The majority of young adults in modern societies leaves the parental home and establishes independent households between the ages of 20 and 30. However, the share of adult children co-residing with their parents is on the rise (Ogg and Renaut, 2006; Kaplan, 2012). Exploring which factors might compel young adults to co-reside with their parents promises to shed light on relevant need patterns which are not met by social policies. The lion’s share of previous studies either focuses on the age of home-leaving of young adults, cohabitation resulting from care dependencies of frail parents, or examines the phenomenon as a whole across all phases of life. However, it is crucial to gather information on the phenomenon occurring in the more independent stages of life – somewhere in between the natural life phases of adolescence and aging. Moreover, most of the research done in this field does not include international comparisons and thus cannot account for cultural, economic and welfare-state-specific variations. The present article aims at addressing these research gaps.

Additionally, as straight forward as the topic may seem, the moderate explanatory power of numerous papers bears witness to its covert complexity (Kaplan, 2012). Life course scholar Szydlik is one the few researchers who contributed to the development of a theoretical basis, considering intergenerational cohabitation a form of functional family solidarity (Isengard & Szydlik, 2012). In this article, his model of intergenerational solidarity is revised and extended to include the effect of various forms of family solidarity.

Based on the data of the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement (SHARE), theory-driven, quantitative and cross-national analyses are conducted and multi-level models calculated. It can be maintained that it is mainly young adults’ needs that determine intergenerational cohabitation. However, the results suggest that parental familialistic values also play a vital role in the recognition of their adult child’s needs.