ +	– – –	/	– – –	
Needs								
Age	+ +	+ +	– –	– – –		– – –	+ + +	
In education	+	+ +	+	+ +		+ +	+ +	
Health parent	– –	– – –	– –	– – –	+		– –	+ +
Money parent				–	+ +		+ +	/
Family								
Women	+	+ +	+ +		+ + +		+ + +	
Parents: Couple	–	– –		– – –	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	– –
Parent conflicts	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	–		–	
Conflicts	+ + +	+ + +	+ + +	+ +		–	–	
Affection	– – –	– – –	– – –	– – –	+ + +	+	+ +	+
Partnership	–	–	–	–	–	– – –	– –	+
Child(ren)	+					– – –	– –	
Siblings	–	– –	– – –	– –	– –			– –
Contexts								
Migration	+		+		+ + +		+ +	– – –
German		+	–	– – –	– – –			

Ambivalence: mixed feelings. *Stress:* burdens. *Quarrel:* conflict. *Distance:* estrangement. *Attachment:* contact. *Space:* coresidence. *Time:* help given. *Money:* inheritance received.
High vs. low education, better finances, greater spatial distance, older age, in education or training vs. employed, better parental health, money from parent, daughter-mother vs. son-father, parents: couple vs. other partner, childhood: parental conflicts, conflicts with parents, parental affection, partnership of adult child, 1st generation vs. no migration, German vs. Italian Switzerland.

When one's mother and father continue living together, there is also considerably stronger intergenerational cohesion along with much fewer challenges. The difference is particularly large compared to parents who have entered into a new partnership. In this case, their adult children report an intergenerational relationship that is marked by more frequent mixed and changing feelings, burdens, tension, conflict, indifference and estrangement – and by

less closeness, contact, spatial proximity, help, care and fewer current monetary transfers. When parents live together, however, the surviving parent is the first to inherit.

Early influences on the intergenerational relationship between adults are represented by conflict between and with parents along with affection shown by parents. Conflicts between parents during the respondents' childhood (up to the age of 16) have a strong impact on the later intergenerational relationship in adulthood. The more often parents were in conflict with each other at the time, the more the intergenerational relationship is later affected by ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance. Conversely, conflict between one's parents early on weakens the bonds with them and reduces the willingness to provide help and care.

Previous conflict with one's parents during childhood has an even greater impact. Children who experienced frequent conflict with their mother or father up to their sixteenth birthday describe the intergenerational relationship (also) in adulthood as being much more ambivalent, stressful, conflictual and distanced. Early conflict also comes with less emotional attachment to, less coresidence with and less help for the respective parent later on. Offspring who experienced frequent conflict with their parents early on are more likely to expect an inheritance – perhaps as compensation. However, this is not the case for previous bequests.

Especially impressive are the findings on affection in childhood. "My mother [father] showed me that she [he] loved me." The response to this question is predictive of the later lifelong intergenerational relationship. No other factor is of such pervasive significance. Ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance are forms of intergenerational relationships that are all much less frequent when parents expressed their affection to their children early on. Showing affection in childhood substantially strengthens intergenerational cohesion among adult children and parents, as expressed in terms of attachment, space, time and money.

What is the importance of other family members? Partners can support one another and hence reduce intergenerational problems. But they can also represent a centre of life in its own right that leads away from the parents. The findings point to both. Adult children who live in a partnership have less ambivalent emotions toward their parents, feel less burdened by them and experience less intergenerational tension, conflict and estrangement. On the other hand, adults living in a partnership have somewhat less contact with their parents, move out of their parents' home at a younger age and provide less time-related support to their parents.

When adults have children of their own, they are more likely to have mixed and changing feelings toward their parents. A factor that might play a role here is the basic expectation that grandparents provide childcare without further intrusion. Those who have children also worry less about their parents and feel somewhat less connected with them. These adults no longer live with their parents but often nearby. They provide help and care to their parents less frequently but receive more financial support from them. This attests to a dual orientation: Adults with children attend to their offspring but remain connected with their family of origin.

Siblings can relieve each other, share the burden of helping and caring for their parents and support one another. This reduces ambivalence and burden. Siblings also contribute to less quarrelling with parents. While having several siblings reduces the attention that parents devote to each child and their frequency of contact, estrangement is less common. Having siblings can result in more care to parents when sharing the task increases the likelihood that elderly parents can remain in their home. In addition, the existence of several siblings significantly reduces current monetary transfers and inheritances from parents.

Contexts include migration and region. Adults with a migration history are somewhat more ambivalent towards and worry much more about their parents. In addition, they partly experience more tension, conflict and a tendency to drift apart. But above all, there are much closer emotional ties and more contacts. The second generation lives in the parental home for a longer period of time, but generally there is a greater spatial distance. If the latter is taken into account, adults with a migration history provide much more help and care to their parents. Inheritances, however, are substantially smaller, particularly for the first generation.

