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Family Experiences and the Erosion of Support for Intergenerational Coresidence

We test the affluence interpretation of the decline in intergenerational coresidence, which implicitly affirms that close kin would still offer housing to those in need, by examining the factors that influence attitudes about coresidence with young adult children and aging parents. Using national data, we model the effects of living in a multigenerational household in childhood and living independently from parents prior to marriage on respondents' obligation to allow aging parents and adult children who are in need to coreside. We find strong effects of living arrangements experiences on attitudes that differ by the type of intergenerational coresidence.

Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
they have to let you in.

Robert Frost, "Death of the Hired Man"

Shelter is a fundamental resource that family members attempt to provide each other when nec-

essary. Although levels of intergenerational coresidence have declined dramatically in recent decades in the United States and in other developed countries, most analysts interpret these changes as the result of increases in affluence that have allowed previously dependent relatives to split off from the nuclear family to live in a home of their own (Kuznets, 1978; Michael, Fuchs, & Scott, 1980). Given that splitting off increases the privacy of both those who split off and their relatives, the increased number of young adults leaving home prior to marriage (Goldscheider, 1997) and the greater likelihood that widowed parents live alone (Ruggles, 1996) are usually seen as strictly beneficial. The affluence interpretation underlies this positive view, and it suggests that although the necessity for coresidence has declined, there has been no reduction in the commitment to provide it. Rather, ascribing change to affluence implicitly affirms that close kin would still offer housing to those in need.

However, changes in preferences may have been as important as increases in affluence in the splitting off of extra relatives from American families (Pampel, 1983). The outcry in the popular press (Cowan, 1989; Gross, 1991; Lindsay, 1984) and from some scholars (Schnaiburg & Goldenburg, 1989) against the recent increase in grown children living with parents, despite the dramatic increases in housing costs and youth unemployment (Levy, 1987), suggests that Americans may have become increasingly opposed to

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parents and adult children sharing a residence, even if the parent or child is in a difficult situation and lacks the physical or financial resources to make separate living feasible. In fact, the commitment to provide housing to close kin in need may be weakening. Many may no longer feel that they have to let you in.

These two explanations—changes in affluence and changes in preferences—are not contradictory, given that changes in attitudes and preferences are likely to occur as a result of changes in behavior. The decline in coresidence has been under way for most of the twentieth century (Ruggles, 1994). Through social-psychological behaviorist mechanisms of social learning and through the interpretation of experiences via processes such as those set forth by cognitive theorists, people develop attitudes about their family relationships and obligations (Caspi & Elder, 1988; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1988). Children watch what significant others like their parents do, hear what they say, and learn by imitating many of their parents' attitudes and behavioral choices. If increases in affluence mean that families need to provide intergenerational coresidence less often, children are less likely to observe such living arrangements and are more likely to conclude that such solutions are inappropriate or unnecessary.

Of course, not all learning takes place in childhood, and most people find that the economic and family commitments of adulthood restructure their choices and priorities and increase their concern for the needs of others. However, if increases in affluence lead people to make new choices when they enter adulthood that affirm the priority of privacy over interdependence for themselves when they enter adulthood, the attitudes learned in childhood may be even more strongly reinforced. Hence, nonfamily living early in adulthood may weaken commitment to intergenerational coresidence.

In this study, we focus on two paths of attitude development, one in childhood and one in adulthood. These paths are the experience of coresidence with grandparents and the experience of leaving the parental home prior to marriage. We propose that, because living separately became economically more feasible and adult coresidency became associated with poverty, the desire for increased privacy superseded the commitment to sharing living space with family members. Those who never experienced coresidence with a grandparent may be less open to the idea of providing residential support to their own aging parents. Similarly, those who experienced intergenerational privacy

as a result of affluence in young adulthood may increasingly require it for themselves, even when the resources needed to maintain separate housing for their own adult children—or their aging parents—are not available. We examine the link between having experienced these two forms of intergenerational coresidence and current attitudes toward each of them.

HYPOTHESES

With the exception of parental marital disruption, there is little research on the effects of experiencing various forms of living arrangements while growing up. We know little about how living outside a family setting early in adulthood, which only became common in the late 1960s (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994), shapes people's lives. Early nonfamily living contributes to lower educational attainment (White & Lacy, 1997) and appears to weaken support for gender-segregated roles (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991), but we have no evidence about its effects on expectations about living arrangements.

