



How mothers allocate support among adult children

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Intergenerational solidarity

- The degree to which adult children and parents provide each other with support in times of need
- Dimensions
 - Social-emotional
 - Practical
 - Financial
- Directions
 - Upward
 - Downward

Theoretical explanations

- 1. Exchange theory
- 2. Theory about altruism
- 3. Theory about norms

Exchange theory

- Rational and egoistic
 - Support giving = cost
 - Support receiving = benefit
- Forms of exchange
 - Direct exchange
 - Inter-temporal exchange (investment)
- Critique of exchange

Theory about altruism

- Rational and altruistic
 - Support giving = benefit for other = benefit for ego
 - Costs still matter
- Origin of altruism
 - Biological
 - Empathy
 - Emotional side effects of helping

Theory about norms

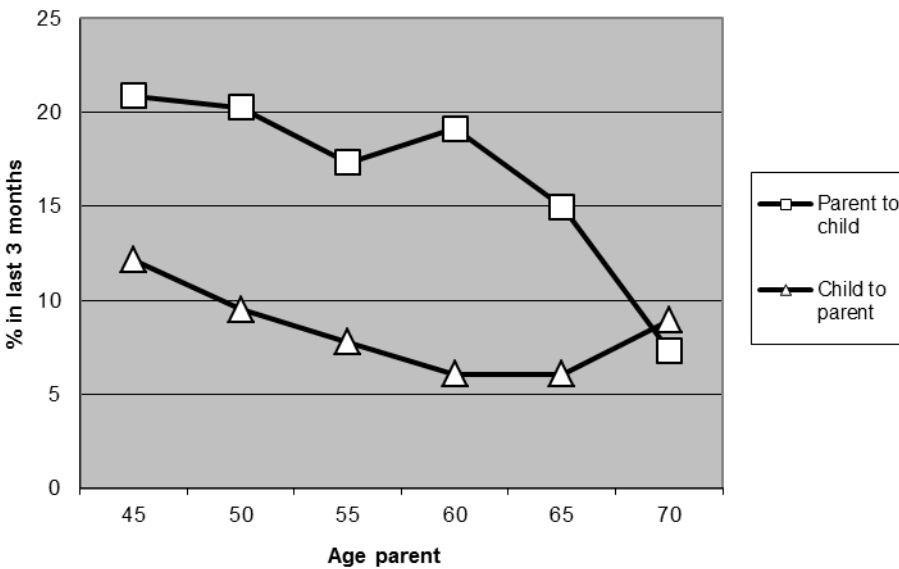
- Socially expected behavior toward family
 - Norm of filial obligations
 - Norm of reciprocity
- Origin of norms
 - Socialization by parents
 - Cultural climate (familialism versus individualism)
 - Church

Evidence: reciprocity of support

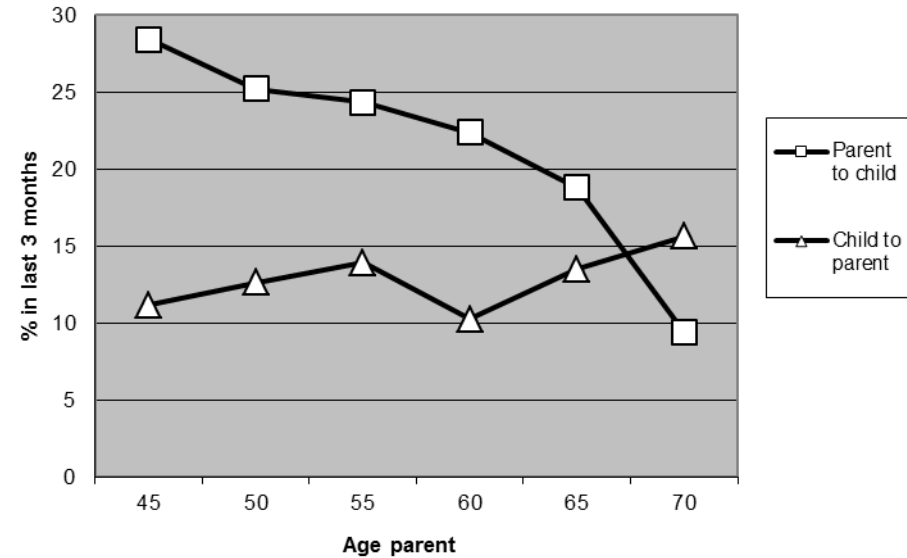
- Cross-sectional evidence (Klein Ikkink et al. 1999)
 - The more support children receive from parents, the more support they give to parents
- Longitudinal evidence (Silverstein et al. 2002)
 - The more support children received from parents when growing up, the more support they later give to parents (weak effects)
- Life course research (Kohli 1999, Morgan et al. 1991)
 - No 'reversal' of the direction of exchange