Furthermore, regional influences should not be neglected. When comparing German-, French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland, we ultimately find only minor differences in terms of ambivalence. However, worries and burdens are particularly pronounced in Romandy, and similar applies to tension, conflict and indifference. Estrangement is more likely to be found in Ticino – yet here we also see the closest ties and most contact by far with more coresidence, less spatial distance and more frequent care. In German- and French-speaking Switzerland, on the other hand, there are more monetary transfers along with a better financial situation.

Most of these patterns apply not only to current relationships but to previous ones as well. Nevertheless, some current gender differences no longer surface during the parents' last year of life. This applies to mixed feelings,

tension, conflict and inheritances. During this time, we also no longer find effects of adult children's partnership on mixed and changing feelings, burdens, tension, conflict, estrangement, contact, help and care. This suggests that a certain competition between a child's partnership and intergenerational relationships is suspended toward the end of parents' lives.

Challenges

Current and future intergenerational relationships face major challenges. The generations are coming under increasing pressure for a number of reasons, and their relationships have far-reaching consequences. The keywords here are demography, family, work, state, pandemic, society and inequality.

Demography. A longer life is a great gift. Demographic change also offers substantially more opportunities for decades-long intergenerational relationships (see Introduction). Yet stable, lifelong cohesion also encounters tremendous challenges. Increased ageing and shrinking families can cause major problems for intergenerational relations. As parents get older, the burden on their offspring can increase. Among the key challenges to the intergenerational relationship then is providing care to mothers and fathers. It comes as no surprise that adult children worry about their elderly and frail parents in particular and that this poses a heavy burden on the offspring. Such a situation also enhances tension and conflict (Chapters 4, 5).

Adding to this is another demographic effect. For one thing, demographic change increases the need for supporting parents who are growing older. For another, this increasing need is faced with fewer offspring and thus fewer siblings who could share the burden. This poses particular problems for the individual adult child. As female family members are still more often held responsible for providing help and care to elderly parents, this affects daughters in particular (Chapter 9). Yet sons will also increasingly have to take care of their parents.

Family. Older parents and fewer siblings pose crucial demographic challenges to families. In addition, relationships between couples are becoming increasingly unstable, which can further reinforce individual burdens in intergenerational relationships. This can be the case, for instance, when parents have separated and are no longer there for each other in old age. In these cases, their offspring not "only" have to care for the surviving parent but for

both parents equally. At the same time, unstable couple relationships among adult children can further increase the individual burden of attending to their parents.

Previous events and experiences in childhood are particularly important for intergenerational relationships among adults. This is also an important finding of the study. The long arm of childhood becomes manifest when parental affection is experienced early on. The bonds with affectionate parents remain close over their entire lifetime. Conversely, conflicts between and with parents during childhood cast a long shadow. For these generations, early experiences that continue to have an impact pose particularly great challenges for current and future attachment.

Work. Adding to these challenges are the demands of the workplace, which can drive a wedge between family members. The compatibility of work and family not only refers to caring for underage children but also to supporting parents in need of help and care. This is where the demands of work and family come into conflict. Work demands flexibility and mobility; a family needs reliability and stability. Rotating shifts, work on demand and long working hours limit the opportunities for intergenerational solidarity. Globalisation, flexibilisation and destandardisation also contribute to making reliable support for parents more difficult (Szydlik 2008b).

In this respect, job-related spatial mobility is also of central importance. The study has shown that residential distance between the generations is a key factor for maintaining close bonds and particularly for time-related support. Adult generations are especially closely connected when they do not live far apart (Chapter 7). Increasing spatial distance hence poses a problem for intergenerational cohesion. How can adult children reliably support elderly parents when living far away?

State. Another great challenge for intergenerational relationships is a weak state (Szydlik 2016). As demographic change, international economic competition and political development put pressure on the welfare state, this can also place a greater burden on family generations. This includes challenging working conditions in the care sector, which contribute to staff shortages, a lack of trainees and an insufficient quality of care. The more the state refrains from supporting and caring for the elderly, the more demands are placed on the family, including adult children.

This again affects female family members in particular. A weak welfare state primarily burdens daughters (Haberkern et al. 2015). It fits the picture that daughters in Italian Switzerland, with its high family demands, report more intergenerational conflict. This is also where estrangement is especially

frequent (Chapters 5, 6). Hence we find considerable problems under the surface of close ties. With a little bad luck, the only daughter works rotating shifts and has to look after separated parents in need of care for many years without having substantial resources and with insufficient state support.

