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Living Apart (or) Together? Coresidence of Elderly Parents and Their Adult Children in Europe

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Abstract

Coresidence of elderly parents and adult children is a special form of intergenerational relations that is not uncommon in European societies. Why do adult children and parents live together? In what way do individual characteristics, family structures, and cultural contexts play a crucial role? How can differences between countries be explained? Are there discrepancies between adult generations sharing the same household and those who live in separate homes within the same building ("near coresidence")? The empirical analyses reported in this article are based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe. The findings prove the importance of individual needs and opportunities of children and parents as well as the relevance of family structures. Country comparisons show that welfare-state arrangements have a substantial effect. In fact, coresidence appears to be a response to economic insecurities at both individual and societal levels.

Keywords

coresidence, country-specific differences, family structures, needs, opportunities, intergenerational solidarity

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Adult children and their parents are connected through many forms of intergenerational solidarity. Previous studies show strong emotional closeness and affection (affective solidarity), frequent contact and shared activities (associational solidarity), and a considerable degree of functional solidarity, which involves the giving and receiving of money, time, and space (e.g., Bengtson, 2001; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Szydlik, 2000, 2008). Even if parents and adult children no longer live in the same household, they help each other by providing financial support, care, and other forms of assistance (e.g., Brandt, Haberkern, & Szydlik, 2009; Kohli, Künemund, Motel, & Szydlik, 2000).

In addition to financial transfers, help, and care, the provision of (living) space is an aspect of functional solidarity that should not be underestimated. Previous findings suggest that coresidence of parents and their adult children is not uncommon in a number of European societies (e.g., Hank, 2007). Intergenerational coresidence in adulthood may include adult children who have never left home. Apart from the fact that these so-called stay-at-homes can enjoy living in "Hotel Mum," this can also be attributed to longer periods of training and education as a consequence of the expansion of education and the associated economic uncertainties (see Ogg & Renaut, 2006, p. 733). Coresidence also occurs when adult children return to their parents after periods of living elsewhere ("boomerang kids"). Reasons for this may be a failed attempt to start a family or a divorce (see Norris & Tindale, 1994). Sharing the same apartment also applies to adult children taking in their frail elderly parents to provide permanent help and care.

Coresidence between adult generations may often reflect a more or less involuntary living situation, which results from economic necessity and is subject to financial restrictions. One may argue that living with one's parents goes against the desire to break away from the parental home and stand on one's own two feet, which is part of the process of becoming an independent adult. In fact, coresidence conflicts with the "family cycle" concept in which, as a rule, children leave their parents' homes when they start their own families. Next to perceived costs and benefits of leaving home and the country-specific housing market situation, perceived age norms are also of relevance to leaving the parental home (see Billari & Liefbroer, 2007). According to Neugarten and Hagestad (1976), "individuals develop a mental map of the life cycle, they anticipate that certain events occur at certain times . . . [and] internalize . . . norms that tell them if their behavior in various areas of life is age-appropriate" (p. 35). Additionally, a negative consequence of coresidence may be stress on generational relationships (see, e.g., Aquilino & Supple, 1991). However, it is also conceivable that adult children prefer living with their parents. In fact, coresidence can, in principle, be seen as an especially

close form of intergenerational relationship in adulthood. Sharing the same apartment is likely to go along with frequent contact, mutual help, and financial benefits.

So far, previous studies on intergenerational coresidence have concentrated on the narrow definition of this phenomenon, namely, living in the same apartment, and have not distinguished living arrangements according to a wider definition, including what we might refer to as "near coresidence," in which parents and children live in the same building but in separate households (see Kohli, Künemund, Motel, & Szydlik 2000, p. 186). However, this differentiation is relevant, because it relates to different forms of intergenerational living arrangements. Although living together in the same household (coresidence) means that the residents of the unit can profit from pooling and sharing resources (economies of scale), economic reasons are less important for near coresidence, even though they should not be underestimated either. For example, living in a lodger flat or own apartment in the parents' owned home can save money if only utilities for water, gas, and so on, must be paid for. In some cases, the family can more easily afford a house if the different generations share their resources and occupy different apartments in the same house. Next to financial reasons, emotional aspects as well as instrumental support are likely to be important. For close parent-child relations in which everyone lives in the same building but separate apartments, near coresidence may offer a suitable compromise between coresidence in the narrow sense, on one hand, and greater geographical distance, on the other. These generations are able to enjoy emotionally close and frequent contact, yet they can still retreat into their own four walls. Near coresidence may also be an apt solution when grandchildren are looked after by grandparents (Igel & Szydlik, 2011) or when elderly parents are cared for by their adult children. Thus, near coresidence is also likely to be a crucial precondition for many forms of intergenerational solidarity. One cannot exclude, however, that country-specific housing situations influence families' possibilities of near coresidence considerably. Moreover, one cannot rule out that in some cases living on the same street but in separate buildings may resemble a similar situation in terms of emotional closeness, privacy, and, to some extent, frequency of contact and providing help. However, living in the same building may still involve relevant economic considerations (e.g., in the case of a "granny flat," shared resources to buy or build a family home, or a young adult child moving into an empty separate room in the attic or in the basement before moving out altogether).

