Young Parents and Coresidence with Their Own Parents

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Abstract

Multigenerational household research often overlooks the middle generation – those who live with their own parents and their own children. Similarly, work on boomerang kids rarely considers young parents, who might particularly need help from their parents. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97), I examine the characteristics of three types of young parents aged 24 (N = 1,984): living with parents consistently between birth and age 24; living with parents at birth but subsequently moved out; and living independently at birth. Results show that more than half of young parents live with their own parents at their first birth or subsequently. Among those who were either living independently at birth or moved out subsequently, event history models reveal that union instability is strongly associated with the odds of moving back home, as is not living with their firstborn child. Overall, young parents have complicated and fluid living arrangements.

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In American society, it is widely accepted that the young adults years, sometimes referred to as "emerging adulthood" and including those up to age 24, are a time of immense change and multiple transitions (Arnett, 2000; Settersten and Ray, 2010). As young adults try to figure out their long-term plans and goals, they move in and out of households, relationships, schooling, and jobs. Coresidence with parents – either through living with parents continuously or "boomeranging" back home – is common as young adults try to make the transition to adulthood and independence (Fry, 2013). While most of the experiences and transitions are reversible – one can break up with a partner, go back to school, or change jobs – becoming a parent is not. In 2006-2010, about 30% of women and 15% of men aged 20-24 reported having at least one biological child (Martinez, Daniels, and Chandra, 2012).

Thus, the instability that typically accompanies young adulthood today presents several challenges to young parents. One of these challenges is logistical: where, and with whom, do young parents live? Unstable relationships and low incomes almost certainly reduce the likelihood that young parents maintain their own household, live with their child's other parent, or even live with their child. As multigenerational households have become increasingly common, with the modal category consisting of a householder (grandparent), an adult child, and a grandchild (Lofquist, 2012), the growing body of research on the topic has largely been descriptive or focused on the eldest (grandparent) generation (e.g., Keene and Batson, 2010; Stykes, Manning, and Brown, 2014). The living arrangements of young parents remains an unstudied topic, yet many young adults, especially young parents, rely upon their parents as a safety net (Swartz, 2009). In this paper, I paint a descriptive portrait of the living arrangements of young parents using several waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) and examine the likelihood of returning to the parental home among young parents.

This work speaks to three distinct research areas – multigenerational living, boomerang kids, and early fertility – that are actually highly related but rarely examined in a single project.

Background

From a life course perspective, leaving the parental home is an important step in the transition to adulthood, and the age at home-leaving has been gradually lengthening over the past century (Furstenberg, 2010). In 2012, more than half (56%) of young adults aged 18-24 lived in a parental home (Fry, 2013). Many young adults who live in the parental home have not yet taken on adult roles – for instance, they are often still enrolled in school and/or are unpartnered. Along with other social changes, long-term economic shifts have impeded young adults' ability to achieve independence because moving out – and staying out – of the parental home is partially dependent on the labor market (Card & Lemieux, 2000; Bell, Gurtless, Gornick, & Smeeding, 2007). For young adults in the workforce, jobs typically tend to be low-paying for those without a college degree (Pew Research Center, 2014), making it difficult for young adults to establish their own household. Even for college graduates, high levels of student debt and the tough labor market (which often results in under-employment) means that many return to the parental home at some point after finishing college. Returning to the parental home is so common, in fact, that there is now a term for these young adults: "boomerang kids" (Parker, 2012).

Despite a growing awareness of boomerang adult children, most existing research is primarily descriptive (e.g., Parker, 2012; Fry, 2013), with some methodological flaws. Copp and colleagues (2013), for example, note that much of the research on boomerang kids fails to distinguish between young adults who never left home versus those who left and subsequently returned home. Further, nearly all of the research on returning to the parental household approaches the issue from the angle of employment and housing (e.g., Kaplan, 2009) or focuses on structural impediments to the transition to independence (e.g., Newman, 2013). Overall,

boomerang kids are often assumed to be single and childless, returning home (or never leaving) because they failed to successfully make the transition to adulthood.