There is a need for political action especially when family generations are burdened and overwhelmed. Families do constitute a foundation for intergenerational cohesion, but one must not leave the generations on their own and rely on them somehow coming to terms with the challenges. This applies to support in matters of help and care as well as to financial issues. Low pensions and high costs for healthcare prevent monetary transfers to offspring, which can in turn reduce help to parents (Chapter 9). In some instances, parents even require financial support from their adult children – if the latter are capable of providing it. This once again hits families with scarce resources particularly hard. Conversely, it is above all wealthy families who benefit most from state reluctance to interfere in private transfers of assets via gifts and inheritances (Chapter 10).

Pandemic. It is not certain whether Covid-19 will be the last pandemic in the foreseeable future. As far as this study is concerned, the survey had fortunately been completed before the pandemic hit. The findings have therefore not been influenced by the specific events around the pandemic. Otherwise it would have been rather short-term research, which would have been an interesting case with regard to the pandemic, but one tainted by the uncertainty of not knowing what phenomena are part of "normal" intergenerational relationships and which are the result of the extraordinary situation. The objective of this study, however, has been to capture the essence of adult family generations – and not a special temporary situation.

Nevertheless, the pandemic does raise questions as to its influence on intergenerational relationships, not least with regard to future events. The consequences of the pandemic are of course particularly dramatic for those who have lost their elderly parents to the virus and for those who are suffering from long-term health problems. In the short term, it seems obvious that the pandemic reduced in-person contact between adults and their elderly parents during this period. Nevertheless, the frequency of contact via phone, email and so forth could have even increased (Arpino et al. 2021, Vergauwen et al. 2022). This would attest to stable intergenerational relationships in which children care about their parents and seek to minimise the risk of infecting them. Yet refraining from visiting one's parents also comes at a considerable emotional cost.

Much less clear are the long-term consequences. These also depend on further developments, on virus mutations and countermeasures. Even when Covid is receding into the background, there remains perhaps the memory of the fragility of one's ongoing relationship with one's mother and father. The situation allows for hugging them again and spending time together without endangering their life and health. The pandemic experience could thus even contribute to stabilising intergenerational ties. But the more the pandemic recedes into the past, the less pronounced these effects are likely to be.

Society. Even though the present study was conducted in Switzerland, the findings can be considered in view of other societies as well. The SwissGen study has confirmed and underlined knowledge on intergenerational relationships gained from previous international studies. It is thus generally fair to assume that the new findings are also applicable to other societies. In addition to the current state of research, this is also supported by the theoretical considerations outlined in the individual chapters. For instance, conflict and affection during childhood can be expected to generally have corresponding consequences in adulthood.

Previous studies additionally allow us to situate Switzerland internationally. With respect to most features of intergenerational relations, Switzerland lies between Northern and Southern Europe (Szydlik 2016). The book thus takes an intermediate position as a whole. When it comes to bequests, however, Switzerland stands out: Nowhere else has so much been inherited. This finding reflects the fact that Switzerland is an especially wealthy country. For our study, this means enough cases for well-founded inheritance analyses.

This book provides substantial evidence on the importance of societal contexts for family generations. However, family relationships also have a reverse effect on social structures and processes. These include distinct consequences of private intergenerational solidarity for social inequality (see below). In addition, we can assume connections between cohesion and conflict in family and society. Accordingly, close lifelong ties between family generations can defuse potential conflicts between age groups and birth cohorts and strengthen societal cohesion across generations. The social divide is less between young and old than between rich and poor.

In turn, problematic and distanced intergenerational family relationships can point to social fractures and thus serve as a warning signal for more profound problems. Intergenerational relationships can be strong – but there are also major challenges for secure and unburdened cohesion. The findings of this study speak a clear language. Parents can provide valuable support and security, but they can also be extremely stressful and overwhelming. Factors

that play an important role in this context are opportunities and needs of the generations, family structures and societal contexts.

A key finding of this study is the diversity and similarity of intergenerational relationships. This includes the special bond between adults and their parents. At the same time, we must also keep a close eye on intergenerational relationships that do not belong to the majority. This is by no means a small minority, and it is one that faces great challenges. Problematic relationships between family generations are of particular importance, and they point to further tensions and divisions. An important issue are the factors that contribute to close ties and reliable support. No less relevant are the causes, characteristics and consequences of ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance. These intergenerational relationships deserve special attention.

Inequality. If one had a choice, choosing one's parents would probably be the most important decision in life. In so doing, one would be choosing the time, country and place of one's own life. However, choosing one's parents would determine much more. From the very beginning, mothers and fathers influence the quality of life of their offspring within the existing structure of social inequality.