Although the issue of coresidence between parents and their adult children has often been the subject of public debate in past years, there is little

knowledge in the social sciences of the precise reasons for coresidence. With the help of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), we are able to differentiate between individual, familial and, not least, societal factors for coresidence. So far, there is a lack of studies that compared coresidence in the various countries and investigated the differences systematically. However, we can see that family ties as well as changing family patterns in Europe in past decades are marked by divergence instead of convergence between countries (Kuijsten, 1996; Reher, 1998). Although a comparison of previous studies seems to indicate substantial differences in the extent of coresidence in European countries, most investigations involve only a single country and neglect country-specific differences (see, e.g., Attias-Donfut, 1997, for France; Tomassini, Wolf, & Rosina, 2003, for Italy). Against this background, in the present study, we investigate (near) coresidence by means of a systematic comparison of 11 European countries. We focus on two general questions: (a) What characterizes (near) coresidence of adult children and parents? and (b) How can one explain country-specific differences in Europe?

In the first step, the following section defines the issue theoretically, outlines the current state of research, and presents the hypotheses that are derived on the basis of the theoretical background and earlier findings. The next section presents the data and explains the operationalization of the variables as well as the methodological procedure. The empirical findings are divided into a first part that describes coresidence in Europe and a second part that presents multivariate analyses and discusses the results. Finally, we offer a discussion.

Theoretical Considerations, Previous Research, and Hypotheses

Which factors influence intergenerational (near) coresidence? As with the giving and taking of time and money, coresidence can be associated with functional solidarity. In this respect, Szydlik's (2000, 2008) theoretical model of intergenerational solidarity can be used as a general framework to investigate coresidence patterns of parents and their (adult) children. In the following, after briefly explaining the model, we provide an overview of previous research and derive hypotheses along the theoretical model.

According to theory, intergenerational solidarity in general and coresidence in particular can be influenced at the micro-level by the opportunity and need structures of both parents and children, family structures at the meso-level, and cultural-contextual structures at the macro-level. *Opportunity*

structures reflect opportunities or resources for solidarity. They enable, promote, hinder, or prevent social interaction. For example, available rooms in an apartment or a house may increase the chances of intergenerational (near) coresidence. By contrast, *need structures* indicate the need for solidarity. For instance, financial constraints due to unemployment or help needed because of bad health may increase the probability of adult children and parents sharing the same household. In addition to factors at the individual level, the existing family may also influence intergenerational solidarity, as the relation between parent and child is embedded in *family structures*. For example, single adult children may be more likely to coreside with their parents. Last but not least, *cultural-contextual structures* represent societal conditions within which intergenerational relations develop. These include conditions of the social, economic and tax system, the welfare state, the labor and housing market, as well as rules and norms of institutions and groups. Viewed from this perspective, country-specific differences with regard to the scale and structure of coresidence can go back to welfare-state arrangements. In fact, life courses are not least regulated by the state and especially by welfare-state policy (e.g., Kohli, 2007; Mayer & Müller, 1986). Staying longer in the educational system as an outcome of potential unemployment, returning to (further) education after periods of employment, or not leaving the parental home because of unaffordable rents may lead to destandardized life courses, which can be influenced through state interventions.

Previous studies indicate that the *opportunity and need structures* of both adult children and parents are important determinants of coresidence. On the basis of the European Household Panel, Le Blanc and Wolff (2006) showed that leaving the parental home is significantly influenced by the economic situation (and thus the individual opportunities or needs) of the child. Accordingly, Aassve, Billari, Mazzuco, and Ongaro (2002) found that (un) employment and the income situations of children are important determinants that explain the decision to leave home, especially in the southern European countries (see also DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990). But although the economic opportunities and needs of adult children have substantial influence, empirical investigations indicate that the effect of parents' economic opportunities is less unequivocal (Lee & Dwyer, 1996). For example, Young (1987) found that economic determinants, such as a higher income and a prestigious occupation, increase the probability of coresidence in Australia. However, Goldscheider and DaVanzo (1989) could not confirm this correlation. They showed that having a high income exerted a positive influence on the probability of a child's leaving home. The higher the income of the parents, the less frequently do parents (still) share quarters with their

adult children. Although Aquilino (1990, p. 407) showed that in the United States, the main factor responsible for increased coresidence is not the dependence of parents on their children but, to the contrary, the dependence of children on their parents (see also Ward & Logan, 1996), Choi (2003) founds, contrary to most other previous studies, that both parents' and children's opportunities or needs influence the probability of intergenerational coresidence (see also Lee & Dwyer, 1996). Kalmijn and Saraceno (2008) showed that "the overall evidence [of parental indicators] for coresidence is weaker, [but] the effects do suggest that coresidence is also affected by the needs of the parent" (p. 493).

In addition to parents' income, home ownership and the size of the home are also indicators of parents' opportunities to offer their children accommodation. According to the literature, homeowner status may reflect the ability of the parents to give their children a home, which results in prolonged coresidence (de Valk & Billari, 2007). There is empirical evidence that an owner-occupied home increases the likelihood of coresidence of parents and children (Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992, p. 219). Whereas ownership, like income, is an indicator of financial means in terms of the size of the home, it is of greater significance whether the amount and type of space available is adequate for children to live with their parents. Kim (2004) found that in Japan, the size of the home accounted for the coresidence of parents and their adult children. However, one must always bear in mind that the direction of causality cannot be established with any real certainty. Is the apartment larger because the children are still at home, or are the children still at home because enough living space is available?