We know even less about how living with grandparents as a child influences people's lives (Aldous, 1995). Grandparental coresidence may increase the quality of parenting that children receive (Chase-Lansdale, Brooks-Gunn, & Zamsky, 1992). However, there are probably fewer such influences because, although there has been relatively little change during the twentieth century in the likelihood that a woman will have a parent move in with her, the duration of such coresidence has declined between 25% and 33% across cohorts, and it is increasingly likely to occur later, after all grandchildren have left home (Weinick, 1995).

We expect that those who have not experienced either grandparental coresidence or prolonged coresidence as an unmarried adult in their parents' home will have less favorable attitudes toward these living arrangements. Hence, we propose two similar hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Those who lived with grandparents while children will have a more favorable attitude toward coresiding with parents who need residential support.

Hypothesis 2: Those who left home prior to marriage to live outside a family setting will have less favorable attitudes toward coresiding with adult children who need residential support.

However, the effects of nonfamily living on family-related attitudes were less clear-cut for young men than for young women. The effect of experiencing nonfamily living in young adulthood had a weaker positive effect on men's acceptance of the employment of mothers than on women's. Expecting to leave home before marriage also delayed men's rate of marriage less than women's (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993), and experiencing nonfamily living actually accelerated men's marriage timing (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). These weaker effects for men may reflect the fact that nonfamily living in young adulthood has been more common for men throughout the twentieth century. Hence, we further hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: The effects of nonfamily living will be stronger for women than for men.

However, the relationship between actual experiences of living arrangements and attitudes toward intergenerational coresidence might be the result of other factors that influence both processes. The omission of some of these other factors might produce spurious relationships, as would be the case if, for example, the more highly educated are less likely to have such experiences and are less family oriented. In contrast, some factors might mask the linkage between living arrangements and attitudes. Hence, it is important to include in the model factors that may be related to both. We include measures of family-related attitudes, other life course and family experiences, and social class, as well as indicators of religion, race, and ethnicity.

DATA, VARIABLES, AND METHOD

Data

The analyses are based on data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), designed at the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin. Field work was carried out by the Institute for Survey Research at Temple University during 1987 and 1988. Interviews were conducted with 13,008 men and women, representative of the U.S. population aged 19 and older (or married). Interviews included questions about a range of family-related attitudes and behaviors, including detailed histories of family transitions. (For more information on this survey, see Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988.) We describe how we used the information to construct

our two measures of attitudes about coresidence, the two types of coresidential experiences, and the more complex control variables, as well as the technique we used to analyze them.

Dependent Variables

The data allow us to predict variation in these two measures of support for intergenerational coresidence by using constructs closely related to our theoretical concerns. (See Table 1 for definitions and weighted distributions of the dependent and independent variables.) We derived the dependent variables from two questions about helping members of other generations with coresidence. These questions are in a self-administered portion of the questionnaire. Levels of nonresponse were somewhat higher in this portion of the survey. As a result, we have about 11,000 cases for analysis.

We chose to analyze attitudes about coresidence, rather than actual coresidence, because our central concern is with the variation in the sense of obligation to provide, rather than in actually doing so. We realize that there is likely to be substantial measurement error in these questions because the questions are general and do not measure the willingness on the part of the respondent to coreside with a specific family member. Not all who express such an obligation can truly be counted on by their relatives, and many who do not endorse such a commitment in the abstract might find good reasons to help out their own kin. However, we have no reason to expect this weakness in measurement to be substantially biased. Further, examining attitudes is useful when the potential behavior is distant or infrequent, as is the case here (Dawes & Smith, 1985; Eggebeen, 1992). The attitude items are as follows (shortened titles appear in the parentheses): Children ought to let aging parents live with them when the parents can no longer live by themselves (dependent parent); parents ought to let their adult children live with them when the children are having problems (children with problems).

Each dependent variable is a 5-point scale of the responses to these items, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Higher values on the scale represent greater support for the given form of intergenerational coresidence. About 13% responded to these questions by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the idea that parents ought to provide housing to children having problems, and 25% responded in this fashion about aging parents. There is a slightly higher level of support for providing housing to a financially

