Young Adults Living at Home: Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces

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Contents

Abstract

This chapter is concerned with young people's changing patterns of home leaving. Around the world young people are delaying the process of moving out of the parental home and are living with family for much longer periods into early adulthood. There are a number of reasons for this transformation; principally it reflects the shifting experience of adulthood and independence as well as changes to family formation and employment for young adults. More than this however, changing patterns of home leaving among young adults are suggestive of transformations within intergenerational relationships and what it means to feel "at home" during young adulthood. As young people delay leaving home, they share their home space with parents and wider family well into adulthood, and this has implications for intergenerational intimacies as well as individual identities. Negotiating shared family space can be a complex and emotionally charged endeavor, not least for young adults who have previously lived away from home only to "boomerang" back at a later date. This phenomenon, studies suggest, is a growing trend in the Minority World. Accordingly, this chapter brings together

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literatures on changing patterns of home leaving, the meaning and experience of being "at home" for children and young adults, and the emergence of boomeranging or "homecomings."

1   Introduction

The patterns and processes associated with leaving home are changing for many young people around the world, with many now delaying their exit and living with family for much longer periods into early adulthood (Cobb-Clark 2008). In the UK, the number of young adults (i.e., those aged between 20 and 34 years old) living with parents in the family home was recorded as 3.3 million or around 26% in 2013. Comparable statistics for 1996 reveal a much lower figure of 2.7 million or 21% of young adults living within the parental home (ONS 2014). This changing pattern of home leaving is not limited to the UK; it can also be seen in Mediterranean Europe (Becker et al. 2005) and Australia, where in 2007 almost one in four (23%) young adults were living at home with their parents, compared with 19% in 1986 (ABS 2009). A similar story is identifiable in the USA too, where the number of young adults living at home rose from 4.7 million to 5.9 million between 2007 and 2011 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013).

This changing landscape of young people's home-leaving strategies has received increasing attention from scholars, media commentators, and policy analysts. There are a number of key reasons for this growing interest and these will be explored in this chapter. Firstly, understanding young people's routes out of the family home is integral to the study of youth transitions and the related concepts of "independence" and "adulthood." When, how, and with what kinds of support young people are able to leave home is telling, then, of the broader experience of growing up and is often linked to demographic shifts in employment and relationship status. On a separate level, the issue of co-residence into early adulthood is worthy of public debate because it reveals something about how young people, together with their parents and wider families, imagine and actively negotiate kinship, care, intimacy, and intergenerational responsibilities. Intergenerationality refers to the relations, interactions, and tensions between and within different generational groups, and issues of contact, conflict, and cohesion between generations have important spatial dimensions (Vanderbeck 2007). With this in mind, understanding how young adults in the Minority World share their home space and feel "at home" with kin is an important task of intergenerational geographies.

Finally, changing patterns of home leaving among young adults are interesting because they not only reveal the incidence of delayed departure but also the probability of one or more returns. It has been suggested over recent years that many young adults recorded as living within the parental home may have already left

and experienced a period of absence before returning for financial, social, or emotional reasons (Stone et al. 2014). The ways in which these periods of return have been conceptualized within youth research have changed significantly since the early 1990s, when they were framed as failed or problem transitions with young adults taking up space in "crowded" nests (Schnaiberg and Goldenberg 1989). More recent research has cast these young adults as "boomerang kids" (Mitchell 1998, 2006), and there is now growing research on the apparent trend toward boomeranging or what is referred to here as "homecomings." This emerging literature reveals the significance of gender, social class, and young people's educational trajectories in structuring the experience of return in early adulthood.

This chapter is organized around three important areas of theory and research: leaving home, being "at home," and homecomings. The first section considers the changing patterns and processes underpinning young people's home-leaving strategies in light of theories of social change and notions of independence and adulthood. Following this, the chapter reviews literature on the meaning and significance of home for children and young people and the ways in which this space is constructed as a site of intimacy, family, and care. This discussion outlines some of the challenges and contradictions underpinning ideas about what it means to be "at home" and considers the impact of co-residence on the quality of intergenerational relationships and young people's sense of self. The final section examines the phenomenon of boomeranging and synthesizes the few available studies with a detailed description of two case narratives generated through research with young women graduates in the UK (Finn 2015).