Next to economic opportunities, the need structures of parents are important. The individual health status of parents is an indication of a possible need for solidarity. Thus, there tends to be greater coresidence of parents and their children when health problems occur or a partner is widowed (Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992, p. 211). The age of parents is another factor explaining coresidence patterns (Lin & Rogerson, 1995) because of the greater need for help and care in older age. Another aspect is loneliness in old age (see Dykstra, van Tilburg, & de Jong Gierveld, 2005). De Jong Gierveld and van Tilburg (1999) showed that the proportion of older people without partners in the Netherlands is higher than in Italy, where older parents live together with their adult children more often, with less (measured) loneliness evolving.

The migration background of the parents is another feature that can affect the incidence of generations living together. The underlying supposition is that coresidence is more probable if parents have a migration background. Apart from greater needs due to a less favorable economic situation,

traditional or religious factors might well be a reason for this effect. For Germany, Baykara-Krumme (2008) showed that although migrants do not have more adult children than natives, they live together with at least one adult child significantly more frequently. Thus, 40% of migrants but just less than 26% of natives share their households with adult children. However, although Angel and Tienda (1982) also found ethnic differences in the scale of coresidence in the United States, Aquilino (1990) only partially confirmed these results.

Taking the different economic opportunity and need structures into account, we assume that the better the child's economic opportunity structures, the less coresidence is to be expected; but the greater the economic needs, the higher the probability of coresidence (Hypothesis 1a). In the case of near coresidence, it can be assumed that the influence of economic opportunities and need structures is much weaker compared to coresidence, especially with regard to the labor force status of children (because of their particular economic situation, children in education or unemployment can be expected to more likely live in coresidence rather than in near coresidence) (Hypothesis 1b). The theoretical assumption and previous research indicate that the better the economic opportunities and the greater the needs of the parents, the higher the probability of coresidence (Hypothesis 2a). Again, intense need is more likely to lead to coresidence than to near coresidence, especially when parents are experiencing health problems. However, home ownership may also go along with a considerable frequency of near coresidence, for example, in the case of a "granny flat" (Hypothesis 2b).

In accordance with previous research, not only opportunities and needs but also *family structures* play a substantial role in explaining coresidence. It can be shown that the more children parents have, the higher the probability of their living with an adult child, whereas for the children, this probability decreases with each additional sibling (see Aquilino, 1990; Goldscheider & DaVanzo, 1989). Yet family formation processes of the adult child are also important. White (1994) argued that the tendency of (adult) children to leave home can be explained by the lifecycle concept. This concept treats leaving the parental home as a perfectly normal step in the course of life, which is subject to age-specific stages and which, in turn, is influenced by social norms. Alongside economic necessity, marital status is one of the most important determinants for the occurrence of coresidence: "Only parents with unmarried adult children have any appreciable risk of having an adult child at home" (Aquilino, 1990, p. 405). According to lifecycle theory, leaving the parental home is often associated with starting a family or living with a partner, especially in the southern European countries, although today, the majority of

young people experience time outside the parental home without family formation processes (Billari, Philipov, & Baizán, 2001). When grandchildren are present, parents and adult children are less likely to live together (Crimmins & Ingegneri, 1990) although an opposite effect might well develop if they have to raise small children without a partner. Nevertheless, Madigan and Hogan (1991) found that single mothers do not live closer to their parents, nor do they live with them more frequently.

In the light of the above, we assume that the probability of coresidence diminishes if the number of children increases, if the child is living in a partnership, and if there are grandchildren (Hypothesis 3a). In contrast, near coresidence can be expected to be more common in the case of grandchildren. Living nearby in the same house but in separate households can be helpful for all generations because it ensures opportunities for child care while still allowing to maintain some distance and privacy (Hypothesis 3b).

Finally, intergenerational solidarity can be influenced by *cultural-contextual structures*, which exert effects not only within a country but also, and particularly, between countries. The genders and ages of children are determinants that connect strongly with cultural and normative considerations. Empirical investigations for the European Union show that sons leave home later than daughters in all the countries investigated (Iacovou, 2001, p. 8; see also Billari, Philipov, & Baizán, 2001), which seems to be a culturally accepted norm reflecting later formations of partnership and marriages of men compared with women (Iacovou & Berthoud, 2001). Results for the United States show that younger parents are more likely to coreside with sons, while older parents more often live with daughters (Schmertmann, Boyd, Serow, & White, 2000).

Although the empirical interactions are not absolutely clear, the size of the community where the parental home is located is a contextual factor that may affect the coresidence of parents and their adult children. Adult children whose parents live in smaller towns or rural areas are more likely to coreside than those in larger cities (de Valk & Billari, 2007).