According to the generation-inequality model, the connection between generation and inequality affects the entire life course (Szydlik 2016: 37f.). Does the young child have a room of its own? How is it furnished? Does the child live in a house with a garden? By their choice of neighbourhood, parents also determine the social background of their children's first friends, who in turn influence the child's wishes and goals. Kindergarten, school and subsequent education or training – the early educational decisions are of paramount importance for the child's entire life, and this is where the parents play a particularly crucial role (e.g., Becker/Zangger 2013). Education has an impact on lifelong inequality, for example, with regard to income, prestige, employment, partnership, wealth, pension, health, life satisfaction and longevity.

Parents support their children – if they can – not only during childhood and youth. After moving out of the parental home, the bonds between the generations remain and support continues. This widens the inequality gap ever more over the life course. Affluent parents can enable their children to receive a better education at a young age. Furthermore, social background continues to have a pronounced effect far into adulthood, for instance, in the form of smaller and larger gifts and payments right up to inheritances (Chapter 10).

Intergenerational cohesion and social inequality are two sides of the same coin. To him that hath shall be given: The Matthew principle is clearly evident in the connection between generation and inequality. Parents with more resources can support their offspring over their entire lifetime – and even pass on additional large sums of money thereafter. The results of this study also allow us to take a look at the future of transferring wealth from one generation to the next. Those with higher education and more money in the first place expect a particularly large inheritance from their parents in the future. Those who do not have such parents will receive nothing – and may even have to support them.

Social inequality among the parental generation thus shapes social inequality in their children's generation. This leads to an ambivalent situation. Welcome family cohesion preserves and increases social division. Intergenerational solidarity depends on resources, and parents with higher education and greater wealth can give far more. From the intergenerational passing on of educational opportunities to wealth gains through inheritances, it is a major challenge to do justice to the diversity of intergenerational relationships and their consequences.

Appendix

This Appendix provides key information on cases, variables and coefficients.

Table A1 documents the general numbers of cases. The first column lists the respondents, followed by the relationships with their parents. As the study is about adult generations in Switzerland, we excluded all cases in which parents passed away before the respondent's eighteenth birthday or before the respondent moved to Switzerland.

Table A2 offers information on the dependent and independent variables. It reports how the variables were operationalised. The independent variables refer to the respondent unless stated otherwise.

Finally, Tables A3 to A10 present the coefficients of the multivariate analyses. The 16 multivariate analyses in this book involve 15 ordered probit models and one logit model (coresidence in Chapter 8). In each of the Chapters 3 to 11, the coefficients are represented by plus and minus signs. Only coefficients at a significance level of five per cent are considered. We set the following boundaries for one, two or three plus and minus signs for the positive and negative coefficients of the ordered probit models, respectively: 0.15/0.3 and –0.15/–0.3. For the logit model, the boundaries are 0.4/0.8 and –0.4/–0.8, respectively. In the case of (quasi-)metric variables, we used half of the range as a basis. The multivariate analyses are unweighted; the descriptions with the percentages are weighted.

General information about the study can also be found in the introduction to this book. Detailed information on the survey, the questionnaires as well as the basic results for all SwissGen questions are provided in the data volume "Relations with Parents: Questions and Results" (König et al. 2023).

Table A1: Cases

	Persons	Parents	Alive	Deceased
Education				
Low	917	1,408	601	807
Medium	4,768	8,328	4,886	3,442
High	4,776	8,689	5,869	2,820
Finances				
– –	208	339	219	120
–	502	855	577	278
o	2,869	5,027	3,191	1,836
+	3,647	6,559	4,312	2,247
+ +	3,059	5,486	3,042	2,444
Age				
18–29	1,650	3,141	3,107	34
30–59	5,533	10,071	7,737	2,334
60+	3,329	5,337	555	4,782
Gender				
Female	5,513	/	/	/
Male	4,729	/	/	/
Daughter-mother	/	5,074	3,445	1,629
Daughter-father	/	4,654	2,680	1,974
Son-mother	/	4,326	2,813	1,513
Son-father	/	4,025	2,203	1,822
Migration				
1st generation	2,253	3,599	2,486	1,113
2nd generation	1,522	2,848	2,050	798
No migration	6,307	11,682	6,634	5,048
Region				
German	7,932	13,967	8,566	5,401
French	2,132	3,727	2,347	1,380
Italian	559	933	564	369
All	10,623	18,627	11,477	7,150

Source: SwissGen.