These three themes synthesize different and often disparate debates within the study of children and childhood, youth transitions, and intergenerational geographies. The discussion offers important insights into how and in what ways a prolonged stay within the family home, or indeed a period of return after an initial departure, may impact upon notions of independence and adulthood for the young person living at home but also for the quality and emotionality of intergenerational relationships and the spatiality of family life. Although the concerns addressed here relate to young adults in the Minority World, there may be points of overlap with Majority World experiences too.

2   Leaving Home

Young lives and identities are often approached in the language of transition, and leaving the parental home is regarded as a key event in the process of becoming independent and entering a phase of early adulthood. Leaving home has emerged as significant moment for young people and their families and one worthy of academic study, not least because empirical data reveals that individual experiences of this transition are extremely varied (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). These variations – from country to country, between men and women, and young people in urban and rural settings – illuminate the different levels of planning and control that are available to different groups of young people, the various opportunities and

constraints at play in different contexts, and the kinds of familial support to which they have access at this time. Moreover, home-leaving strategies are often indicative of the availability of public support for young people and housing and broader generational shifts with regard to household formation and relationships (Heath 2008, p. 10).

Leaving home has long been understood as one dimension of a threefold trajectory toward adulthood which includes employment or professional transitions as well as housing and changes to relationship status (Coles 1995; Galland 1991). These three separate but often overlapping experiences have become the main typologies underpinning youth transitions research. For much of the last century, young people's pathways into adulthood were highly structured and linear, and these three transitions were relatively synchronized and condensed within a short space of time (Molgat 2007). It is now widely acknowledge, however, that this synchronicity of transition has been replaced by feelings of uncertainty and a general sense of irregularity and disruption with regard to how and when young people move from dependency to independency (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). Routes in and out of the family home are now conceptualized as disjointed or "yo-yo" transitions (Biggart and Walther 2006), often including peer-shared or solo living as well as more traditional exits for family formation (Heath 2008).

These changes to young people's patterns of home leaving are understood in the context of broader social changes which shape the opportunities and constraints that young people must navigate. Variations in the timing and nature of young people's routes out of home are articulated in terms of individualization, the destandardization of the life course, and the declining significance of age-defined transitions (Bynner 2005). From this perspective young people's housing pathways are characterized as reflecting varying degrees of choice and risk as the traditional structures of gender, family, social class, and employment cease to pattern pathways out of home in routine and predictable ways. Leaving home early is regarded as a "fast-track" transition and part of a standardized or normal biography. This route into early adulthood is mostly associated with young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and the gendered pathways of young women into early parenthood. By contrast, delaying the move out of home reflects a choice-based approach and more flexible orientations of young people who have the resources to adapt to the changing circumstances of employment and shifting expectations around family, lifestyle, and so on (du Bois-Reymond 1998). These slow-track, choice biographies are not structured by gender and, in the main, refer to the experiences of middle-class young people who are or have been engaged in higher education.

There are great variations in young people's patterns of home leaving, and as outlined above, these reflect inequalities of social class and gender and the unequal processes of social change. In a seminal study of young people's housing transitions, Ford et al. (2002) illuminated for the first time the mixed picture of housing pathways in England. The research reveals that while some young adults experience leaving home in chaotic, unplanned, and relatively under-resourced ways, others articulate carefully planned strategies of exit which often reflect lifestyle and identity-related concerns, as well as material and emotional needs. Ford et al. (2002) identified five

distinct housing pathways: chaotic, unplanned, constrained, planned (nonstudent), and student pathways. These different models of home leaving highlight the key resources that young people must access if they are to move successfully from dependence to independent living, as well as the complex interdependencies that develop in this context. Finally, this important study draws attention to the centrality of higher education and student experiences for the process of housing transitions in the Minority World.