There is certainly some truth to this picture, as those who have taken on more adult roles such as securing full-time employment or marrying are far less likely to live with their parents (Furstenberg, 2010; Fry, 2013). But one adult status, in particular, does not fit neatly into this picture of the transition to adulthood: parenthood. On the one hand, having children is an adult role, traditionally viewed as the last step in the transition to adulthood, following leaving the parental home, the completion of schooling, establishing a career, and finding a partner (Settersten and Ray, 2010). As such, parents are generally assumed to be financially and residentially independent. On the other hand, the majority of births to young adults are unintended and nonmarital (Mosher, Abma, and Jones, 2012), making births during this life course stage an off-time event occurring prior to the expected normative sequence. Thus, many young parents have not achieved all (or any) of the social prerequisites of parenthood, including financial security, stable unions, and residential independence.

Little is known about the living arrangements of young parents. The research on boomerang kids has largely ignored them, painting "boomerangers" in broad strokes. Multigenerational family research has also ignored young parents, instead framing the issue as grandparent coresidence. Similarly, work on early fertility has ignored young parents by disproportionately focusing on teen parents or focusing on family structure, to the neglect of household structure. Young women are more likely to be parents than young men, but both young mothers and fathers tend to socioeconomically disadvantaged, with low levels of levels of education, and are disproportionately comprised of blacks and Hispanics (Carlson, 2012; Edin & Tach, 2012). With the exception of gender – men are more likely to live with their parents than women (Fry, 2012; Payne, 2012; Vespa, Lewis, and Kreider, 2012) – these same characteristics

are also associated with multigenerational living. For instance, multigenerational living is lower among non-Hispanic whites than minorities, and poverty rates are higher in multigenerational households (Vespa, Lewis, and Kreider, 2013). Together, this paints a picture of negative selection into multigenerational family living (Chase-Landale et al., 1994). Accordingly, I hypothesize the least advantaged young parents (as proxied by age, family background, education, race-ethnicity, and receipt of social welfare programs) are more likely to live with their parents and, among those who move out, to return home.

In addition to socioeconomic and demographic factors, young parents have unique challenges compared both to non-parents and to older parents, and there is a broad literature linking early fertility to adult and child well-being and an elevated risk of family complexity (Brown, 2010; Guzzo, 2014). By default, young parents have young children, and the depth and intensity of the needs of young children are well-known. As such, young parents may need more social, economic, and instrumental support in raising their children than their older counterparts. The aid provided by their own family members may be an important source of relief and support helping to alleviate the demands childcare (Pebley and Rudkin, 1999). This support may range from financial aid to helping with child-related tasks, such as feeding or bathing, to providing childcare directly; the high costs and limited hours of paid childcare settings (Child Care Aware of America, 2013), combined with the low wages and unstable job schedules of many young adults, makes relative care the only option for many young parents. This might be particularly true for those with more children and those with coresident children, especially if grandparents feel more obligated to take in their adult child and grandchild(ren) than their adult child alone (Eggebeen and Hogan, 1990). Conversely, young parents with nonresident children may not need additional support and can perhaps better afford to be residentially independent.

Moreover, the context of young fertility makes it likely that living in the parental home is common. More than three-fourths of births to those aged 15-19 are unintended, as are half of births to those aged 20-24 (Mosher, Jones, and Abma, 2012); many of these teens and young adults, in fact, are living with their parents when they conceived and bore their child, particularly among the never-married (Jayakody and Snyder, 1998). Although these young parents usually move out at some point, they may be at an elevated risk of returning home if they have difficulty maintaining an independent household in which they no longer have help with childcare or they exit the parental household when forming new romantic relationships, which are often unstable (discussed below). Thus, I hypothesize child coresidence and the number of children is positively associated with returning back home, and young parents who were living with their own parents at the time of birth would be more likely to return home than those who were not living at home.

Relationship status also affects the likelihood that young parents will live with their own parents. In general, married and cohabiting young adults are less likely to be living with their parents than those who are unpartnered (Fry, 2013) because couples tend to need and receive less financial support than single individuals (Hogan et al. 1993). Similarly, cohabiting and married young parents have two potential caretakers and thus have less need for coresidential childcare help; the grandparent generation may also be unable or unwilling to take in two adults (one of which is unrelated) and their children for logistical or financial reasons. However, relationships among young parents tend to be highly unstable, particularly cohabitations (Edin and Tach, 2012). Relationship dissolution, in turn, is often accompanied by residential instability, and moving back into the parental home is a common behavior following a break-up (DaVanzo and Goldscheider, 1990; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1992). In sum, I hypothesize that union instability and singlehood increases the likelihood of moving back home.