Table A2: Variables

Dependent variables	
Types	Cohesion: Close & hardly any conflicts. Ambivalence: Close & conflicts. Conflict: Not close & conflicts. Distance: Not close & hardly any conflicts. – Time: Currently or during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.
Ambivalence, stress, quarrel, distance	1: Never. 2: Rarely. 3: Sometimes. 4: Often. 5: Always. – Time: Currently or during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.
Closeness	1: Not close at all. 2: Not very close. 3: Medium. 4: Close. 5: Very close. – Time: Currently or during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.
Contact	1: Never. 2: Less than once a month. 3: About once every two weeks/about once a month. 4: About once a week/several times a week. 5: Daily. – Time: Last year or during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.
Coresidence	1: Yes. 0: No. – Time: Current or at the time of the passing of the parent.
Proximity	1: Up to 5 kilometres. 2: 5 to under 25 kilometres. 3: 25 to under 100 kilometres. 4: 100 to under 500 kilometres. 5: 500 kilometres or more. – Time: Current or at the time of the passing of the parent.
Help/care	1: Never helped/provided care. 2: Rarely. 3: Monthly. 4: Weekly. 5: Daily. – Time: Last year or during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.
Current transfers	1: No gifts/payments received. 2: Up to 500 CHF. 3: Up to 1,000 CHF. 4: Up to 5,000 CHF. 5: 5,000 CHF or more. – Time: Last year or during the last year in the lives of now deceased parents.
Inheritances	1: No inheritance expected/received. 2: Up to 5,000 CHF. 3: Up to 50,000 CHF. 4: Up to 250,000 CHF. 5: 250,000 CHF or more. – Time: After the passing of the parent.
Independent variables	
Education	Highest level of formal education completed according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011. Low (reference): Up to lower secondary education (ISCED 0–2). Medium: Up to upper or post-secondary, non-tertiary education (ISCED 3–4). High: Tertiary education (ISCED 5–8).
Finances	From 0: “Very poorly” to 10: “Very well”. In Figures “– –”: 0–1. “–”: 2–3. “o”: 4–6. “+”: 7–8. “+ +”: 9–10.
Distance	1: With parent in the same household. 2: In the same building. 3: Less than 1 kilometre. 4: 1 to under 5 kilometres. 5: 5 to under 25 kilometres. 6: 25 to under 100 kilometres. 7: 100 to under 500 kilometres. 8: 500 kilometres or more.

Continuation of the table on the following page.

Continuation of Table A2.

Age	In years.
Employment	Employed (incl. self-employed; reference). In education/training (e.g., apprenticeship, university). Not employed: Unemployed (RAV; regional employment centre), not gainfully employed (e.g., homemaker), pensioner (AHV/IV; old-age and survivors' insurance/disability insurance).
Health of parent	From 0: "Very poor" to 10: "Very good".
Money from parent	1: Monetary gifts, material gifts or payments received from parent during the last year. 0: No monetary transfer.
Help to parent	1: Never helped the parent around the house, with shopping, paperwork or similar during the last year. 2: Rarely. 3: Monthly. 4: Weekly. 5: Daily.
Care to parent	1: Never provided care (e.g., personal care, help getting up and dressing) to parent during the last year. 2: Rarely. 3: Monthly. 4: Weekly. 5: Daily.
Gender	Daughter-mother (reference). Daughter-father. Son-mother. Son-father.
Partnership parents	Couple (reference): Married to one another or in unmarried partnership. Other partner: Parent in partnership with another person. Single: No partner.
Childhood: parental conflicts	1: Never any conflicts between parents before the respondent's 16th birthday. 2: Rarely. 3: Sometimes. 4: Often. 5: Always.
Childhood: conflicts	1: Never any conflicts with parent before the respondent's 16th birthday. 2: Rarely. 3: Sometimes. 4: Often. 5: Always.
Childhood: affection	1: Parent never showed affection before the respondent's 16th birthday. 2: Rarely. 3: Sometimes. 4: Often. 5: Always.
Partnership	1: Married, registered partnership, unmarried partnership. 0: No partnership.
Child(ren)	1: At least one biological child. 0: No biological children.
Siblings	Number of living biological siblings from 0 to 10 (the few cases with more than ten siblings are recoded to "10").
Migration	No migration (reference): Respondent and both parents were born in Switzerland. 1st generation: Respondent was born abroad. 2nd generation: At least one parent was born abroad.
Region	German (reference): German Switzerland. French: French Switzerland. Italian: Italian Switzerland.