The massification of higher education in Western societies is understood as having a significant impact on the patterns of home leaving among young adults, particularly in the UK where leaving home to attend university has a strong tradition (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). Leaving the family home is linked to notions of independence and regarded by some as central to the experience of university (Holdsworth 2009). Whether it is the experience of living with peers or negotiating the private rented sector (Christie et al. 2002), living away from home during university study can be transformative and give rise to greater feelings of autonomy and freedom. Often, experiences of peer-shared living within higher education are sustained after graduation. Research by Heath (2004) and Heath and Kenyon (2001) reveal that for many young adults, this is an active choice and ties into the kinds of lifestyles young professionals intentionally seek out. Independent living with friends and peers is therefore part of the process of home-making and establishing a sense of self and belonging in early adulthood (Gorman-Murray 2014). More than this, however, it is thought that the expansion of higher education and the rising costs of study in the UK have led to a decline in the financial returns of a university degree, and this has had a significant impact upon the transition into home ownership for young graduates (Heath 2008).

A recent study by Heath and Calvert (2013) examined the impact of debt and the global financial downturn upon young people's patterns of leaving home and living independently. The authors reveal the important role of intergenerational financial support for facilitating routes out of home.

> It has been estimated that the proportion of UK first-time buyers under 30 who were dependent on financial support from family members rose from 10 per cent in the mid-1990s to around 40 per cent by the mid-2000s. . . and to around half by 2008. Furthermore, many mortgage products available to first time buyers are premised on some form of parental contribution, including equity release schemes. (2013, p. 1122)

This emerging trend of intergenerational support to enable young adults to offset the costs of independent living is interesting. At one level, it illuminates the enduring importance of leaving home as a social and cultural milestone, a turning point within the life course. Looked at another way, however, the elasticity of parental support – that is, its stretching beyond the defined spaces of family home to a new, independent home – may be indicative of the strains put upon relationships through the experience of prolonged co-residence. Alternatively, this might be telling of parental anxieties regarding the possibility of "failed" or unsuccessful transitions of adult children.

Studies in the USA and Canada have documented some of the challenges for intergenerational relationships in the context of young adults' delayed transitions. Schnaiberg and Goldenberg (1989) invoke images of the "crowded nest" when young adults remain at home. Aquilino and Supple (1991, p. 24) reflect on "parental satisfaction with the presence of 'unlaunched' adult children." This body of research highlights the complexities and pressures felt by parents and children as they negotiate roles and responsibilities in order to avoid disagreements and ensure co-residence is a successful enterprise. In a more recent study, Mitchell (2010) argues that parents reported being unhappy when their children failed to properly transition or when they felt "entitled" to support from family. The following section examines the meaning and experience of home for children and young adults and considers what it means to feel "at home" and how this relates to intergenerational relationships and support.

3   Being "At Home"

If the timing and experience of leaving home is important for understanding youth transitions, then it is important also to recognize what being "at home" means for young adults and how this relates to intergenerational relationships and familial intimacies. In their research into young people's transitions into adulthood and independence in three distinctive European contexts – Liverpool, UK, Bilbao, Spain, and Trondheim, Norway – Holdsworth and Morgan argue that the "centrality of home of home is such that, for most people, it is something that we take for granted" (2005, p. 68). Certainly, home is an everyday experience and, as a consequence, has a multiplicity of meanings and can refer to a range of locales and scales as well as feelings and sentiments. Mallett (2004) provides a comprehensive review of the different ways in which home is understood within sociology, anthropology, psychology history, architecture, and philosophy as well as geography. This critical discussion of home reflects upon the ways in which home is often conflated with "house," reducing home to a one-dimensional experience. As Mannay's research with young people in South Wales illuminates, "home" does not simply refer a geographical space "but the site of a close-knit kinship network" (2013, p. 95).

