The Complicated Return Home For Boomerang College Graduates

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Background

- The term "boomerang" is used to describe individuals who return to their parent(s)' home after previously moving out e.g., for employment, college, marriage, etc. Thus, boomerangs experience more instability in their "complete" transition to adulthood (Mitchell, 2007).

- Many factors, including increasing levels of student debt and a depressed job market culminate in the return of boomerangs to the parental home after an initial "launch" (Mitchell, 2007).

- Meanwhile, college attendance is seen as an unequivocal good in society. For many, the inevitable debt and possible return home is an investment both for the eventual success of students and for communities receiving the graduates.

- Additionally, first-generation college students — students whose parents do not have 4-year college degrees — now constitute a larger proportion of the student bodies at universities and colleges across the nation (Bowen et al., 2005; Housel & Harvey, 2009).

Prior Research

- Between 2005 and 2014, the fraction of young adults aged 18 to 31 who live with their parents rose 15 percent (Dettling et al., 2014).

- The most important factors explaining the tendency for single adults to move back in with parents are income and attending school (Boyd & Pryor, 1989).

- Non-White young adults are more likely to live with their parents throughout their 20s, more likely to return home after going away to college, and less likely to leave again after returning (Britton, 2013).

- Young adults who coreside with parents experience lower affective relationships, but give, receive, and perceive more parental support than nonresident children (White & Rogers, 1997).

- Factors like protection needs, parental happiness, and dependence seem to be connected to long-term stays in the parental household, along with more traditional problems such as financial reasons and unemployment (Clemens & Axelson, 1985).

- First-generation college students represent one in six students at four-year universities in the U.S. (Saenz et al., 2007).

Research Questions

- What factors predict patterns of coresidence with parents?

- How do patterns of coresidence affect wellbeing outcomes?

- What role does first-generation college status play in the relationship between coresidence and well-being?

Data Source

- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)
  - Wave I (1994-1995) participants 13-21 years old
  - Wave III (2001-2002) participants 18-26 years old
  - Wave IV (2008-2009) participants 24-32 years old

- Add Health is a nationally representative sample which began in 1994 studying adolescents in grades 7-12. It has continued to follow these individuals through early adulthood to examine social, behavioral, and psychological dynamics.

Key Measures

Patterns of coresidence with parents:
- Always Coresident: living with parents at Wave I, Wave III, and Wave IV
- Boomerangs: independent at Wave III, return home at Wave IV
- Independents: independent at Waves III and IV
- Late Independents: living with parents at Waves I and III, independent at Wave IV

First-generation college student if:
- Completed a 4-year or graduate level degree AND
- Mother did not graduate from college, but may have taken some college courses AND
- Father did not graduate from college, but may have taken some college courses

Depression (Wave IV):
- Could not shake off the blues, even with help from family and friends (past 7 days)
- Felt sad (past 7 days)
- Felt depressed (past 7 days)

Self-efficacy (Wave IV):
- Felt unable to control the important things in life (past 30 days)
- Felt confident in ability to handle personal problems (past 30 days)

Victimization (Wave IV):
- Someone pulled a knife or gun on you
- Someone cut or stabbed you
- Took part in a physical fight in which injuries had to be treated by a doctor or nurse (past 12 months)

Descriptive Analysis

Percentage of Sample by Coresidence Category

11.19	☐ Always Coresident
5.28	☐ Boomerang
28.46	☐ Independent
54.17	☐ Late Independent
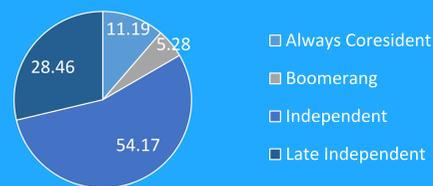
Means Across Coresidence Categories

Variable	Always Coresident (N=1466)	Boomerang (N=692)	Independents (N=7097)	Late Independents (N=3728)
FEMALE	0.4618	0.53035	0.5825	0.50483
WHITE	0.3397	0.46532	0.61758	0.52387
BLACK	0.2824	0.28179	0.19177	0.21567
HISPANIC	0.24829	0.14595	0.1271	0.17355
ASIAN	0.10641	0.0896	0.04861	0.06974
FORNBORN	0.10914	0.08526	0.06158	0.0794
INSCHOL3	0.92565	1.00578	1.00352	1.12768
WORKTYP3	2.42156	2.4877	2.75842	2.63922
FAMSES	5.86147	6.03659	6.31863	6.33575
FRSTGEN	0.08828	0.11782	0.14054	0.15958