Although most studies have focused only on one country or provided two-country comparisons, Hank (2007) analyzed geographical distances and contacts in different European countries. He found that spatial proximity between parents and their (nearest living) child is much closer in the South than in the North and that coresidence is the major living arrangement in the Mediterranean countries. All in all, previous studies indicate that parents live with their adult children far more frequently in the southern European countries than in western Europe and, particularly, in comparison with northern Europe (Kiernan, 1999). But how can these distinct country-specific differences be explained? Naldini (2003) showed for Italy and Spain, for example,

that the inadequate support given to families by the state is important because their economic situation is much worse than in the northern countries. The differences can be attributed empirically to a number of factors; for example, high rents and poor labor market conditions can be regarded as contributory factors in the southern countries (see, e.g., Gianelli & Monfardini, 2003; Martinez-Granado & Ruiz-Castillo, 2002). In these countries, public family-related support services are quite underdeveloped, whereas traditional family structures are very strong (see Ferrera, 1997; Sciortino, 2004). Overall, welfare-state arrangements play an important role when explaining country-specific differences. The fewer the welfare-state services offered in a country, the stronger the role of family and the higher the incidence of coresidence; conversely, the more universal the state services on offer, the less the incidence of coresidence (Hypothesis 4a). Regarding near coresidence, one can expect similar effects, albeit to a lesser degree, because near coresidence reflects an intermediate spatial situation between living apart and living together, not least with regard to the influence of economic opportunities and needs (Hypothesis 4b). Economic conditions of societies are strongly connected with specific social security services, which in themselves influence coresidence patterns. Accordingly, we assume that poverty and inequality of income have a direct impact on coresidence: the greater these two factors, the more frequently do parents and adult children live together in the same household (Hypothesis 5a) or in the same house but in separate apartments. Again, the influence should be weaker for near coresidence, because in this case, overall economic causes are likely to be somewhat less important (Hypothesis 5b).

Data and Methods

The analysis of the (near) coresidence of elderly parents and their adult children is based on the SHARE; the data were collected in 2004 (see Boersch-Supan & Juerges, 2005). The survey provides information on people aged 50 years and older from 11 European countries: Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, Italy, and Greece. The advantages of these data are that a standardized procedure is used in all the countries, and a wide range of topics is surveyed. Interviewees were asked about various issues, such as age, income, health, accommodation, education, occupation, behavior, social support, activities, and expectations. Partners living in the same household were also surveyed, even if they were younger than 50 at the time. Overall, the age structure is as follows: the mean age of the respondents is 67.1, and the mean age of the respondents' adult children (aged 18 and older) is 37.6. A total of 28,517

people were interviewed, each of whom provided information about their parents and children (for country-specific sample sizes, see http://www.share-project.org). They were asked about age, gender, and distance of residence of all children. In addition, more specific questions were asked, focusing on up to four children (selected by the parents), such as marital status, employment status, number of children, and highest level of education. It should be mentioned that the following analyses relates to coresidence between parents (the respondents) and their adult children, not to the respondents and their own parents. Although the latter is also of importance, sample sizes are too small for analysis (in this case, only about a 1% coresidence rate was observed). Our data set is so organized that each child of a respondent counts as one observation.

The dependent variable is (near) coresidence, which means parents living with their adult children in the same household or building. This variable is based on the following question:

> Please look at card 5. Where does [child name] live? (1) In the same household, (2) In the same building, (3) Less than 1 kilometer away, (4) Between 1 and 5 kilometers away, (5) Between 5 and 25 kilometers away, (6) Between 25 and 100 kilometers away, (7) Between 100 and 500 kilometers away, (8) More than 500 kilometers away and (9) More than 500 kilometers away in another country.

Because of the differentiation between coresidence, near coresidence, and no coresidence, the dependent variable is formed on the basis of three categories in which Items 1 (same household) and 2 (same building) are retained, and Items 3 to 9 are subsumed in one category (no coresidence). As indicated in the introduction, for some respondents, one cannot definitely exclude a similar situation when living in near coresidence or living close by on the same street. Unfortunately, the SHARE data do not provide this information. In fact, "less than 1 kilometer away" may include direct neighbors as well as more distant frail elderly without cars who are rarely able to visit their children without help. But if we look at the special housing situation in Europe, we can observe that living in the same large apartment block, which in terms of geographical proximity is similar to living as neighbors in the same street, plays only a marginal role. Overall, only 2% of the respondents live in apartment blocks with more than nine floors. The large majority (67%) live in single homes or two-family houses.

According to the theoretical model, different micro, meso and macro indicators are taken into account as explanatory variables. In the empirical model,

variables are first included that indicate *opportunities and needs of children*. Employment status and the individual level of education are included in the multivariate estimations indicating the child's opportunity to move out. Six dummy variables are incorporated for employment status, which distinguish between employment, in education, unemployment, (early) retirement, economic inactivity (homemaker), and a residual category. The levels of education are recorded in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) and assigned to three categories that indicate low (ISCED 1), intermediate (ISCED 2), and high (ISCED 3) levels of education (see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1999). To avoid "losing" too many cases, people who are still at school and those who state they have other unclassified qualifications are subsumed under ISCED 1. As ISCED reflects the highest educational or vocational degree, university students, for example, are not subsumed under ISCED 1 but under ISCED 2, because they have obtained a university entrance qualification at the upper secondary level.

Second, indicators are included to denote *opportunities and needs of parents (respondents)*. To indicate the parents' economic opportunity structures, the models also cover income, home ownership, and the number of rooms. Income is generated on the basis of the information provided by the parents on their individual sources of income. The individual types of income are summated and then weighted in accordance with the old Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development scale with a factor of 1 for the first adult person and 0.7 for a second parent. Because adult children in a household would by definition increase the total income, only the parents' income is taken into account and weighted for need in line with the size of the household on the assumption that no child is present. The income value thus corresponds to the income that would have been available to a household if only the parents were living there. The equivalent household income adjusted for purchasing power is then calculated, and the logarithm is finally applied to minimize outlier effects. As additional indicator, note is also made of whether the parental home is owner occupied or not. Another indicator of opportunity structures is the number of rooms of the parental home.