Being "at home" thus relates to feelings of belonging, identity, and connections to places, people, as well as different temporalities. In this way, home operates on a range of levels from the real and everyday to the idealized and imagined. Home can be framed in romanticism and nostalgia, depicted as a haven or retreat where people can seek out sanctuary away from the public world (Moore 1984). Several scholars have challenged this perception of home and have sought to trouble the dichotomies of home/work, inside/outside, private/public, and safe/unsafe (Sibley 1995). In doing so, romantic notions of home are destabilized mostly through an exposition of the difficulties experienced by women, children, and young people who are subject to violence and sexual abuse which can have the effect of making individuals feel "homeless at home" (Wardhaugh 1999). Indeed, research has highlighted that for children and young people living in homes in which there is domestic violence

(Overlien and Hyden 2009) issues of substance misuse (Wilson et al. 2012), problem gambling (Valentine and Hughes 2012), and parental mental illness (Fjune et al. 2009), being "at home" is often far from stable, safe, and within their control. Intimacy and family can, therefore, be experienced in challenging ways, and the spatial practices of sharing home with kin are constructed in ways that reflect and/or transgress power relations.

The rhythms and routines that constitute home are important for a variety of social processes from eating and caring to production and reproduction. Home is in many ways, therefore, the synthesis of the social and the spatial (Saunders and Williams 1988) providing opportunities and constraints for action, identities, and modes of relating. Understanding the dynamics of family relationships within the shared spaces of home is a significant challenge for geographers and sociologists. David Morgan's (1996) work on family practices has been influential in shifting the sociological gaze away from "the family" (i.e., as an institution) toward an understanding of families as constituted by the things that they do, more or less routinely. Morgan defines family practices as "sets of practices which deal in some way with ideas of parenthood, kinship and marriage and the expectations and obligations which are associated with these practices" (1996, p. 11). Similarly, Daly (2003, p. 771) considers the everydayness of family and home revealing a range of concerns – material, health, moral and spiritual, and spatial relationship – that are not always apparent in theorizing about families.

Valentine and Hughes (2012, p. 243) also stress the limited attention paid to the meaning and quality of relationships and the "doing" of intimacy within families within contemporary geographical research. Their study of problem gamblers' experiences of familial space makes a strong case for exploring the interiority of family life – what it means to live in families – and how space is used as a dynamic resource in the everyday enactment of family and intimacy. Their research illuminates some important issues with regard to being "at home" particularly in contexts where sharing domestic space is challenging and underpinned by secrecy and difficult relationships. The research does not draw explicit conclusions about the meaning and experience of home for children and young people; nevertheless, there are some valuable insights into the ways in which space (and time) are utilized, relationally, as family members relate to each other in the home and attempt to manage the boundaries between the personal and the social/familial (Valentine and Hughes 2012, p. 243).

The home is understood as an emotional and sensory space in which "families must manage the transition from dispersion to convergence" (Valentine and Hughes 2012, p. 245). In his work on family practices, Morgan (1996) considers the significance of negotiating claims to a particular chair or for exclusive use of a room and attempts to coordinate multiple timetables for the micro-politics and spatiality of family life. The increasingly specialized use of space within the contemporary home, for example, children's own bedrooms, designated office space, dens, and so on, can engender "individualized time/space" that is more in step with personal interests or hobbies rather than collective family activities. Moreover, as media and communications technologies (e.g., smartphones, tablets, and iPods)

develop and permeate the home, they have the effect of creating a sense of distance between family members even when sharing the same space (Valentine and Hughes 2012, p. 245).

The spatial politics of family and being "at home" are given further consideration in Wilson et al.'s (2012) study of 10–18-year-olds living within the context of parental substance misuse. The authors contend that children and young people's use of space, the meaning of spaces to them, and their own place-making are fundamentally linked to issues of access and power but also, and crucially, reflect the ways that "intergenerational relationships are made and made sense of through sensory experience" (2012, p. 96). Spaces of home matter for children and young people, and bedrooms and private spaces were significant for coping with difficult family relationships. It was within these carefully marked out spaces that the respondents in the study felt a sense of control over their personal space, and through the use of visual, auditory, and physical strategies, they were able to carve out a space that felt safe and secure. This contrasted sharply with their lack of control in shared domestic spaces.