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (WEIGHTED)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> (Continuous Variables)
Agreement that children should let aging parents coreside (1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> , 5 = <i>strongly agree</i>)	2.44	.96
Agreement that children should let adult children coreside (1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> , 5 = <i>strongly agree</i>)	2.84	1.00
Grandparent lived in parental home	.17	—
Lived with parents in grandparental home	.09	—
Lived with grandparents but without parents	.04	—
Nonfamily living (left home > 1 year before marriage)	.54	—
Female	.52	—
Traditional roles (scale 0–5)	3.38	1.22
Disapproval of mothers' working (scale 0–28)	16.60	5.31
Never married	.22	—
Minor children in household	.39	—
Parent of noncoresident children	.32	—
Number of siblings	3.21	2.57
Age at survey	42.59	17.26
Both parents deceased	.29	—
Parents divorced	.09	—
College education (any)	.42	—
Income (natural log)	8.26	2.52
Income missing	.12	—
Black	.11	—
Hispanic	.07	—
Catholic	.23	—
Jewish	.03	—
Fundamentalist Protestant	.12	—
(White nonfundamentalist Protestant)	(.44)	—
<i>n</i>	10,979	

stressed adult child than to a physically dependent parent (2.84 vs. 2.44).

The Two Coresidential Experiences

Living with grandparents. We measure whether respondents ever lived for 4 months or more with a grandparent while growing up. The large amount of detail in the NSFH allows us to distinguish three different circumstances: living with grandparents but without parents (among those who did not live continuously with both parents), living with parents in the grandparents' home, and living with grandparents in the parental home. Although the information does not indicate the reasons for these experiences, we think it likely that only the last case normally represents residential need on the part of the grandparent. The other two cases indicate that the respondent's own parental family was in need of housing for the child or for the parents as well.

More than one quarter of the sample (27%) had one or more of these experiences. (The cumulative proportions in Table 1 sum to 30% because some had more than one kind of grandparental coresidence.) These experiences are relatively uncorre-

lated; few who experienced one form of coresidence with grandparents while growing up experienced one of the other forms of coresidence. However, respondents who lived in their grandparents' home without their parents were likely to have lived with their parents there, as well, for part of the time.

Nonfamily living. In the NSFH, respondents were asked their age when they left home. They also were asked their date of marriage. This combination allowed us in most cases to determine whether they experienced a period of nonfamily living prior to marriage. However, a precise matching of the timing of marriage and leaving home was not always possible, given that the timing of leaving home was asked in terms of age, and marriage dates were obtained as years and months. Further, respondents were more likely to predate their age at leaving home than their timing of marriage, so that, even among those who reported leaving home "to get married," there often was a gap of 1–2 years between the age at leaving home and the age implied by the date of marriage (Goldscheider, Biddlecom, & St. Clair, 1994). Because we wanted our measure of nonfamily living to include those who had experienced more than a

trivial spell, we have defined nonfamily living as having left home at an age 2 years younger than age at marriage or the survey date, whichever came first.

Control Variables

Gender role attitudes. Two variables measure the respondents' attitudes toward the ideal manner for women to carry out their roles in the family. Traditional roles is a variable that reflects the role of women as wives, measured by the statement, "It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living, and the woman takes care of the home and family." This variable ranges from *disagree* (1) to *agree* (5). A high value on this variable indicates greater support for a division of family roles into separate spheres. Disapproval of mothers working is a scale that measures the role of women as mothers. It is derived from four items, three attitudinal items concerning the extent of agreement about the appropriateness of mothers working when the job is full-time and the youngest child is under age 5, when it involves children younger than 3 years old being cared for all day in a day care center, and when the job is part-time and the youngest child is under age 5. The fourth item is a general statement about whether preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed. These four questions were coded so that higher values indicate greater disapproval of mothers working under each of these conditions, and then values were summed. They are very closely related (Cronbach's alpha = .81).

Family statuses. We distinguish four categories that indicate the respondent's position in his or her families of procreation and orientation: (a) respondent's current marital status—married or unmarried; (b) respondent's current parental status, subdivided by whether or not there are children living in the household; (c) respondent's number of siblings; and (d) whether the respondent's parents divorced while she or he was younger than 19 years old. We expect the effects of parental status to differ on support for the two types of coresidence because having children should increase support for providing help to children, and having children in the household should leave less room physically and emotionally for a dependent parent. To indicate maturity and to help clarify which generation the respondent is likely to identify with, we control for the respondent's age.

Social class. We include two measures of social class: education, for its effects on familistic attitudes (indicated by whether the respondent attended college, which is the major effect); and respondent's total personal income (measured with the natural log), which indicates the extent to which the respondent can meet the residential needs of parents and children though subsidizing their living arrangements elsewhere. We also include a dichotomous measure of whether or not income was stated by the respondent.