The health of the individual parent is an indicator of a possible need for solidarity, particularly if this parent no longer has a partner. For this purpose, an interaction term is formed from the state of health and the presence of a partner. Health is recorded as the number of limitations on the activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living. Activities of daily living cover eating, dressing, personal hygiene, and walking, whereas instrumental activities of daily living include shopping, preparing meals, housekeeping,

and dealing with financial matters. Overall, the indicator ranges between 0 (no help needed) and 26 (needy on all points). Although "number of limitations (single parent)" is the main effect for persons without a partner, the interaction term described as "number of Limitations × Partner" indicates whether the influence of limitations on coresidence differs for people living in a partnership and without a partner. "Number of limitations (with partner)" reflects the main effect for parents living in a partnership. We also consider the mean age of both parents in the household (ranging from 37 to 101 years, each with very few cases, with a mean of 67.1 years), which is incorporated as linear and squared. If only one parent is available, the mean age corresponds to the age of the respondent. After controlling for health and associated restrictions, the remaining age effect may provide an indicator of the possible need for emotional closeness due to increasing loneliness in older age (see the corresponding theoretical arguments in the previous chapter). We also take into account whether the household has a migration background. The parental home is categorized as a household with a migration background if at least one parent claims to have been born in another country or does not possess the nationality of the country of residence.

Third, *family structures* are included in the model; in other words, consideration is given to whether the parents have additional children, the child is in a partnership, or whether grandchildren exist. The number of additional children and grandchildren is recorded using four dummy variables. Distinction is made between whether the parents have no other (grand)children, one other (grand)child, two other (grand)children, or three or more other (grand) children. Married children and those who live with a partner are assigned the value 1; those without a partner are given the value 0.

Fourth, *cultural-contextual structures* are taken into account. Two indicators that reflect cultural aspects are the gender and the age of the child. Both the linear and the square terms of the child's age are considered to examine the age trend (which ranges between 18 and 82 years, with a mean of 38 years; only adult children are considered). The size of the community of residence is also included and recorded on the basis of one of the generated SHARE variables, with a distinction made between small towns and rural areas on one hand, and (big) cities on the other. Besides gender, age, and size of residence that explain cultural-contextual differences in countries, a group of indicators is considered for the differences between countries. For this purpose, 11 country dummies are used in the statistical estimations as well as a set of welfare-state indicators. The latter are social security and family expenditures on one side (measured as the total yearly amount in U.S. dollars, adjusted for purchasing power parity) and two characteristics reflecting the

incidence of poverty on the other, namely, the poverty rate (new Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development scale, 60% of median) and a measure of the inequality of income, the Gini coefficient. To examine the effects of these indicators for each macro-variable, a single multinomial logit model is determined, which comprises all indicators of the model presented in Table 1 (except country dummies).

To analyze the difference between coresidence, near coresidence, and no coresidence, multinomial logit models with robust standard errors correcting for the clustered data structure were estimated (see Greene, 2003). The probability of the occurrence or nonoccurrence of (near) coresidence is estimated as a function of the explanatory variables. The model specifications include mainly independent variables that are linked by addition. Because some characteristics may be linked multiplicatively, we also include an interaction term (for details, see Ai & Norton, 2003). In our case, the "number of limitations (single parent)" and the "number of limitations (with partner)" reflect the main effects, while the interaction term indicates whether the influence of the health status is different for people with a partner in contrast to those without a partner.

Testing for multicollinearity between individual and country level variables shows no problems, because we decided to estimate a separate model for each macro indicator. The variance inflation factor values are mostly around 1, with the exception of (a) age effects for parents and children, indicating an expected correlation between these indicators, and (b) the income variable, which is not surprisingly correlated with education.

Results

Patterns of Coresidence

Coresidence between parents and their adult children is not uncommon in contemporary European societies, although it differs in extent depending on the specific countries (Figure 1). A first glance at the rates of coresidence reveals that far fewer adult children live with their parents in northern than in southern Europe. For example, in Italy and Greece, just less than 30% of all adult children live with their parents, whereas, by contrast, this applies to only 5% in Sweden and 4% in Denmark. In southern European countries, particularly in Italy and Greece as well as in the German-speaking European countries of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, near coresidence, that is, living under one roof but in separate apartments, is not a rare phenomenon. By contrast, this form of living situation hardly plays a role in Sweden or

