



RETIREMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFERS

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The literature examining retirement has tended to focus primarily on retirees and their spouses. Since the decision to retire is deeply rooted in extended family dynamics—especially the exchange of economic and instrumental support across generations—the standard individual- and couple-based approaches may be limited. This study aims to assess the dynamic relationship between retirement and two broad dimensions of social and family lives: *social networks* and *intergenerational transfers*.

Retirement Effects on Social Networks and Intergenerational Transfers

This project aims to estimate the impact of retirement on changes in social and family relationships and their consequences for health in later life. The analytic strategy focuses on dealing with the endogeneity of retirement—the decision of retirement is not random and largely depends on individual and family characteristics that are not fully observable to researchers—by leveraging the exogenous variation of pension eligibility. For this purpose, this study requires comprehensive information about older adults' social and family lives, health, and working history, from multiple countries and cohorts where pension eligibility ages vary by policy regime.

Data for the proposed analyses will come from three nationally representative longitudinal studies. The National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP) and the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) are representative of the US older population. The Survey of Health and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) provides additional data for cross-national comparisons with 28 European countries. The NSHAP and SHARE surveys adopted the same module for social networks, based on which we assess the impact of retirement on various dimensions of family and non-family networks. Additionally, using the harmonized survey items for intergenerational exchange of economic resources and social support in the HRS and SHARE, we explore whether and how the direction and amount of intergenerational transfers change after retirement.

Male Retirees with Higher Education Are More Likely to Increase Networks with Kin Members

Compared to the baseline network size of male non-retirees, the increase for male retirees corresponds to an 11% increase in overall networks, a 13% increase in kin networks, and a 60% increase in non-resident kin networks. These patterns had no correspondence with the change in household structure, implying an independent mechanism for social network changes from household rearrangement. The increase in kin networks was more pronounced for those with post-secondary or higher education, suggesting the importance of socioeconomic resources in network reorganization for male older adults.



Male Retirees Increase Economic Transfers with Kin Members, Whereas Female Retirees Are Engaged in Care Work for Grandchildren

In the US, male retirees were more likely to exchange economic resources with children and kin members after retirement than females. As for the non-economic transfer, the obligation of grandchild care was more focused on females than male retirees both in the US and European countries. One common trend for both genders in both the US and Europe was the gradual re-arrangement of household composition by moving closer to children after retirement.

Implications

- Male older adults are more vulnerable to the shortage of socioeconomic resources in organizing social networks after retirement than females.
- Female older adults maintain higher levels of solidarity with kinship members regardless of their retirement status and socioeconomic resources, possibly due to their social roles focusing on non-economic caregiving.
- These findings suggest two different directions of policy for retirees: first, policy could support care work in the family for reducing the burden of female older adults; second, policy could focus on low-class male retirees for addressing their higher risk of social disconnection.

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