Key Findings

Living with Parents Wave III

Variable	Males Odds Ratio		Females Odds Ratio	
AGEWAVE 1	0.805	***	0.839	***
Work 10-29	0.905		1.123	
Work 30-39	1.224	*	1.179	*
Work 40+	0.658	***	0.898	
SCHOFUL3	0.626	***	1.112	
SCHOPAR3	1.218	*	1.468	***
BLACK	1.488	***	1.825	***
ASIAN	1.823	***	2.108	***
HISPANIC	1.745	***	2.26	***
OTHRACE	1.618		2.319	**
FORNBORN	1.241	*	1.05	
FAMILYSES	0.965	***	0.981	*
STEPPAR1	0.562	***	0.622	***
SINGMOM1	0.79	***	0.705	***
SINGDAD1	0.654	**	0.628	**
LIVWOTH1	0.306	***	0.331	***

***p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Boomerangs

Variable	Males Odds Ratio		Females Odds Ratio	
AGEWAVE1	0.944		0.843	***
BLACK	1.936	***	1.947	***
ASIAN	3.29	***	1.832	*
HISPANIC	1.358		1.527	*
OTHRACE	1.026		1.609	
FORNBORN	0.851		1.441	
FAMSES	1.019		0.974	
STEPPAR1	0.95		0.597	**
SINGMOM1	1.023		0.526	***
SINGDAD1	0.923		0.799	
LIVWOTH1	1.032		0.234	***
WELFARE4	1.06		1.335	*
FULTIME4	0.618	*	1.205	
PARTIME4	1.588		1.349	
UNEMP4	1.56		2.26	***
EDUCCAT4	0.851	**	0.937	*

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Depression

Variable	Baseline Model PE		Adds Controls for Own SES PE		Adds Controls for Family Transitions PE	
Boomerang	0.07255	***	0.06775	***	0.07358	***
Independent	-0.0584	***	-0.04063	**	0.01472	
Late independent	-0.04918	***	-0.02961	*	0.02067	
First generation	-0.09692	***	-0.01808		-0.01613	

Efficacy

Variable	Baseline Model PE		Adds Controls For Own SES PE		Adds Controls for Family Transition PE	
Boomerang	-0.02487		-0.01871		-0.02248	
Independent	0.14279	***	0.10811	***	0.06058	***
Late independent	0.12311	***	0.08598	***	0.04202	*
First generation	0.21646	***	0.03658		0.03427	*

Victimization

Variable	Male PE	Pr > |t|	Female PE	Pr > |t|
AGEWAVE1	-0.03477	**	0.02470	*
BLACK	0.24108	***	0.17097	**
ASIAN	0.12167		0.14215	
HISPANIC	0.20480	**	0.06433	
OTHRACE	-0.09999		0.52779	*
FORNBORN	-0.13129		-0.10811	
FAMSES	0.01306		-0.01006	
STEPPAR1	0.27674	***	0.04110	
SINGMOM1	0.15126	**	0.08487	
SINGDAD1	0.26237	*	-0.21062	
LIVWOTH1	0.29444	*	0.18765	*
Boomerang	0.04231		0.22342	*
Independent	0.03034		0.13569	*
Late Independent	0.00583		0.03699	
First Generation	0.05476		0.02532	
Own Education	-0.06198	***	-0.04273	**
Married no Kid	0.15553	**	-0.04706	
Single with Kid	-0.07235		0.20275	**
Single no Kid	0.18926	**	0.08152	
Cohabit with Kid	0.20908	*	0.16996	*
Cohabit no Kid	0.18063	*	0.02144	
WELFARE	0.19167	**	-0.00387	
Full-time Work	-0.13285		-0.17216	**
Part-time Work	-0.02661		-0.12219	
Unemployed	0.05720		-0.02711	

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.001

Conclusions

Living with parents Wave III
- Women less likely to be living with parents at Wave III
- Men with school less likely to be at home in Wave III
- Men with 40+ work significantly less likely to be at home'
- Men and women are less likely to live at home if not from two biological parent families
- Women living with parents at Wave III are more likely to be in school part time compared to males
- Men and women of higher family SES are less likely to be at home in Wave III

Boomerang
- All races more likely to boomerang than whites
- Men with fulltime work less likely than women with fulltime
- Women significantly less likely to return home if not from a two biological parent family

Depression
- Higher depression for boomerangs
- First generation students are less depressed

Efficacy
- Boomerangs are not as consistently efficacious as their peers
- Independents and late independents are more efficacious
- First-generation students also more efficacious

Victimization
- Boomerang females more likely to be victimized
- Men with education less likely to be victimized than women with education

Limitations

Unable to account for:
- Assessment of Community and cultural norms
- Pre-existing disposition and livelihoods
- Origins of Depression
- Who or what is best suited to mediate negative outcomes
- Small sample of boomerang co-residents

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