In this paper, I describe the characteristics across types of living arrangements for young adults who reported having at least one child by age 24. I then turn to event history analysis to examine the factors influencing the likelihood of living with parents again among young parents who had at least one spell of non-parental coresidence between their first birth and age 24. In this analysis, I explore how socioeconomic and demographic factors, child-related factors, and union formation and stability are associated with the odds of returning the parental home.

Data and methods

The analyses use the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97). The NLSY97 is a representative cohort study of individuals born 1980-84 who were first interviewed in 1997, with yearly interviews thereafter. The original sample included 8,984 respondents, including oversamples of black and Hispanic youth. I combine several waves of the data to identify respondents at age 24, which occurred sometime between 2003 and 2008; 7,124 respondents reached their age 24 survey. Because the dependent variable is only measured at the time of survey as part of the household roster (rather than retrospective coresidence histories), the analyses required the respondents to be in every survey between the original 1997 survey and the survey year they reported being 24 (N = 5,584). To focus on parents, the analytical sample is further restricted to respondents with at least one child by age 24 and whose firstborn child was still alive and not adopted/in foster care at the survey year they turned 24, resulting in an analytical sample of 1,984 young parents.

The dependent variable is whether the respondent lives with his or her parent(s). This information is pulled from the household roster gathered at the time of survey, and parental coresidence is defined as living with one or more biological parent(s), including single parent and stepparent families. Because the dependent variable is measured only at the time of survey, all independent variables are also taken at the time of survey. This introduces a degree of loss of

precision in measurement for some covariates. For instance, a key independent variable is residential status at the survey in which the first birth was reported; this is not necessarily residence status at first birth since respondents' living arrangements at birth could be different than those at the time of survey, which may have been several months after birth. Residential status at survey year of first birth is a dichotomous indicator of coresidence with parents. Among those who were living with their parents at first birth, I further subdivide them by whether they lived with their parents continuously from first birth to the survey year in which they turned 24.

Analyses also include a range of time-invariant socioeconomic and demographic characteristics: gender, race-ethnicity (white, black, foreign-born Hispanic, native-born Hispanic, and other), family structure at age 12 (both biological parents, stepfamily, single parent, other), a dichotomous indicator of whether there are grandparents or other relatives in the household at the 1997 interview (to proxy experience living in multigenerational household), mother's education, and whether the mother had a first birth prior to age 18. Time-varying measures socioeconomic and demographic variables include age, respondent's education level and school enrollment status, and number of months the respondent received aid from welfare programs in the past year. Child-related measures include a time-invariant indicator of whether the respondent was living with his/her parents at first survey following the first birth and two time-varying measures: whether the first child lives with the respondent and the number of children (measured categorically as one, two, or three or more children). Finally, the analyses include time-varying measures indicating changes in union status from survey to survey: unpartnered during prior and current year; cohabiting/married during prior and current year; unpartnered during prior year and cohabiting/married during current year; cohabiting during prior year and unpartnered during current year; and married during prior year and unpartnered during current year. Preliminary analyses showed that no differences between those cohabiting at both surveys, those married at

both surveys, and those who moved from cohabitation to marriage, nor were there differences between those who moved from no partnership to cohabitation and those who moved from no partnership to marriage. It should be noted that these indicators do not explicitly measure whether unions are with the same partner from year to year.

Missing data was present for some family background and socioeconomic measures (nativity, mother's education and age at first birth, household structure at age 12, months of welfare receipt, and enrollment status). However, it was fairly low (less than 8% for any variable) and was imputed using the multiple imputation commands in Stata 13.1.

