

Tekst 4

Parents and children

Family values

- 1 WHY was King Lear treated so cruelly by his daughters? Until recently, most of the answers have come from scholars with scant knowledge of economic theory. Fortunately, John Ermisch, an Essex economist, is working to remedy this deficiency. His research proves what many parents have long suspected – that increased wealth goes along with filial ingratitude.
- 2 Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, Mr Ermisch shows that affluent parents are slightly more likely to supply offspring with money and help with child-rearing than poor parents. But success seems to have precisely the opposite effect on children. The mere possession of a university degree makes children 20% less likely to phone their mothers regularly, and more than 50% less likely to pay them a visit.
- 3 This is puzzling because self-interested children might be expected to behave in precisely the opposite way. Most wealthy people are descended from wealthy parents, which means they have a lot of patrimony to lose by cutting back on the fawning. “Nothing will come of nothing,” as a pre-retirement and still sane King Lear put it when his youngest daughter dared to withhold her affections.
- 4 So why are rich kids such brats? There are two likely explanations. The first is that, as their income rises, the marginal cost of providing services goes up. It simply isn’t worth their while to help with the shopping, particularly



You never call

- since affluence tends to increase distances between parents and children. And, since personal contact correlates with telephone contact, they are less likely to phone, too. Out of sight, out of mind.
- 5 The other answer comes from an obscure branch of economics known as strategic bequest theory. This predicts that children will provide only enough services to ensure they get a reasonable share of their parents’ estate. But that point is reached sooner by those who have only one sibling rival, or none at all. Wealthier families, which tend to be smaller, simply fail to ensure the optimum amount of competition.
 - 6 Given these iron laws, what are parents supposed to do? Good results might be achieved by having more children, or expressing a sudden interest in the local cats’ home. But Mr Ermisch is not optimistic. “The only thing they can do is follow their children around,” he says. And don’t make King Lear’s mistake by handing over the cash first.

The Economist

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- 1p 4 Which of the following is made clear in paragraphs 1-2?
- A Children who do well in life tend to be less affectionate and attentive towards their parents.
 - B Children who prosper do not always realise that they owe this to their parents' efforts.
 - C Rich parents tend to be more emotionally involved with their children than poor parents.
 - D The more parents do for their children, the less it will be appreciated.

“self-interested children might be expected to behave in precisely the opposite way” (alinea 3).

- 1p 5 Waarom?

“So why are rich kids such brats?” (paragraph 4)

- 1p 6 Which of the following answers does the writer give to this question in paragraphs 4 and 5?
- 1 They regard their time as too valuable to spend on their parents.
 - 2 They grow up in circumstances that discourage warmth between parents and children.
 - 3 They calculate the minimum effort needed to secure their inheritance.
 - 4 They have become self-centred as a result of growing up in small families.
- A 1 and 2.
 - B 1 and 3.
 - C 2 and 4.
 - D 3 and 4.

“Good results ... local cats' home.” (alinea 6)

- 1p 7 Welk resultaat wordt bedoeld?

- 1p 8 Which of the following statements are in accordance with paragraph 6?
- Parents are advised to
- 1 buy a pet to lavish their love on.
 - 2 create the impression they intend to leave their money to charity.
 - 3 take action themselves if they want to remain in touch with their children.
 - 4 spend money on themselves rather than save it for their children.
- A Only 1 and 2.
 - B Only 2 and 3.
 - C Only 3 and 4.
 - D 1, 2 and 3.
 - E 2, 3 and 4.
 - F All four.