Ethnicity and religion. Group membership is indicated by six mutually exclusive categories defined by race and religion: (a) Black, (b) Hispanic, (c) Catholic, (d) Jewish, (e) fundamentalist Protestant, and (f) all others, which serves as the reference category (mainly White, nonfundamentalist Protestants). The first two groups (Blacks and Hispanics) can be of any religion, and the remaining groups are all non-Black, non-Hispanic. There are few Jews who are Hispanic or Black in this data set, and research on several dimensions of family attitudes and behaviors has found considerably less difference by religion among Hispanics and Blacks than among the White majority in the U.S. (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Goldscheider & Mosher, 1991). Fundamentalist Protestants are those who reported they agreed or strongly agreed with both of the following two statements: "The Bible is God's word and everything happened or will happen exactly as it says." "The Bible is the answer to all important human problems."

Analytic Method

The ordinal structure of the attitude questions about intergenerational coresidence, the dependent variables of the analysis, requires a statistical tool that, although not assuming an interval scale, does take order into consideration (Agresti, 1990). A logistic regression of ordinal data accomplishes this computation by forming maximum likelihood estimates of cumulative probabilities in which the base category is compared with all others, generating beta coefficients that reveal the direction of effect and significance. (We use *strongly disagree* as the base category so that positive effects are those increasing support for coresidence.) Unlike multinomial logit, the effect of the independent variables is assumed to be identical for all categories of the dependent variable. We have transformed the betas generated by the logit model into odds ratios to increase interpretability and to

highlight the magnitudes of the effects. This transformation, $\exp(b_k)$, yields the odds ratios for those who were a unit apart on a given measured characteristic, net of other predictors in the model (DeMaris, 1995, p. 956). For example, Table 2 shows that the odds ratio for a fundamentalist Protestant supporting coresidence with a dependent parent is 2.7 times greater than that for a nonfundamentalist Protestant (the reference category). This portion of the analysis is based on unweighted data.

RESULTS

This analysis, by and large, supports our hypotheses. Both experiences of intergenerational coresidence significantly increased support for providing the parallel form of coresidence to the appropriate generation. The results also show that the effects of many of the independent variables depend on which direction of coresidence is considered—with children or with parents.

The experience of having lived with grandparents reinforces an individual's support for provid-

ing coresidence to parents who are in need. This was the case for two of the three types of coresidence with grandparents, increasing approval levels by relative odds of 12%–19%. The exception suggests that it is necessary that the childhood experience include parents living in the household, as well.

The experience of living with grandparents, but not with parents, did not have a significant effect on support for coresidence with aging parents, and the coefficient is actually in the wrong direction. Such living arrangements may arise because of conflict between the parental and grandparental generation, so that conflict is learned. In the other two cases, the experience of residential closeness between the parental and grandparental generations is highlighted and learned, even if their living together produced tension. The grandparent's need does seem to matter, given that the effects are sharper when the three-generation family lived in the parental home. Hence the experience of living with parents and grandparents reinforced the commitment to provide residential support to

TABLE 2. ORDERED LOGIT ANALYSIS (ODDS RATIOS) OF ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERGENERATIONAL CORESIDENCE (UNWEIGHTED)

Variable	Dependent Parent	Adult Child with Problems
Grandparent lived in parental home	1.189**	1.113*
Lived with parents in grandparental home	1.125†	1.077
Lived with grandparents but not parents	0.969	0.979
Nonfamily living	1.021	0.952
Female × nonfamily living	0.903	0.679†
Female	1.004	0.868*
Traditional roles	1.226**	1.152**
Disapproval of mothers' working	1.014**	0.989
Own parents divorced	0.874*	1.046
Never married	1.081	1.32**
Children younger than 19 years old in household	0.865**	1.118*
Parent of other children	0.67**	1.097
Number of siblings	1.022**	1.005
Orphan	0.967	1.055
Age	0.995*	0.999
College education	0.917*	1.033
Income	0.985	0.959**
Income missing	0.913	0.853**
Religion-ethnicity ^a		
Black	2.41**	1.21**
Hispanic	1.862**	2.027**
Catholic	1.204**	1.152**
Jewish	1.069	1.702**
Fundamentalist Protestant	2.766**	1.162*
Intercepts ^b		
1	0.089**	0.065**
2	0.546**	0.539**
3	3.822**	2.733**
4	18.718**	15.054**
<i>n</i>	10,979	10,967

^aReference is non-Hispanic, non-Black, nonfundamentalist Protestant. ^bUntransformed coefficients.

†*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

aging parents. There was also a link, if a weaker one, to support for young adult coresidence because the experiences of coresidence with a grandparent who was in need increased support for parents helping their adult children residentially.