Co-residence of parents and young adult children is not always experienced as challenging or problematic. Studies have highlighted that parents generally have a positive assessment of co-residence (Aquilino 1991) and that shared experiences in the home and having an enjoyable time together served to strengthen intergenerational bonds (Aquilino and Supple 1991). In addition to the emotional and social benefits, co-residence with parents is an important mechanism through which resources are transferred between generations, usually from parents to their adult children and, perhaps, intragenerationally between siblings too. Generally speaking, staying at home with family into early adulthood "allows young people to consume, save, invest and maintain their relative income position even in difficult financial contexts" (Cobb-Clark 2008, pp. 162–163).

Family transmission is an important concern for understanding home and intimacy in the lives of young adults. Several studies have revealed the complexity and diversity in terms of how families construct and transmit identities and practices based on notions of giving and receiving support between kin (Finch and Mason 1993, 2000; Brannen 2006; Heath and Calvert 2013). Some families have a strong sense that they should provide for their own and, thus, do not view solidarity as dependency. In this way, co-residence, into early or even late adulthood, would be part of "what families do." Other families exhibit cultures in which support is much more limited and highly contingent (Brannen 2006) emerging out of negotiated responsibilities (Finch and Mason 2000). These studies reveal how the transfers that take place within families, and of which the shared space of the home or provisions for an independent home are often a central part, are shaped in context, that is, at particular life-course phases and in particular historical conditions. Families thus attribute meaning and importance to giving and receiving in multigenerational families. At times, however, there can be ambiguities and complexities regarding the nature of gifts or loans (Heath and Calvert 2013), and emotional work is required to ensure that identities and intergenerational ties are kept intact in this process. This is explored in detail, below.

4   Homecomings

The growing incidence of co-residence in the family home not only reflects the delayed exit of adult children but also the trend toward return, or homecomings, of "boomerang kids" (Mitchell 2007). As a concept, homecomings offers a way to think about young adults returning to live with parents which presents this experience as both intentional and relational. This contrasts with a view of young adults "failing" to launch or move along a preferred pathway or as bouncing back and forth from one experience to the next with little to no control. Having said that, homecomings understood as deliberate and thoughtful should not be read as necessarily positive or enriching experiences. As shall become clear, just because the decision to return to live with parents emerges out of relational considerations, this does not mitigate problems in terms of the ways home is experienced (emotionally, spatially, ideologically), nor does it render the processes of identification and belonging trouble-free for young adults.

It is estimated that homecomings are a common feature of young people's transitions into independence and adulthood, with many making one or multiple returns to the family home after an initial departure (Mitchell 2006, p. 47). This trend was observed in the 1990s in the USA (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999) and has gained currency in popular debates in the UK particularly since the recession in 2008. Although there is an observable increase in rates of co-residence among parents and adult children in the UK, there is virtually no empirical research on whether or not this relates to young people returning home or simply delaying the process of leaving (Stone et al. 2014; see also, Berrington and Stone 2013). A number of studies have now begun to tackle the idea that young adults in the UK are "boomeranging" back to the parental home. Drawing on longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS 1991–2008), Stone et al. (2014) examine the apparent trend of returning to live with parents after an earlier exit. The study concludes that, overall, homecomings are a relatively rare event for young adults in Great Britain. Nevertheless, they argue that there are subgroups of young people for whom returning home has become the norm.

The subgroups they refer to include but are not limited to young women who have engaged in higher education. The trend toward homecomings is particularly evident for young women in their mid-20s largely due to the apparent feminization of higher education in the UK (Leathwood and Read 2008) and the fact that females now outnumber their male counterparts in UK universities. Stone et al. (2014) reflect that homecomings are less likely among single parents because of the availability of means-tested social assistance and social housing. Single people without children, therefore, face more difficulty in accessing housing and perhaps more likely to turn to family if, for example, a partnership breaks down.