Table 1. Rates of Coresidence

	Near Coresidence		Coresidence	
Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Opportunity and need structures of child				
Labor force status (*employment*)				
In education/apprenticeship	0.24	0.19	0.29**	0.07
Unemployed	0.28+	0.14	0.70**	0.08
(Invalidity) pension	0.16	0.19	0.59**	0.14
Homemaker	−0.02	0.11	0.15	0.16
Other	0.12	0.28	0.62**	0.13
Education according to ISCED (*middle*)				
Low	−0.20*	0.08	0.25**	0.06
High	−0.59**	0.08	−0.56**	0.06
Opportunity and need structures of parents (respondent)				
Income				
Linear	0.24	0.41	0.35	0.24
Quadratic	−0.02	0.02	−0.02+	0.01
Proprietary (*no*)				
Yes	0.99**	0.11	0.21**	0.07
Number of rooms	−0.21**	0.03	0.17**	0.02
Health (ADLs + IADLs)				
Number of limitations (single parent)	−0.01	0.02	0.09**	0.03
Number of Limitations × Partner	−0.02	0.03	−0.08*	0.03
Number of limitations (with partner)	−0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02
Age, mean				
Linear	0.13**	0.05	0.02	0.04
Quadratic	−0.00+	0.00	0.00	0.00
Migration background (*no*)				
Yes	0.04	0.11	0.22**	0.08
Family structures				
Additional children (*none*)				
1	−0.34**	0.09	−0.37**	0.08
2	−0.70**	0.10	−0.52**	0.08
3 and more	−0.95**	0.12	−0.71**	0.09
Cohabitation/marriage of child (*no*)				
Yes	−0.55**	0.08	2.90**	0.08

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Variables	Near Coresidence		Coresidence	
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Grandchildren (*none*)				
1	0.16	0.10	−1.13**	0.10
2	0.35**	0.10	−1.34**	0.11
3 and more	0.33**	0.12	−1.32**	0.17
Cultural-contextual structures				
Gender (*daughter*)				
Son	0.18**	0.06	0.32**	0.04
Age of child				
Linear	−0.05+	0.06	−0.35**	0.02
Quadratic	0.00	0.00	0.00**	0.00
Area of building (*small towns and rural area*)				
(Big) city	−0.16*	0.07	−0.17**	0.05
Constant	−8.08**	2.22	3.28*	1.54
n	34,480			
Pseudo-R^2	.42			
Log likelihood initial value	−20,182.77			
Log likelihood final value	−11,673.98			

Source: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe 2004 Release 2.1; authors' own calculations.
Note: Model also controlling for countries. Reference categories are in italics. Significance levels for the main effect "number of limitations (with partner)" are calculated on the basis of post hoc probing (see Aiken & West, 1991, pp. 14ff.).
$^{+}p < .10$. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

Denmark or in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, although the total rate of coresidence in these countries follows the western European pattern.

Against this background, we must bear in mind that next to individual or familial structures, the specific housing market in different countries will also determine coresidence. Especially in countries with more large apartment blocks, near coresidence is more likely than in countries (such as the northern ones) with housing cultures more strongly marked by small, individually separate homes. It can be assumed that country-specific public subsidies for new housing and traditional architectural features, such as in-law suites or two-family homes, also play a major role.

Determinants of Coresidence

To find out what affects coresidence in a European comparison, this section investigates the determinants with the aid of multinomial regression models

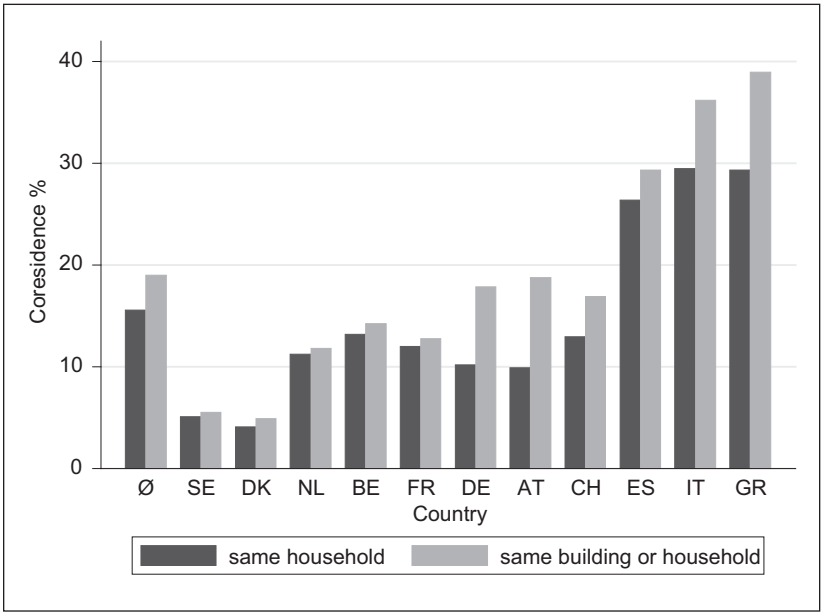

Figure 1. Multinomial Logit Model: Determinants of Coresidence
Source: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, Release 2.1; authors' own calculations (weighted).
Note: All children over 18 years (n = 36,928). AT = Austria; BE = Belgium; CH = Switzerland; DE = Germany; DK = Denmark; ES = Spain; FR = France; GR = Greece; IT = Italy; NL = Netherlands; SE = Sweden; Ø = overall mean.

and discusses the relationship between individual, familial, and cultural-contextual determinants and (near) coresidence. Furthermore, separate analyses for each country (not presented here) show that the indicators (with few exceptions) are very similar in all countries not only in terms of direction but also in size. Table 1 features a model that includes not only individual opportunity and need structures of the adult children and their parents but also family structures and cultural-contextual indicators, such as gender, age of child, area of building, and countries (latter effects shown in Table 2). In a next step, avoiding multicollinearity, single multinomial logit models are estimated for each macro indicator while controlling for individual and family structures to investigate the extent to which national differences persist when controlling for individual and family characteristics.