However, the experience of nonfamily living in early adulthood was linked only to decreased support for young adult coresidence and did not affect support for coresidence with aging parents. Also, the effects of experiencing nonfamily living in young adulthood were weaker than the effects for coresidence with grandparents. They were stronger for women and, in fact, only applied to them. We present this result in Table 2 as an interaction term. When the model is applied separately to men and women, women who experienced nonfamily living showed significantly less support for intergenerational coresidence with adult children than those who did not. Men showed no significant effect.

Espousing traditional roles for women increased the approval of coresidential support, particularly for the older generation. The scale measuring global gender roles had more impact than the scale indicating disapproval of mothers working. These patterns hold for both men and women, although the effect of holding traditional gender roles was stronger for men than for women (data not shown).

Position in the life course strongly influenced attitudes about intergenerational coresidence, usually in sensible ways. Those with divorced parents were significantly less supportive of coresidence with aging parents, with an odds ratio of .87, but this experience had no significant effect on support for coresidence with financially stressed adult children. The never married, who are most likely to move back into the parental home (DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990), were more supportive of such a solution to adult children's difficulties than were the ever married. The relative odds of support were 32% higher among the never married than among the ever married. Marital status had no effect on support for coresidence with an aging parent. Respondents with children in the household were more likely to agree that adult children should be able to return to the nest if necessary, but this was not the case among those whose children had left home. However, those with children, whether or not the children were living at home, were significantly less supportive of coresidence with an aging parent. Older respondents were less supportive of coresidence with an aging parent than were younger respondents. This may reflect a life course effect. With age, respon-

dents increasingly identify with the situation of the aging parent and wish to assert their independence by not asking children for help. However, there is some evidence that persons born after World War II are generally more open to intergenerational coresidence (Alwin, 1996).

Having many siblings had no effect on support for providing coresidence to needy young adults. However, having more siblings slightly but significantly increased enthusiasm for parental coresidence. The lower probability of needing to provide housing to parents (because other siblings are available to provide it) may allow people to be more supportive of parents moving in (with others). This finding is consistent with Levy's (1965) argument that norms are most strongly maintained when the need or the opportunity to violate them is rare. However, those with more siblings report more positive relationships with their parents (Lawton, 1990), and relationship quality is an important predictor of willingness to provide support (Goldscheider & Thornton, 1998).

The effects of our two measures of social class differ, depending on the direction of intergenerational support. Having more income decreased support for coresidence with a financially stressed child, but additional income had no significant effect on attitudes toward coresidence with a physically dependent parent. The difference in results might reflect the differences in the problems. The adult children's problem is likely to be financial, so the problem of maintaining independence can be solved by providing a subsidy. The aging parents' problem, however, is likely to be health, so simply paying the rent would not fully solve it.

A much sharper difference emerged for education. Those with a college education were significantly less supportive of coresidence with aging parents but did not differ from those with less education in their willingness to help their children. This result is consistent with the wealth-flows transition argument (Caldwell, 1982) because the more educated are expected to be in the forefront of this transition and to invest more strongly in their children than in their aging parents.

Ethnic differentials for the support of intergenerational coresidence were substantial. Overall, every group was more supportive of intergenerational coresidence than were White, nonfundamentalist Protestants. Two groups, non-Hispanic Catholics and Hispanics, expressed greater support for each form of intergenerational coresidence than nonfundamentalist Protestants. Catholics affirmed somewhat higher support, and Hispanics, dramatically

greater support for both forms of coresidence than this reference group.

The other three groups were generationally selective in their greater support for coresidence. Blacks and fundamentalist Protestants were distinctive in being very supportive of coresidence with aging parents but were little more supportive of the problems of financially stressed adult children than were Catholics. Jews, in contrast, were highly supportive of their children (although not as much as Hispanics) but were not significantly different from nonfundamentalist Protestants in their support for coresidence with a physically dependent parent.

DISCUSSION

There is substantial variation in the sense of obligation to provide a home to frail parents and to adult children in trouble. This variation responds strongly to the factors that we examined. In particular, as we hypothesized, those who experienced a given form of intergenerational coresidence as children or young adults were more committed to providing it, in turn, to their parents and to their young adult children. Such living arrangements clearly help to strengthen people's commitments and provide opportunities for social learning that supports intergenerational coresidence. These experiences enhance support for coresidence either because the respondents learned that the benefits of strengthened relationships were greater or the costs of lost privacy were less than they would have expected had they never had such an experience.