The study raises some interesting questions about what the incidence of homecomings may indicate in broader terms, for example, with regard to young adults' experiences of unemployment or underemployment, an increasingly volatile youth labor market, low wage levels, and the burden of debt for graduates and other young adults. In their conclusions, Stone et al. (2014, p. 272) reflect on the limitations of the BHPS for gaining insights into the everyday, relational experience of homecomings. Suggesting further research to unpack these issues, the authors highlight the need to

better understand how families manage co-residency when parents have downsized their home or when there are competing demands of siblings on familial resources (including home space). Additionally, this timely study calls for a more robust consideration of the tastes, attitudes, and social expectations of young people, their families, and wider peer group in order to ascertain how these are shaping the everyday experiences of homecomings.

In an attempt to address some of the questions outlined above, and to consider the issues raised throughout this chapter in relation to patterns of leaving home and the experience of shared family space, what follows is an exploration of two detailed case studies in which the experience of homecoming is central. The two case studies of Emily and Catherine (pseudonyms) were generated as part of a 7-year qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) project with young women engaged in higher education in the UK (Finn 2015). The project began in 2006 and interviews were conducted with 24 participants at three intervals: before, during, and on completion of their first year of undergraduate study. These young women were recruited through sixth forms and colleges in an area of North West England ("Millthorne") that is characterized by old industry and deindustrialization, problems of deprivation, and ethnic segregation. Notions of home and place were, thus, important features of the young women's narratives of choice and change.

In March 2012 ten of the original 24 young women were interviewed for a fourth time. This stage of fieldwork captured the young women's experiences of exiting university and finding employment amidst a global recession and severe austerity program in the UK. Depending on their program of study, the participants were between 2 and 3 years out of full-time study. During this period, eight young women returned from universities around the UK to live with their parents and family in Millthorne. Although some spent just a short spell at home initially, others remained for longer periods. At the time of the fieldwork, three young women, including Emily and Catherine, were living with their parents in the family home on a more or less permanent basis. The complexities, contradictions, and relational dimensions of these homecomings are reflected below.

4.1 Case Studies: Emily and Catherine

Emily and Catherine are first-generation entrants to higher education and articulated narratives of escape as they discussed their plans to move away from Millthorne to attend university in London and the South Coast of England, respectively. These young women are local to Millthorne with family connections to the area dating back generations. When they were interviewed in 2006 and 2007, both young women exhibited a strong but complicated sense of connection to Millthorne and home. They were aware of the deprivation and lack of opportunities for young women and had begun to regard their home town, and the some of their relationships, as provincial, stagnant, and suffocating. Despite this, through their broad regional accents and relational connections to friends and family, these young women were also embedded in this place and carried it with them to university.

Leaving home was a significant experience for both Emily and Catherine and allowed them to position themselves against others – siblings, friends, and neighbors – who opted for local universities and remained proximate to home. They made no attempt to hide their confusion and disdain for other young adults who made local choices. Indeed, in leaving the spaces of Millthorne, these young women hoped both to evidence and consolidate the social, cultural, and emotional distance that existed between them and their peers. As the first year of university progressed, Emily and Catherine lived at a distance from home and embedded themselves in their new lives and relationships at the university.

When interviewed for the fourth stage of fieldwork, the two young women were living with family in Millthorne. Emily had been out of full-time study for almost 3 years, and over this period, she had moved back and forth between her parents' home and rented accommodation. Due to a failed first year of study and what she described as "a sort of breakdown" in her final year, Catherine had been back in the North West of England for a shorter period. Emily and Catherine's exit from the university, and their experiences of homecoming were complicated by a challenging graduate labor market and a lack of jobs to move into. Emily oscillated between part-time, casual work in the retail sector and unpaid internships as she attempted to get a foot in the door of the music industry. Catherine could not find full-time employment and relied on local bar work to supplement her income from a temporary administrative job at the local council. It is important to understand their experiences of homecoming within the broader context of these difficult transitions into employment and, as shall become clear, their relationship transitions.