Approach

The analysis begins by describing the socioeconomic, demographic, and family-related characteristics across three categories: those not living with their parents at the survey in which they reported their first birth, those living with their parents but who subsequently left the parental home before the survey in which they reported being age 24, and those who lived with continuously with their parents from the survey year of first birth to age 24. The descriptive analyses are weighted using the custom weights provided by the NLSY97, which corrects for the complex survey design and for the analytical requirement that respondents participate in all years until age 24. Time-varying covariates are reported for the year of the respondent's first birth. The next stage of the analysis involves event history models predicting living with their own parents again, excluding those who reported living with their parents at each survey between first birth and age 24. The data files were converted to person-years, and individuals enter the analysis the year of their first birth (if they were not living with their parents at the survey year) or the first survey year in which they reported that they did not live with their parent (if they were living with their parents at the survey year following first birth). Respondents are censored the survey year they first report living with their parents again or at the survey in which they

report being age 24. Models include a categorical indicator of years of observation (0-2 years, 3 years, 4 years, or 5 or more years) because preliminary analyses indicated the odds of returning home were nonlinearly associated with exposure.

Results

Table 1 shows the weighted descriptives for the analytical sample of young parents who were continuously interviewed between 1997 and the survey year in which they turned 24 (representing 31% of those interviewed every year, not shown). Of the roughly 2,000 young parents in the analytical sample, 61% were not living at home at the time of the survey in which they reported their first birth. Among those who were living at home at first birth, over 70% (27.8%/ 27.8+11.6) moved out by the time they reached age 24, averaging about two years (not shown) between birth and the survey they first reported living outside of the parental home.

- Table 1 here -

Just over 60% of young parents were women, with variation across living arrangements; father were over-represented among those who lived at home at birth through age 24. Non-Hispanic whites comprised 57% of the analytical sample, and significantly more non-Hispanic whites lived outside of the parental home at birth. Non-Hispanic blacks made up less than a quarter of young parents but nearly 40% of those who lived at home at birth through age 24. Family structure at age 12 varied moderately across groups, but there were no statistically significant differences in the proportion who reported living in a multigenerational family at the first survey. Mother's education varied across living arrangements at birth, with a greater proportion of young parents whose mother had higher levels of education living outside of the parental home at birth. The respondents who lived at home at first birth but subsequently moved out were, on average, about 2 years younger than their peers who either lived independently or lived at home and never moved out. Those who lived outside of the parental home at the survey

in which they first reported having a child tended to be better educated than those living at home, with the greatest proportion of young parents with no high school education (48%) living at home at birth and subsequently moving out. About 30% of those who were living at home but subsequently moved out were enrolled at school at the time of birth; this group, on average, also received aid from social welfare programs for more months than either those who were not living at home and those who were living at home continuously between birth and age 24.

The majority of those living independently at birth were in a coresidential union (81%), whereas the majority of those living with their parents at birth were neither cohabiting nor married (76%-78%). Similarly, the majority of young parents not living with their parents at the survey following their first birth were living with their child (93%), but this proportion declined considerably across categories. Just over three-fourths of young parents who were living with their own parents and later moved out were living with their child at the time of first birth, and only two-thirds of young parents who lived with their parents continuously were living with their child at the time of the survey following the first birth. Overall, about two-thirds of young parents in the sample had more than one child before age 24, with the highest proportion among those living at home but who subsequently moved out (76%) and the lowest proportion among those living continuously at home (56%).

Finally, the bottom of Table 1 reveals that living with their own parents again (i.e., the grandparent of the respondent's children) among young parents is not uncommon. Of those who were living outside of the parental home at first birth, more than a quarter (28.2%) returned home by age 24. This proportion was even higher among those who had been living at home at first birth and subsequently moved out, at 38%. In fact, when including those who lived at home continuously, more than half (56.5%) of young parents were either living at home at birth or lived with their parents sometime before age 24 (not shown). Thus, living in a multigenerational

household is a fairly common experience for young parents and their children. However, because exposure likely varies over time and many of these characteristics may be tapping into the same underlying risk factors, I now turn to multivariate event history analyses to examine which factors are most strongly associated with returning to the parental home, focusing on the those who either lived independently at the survey following their first birth or who were living at home at birth but subsequently moved out (N = 1,707).