Netherlands Kinship Panel Study

Household help



Practical support



Evidence: financial transfers

- Hochguertel & Ohlsson (2009), Arrondel & Masson (2001), McGarry & Schoeni (1995), Cox & Rank (1992)
- Effects of economic situation of child on gifts/loans from parents
- Within family designs
- Unequal division of transfers

Evidence: inheritances

- Bernheim et al. (1985), Perozek (1998), Wilhelm (1996), Behrman & Rosenzweig (2004)
- Little evidence for strategic bequest motive
- Equal division of inheritances

Evidence: effects of norms

- Gans & Silverstein (2006)
 - Interaction effect functional impairment parent x norm child
 - On support provided by adult child
- Kalmijn & Saraceno (2008).
 - Interaction effect parental need x normative context
 - On support provided by adult child

The present study

- Within family design
 - Comparing (adult) children within families

Who gets more?



Relevance

- Substantive
 - Emotional consequences of differential treatment (Jill Suitor)
 - Consequences for social stratification & intergenerational mobility
- Methodological
 - Better way to test theories about IG support

Hypotheses

- Altruistic perspective
 - The child who has more ‘need’ of support receives support from the mother than the child who has less ‘need’
- Exchange perspective
 - The child who has stronger filial norms gets more support from the mother than the child who has weaker norms
- Normative perspective
 - Parental norm of ‘equal treatment’
 - When a parent gives to one child, she is more likely to give to another child as well

Data

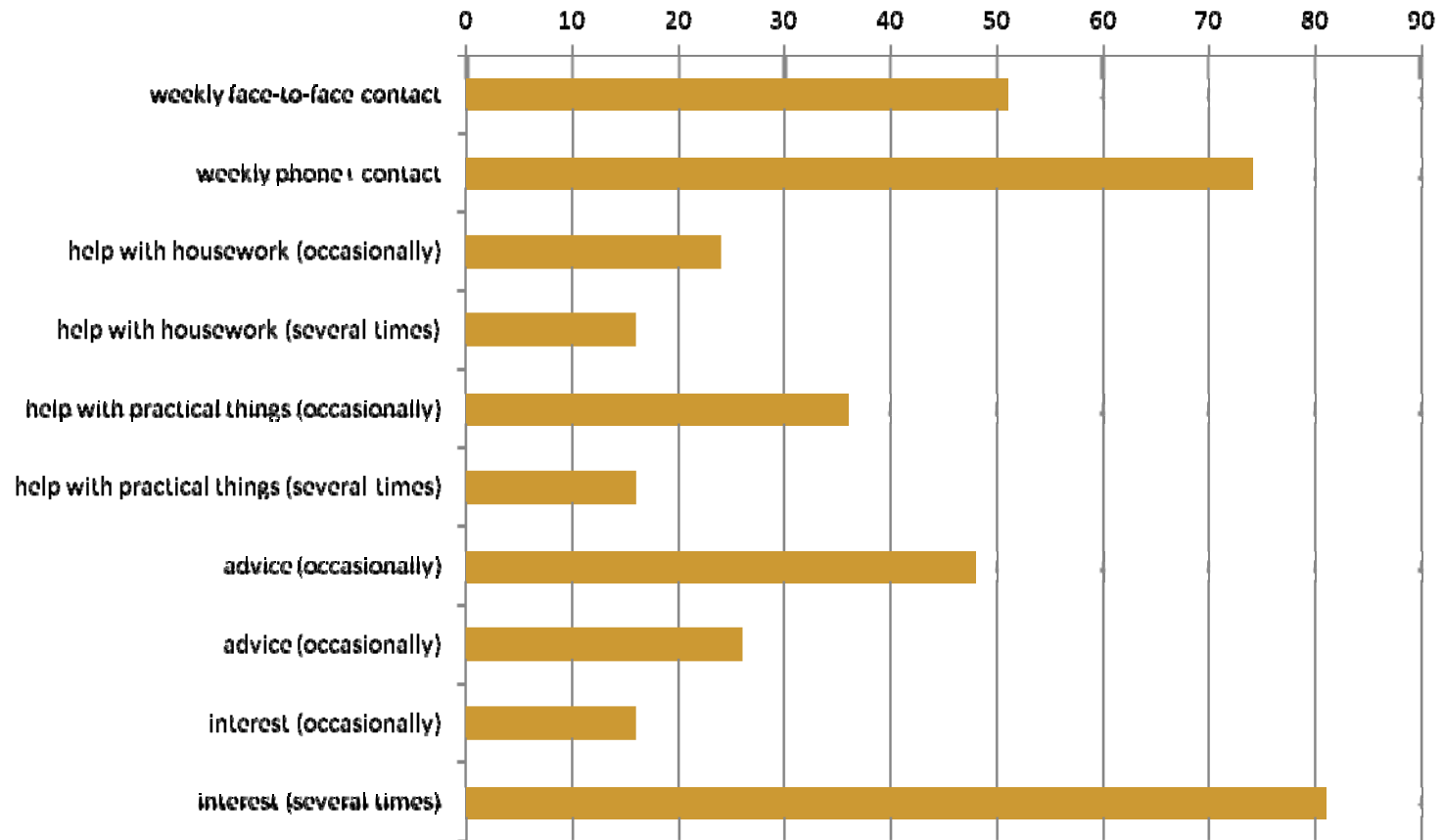
- Netherlands Kinship Panel Study
- Anchors (N = 8,161)
- Alters
 - Two (randomly chosen) biological children 15+ 51%
 - One randomly chosen parent 41%
 - One randomly chosen sibling 38%
 - The partner 72%