It is within the context of their relationships that these two stories of homecoming begin to look rather different. At the time of her fourth interview, Emily was living within her parents' home with her boyfriend. The couple occupied a specially demarcated space, and their homecoming had been negotiated as part of a longer-term plan to save for a down payment on a mortgage. Prior to the homecoming, Emily and her partner were living in a rented flat on the other side of Millthorne. The accommodation and the experience of shared living were important for Emily and her partner who, she explained, were "at that stage" in their relationship and perhaps more generally in their lives as young adults. Living together, and crucially independently of family, signified their maturity and autonomy and the practices of home-making unified them as a couple. Notwithstanding this, the rented home they shared did not live up to its idealized image. As Emily's partner worked away for long periods, she often found herself feeling isolated and alone: "I'd kind of just be twiddling my thumbs. I didn't have a car at the time... so, I couldn't just nip home for a bit and hang out with family. I was just stuck there. It was depressing really." Emily's feelings of loneliness, the high rental costs, and her precarious employment status took their toll and this experience of independent living became untenable.

After some deliberation, Emily and her parents came to an agreement about how to solve the problems she was facing. Negotiating her own needs, for independence on the one hand and emotional support on the other, and the values of her parents, notably that renting was a waste of money, they discussed the possibility of another homecoming. This time, however, Emily and her partner would have their own space

and would work toward a clear plan for the future. Although Emily's parents had "always been very much like, 'there's always a home for you here,'" her previous homecomings had not been the most productive for her relationships with family. Her parents often felt that she "treated the house like a hotel," and this had to be addressed in this new period of co-habiting. "Living at home is different this time; it has to be. I know it's a means to an end and so do they. There's a different focus somehow. It's kind of a partnership this time around."

Emily's narrative of homecoming was, thus, deliberate and intentional and reflected relational concerns and not simply individualistic motivations. Of course, this move was in part a product of her limited resources and the difficulties she faced finding employment. As she stated, however, homecoming was also much more than this for her and her parents because "knowing I have their support has been really important. I hated being at the flat knowing that my dad thought it was a bad idea. I like to know they're on board." This suggests that feelings of independence, self-responsibility, and autonomy are not always undermined by co-residence but actively achieved through these kinds of relational considerations.

Catherine's descriptions of co-residing with her parents revealed a far less democratic and open process. Her younger sister was now living away at a university and so she shared her home space with her mother and father. Although they had once been close, Catherine had recently entered into a same-sex relationship and her parents refused to accept her sexuality. Over the course of her interview, it transpired that the "sort of breakdown" was linked to a traumatic experience of coming out and coping with the tensions this brought within her relationship with her mother. Thus, Catherine's experiences of co-residence were stifled and underpinned by secrecy, distrust, and a deep sense of unhappiness on her part. Rather than feeling "at home," Catherine felt alienated and alone within her parents' house. "Its hard being around mum when I know how she feels about, well, about who I am; my life. . . I don't want to be there but I have no choice and I have to look grateful of her *generosity*. It's insane." (Original emphasis). As a result of the tensions that cast a shadow over this period of co-residence, the idea (and the ideal) of a home with her new partner took on great significance and provided a way of coping with present unhappiness.

> I'm on the verge of being ready to move out I think. I've lost my relationship with my mum now really in terms of that anyway. So it isn't home for me anymore here. I think a move would be best because it opens up the jobs. You can move wherever you need to. And it's a new start for both of us. Whereas [her partner] has past in [nearby city] I have family here. So, to move away would give us both a chance to start something without anybody overlooking or saying, why are you doing that? Are you sure you're not doing it too early on? Things like that. We could just get on with it really.

Catherine's narrative reveals the ways in which homecomings can be challenging both for the nature and quality of intergenerational relationships and for personal identities. Sharing the physical space of home is complicated when there is a rupture in shared symbolic or cultural space. Catherine and her parents, who provided a rent-free home, were acting relationality, and yet this story reveals that feelings of embeddedness and connectedness to others can be experienced in destructive and

constraining ways. As the quotation above reveals, although her parents were showing support for her during a difficult time, the slow decline of her relationship with her mother meant that "home" was emptied of all positive emotional connection and not the space of belonging it had once been. Catherine's narrative is one of struggle; that is, to reconcile her relationships, with her parents and her new partner, with her lack of residential choices. Thus, contrary to receiving "something for nothing" financial support, for Emily and Catherine, was highly contingent on specific circumstances (saving for a mortgage, suppressing one's sexuality), and this complicated claims to legitimacy, independence, and autonomy.

