

## Did you plan to move in with your parents? Rethinking Shared Living

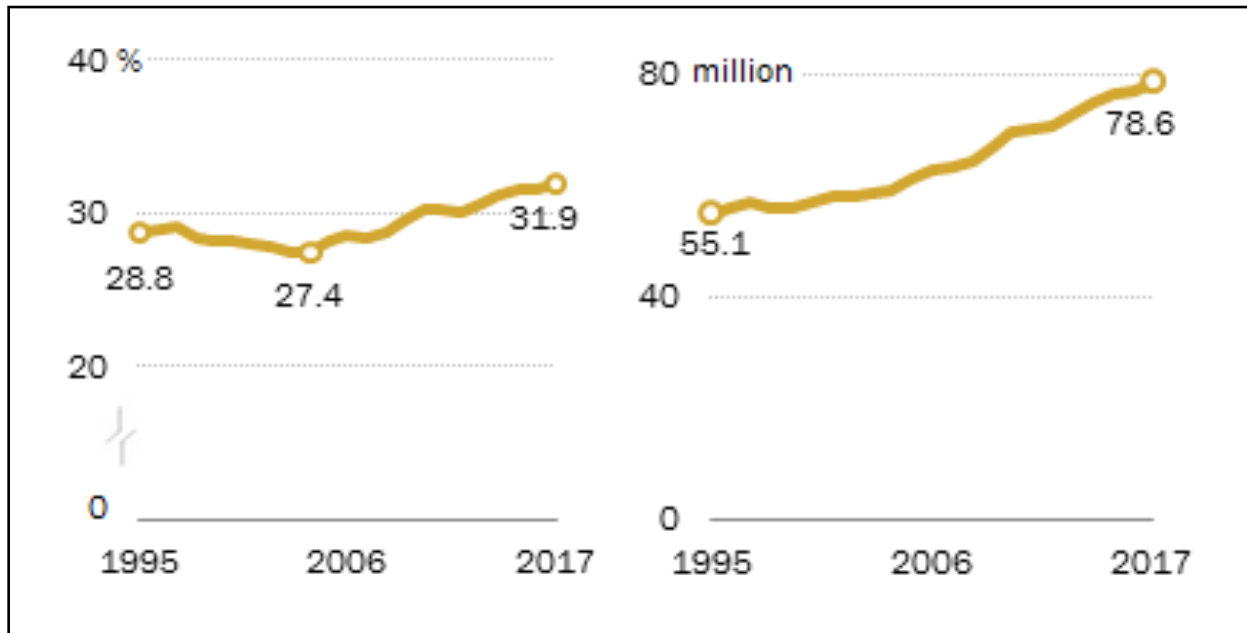


Figure 1: Left shows percentage of U.S. adults living in a shared household, defined as a household with at least one adult who is not the head of house, the spouse or unmarried partner of the head, or an 18-24 year old student. Right shows increase in millions of these households from 1995 to 2017.

Source: Pew Research (<https://pewrsr.ch/2FO1nzh>)

### Are we all “doubling up”?

As people flock to urban environments for work, housing prices are sky-rocketing with little work put towards creating new developments. This pushes many adult children to move back in with their parents as shown in Figure 1. This group is even larger than those who choose to live with a non-relative like a roommate. Indicated elsewhere in the study, the number of “extra” adults living in a household with a *non-relative* has actually decreased since 1995. A cultural cause for this trend in the graph may be the fact that nonwhite families embrace multigenerational living and that the nonwhite population in the U.S. is growing.

## **Implications**

These shared living situations have strong “primary” implications such as creating the issue of dealing with multiple incomes and household expenses. Who should pay for groceries? How do you divide up the cost of shared spaces compared to private bedrooms? Circumstances that cause children to move back in with their parents may be temporary, making it even more difficult to establish rules and norms for these questions. This leaves the future of shared living an undesigned area that could either be intentionally understood or neglected, creating larger social problems.

Furthermore, since these multigenerational homes are not the traditional norm in the U.S., how will our youth have to adapt to the decreased privacy and ownership of space? This is strengthened by the fact that Americans are marrying and owning houses later in life. We will spend increasing amounts of time living with others that are not our significant others. Perhaps the home of the future will be less of a “meeting space” because of the differing age levels and social circles of the inhabitants. This may lead to secondary effects like increased need for public, communal spaces like libraries and cafes to meet others. Perhaps we can look to countries like Italy where a majority of new college grads cannot find work and are moving back in with their parents. We can see how this group is tackling the increasingly prevalent concept of “shared living” as a way to forecast its future in the U.S.