Table A3: Ambivalence

	Mixed feelings		Changing feelings	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	−0.04	0.01	0.07	−0.00
High	−0.00	0.04	0.11	−0.05
Finances	0.02	0.04*	0.02	0.01
Distance	−0.01	−0.01	−0.03***	−0.03**
Needs				
Age	0.01***	0.00**	0.00	0.00*
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	0.10*	0.36	0.18***	0.66**
Not employed	0.01	0.23***	0.07	0.08*
Health of parent	−0.04***	−0.01*	−0.04***	−0.01**
Money from parent	0.04	0.03	0.06*	0.06
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−0.02	0.02	−0.05	0.04
Son-mother	−0.10**	−0.02	−0.04	0.05
Son-father	−0.12**	−0.01	−0.04	0.08
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	0.12**	0.01	0.10**	0.01
Single	0.04	−0.05	0.02	−0.05
Childhood: parental conflicts	0.09***	0.10***	0.08***	0.08***
Childhood: conflicts	0.55***	0.61***	0.48***	0.51***
Childhood: affection	−0.20***	−0.27***	−0.16***	−0.22***
Partnership	−0.07*	−0.02	−0.07*	0.05
Child(ren)	0.07*	0.07	0.06*	0.12**
Siblings	−0.02*	−0.01	−0.01	0.01
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	0.08*	−0.02	0.02	−0.08
2nd generation	−0.01	−0.04	−0.04	−0.06
Region (ref.: German)				
French	−0.02	−0.01	−0.02	−0.10*
Italian	0.05	−0.04	−0.11	0.00

Significance: * p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.

Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,614, 5,522, 9,667, 5,527).

Table A4: Stress

	Worries		Burdens	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	−0.10	−0.06	0.02	0.06
High	−0.14*	−0.11	0.16*	0.20**
Finances	−0.02***	0.02*	0.00	−0.01
Distance	−0.04***	−0.03***	−0.02*	−0.02*
Needs				
Age	0.00**	−0.00	0.00**	0.00
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	−0.05	0.16	0.17***	0.08
Not employed	0.04	−0.06	0.02	0.12**
Health of parent	−0.19***	−0.18***	−0.08***	−0.05***
Money from parent	0.07**	0.06	0.03	0.05
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	0.10**	−0.15***	−0.12***	−0.04
Son-mother	−0.36***	−0.46***	−0.10**	−0.12*
Son-father	−0.18***	−0.44***	−0.18***	−0.18***
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	−0.28***	−0.35***	0.19***	0.26***
Single	0.09**	−0.01	0.19***	0.18***
Childhood: parental conflicts	0.03*	−0.03	0.13***	0.13***
Childhood: conflicts	0.01	−0.01	0.17***	0.36***
Childhood: affection	0.25***	0.30***	−0.34***	−0.35***
Partnership	0.03	0.02	−0.10***	−0.08
Child(ren)	−0.09***	−0.06	−0.01	0.01
Siblings	−0.01	−0.01	−0.05***	−0.06***
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	0.47***	0.42***	0.04	0.07
2nd generation	0.18***	0.07	0.03	0.03
Region (ref.: German)				
French	0.37***	0.27***	0.17***	0.13**
Italian	0.05	0.25***	−0.14*	−0.32***

Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.
Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,783, 5,708, 9,747, 5,659).

Table A5: Quarrel

	Tension		Conflict	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.11
High	0.15*	0.08	0.11	0.11
Finances	−0.00	−0.02**	−0.01	−0.02**
Distance	−0.04***	−0.05***	−0.04***	−0.04***
Needs				
Age	−0.00***	0.01**	−0.01***	0.00
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	0.17***	−0.06	0.14***	0.07
Not employed	0.07	−0.01	0.08	0.01
Health of parent	−0.05***	−0.01	−0.04***	−0.01
Money from parent	−0.00	0.04	0.00	0.06
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−0.20***	−0.05	−0.18***	0.00
Son-mother	−0.12***	−0.05	−0.10**	0.04
Son-father	−0.19***	−0.01	−0.20***	0.06
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	0.06	0.20***	0.02	0.25***
Single	0.07*	0.05	0.03	0.04
Childhood: parental conflicts	0.14***	0.15***	0.14***	0.15***
Childhood: conflicts	0.36***	0.51***	0.41***	0.60***
Childhood: affection	−0.30***	−0.25***	−0.28***	−0.25***
Partnership	−0.12***	−0.01	−0.13***	−0.05
Child(ren)	−0.01	−0.04	0.00	−0.05
Siblings	−0.05***	−0.03***	−0.07***	−0.03***
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	0.12***	0.08	0.10**	0.10*
2nd generation	0.01	−0.05	−0.02	−0.02
Region (ref.: German)				
French	0.06*	0.09*	0.08**	0.09*
Italian	0.04	−0.22**	0.12*	−0.16*

Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,746, 5,644, 9,727, 5,632).