Subsample

- N = 1,234 children
- N = 617 child pairs
- Children 15+, independent, same mother

- Mean age mother 63
- Mean age children 37

Indicators of support (child reports)

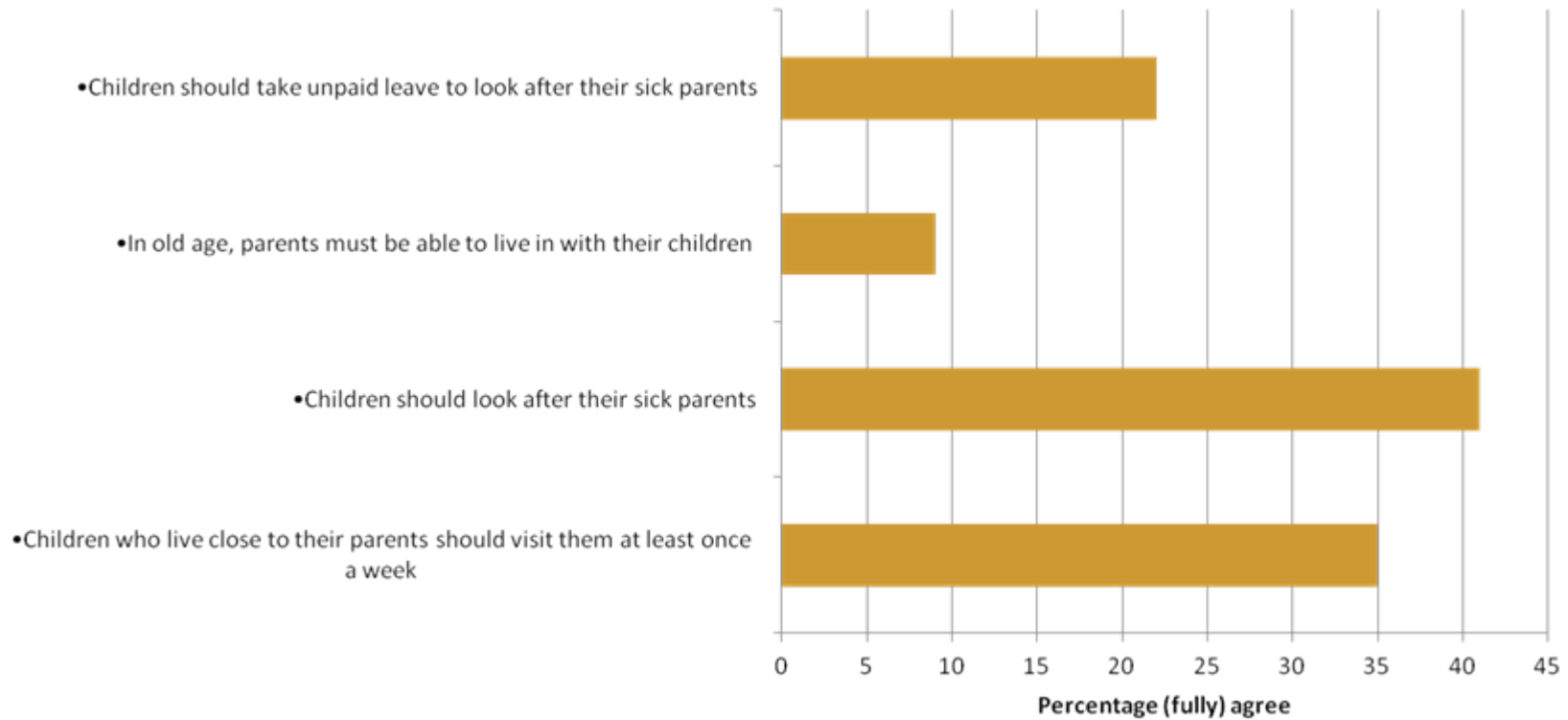


Cronbach's alpha = .76

Indicators of child need

- Socioeconomic
 - Educational level of child (-)
 - Job (-)
 - Occupational status (-)
- Demographic
 - Child has children at home (+)
 - Child has partner (-)
 - Age of child (-)
- Health
 - Handicap (+)
 - Depressive mood (+)

Indicator of child norms



Cronbach's alpha = .70

Random effects regression

- Empty model
- Variance between families $(\text{var } u) = .365$
- Variance within families $(\text{var } e) = .638$
- Rho $\text{var } u / [\text{var } u + \text{var } e] = .363$

Fixed effects regression

Table 2. Fixed effects regression of support from mothers to adult children (N = 1234)

	Overall support to child b	Practical support to child b	Socio-emotional support to child b
Age of child	-0.020*	-0.024*	-0.015