Multivariate analyses

Table 2 shows the results from multivariate event history analyses, using logistic regression. The dependent variable is returning to the parental home, represented as yearly odds. Model 1 includes socioeconomic and demographic variables. Model 2 adds child and fertility characteristics to Model 1, and Model 3 adds union characteristics to Model 2. In Model 1, relatively few socioeconomic or demographic covariates were predictive of returning to the parental home. The odds of returning home increase with age. Foreign-born Hispanics were 28% more likely than non-Hispanic whites to return home during the year. Family background characteristics were not significant, but the respondent's education (a time-varying measure) was important. Those with a less than high school education were 1.4 times as likely to move back home than those with a high school degree, whereas young parents with a college degree or more were significantly less likely to move home (OR = 0.56). The likelihood of returning to the parental home also varied over time; compared to the first two years after the first birth or moving out of the parental home, young parents are about 50% more likely to return home between two and three years. Further durations, however, were not associated with returning to the parental home. In general, these results provide only weak evidence that the least advantaged young parents are more likely to move back in with their own parents.

- Table 2 here -

Model 2 adds indicators of fertility and other child-related characteristics; some of these measures were significant in their own right as well as making a few additional socioeconomic and demographic variables become significant. Age remained a significant predictor of parental coresidence, but in this model, there was also a gender difference. Women were about 50% more likely to return home than men when controlling for child coresidence. Foreign-born Hispanics remained about 30% more likely to return home than non-Hispanic whites. Young parents whose mother had some college were marginally more likely to return home (OR = 1.26). The respondent's own education remained important, though only for those who have less than a high school education (OR = 1.35). The association between duration was unchanged. Turning to the child-related characteristics, there is some support for the expectation that such factors matter, but the direction of these associations is somewhat unexpected. As hypothesized, young parents who were living at home at the survey after their first birth were marginally more likely to return home, by about 20%, than their peers who were living independently at first birth. However, young parents who lived with the first child during the year (a time-varying measure) were more than half as likely to move back home during the year compared to those who were not living with their first child. The number of children was unrelated to the odds of moving back home.

Finally, Model 3 adds the union characteristics of young parents added to Model 2. Age remained positively and significantly associated with the odds of returning home, but gender differences became insignificant. Foreign-born Hispanics continued to be more likely to move back home than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, by about 40%. Young parents who lived in an "other" family structure at age 12 were less likely to move back home compared to those who lived with both biological parents, and those whose mother had some college were about 30% more likely to move back home relative to those whose mother had only a high school. As in prior models, young parents with less than a high school education were about a third more

likely to return to the parental home than their counterparts with a high school degree. The odds of moving back home continued to be highest in the 2-3 year period after having their first child or first moving out of the parental home.

Of the child-related characteristics, only coresidence with the first child remained significant in the presence of controls for union status changes. The odds of returning home were significantly lower among those who lived with their first child than those who did not live with their child (OR = 0.59). In the presence for controls for union status/changes, living with parents at the time of birth is no longer a risk factor for living with parents again. Unlike child-related characteristics, which were fairly weakly related to multigenerational living, union changes were strongly associated with returning home, as hypothesized. Compared to those who were in a coresidential union at both the prior year and the current year, young parents who were unpartnered at both surveys were nearly 2.5 times as likely to move back home. Those who were single at the prior survey but were partnered in the current survey year did not differ from those who were partnered at both surveys. Moving from a partnership into singlehood particularly increased the risk of moving back home – those who were cohabiting at the prior survey but were unpartnered at the current survey were 8.3 times as likely to move back home as those who were partnered. Young parents who were married at the prior survey but who were unpartnered at the current survey were 6.5 times as likely to move back home; supplementary analyses revealed that the odds of moving back home following the dissolution of a cohabiting union were significantly higher than following a marital dissolution (OR = 7.73, not shown). Thus, the results are consistent with the hypothesis that union instability increases the risk of moving back home among young parents.