Table A6: Distance

	Indifference		Estrangement	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	−0.07	−0.17***	−0.10	0.05
High	−0.07	−0.24***	0.05	0.20**
Finances	−0.00	−0.01	0.01	−0.02*
Distance	0.01	0.03***	0.07***	0.04***
Needs				
Age	0.01***	−0.00	−0.01**	−0.00
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	0.15***	0.11	0.19***	0.21
Not employed	−0.02	0.10**	−0.01	0.13**
Health of parent	−0.05***	−0.01*	−0.07***	−0.03***
Money from parent	−0.30***	−0.17***	−0.11***	−0.12*
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	0.25***	0.14***	0.04	0.04
Son-mother	0.27***	0.24***	0.05	0.01
Son-father	0.31***	0.27***	−0.06	−0.02
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	0.33***	0.31***	0.39***	0.43***
Single	0.10***	0.05	0.10***	0.09*
Childhood: parental conflicts	0.07***	0.10***	0.11***	0.12***
Childhood: conflicts	0.05***	0.08***	0.14***	0.29***
Childhood: affection	−0.62***	−0.61***	−0.53***	−0.51***
Partnership	−0.04	−0.03	−0.10***	−0.08
Child(ren)	0.02	−0.07	0.04	0.05
Siblings	0.02**	0.01	−0.04***	−0.04***
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	−0.11***	−0.12**	0.06	0.12*
2nd generation	0.07*	−0.01	0.09**	0.00
Region (ref.: German)				
French	0.14***	0.13***	−0.09**	−0.04
Italian	−0.00	−0.18*	0.62***	0.42***

Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,742, 5,644, 9,747, 5,667).

Table A7: Attachment

	Closeness		Contact	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	0.06	−0.11	0.18*	0.15**
High	0.01	−0.10	0.14	0.16**
Finances	−0.01*	0.01	−0.01	−0.00
Distance	−0.06***	−0.06***	−0.26***	−0.36***
Needs				
Age	0.00*	−0.01***	−0.00	−0.00*
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	−0.20***	0.23	−0.01	−0.18
Not employed	−0.01	−0.06	0.14**	−0.01
Health of parent	0.05***	0.00	0.02***	−0.01*
Money from parent	0.22***	0.09*	0.23***	0.22***
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−0.31***	−0.32***	−0.50***	−0.46***
Son-mother	−0.51***	−0.47***	−0.54***	−0.73***
Son-father	−0.41***	−0.55***	−0.52***	−0.66***
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	−0.33***	−0.39***	−0.54***	−0.58***
Single	−0.05	−0.05	−0.01	−0.03
Childhood: parental conflicts	−0.10***	−0.08***	−0.07***	−0.09***
Childhood: conflicts	−0.11***	−0.21***	−0.03	0.00
Childhood: affection	0.61***	0.64***	0.35***	0.30***
Partnership	0.03	−0.02	−0.08*	0.01
Child(ren)	−0.07*	−0.05	0.01	−0.14***
Siblings	−0.00	0.01	−0.05***	−0.03***
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	0.25***	0.25***	0.47***	0.24***
2nd generation	0.07*	0.09	0.08*	0.11*
Region (ref.: German)				
French	0.22***	0.33***	0.03	0.11**
Italian	0.48***	0.63***	0.50***	0.38***

Significance: * p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.
Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,661, 5,657, 8,362, 5,233).

Table A8: Space

	Coresidence		Proximity	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	−0.26	−0.16	−0.14*	0.04
High	−0.89***	−0.33	0.08	0.21***
Finances	−0.01	−0.05	−0.01	−0.01
Needs				
Age	−0.19***	−0.03***	0.00***	0.01***
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	0.78***	1.49***	0.44***	−0.07
Not employed	0.73***	0.22	0.16***	−0.00
Health of parent	0.01	0.05*	−0.01	0.00
Money from parent	0.13	−0.21	−0.05	−0.12***
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−0.43***	−0.08	0.06	−0.01
Son-mother	0.15	0.37*	−0.04	−0.20***
Son-father	0.02	0.39*	−0.01	−0.15***
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	−1.52***	−1.81***	0.24***	0.36***
Single	−0.39**	−0.52***	0.03	−0.03
Childhood: parental conflicts	−0.09	−0.07	−0.02	0.03
Childhood: conflicts	−0.18***	−0.27***	−0.02	−0.02
Childhood: affection	0.15***	0.09	−0.04***	−0.02
Partnership	−1.05***	−0.61***	0.01	0.03
Child(ren)	−0.97***	−0.43***	−0.10***	−0.10**
Siblings	0.01	−0.06*	0.01	0.00
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	−0.03	−0.94***	1.77***	1.79***
2nd generation	0.41***	−0.17	0.23***	0.11*
Region (ref.: German)				
French	0.14	−0.32*	0.04	−0.07
Italian	0.18	0.24	−0.24***	−0.22***

Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.
Source: SwissGen. Logit models/ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,583, 5,618, 8,217, 5,101).