Table 2. Multinomial Logit Models: Cultural-contextual Differences in Europe (n = 34,480)

	Near Coresidence		Coresidence	
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Country (*Germany*)				
Denmark	−2.27**	0.26	−1.27**	0.15
Sweden	−3.03**	0.27	−0.91**	0.12
The Netherlands	−2.47**	0.26	0.13	0.11
Belgium	−2.15**	0.17	0.67**	0.10
Austria	0.09	0.11	0.34**	0.13
Switzerland	−0.50**	0.18	−0.23	0.14
France	−2.23**	0.19	0.23*	0.11
Spain	−0.91**	0.15	2.15**	0.12
Italy	−0.03	0.12	2.46**	0.11
Greece	0.16	0.12	1.94**	0.12
Social expenditures	−0.29**	0.03	−0.57**	0.02
Family expenditures	−0.32**	0.02	−0.55**	0.02
Poverty rate	0.19**	0.01	0.26**	0.01
Gini coefficient	0.15**	0.09	0.25**	0.07

Source: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe 2004 Release 2.1; authors' own calculations.
Note: Models controlling for all independent variables presented in Table 1. Reference category is in italics.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

The first two indicators, employment status and level of education, denote individual opportunity structures and the needs of an adult child (see Table 1). The results confirm previous research and show that economic necessity (e.g., vocational training or unemployment) leads to children living with their parents in a common household much more frequently. However, employment status hardly has any effect on near coresidence; the only exception is unemployment, when children live more frequently in the same building as their parents. The individual level of education is not only an indicator of opportunities but also of greater geographical mobility. Accordingly, we observe that the higher educated live with their parents much less frequently than persons with intermediate education (for both types of coresidence), while the less educated do so significantly more often in a narrow form of coresidence. All in all, we can confirm that the better the child's opportunity structure, the less

coresidence is discerned, but the higher the economic needs, the greater the likelihood of coresidence (Hypothesis 1a). These effects are much weaker for those who live in near coresidence (Hypothesis 1b).

What are the influences of parental (economic) opportunities and needs? As other previous studies have shown, the income of parents has no significant effect on coresidence in our analyses. What is important, however, is whether the parents are homeowners or whether they rent their home. Home ownership encourages coresidence, and this applies not only in the narrow sense but also, to an even greater extent, in the broader sense. It is more than likely that this has at least something to do with the property being a single-family home with an integrated apartment facility. The number of rooms also affects the incidence of coresidence. The larger the parental home, the more likely it is that adult children live there. However, if adult children remain in the parental home, a larger apartment is necessary. In this respect, the causal direction is ambiguous. Conversely, near coresidence is less likely to occur as the number of rooms increases; this may be because larger apartments are found more often in single-family homes (although SHARE provides information on the type of building, this variable is not suitable for analysis, because it makes no distinction between one- and two-family homes).

One important indicator predicting the need of the parents for coresidence is the health of the individual. Yet as our empirical analyses show, the state of health is important only in conjunction with a partnership setting. Limitations of health have no effect on near coresidence, irrespective of whether a partner is present. However, an effect on coresidence is discernible in that more restrictions increase the likelihood of coresidence if only one parent is present. In a partnership situation, health restrictions do not entail children living more frequently with their parents. The difference is statistically significant, as the interaction effect shows. Although health problems are often associated with increasing age, we can exclude this connection when controlling for health. Accordingly, parents' age would seem to have no effect on coresidence, health problems aside. Nevertheless, a significant age effect on near coresidence is discernible, underlining the supposition that, as parents get older, near coresidence becomes more likely. The effect possibly reflects an increasing need for child care by grandparents, but it can also be an indicator of isolation and the emotional need for proximity in older age. Migration background tends to make coresidence more frequent but has no influence on near coresidence. When controlling for the economic situation, we can exclude financial reasons and see that different cultural or religious norms might very well be responsible. Overall, regarding the influence of the parents' opportunities and needs on coresidence, Hypothesis 2a can be partly

confirmed: The income situation plays no role, while home ownership is important and health status is only relevant if there is no partner. In terms of near coresidence, the empirical analysis also supports the assumptions: Particularly home ownership promotes living under one roof (Hypothesis 2b).

Apart from individual characteristics of the child and the parents, family structures also play a role. The number of children influences coresidence: The greater the number of children, the less likely it is with each extra child that they all live together. This applies to both shared accommodation and separate apartments in the same building. Cramped living conditions could be the deciding factor, although it might also be that each individual feels less responsible for the parents, given the prevalence of so many siblings. A partnership of the adult child also plays an important role. In terms of the child, the lifecycle concept means that having a family of one's own is the main indicator of one's housing situation. Whereas a partnership of the child reduces (near) coresidence, the prevalence of grandchildren enhances the probability of near coresidence but diminishes the likelihood of coresidence in the narrow sense. In all, the empirical results clearly show that competing family members, both on the child's side (partnership) and on the parents' side (number of (grand)children), reduce the rate of coresidence of parents and their adult children (confirming Hypothesis 3a) with the exception of near coresidence if there are two or more grandchildren. In the latter case, parents and children more often live in near coresidence (Hypothesis 3b), which may enable the grandparents to help cover the potential need for child care more easily.