In sum, there is some weak support for the expectation that the least advantaged young parents would be most likely to return to the parental home. There is no support for the

hypothesis that having more children or living with children increases the risk of returning home; in fact, the opposite was found – young parents who do *not* live with their children are more likely to return home. Finally, there is support for the last hypothesis that union status and stability matter; single young parents and those whose coresidential relationship ended (especially if it was a cohabitation) are highly likely to move back home. However, it is not the case that partnered young parents are not living with their parents or that those living at home tend to have children living elsewhere. Table 3 documents the union status and living arrangements among those who returned home. Looking at young parents' union status at the survey in which they first reported living with their parents again, 43% of these young parents were either cohabiting or married. Only 13% have never cohabited or been married. The majority of these parents (70%) were living with all of their children. In terms of their own parents' household and family structure (i.e., what kind of household are they returning *to*), less than a third were moving back in with both biological parents, with the majority of them returning to either a stepfamily (21%) or, more often, a single-parent household (49%). Some of these households span four generations, as 6% had a grandparent or other relative living in the household as well.

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Discussion

This research examines an often-overlooked component of multigenerational households – the middle generation, those living with their own parents but who are parents themselves – with a focus on young parents. Young parents are interesting for two reasons. One, young adults in general often live with their parents as they make the transition to adulthood, and this seems to be particularly the case in more recent cohorts, with "boomeranging" back home a fairly common behavior. Two, compared to older parents, young parents are particularly likely to need

the instrumental, social, and financial support of their own parents, in part because their lives tend to be more unstable. The results do indeed show that young parents utilize their parents as safety net, with over half living with their parents at birth or at some point before turning 24. Although many young parents live in multigenerational households, these young parents do not fit into a neat profile. For instance, nearly a third who return home are not living with all of their children, suggesting that help with childrearing is not the only (or at least primary) motive for moving home. Similarly, a substantial minority – 43% – are living with their parents *and* with a cohabiting partner or spouse, yet the dissolution of a coresidential union sharply increases the odds a young parent moves back home.

The descriptive characteristics, which analyzed young parents by their living arrangements at birth, showed substantial variation across different coresidence patterns. Those who were not living at home at the time of their first birth, for instance, were more likely to be non-Hispanic white and tended to be slightly older, have more education, and were more likely to be cohabiting or married at birth than the other two types of young parents. At the same time, though, young parents on the whole are a relatively disadvantaged group, which may explain the relative lack of support for the hypothesis that those who returned home would be fairly disadvantaged. While the least educated were more likely to return home, in general few socioeconomic and demographic covariates were strongly predictive of multigenerational living. It is likely, then, that selection occurs earlier in the process, primarily through the entry into early parenthood in unstable unions.

In fact, young parents' union status seems to be the most salient factor associated with coresidence with parents. Young parents' relationships are highly unstable, and the dissolution of a coresidential union, particularly a cohabitation, sharply increases the odds of returning home. The change in significance for living with parents at birth from Model 2 to Model 3 suggests that

young parents who move out of the parental home are particularly likely to be entering unstable relationships. The low incomes and unstable jobs of young parents likely provide little recourse after a break-up – young, single parents may be unable to afford to maintain a household independently. Further, they may need to rely on their parents for childcare when only one parent is present in the household; paid childcare in the United States can be prohibitively expensive and is often unavailable outside of standard 9-5 hours (Child Care Aware of America, 2013). That said, it is interesting that those living with a child reduces the odds of moving back home (though the majority of those who move back home do live with their children). This suggests that perhaps coresidence with parents is not necessarily due to needs pertaining to childrearing and childcare, to the extent that the nonresidential parent perhaps moves back "home" to allow the residential parent to maintain continuity of housing for the children. Conversely, the nonresidential parent may move back home precisely because he or she is not the primary parent and may anticipate needing help childrearing during visits.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the analysis. Foremost is the use of yearly residence information. Residence at the survey following the first birth is not necessarily the residence status at first birth if respondents moved between birth and survey. The use of yearly residence information also almost certainly underestimates the prevalence of returning back home as short-term spells between surveys are missed. Prevalence is also underestimated because the dependent variable is limited to the respondent's parents and does not include moving in with a partner's parents; the roster information included living with in-laws but not cohabiting partner's parents and thus coresidence with a partner's parent(s) was not incorporated into the dependent variable. Further, the direction of coresidence changes is undetermined. It is possible, though unlikely in such a young sample, that parents are moving in with their adult children rather than

adult children moving back home; this may be more likely the case for partnered young parents (Dunifon, Ziol-Guest, & Kopko, 2014). It was also not possible to test whether certain configurations of parental households are associated with moving back home, as parental family/household structure is only known in the years in which respondents live at home.