Table A9: Time

	Help		Care	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	0.23***	0.17**	−0.02	0.00
High	0.22***	0.23***	−0.08	0.16**
Finances	0.06***	0.00	0.01	−0.04
Distance	−0.27***	−0.22***	−0.11***	−0.15***
Needs				
Age	0.01***	0.02***	0.01***	0.01***
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	0.22***	−0.13	0.17**	0.12
Not employed	0.15***	−0.10**	0.05	−0.16***
Health of parent	−0.06***	−0.05***	−0.13***	−0.10***
Money from parent	0.24***	0.21***	0.04	0.11**
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−0.30***	−0.32***	−0.14**	−0.29***
Son-mother	−0.22***	−0.44***	−0.31***	−0.75***
Son-father	−0.32***	−0.51***	−0.28***	−0.65***
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	−0.31***	−0.27***	−0.14*	−0.12
Single	0.28***	0.13***	0.20***	0.03
Childhood: parental conflicts	−0.04**	−0.01	−0.04*	−0.03
Childhood: conflicts	−0.06***	0.03	−0.01	−0.01
Childhood: affection	0.13***	0.15***	0.11***	0.13***
Partnership	−0.16***	0.03	−0.18***	0.02
Child(ren)	−0.21***	−0.10**	−0.10*	−0.05
Siblings	−0.01	−0.01	0.02*	0.03***
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	0.21***	−0.04	0.34***	0.13*
2nd generation	0.11***	0.05	0.09*	0.11*
Region (ref.: German)				
French	−0.14***	0.00	0.22***	−0.02
Italian	0.06	−0.33***	0.23**	−0.15

Significance: * p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.

Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,657, 5,507, 9,655, 5,506).

Table A10: Money

	Current transfers		Inheritances	
	Parents alive	Parents deceased	Parents alive	Parents deceased
Opportunities				
Education (ref.: Low)				
Medium	0.27***	0.34***	0.14	0.20***
High	0.42***	0.50***	0.44***	0.46***
Finances	0.02***	0.03**	0.10***	0.10***
Distance	0.02*	0.00	−0.01	0.02
Needs				
Age	−0.01***	−0.01**	0.01***	0.00
Employment (ref.: Employed)				
In education/training	0.46***	0.26	0.19***	0.11
Not employed	0.06	−0.10*	−0.06	0.00
Health of parent	0.06***	0.05***	0.08***	0.03***
Help to parent	0.11***	0.11***	0.09***	0.07***
Care to parent	−0.02	−0.03	−0.01	0.01
Family				
Gender (ref.: Daughter-mother)				
Daughter-father	−0.07*	0.02	−0.03	−0.07
Son-mother	−0.16***	−0.18**	0.12**	−0.05
Son-father	−0.19***	−0.08	0.19***	−0.07
Partnership parents (ref.: Couple)				
Other partner	−0.10**	−0.18*	−0.21***	0.23***
Single	−0.14***	0.05	−0.13***	0.40***
Childhood: parental conflicts	0.04**	−0.03	−0.01	−0.01
Childhood: conflicts	0.02	0.04	0.05**	0.01
Childhood: affection	0.08***	0.09***	0.05***	0.03*
Partnership	−0.02	−0.02	−0.03	0.08*
Child(ren)	0.07*	−0.02	0.03	−0.04
Siblings	−0.08***	−0.02*	−0.12***	−0.06***
Contexts				
Migration (ref.: No migration)				
1st generation	−0.14***	−0.01	−0.15***	−0.48***
2nd generation	0.03	−0.03	−0.12**	−0.15**
Region (ref.: German)				
French	0.07*	0.21***	0.09*	0.00
Italian	−0.11	0.14	0.04	0.08

Significance: * p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.
Source: SwissGen. Ordered probit models, unweighted (n: 9,660, 5,617, 6,050, 5,541).

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Daughter, son, mother, father. What is the relationship between adults and their parents? What role do tensions and conflicts play? How strong are cohesion and support? This book is dedicated to the relationships between adults and their parents in all their essential facets. The findings are based on the nationwide SwissGen study. It examines current relationships with living parents and past ties to mothers and fathers who have passed away.

The first part of the book is about ambivalence, stress, quarrel and distance. These include mixed and changing feelings, worries and burdens, tension and conflict, indifference and estrangement. The second part deals with attachment, space, time and money. This comprises emotional closeness and contact, coresidence and proximity, help and care, current transfers and inheritances.

The study was conducted under the direction of Marc Szydlik at the Department of Sociology at the University of Zurich. The contributions are from Ronny König, Bettina Isengard, Klaus Haberkern, Christoph Zangger, Tamara Bosshardt and Marc Szydlik.

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