Daughter	0.517*	0.406*	0.493*
Child lives alone	0.295*	0.406*	0.173~
Child ever divorced	0.103	0.117	0.077
Child has children < 12	0.230*	0.325*	0.123~
Child has children 12-18	-0.053	0.018	-0.062

(continued)

Table 2. Fixed effects regression of support from mothers to adult children (N = 1234)

	Overall support to child b	Practical support to child b	Socio-emotional support to child b
Child works for pay	0.063	0.013	0.076
Child in school	0.180	0.091	0.196
Child's schooling	-0.050*	-0.048*	-0.041*
Child's ISEI	-0.002	0.001	-0.004

(continued)

Table 2. Fixed effects regression of support from mothers to adult children (N = 1234)

	Overall support to child b	Practical support to child b	Socio-emotional support to child b
Child handicapped	0.201*	0.090	0.233*
Child's depressive symptoms	-0.001	0.046	-0.029

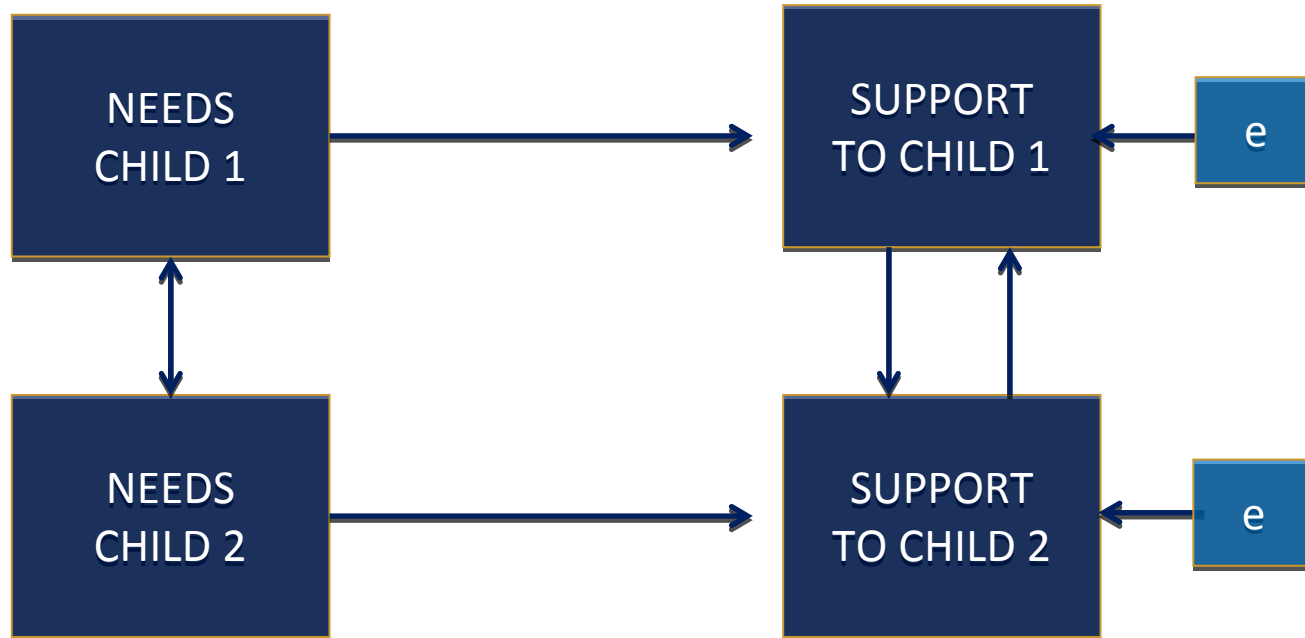
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Table 2. Fixed effects regression of support from mothers to adult children (N = 1234)