The undertone to these two case studies is, of course, sexuality. For Emily who was in a heterosexual relationship, the experience of homecoming was relatively smooth and she could be open with her parents who shared her plans for the future. Catherine's narrative reveals much more explicit constraints and power relations. As a nonheterosexual, co-residence with (straight) parents is complicated and emotionally debilitating, as has been noted elsewhere (Einesdottir 2011; Valentine 1993, 2002). These case studies thus reveal that home is neither always a place nor a feeling, but a dialogue between the two. Moreover, these stories highlight that the spaces of home can be central in confirming and/or denying particular ways of becoming (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Waitt and Gorman Murray 2007).

5   Conclusion

This chapter has brought together disparate research on housing transitions and the significance of these amidst changing notions of adulthood and independence, the meaning and experience of (shared) home space for children and young adults, and the emerging trend of homecoming among young adults who have at one time lived away from family. Whether young adults are returning to live with parents and family or simply delaying the transition out of home, there are many issues at play for young people caught up in "extended" transitions. At one level it appears that living at home with parents and being dependent upon parental support – material, financial, emotional, and social – is accepted as part of the order of things for many young people. Data from the Minority World reveals a steady increase in the proportion of young people living within the parental home since the early 1990s (Cobb-Clark 2008). Moreover, it is clear that this experience has an impact upon the ways in which intergenerational relationships, intimacy, and independence are imagined and negotiated in contemporary times.

Theory and research relating to the experiences of young adults in the Minority World and their experiences of housing (and other) transitions emphasize the processes of individualization, choice, and risk as pathways into adulthood are less predictable than in the past. The effect of this individualized focus is that family and intergenerational relationships have a ghost-like presence in these debates, "referred to in the abstract but seldom the focus of analysis" (Wyn et al. 2012, p. 4). This chapter has demonstrated the need to consider family and intimacy when thinking about young people's experiences of home leaving and homecomings and to

consider the complex interdependencies that emerge and shift across the life course as the different needs and obligations of families alter in the unfolding of time. As Holdsworth and Morgan (2005, p. 128) maintain, the family is not a unit or experience that is fixed in time and space, and it is certainly not only young people who experience a change when the time comes to leave home. Rather, the experience of home leaving, and indeed return, has implications for the whole network, practically, relationally, and emotionally.

Mason's (2004) research on residential house moves is telling of the ways in which choices and decisions about where to live, and how to organize domestic arrangements, are most commonly made in relation to significant others and not simply based upon individual needs and desires. This challenges some of the ideas put forward in the individualization thesis by illuminating the many and varied ways that people appeal to relational concerns or challenges when constructing narratives of their residential histories. For Wyn, Lantz, and Harris, the centrality of family and intergenerational bonds is not a challenge to theories of individualization but represents a direct consequence of the processes of detraditionalization. They note:

> one of the most important implications for the process of individualization, whereby risks, costs and responsibilities for navigating life have become increasingly vested in individuals, is that family support, resources and contact… are now more important than ever. (2012, p. 4)

As the patterns and processes underpinning the life course become more fluid and less predictable, family resources become increasingly important in facilitating youth transitions. It is essential then that research considers the interdependency within families and how changes to one member of the network may impact upon others (Elder 1991). The global financial downturn has implications for young people, their connections to home, and older generations (Connidis 2014). This chapter has revealed that the shifts taking place in young adults' housing transitions impact upon notions of independence, adulthood and belonging, and the experience of home for adult children and their parents in situations of co-residence. It is important to appreciate, therefore, that when young adults think about home, home leaving, and/or future homecomings, they do so in relational connection to family and the nature and quality of their intergenerational intimacies.

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