Another notable limitation is the lack of direct information about income and employment. While the NLSY contains a rich set of such measures, a focus on young parents – whose children are young by definition – complicates the meaning of employment and income, particularly for young women. Many young parents alter their employment behaviors (and thus their incomes) before and/or after a birth, sometimes at the couple level, so it is unclear how low income or unemployment in a given year for an individual respondent would be causally associated with having a child, union status, and coresidence with parents. Finally, because the analyses used yearly measures of union status, I did not include measures of whether the respondent's cohabitations or marriages were with the same partner as the prior surveys, nor did the analyses identify whether new partnerships were with the child's other biological parent.

Conclusion

While this research did not compare "boomeranging" back home between young parents and young non-parents, it is reasonable to assume that a fair number of those returning to the parental home have children themselves. Further, the role that union instability played in returns to the parental home in this analysis is certainly not limited to young parents – other young men and women likely use their parents as a safety net when fragile young adult relationships end. As such, research on the boomerang phenomenon needs to move beyond a focus on economic and employment factors to consider other risk factors for moving back home. The reasons young adults move back home are varied and complex, and these boomerang "kids" are not a monolithic group but instead are a varied, diverse group with equally diverse concerns and

needs. This is especially true when considering that some of those lumped into the category of boomerang kids, even among young parents, have actually never left the parental home (Copp et al, 2013).

Young adults in general rely upon their parents extensively for social, instrumental, and economic support, and young parents are no exception. For young parents living with their own parents, though, the household and interpersonal dynamics may look quite different, as they adopt the parental role while perhaps still functioning in the child role themselves. The relationships within these households may be quite complex, as a substantial minority young parents report living with both their parents and their partners. Another layer of complexity occurs in the households they are moving into – many in the grandparent generation are single, potentially dating, or are repartnered, and stepfamily relationships can be complicated (Sweeney, 2010). The emerging body of research on family complexity has largely looked at "horizontal" complexity (sibling ties) or two-generation complexity (stepparents and stepchildren) (Manning, Brown, & Stykes, 2014), but the findings here indicate that family complexity can also emerge – and be quite fluid – based on intergenerational ties and coresidence. Further, we know that family structure instability is associated with poorer outcomes for children (Cavanagh & Huston, 2008; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007), and there is evidence that these multigenerational families are similarly unstable (Dunifon, Ziol-Guest, & Kopka, 2014). Additional research is needed testing how changes in living arrangements and multigenerational contacts affects child well-being.

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Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Parents ≤24 in the NLSY97 by Coresidence with Their Own Parents

	Did not live with parents at 1st birth	Lived with parents at 1st birth, moved out prior to age 24	Lived with parents at 1st birth and through age 24	Overall distribution
Overall distribution	60.6%	27.8%	11.6%	100%
Sociodemographic & background factors				
Female***	61.3%	68.7%	49.7%	62.0%
Race-ethnicity***				
Non-Hispanic white	64.7%	49.2%	32.0%	56.6%
Non-Hispanic black	17.1%	31.3%	39.3%	23.6%
Native-born Hispanic	12.7%	13.3%	17.2%	13.6%
Foreign-born Hispanic	2.9%	3.5%	6.0%	3.4%
Other	2.7%	2.8%	5.5%	3.0%
Family structure age 12†				
Both bio parents	39.3%	34.4%	38.8%	37.9%
Stepfamily	7.9%	7.6%	4.2%	7.4%
Single-parent	45.6%	53.1%	51.1%	48.3%
Other	7.3%	4.9%	5.9%	6.5%
Lived in multigenerational family in 1997	11.0%	8.6%	9.5%	10.1%
Mother's education**				
Less than HS	24.0%	31.6%	31.6%	27.0%
HS/GED	42.9%	43.2%	40.7%	42.7%
Some college	25.8%	17.5%	18.5%	22.7%
College or higher	7.4%	7.6%	9.2%	7.8%
Mother had a teen birth	13.6%	16.8%	13.2%	14.5%
Characteristics at 1st birth				
Age***	21.3 yrs	19.0 yrs	21.2 yrs	20.7 yrs
	(0.070)	(0.088)	(0.166)	(0.058)
Respondent's education***				
Less than HS	24.1%	48.1%	30.3%	31.5%
HS/GED	67.9%	51.0%	66.5%	63.1%
Some college	5.0%	4.2%	1.7%	3.3%
College or higher	3.0%	0.5%	1.5%	2.1%
Enrolled in school***	13.4%	29.8%	20.6%	18.8%
Months rec'd aid in past year**	1.8 mos	3.6 mos	1.1 mos	2.2 mos
	(0.127)	(0.212)	(0.186)	(0.101)
Union status***				
Not in a coresidential union	18.9%	75.6%	77.8%	41.5%
Cohabiting	37.0%	15.9%	11.9%	28.2%
Married	44.1%	8.9%	9.6%	30.2%
Living with 1st child at survey***	92.5%	77.3%	65.3%	85.1%
Had subsequent children before 24***	65.3%	75.6%	56.0%	67.1%
Lived with parents after having a child	28.2%	38.0%	--	31.3%
Of those returned home, years b/w birth/moving out and return	2.8 yrs	2.7 yrs	--	2.8 yrs
	(0.129)	(0.141)		(0.096)
N	1,110	597	277	1,984

