



Adult kids living at home on the rise across the board

By Haya El Nasser, USA TODAY

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Whether in their 20s or 30s, black or white, in the West or Northeast, adult kids find there's no place like home when their finances are in a tailspin or their relationships in shambles.

The number of young adults ages 20 to 34 who lived with their parents jumped from 17% in 1980 to 24% in 2007-09 — the Great Recession— according to a detailed analysis out today.

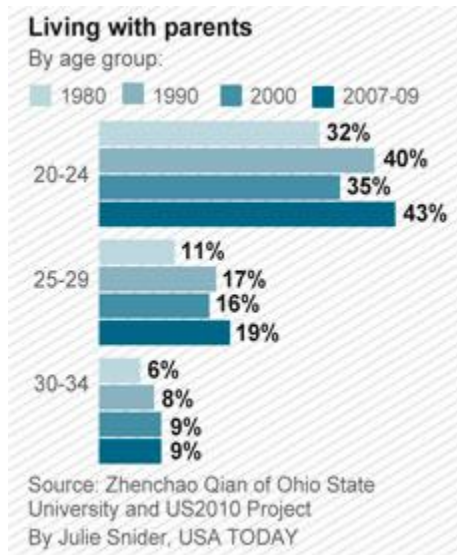
The rise was sharpest among those under 25 — a new high of 43% vs. 32% in 1980 — but it increased largely across the board. Even among 30- to 34-year-olds, nearly one in 10 lived with parents.

"This 'Great Recession' has had tremendous effects that previous smaller recessions did not," says Zhenchao Qian, a sociology professor at Ohio State University and the author of the report for the US2010 Project, which studies trends in American society. "The surprise mostly is that it's increasing for every group."

The only segment not affected: young adults with graduate degrees. The share living with parents has stayed at 8% since 1980.

The number of kids never moving out or coming back after college or divorce had declined in the 1990s but increased faster during the last recession, which hit young adults the hardest. Unemployment among young workers has hovered above 12%.

Financial insecurity, coupled with massive student loan debt, has exacerbated another trend that might encourage some to live with their parents: delaying marriage and postponing having children.



Many also return when marriages end. Among 30- to 34-year-olds who live with their parents, 20% are divorced.

Metro areas

Percent of young adults aged 25-29 living with parents, 2007-2009:

Highest

1. Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, Conn. (34%)
2. Honolulu (32%)
3. McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Texas (31%)
4. Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach (31%)
5. New York-Northern N.J.-Long Island (30%)
6. Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, Calif. (28%)
7. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana (28%)
8. El Paso, Texas (28%)
9. Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, Pa. (27%)
10. Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif. (26%)

Lowest

100. Des Moines-West Des Moines, Iowa (8%)
99. Raleigh-Cary, N.C. (9%)
98. Boise-Nampa, Ida. (9%)
97. Austin-Round Rock, Texas (10%)
96. Madison, Wis. (10%)
95. Columbus, Ohio (11%)
94. Omaha-Council Bluffs, Neb.-Iowa (12%)
93. Oklahoma City (12%)

- 92. Colorado Springs (12%)
- 91. Provo-Orem, Utah (12%)

Source: Zhenchao Qian, Ohio State University, and US2010 Project

The biggest impact has been on lower-income groups and the less educated. In 1980, 18% of young adults living with parents had a high school education. In 2007-09, it had jumped to 29%.

"Sometimes young people live at home for practical reasons," says Sally Koslow, author of *Slouching Toward Adulthood: Observations From the Not-So-Empty Nest*. "Sometimes it's for the lifestyle. They don't have to pay and have access to a full refrigerator."

Qian's research found:

- Metropolitan areas with a higher share of residents who are low-income, unmarried or young minorities have high rates of adult children at home. The Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, Conn., region had the highest share of the 100 largest metros, at 34%.

"This is a case of families adapting to difficult circumstances," says Paul Taylor, director of the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends project. "Family is the ultimate social safety net."

High-cost areas such as New York (30%) and Los Angeles (28%), where doubling up can save money, also rank high on the list.

- Men are much more likely to live with parents than women, partly because they marry later.

"It's not the only reason," Qian says. "Compared with daughters, sons have fewer domestic responsibilities — such as cleaning and cooking — when they live home with parents."

- Non-Hispanic whites had the lowest percentage living with parents. Asians had the biggest jump (from 17% in 1980 to 26% in 2007-09). Qian attributes that to later marriages among Asians, cultural traditions and a greater likelihood to live in expensive regions.

Hispanics' rates were lower (24%), largely because many parents of immigrants do not live in the USA. Blacks (27%) and Native Americans (30%) had the highest.

Koslow says it has become far more socially acceptable for adult children to live at home for long periods of time.

She was recently asked to write a piece for *Cosmopolitan*: tips for women who date men who still live at home.

"I don't think young people feel any embarrassment or stigma," Koslow says.