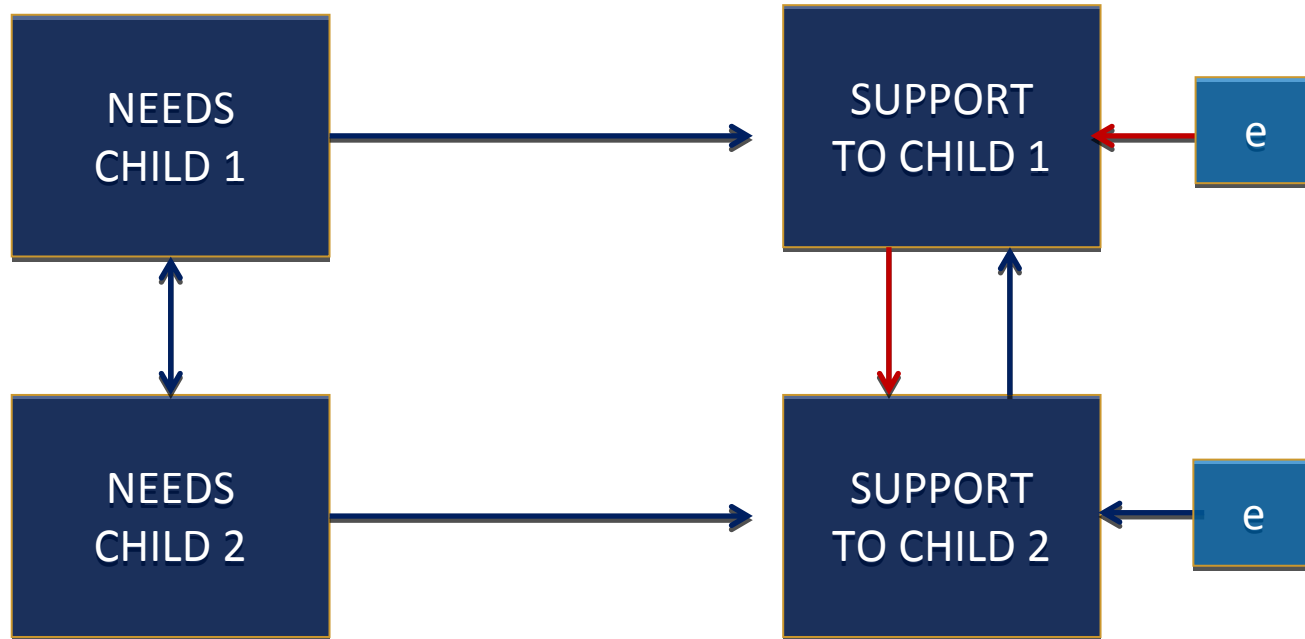
	Overall support to child b	Practical support to child b	Socio-emotional support to child b
Child's filial norms	0.156*	0.092*	0.166*
Constant	0.914*	0.881*	0.784~
R^2	0.127	0.165	0.182

~ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

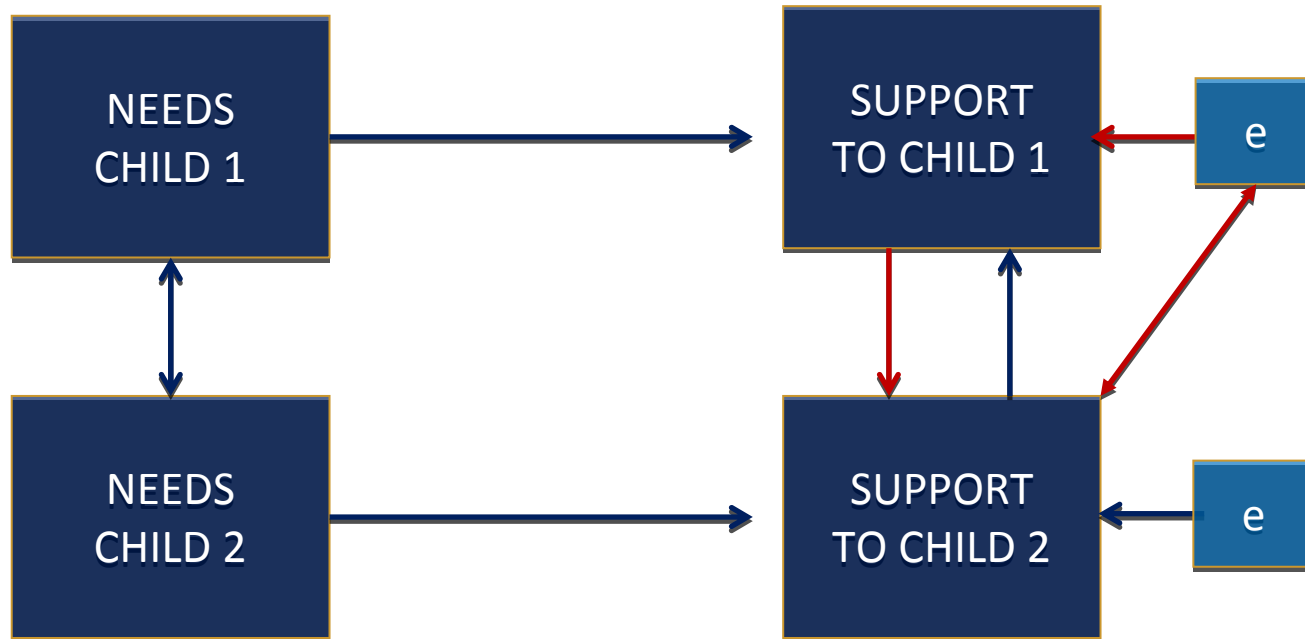
Reciprocal effects



Reciprocal effects



Reciprocal effects



Two-stage least squares

Table 3. Two-stage least squares regression of mother's support to child 1 (N = 617)^a

	Overall support to child 1 B	Practical support to child 1 b	Socio-emotional support to child 1 b
Number of siblings	-0.132*	-0.072*	-0.137**
Mother's age	-0.040*	-0.044*	-0.032**
Mother's education	-0.011	-0.019~	-0.005
Mother with partner	-0.089	-0.028	-0.119~
Mother's familialism	0.129*	0.085*	0.137*

□


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Table 3. Two-stage least squares regression of mother's support to child 1 (N = 617)^a

	Overall support to child 1 B	Practical support to child 1 b	Socio-emotional support to child 1 b
Child 1 is daughter	0.450*	0.300*	0.458*
Child 1 is alone	0.124~	0.267*	0.010
Child 1 ever divorced	-0.009	0.008	-0.020
Child 1 has children < 12	0.129*	0.206*	0.050
Child 1 has children 12-17	-0.137~	-0.183*	-0.091
Child 1 paid work	-0.029	0.001	-0.033
Child 1 enrolled in school	0.082	0.168	0.026
Child 1 years of schooling	-0.021~	-0.011	-0.021~
Child 1 occupational status	-0.001	-0.000	-0.002
Child 1 handicapped	0.025	0.046	0.012
Child 1 depressive symptoms	-0.019	0.004	-0.033
Child 1 filial norms	0.243*	0.156*	0.251*

(continued)

Table 3. Two-stage least squares regression of mother's support to child 1 (N = 617)^a

	Overall support to child 1 B	Practical support to child 1 b	Socio-emotional support to child 1 b
Support to child 2 ^b	-0.057		
Practical support to child 2 ^b		-0.163~	
Socio-emotional support to child 2 ^b			-0.019
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<i>R</i> ²	0.287	0.136	0.276

~ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

^aModel for child 2 is identical.

^bEndogenous variable (see text).

Conclusion

- Positive evidence for the role of need (altruism)
- Positive evidence for inter-temporal exchange
- No evidence for equal treatment norm

- Discussion points
 - Assumptions behind test for exchange
 - Equal treatment dynamically?
 - Combination of altruism and exchange?
 - Differences between 'liking' and 'helping'