Finally, cultural-contextual structures are considered. In contrast to daughters, sons show a greater tendency to live with their parents, this effect being more pronounced for the narrow definition of coresidence. The age of the child is another important factor: The probability of coresidence in a single household declines significantly with increasing age. This confirms the assumptions of the lifecycle concept, according to which moving into one's own apartment is a "normal" step in the life course and coresidence of parents and their children "automatically" becomes less frequent as people age. This corresponds with childbearing and marriage and also with age norms. The age when coresidence ceases to decline and starts to rise again can be calculated (see above). The calculation of this turning point shows that adult children tend to live less frequently with their parents until the age of 54 years; thereafter, there is a greater probability of coresidence. One reason for this could be that from this age on, children take in their parents, who by this time are usually aged 70 and older.

Living in towns and urban areas makes coresidence between parents and their adult children less probable in comparison with more rural areas. An opposite effect is also conceivable, as it can be assumed that children from rural areas need to be geographically more mobile than children from urban areas because of better and more job opportunities in cities. Yet on the other hand, living space is often more plentiful in the countryside than in urban areas (more single-family homes). This reduces the need to move into a home or apartment of one's own.

With regard to the cultural-contextual differences between countries, Table 2 illustrates the respective regression coefficients for country dummies and macro-variables while controlling for the characteristics of the model presented in Table 1. Germany is the reference category here because it is a conservative estimator as middle category and embodies comparatively many cases. An important result is the fact that coresidence in Europe steadily increases from north to south. Parents and children live much more frequently together in the south (Greece, Italy, and Spain). The picture is not so clear for near coresidence. In this case, the pattern is interrupted, for in Germany and Austria as well as Italy and Greece, a particularly large number of adult children live in the same building with their parents but in separate apartments.

What are the reasons for these country-specific differences? Empirical evidence shows that welfare state arrangements in conjunction with economic differences at the societal level are important. Controlling for the independent variables presented in Table 1 shows the influence of the macro indicators to be significant. On the whole, the higher the public expenditures in general and for families in particular, the less likely is coresidence (Hypothesis 4a), and the greater the degree of poverty and inequality, the higher are the coresidence rates (Hypothesis 5b). For near coresidence the effects are weaker but also significant and point in the same direction (Hypothesis 4b and 5b). This means a strong welfare state counteracts coresidence in particular because benefits are greater and, to an extent, offset a relatively weak individual economic situation. Moreover, in addition to the individual economic situation, the general economic situation of a region also exerts a strong influence. In countries with greater poverty and more inequality of income, the individual need for coresidence is also higher.

Discussion

Although coresidence of parents and their adult children is relatively widespread in many western and especially southern European societies, we can observe that in the North, intergenerational coresidence in adulthood seems to be a significantly less frequent way of life. With regard to individual and

family characteristics in Europe, the results of previous empirical analyses can be confirmed; however, most of these relate only to one country. In all, near coresidence reflects relatively similar patterns; in general, it is not so much the needs and opportunities of parents but rather those of the adult children that influence coresidence. Although the patterns of coresidence and near coresidence are on the whole similar, there are also striking differences: (a) Living in a shared household is more common for adult family generations than living in separate apartments in one building. (b) Grandchildren raise the probability of near coresidence but decrease the probability of a shared household with adult children. (c) Economic pressures and necessities are apparently less crucial in the case of near coresidence.

To what extent do social conditions contribute to the coresidence of adult generations? Coresidence can be viewed not only as a reaction to individual and familial contingencies but also to social uncertainties. Accordingly, the European comparison shows that both coresidence and near coresidence are determined to an exceptional degree by macro-structural influences. Not only the individual economic situation is of impact but also the economic standing of the country in general. This result supports the presumption that coresidence is frequently not an opted way of life but that economic pressure and uncertainties are of far greater influence. In the light of this, the overall effect of cultural-contextual structures cannot be overlooked. It is still the individuals themselves and their needs and opportunities that decide whether intergenerational solidarity is required and whether (near) coresidence is necessary or even wanted; however, societal structures obviously also have a substantial influence on the decision.

On the basis of the empirical results, it can be concluded that adult generations living together is an especially important form of family solidarity in cases in which the state takes less responsibility for its citizens. Against this background, it is important to point out that governmental social policies can strongly affect family behavior. Family generations face acute social challenges as processes of economic change, such as globalization and the greater demands for flexibility on employees, lead to increasing uncertainties and greater friction. At the same time, a retrenchment of the welfare state is placing increasing demands on relatives. Elderly parents and adult children thus find themselves having to take responsibility more frequently for one another in many ways.

Summing up, the present study offers insights into the question as to why adult children and their parents do or do not live together in different European countries. Because of data restrictions, however, it is not yet possible to discern whether the child lives in the home of the parents or vice versa. It would hence be helpful if future research would concentrate on differentiating

between the various types of coresidence at greater depth. Another limitation is the lack of direct information as to why parents and children choose to live together, especially in terms of subjective measures. Further research should focus on emotional closeness (which is not possible with the SHARE data) as a determinant of (near) coresidence, in general, and geographic proximity, in particular, to acquire even more profound insights into the mechanisms of intergenerational living distance.

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