The effect of nonfamily living in young adulthood was narrower than that of living with parents and grandparents as a child and was only characteristic of women. Women who withdrew from their parents' home early in young adulthood evidently had a profound family-role hiatus that helped them to redefine themselves more in terms of the importance of work and privacy and less in terms of responsibility for maintaining family bonds and obligations to kin. Nonfamily living in young adulthood lowers women's support for coresidence with both physically dependent parents and with adult children, compared with those who remained as daughters in their parents' households until they married. This experience had less of an effect on men, perhaps because remaining home until marriage does little to reinforce the sense of commitment to caring for others, and the involvement of adult sons in the parental domestic economy is less extensive than that of adult daughters (Goldscheider & Waite,

1991). On the other hand, women seem more able to hold both egalitarian gender roles and supportive attitudes about the coresidential needs of their parents and children than do men, for whom a stronger tradeoff appears. However, it is possible that measures of gender egalitarianism that focused on men's family and work tradeoffs, rather than only on women's, would have had stronger effects on men's attitudes.

Although this is a cross-sectional analysis, in nearly every case the pattern of effects makes the possibility more plausible that there has been a decline in the extent that these obligations are felt. This possibility seems clearest for the effects of actually experiencing various forms of intergenerational coresidence. People who lived together with parents and grandparents when they were growing up were significantly more supportive of coresiding with aging parents, and women who left home to live independently before marriage were less supportive of providing housing to an adult child who was financially needy. Given the dramatic increase in the proportion of older persons living alone, fewer people live with grandparents. Nonfamily living among young adults also has increased because, although young adults now remain home until they are somewhat older, marriage ages have increased even more.

The effect of egalitarian attitudes about gender roles suggests that there has been a decline in support for generational coresidence. Further, parental divorce has been increasing and fertility decreasing—trends that, based on these results, could weaken support for providing housing to aging parents. Therefore, assuming that the effects of these attitudes have been relatively stable over time, the changes in each of these living arrangements have been undermining support for intergenerational coresidence in times of need.

Even the ethnic results can be interpreted in this light. The two groups most supportive of both kinds of intergenerational coresidence were Hispanics and non-Hispanic Catholics. However, both of these groups have been assimilating rapidly to the American pattern on a variety of other family-related behaviors. (See Bean & Tienda, 1989, for Hispanics; Goldscheider, & Mosher, 1991, and Jones & Westoff, 1979, for Catholics.) The patterns among Blacks were not so clearly interpretable in terms of trends because Black family structure has become more, rather than less, extended in the second half of the twentieth century (Ruggles, 1994), and the recent growth of fundamentalist Protestant denominations could presage a return to more tradi-

tional family values. Overall, the trends implicit in these results appear to reinforce an individualistic view of family relationships based more on preference than on obligation. Therefore, given these results and the lessons implied by social learning theory, attitudes supporting the obligation to provide coresidence probably have declined and will decline further.

The attitudes toward intergenerational coresidence expressed here do not measure how the respondent feels about his or her own parents and adult children. However, the factors found to affect the declining commitment to social relationships observed by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) and Watkins, Mencken, and Bongaarts (1987) also were found to affect this particular aspect of the parent-child relationship. Aldous (1987) observed that "individualism is hard on the weak and dependent. . . . It is also hard on the ties that keep adults together" (p. 424). Intergenerational investment may be motivated by the same balance between individual and collective interests. If, in Frost's terms, "home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to let you in," then the most vulnerable adults, the youngest and the oldest, may face increasingly problematic residential choices.

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National Council on Family Relations

60th Annual Conference

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Milwaukee, WI

Conference: Nov. 14-17, 1998 (Saturday through Tuesday)

Pre-Conference Workshops: Nov. 12-13

Post-Conference Workshop: Nov. 17

Plenary Speakers

Atle Dyregrov, Center for Crisis Psychology, Bergen, Norway. Dr. Dyregrov will explore the impact of war and terrorism on children and families.

Charlotte Cole, Vice President for International Research, Children's Television Workshop, New York, NY and **Anna Guenina**, Director of Research and Content, Children's Television Workshop, Moscow, Russia. Drs. Cole and Guenina will discuss children's public television programs in the U.S. and Russia.

Julie Thompson, Office of Public Information, United Nations, New York. Ms. Thompson is responsible for encouraging global efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable development as presented at the Rio environmental conference.

Special Panel

Eyes on the World: The Relationship Between Governments and Families of Color

Plus

- Pre-conference workshops: Family Life Education; Public Policy
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