*p≤.05 **p≤.01 ***p≤.001

Table 2. Odds Ratios of Multigenerational Coresidence among Parents ≤24 Living Independently at First Birth or Living at Home at First Birth But Who Subsequently Moved Out (N = 1,707)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Sociodemographic & background factors						
Age (time-varying)	1.43	***	1.44	***	1.41	***
Female	1.00		1.47	***	1.24	
Race-ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic white	--		--		--	
Non-Hispanic black	1.20		1.09		0.86	
Native-born Hispanic	1.06		1.10		1.10	
Foreign-born Hispanic	1.28	†	1.31	*	1.39	*
Other	1.08		1.17		1.27	
Family structure age 12						
Both bio parents	--		--		--	
Stepfamily	1.08		1.02		0.99	
Single-parent	1.13		1.10		1.04	
Other	0.80		0.75		0.65	*
Lived in multigenerational family in 1997	0.84		0.85		0.85	
Mother's education						
Less than HS	1.05		1.05		1.05	
HS/GED	--		--		--	
Some college	1.24		1.26	†	1.30	*
College or higher	1.04		1.01		0.92	
Mother had a teen birth	1.01		1.00		0.98	
Respondent's education (time-varying)						
Less than HS	1.41	***	1.35	**	1.32	*
HS/GED	--		--		--	
Some college	0.75		0.81		0.84	
College or higher	0.56	*	0.58		0.66	
Enrolled in school (time-varying)	0.80		0.80		0.77	
Months rec'd aid in past year (time-varying)	1.02		1.02		1.01	
Duration (time-varying)						
Less than 2 years	--		--		--	
2-3 years	1.48	***	1.49	***	1.47	**
3-4 years	1.02		1.02		0.95	
4 or more years	1.09		1.09		1.13	
Child/fertility characteristics						
Lived with parents at 1st child's birth			1.21	†	1.18	
Living with 1st child (time-varying)			0.40	***	0.59	***
Number of children (time-varying)						
One child			--		--	
Two children			1.02		0.99	
Three or more children			1.09		0.84	
Union characteristics						
Union status (time-varying)						
Single prior and current year					2.44	***
Single prior year, cohab/married current year					0.82	
Cohab/married prior and current year					--	
Cohab prior year, single current year					8.29	***
Married prior year, single current year					6.47	***
Constant	0.00	***	0.00	***	0.00	***
Pseudo R^2	0.0645		0.0799		0.1362	

†p≤.06 *p≤.05 **p≤.01 ***p≤.001

Table 3. Union Status and Living Arrangements of Young Parents Who Returned Home

Union status	
Never married, never cohabited	12.6%
Never married, previously cohabited	32.0%
Previously married	12.2%
Cohabiting	14.2%
Married	28.9%
Lives with all of his/her children	70.4%
Respondent's parents' family/household type	
Both biological parents	30.4%
Stepfamily	20.9%
Single parent family	48.8%
Grandparents or other relatives in parental home	6.2%
N	561