EMERGING ADULTHOOD AS A UNIQUE STAGE IN

ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

THEORY: INCARNATION V. IMPUDENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation adds to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development by adding a stage between adolescence and young adulthood called emerging adulthood. It was theorized that the crisis of emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, is resolved through experimental sexuality, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness, and relativist and absolutist ideological experimentation. Research on transitions to adulthood and a sociological phenomenon of emerging adulthood, boomerang children, provide the background for study of Eriksonian emerging adulthood.

An online questionnaire was created to collect data to determine if the theorized dimensions of emerging adulthood contribute to crisis resolution. The survey examined

demographic information, boomerang living experiences, and crisis resolution using several instruments, including a measurement instrument created for the purpose of this research, Patterson's Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey (PEEAS). A sample of 586 participants from the ages of 18 to 68 years took part in the survey.

Statistical methods used to test hypotheses included Pearson's *r*, ANOVA, post hoc tests, *t*-tests, and correlations. Results indicate that the crisis of emerging adulthood is resolved through dimensions of emerging adulthood, and boomerang living situations are not detrimental to emerging adult development. On the contrary, it was discovered that as emerging adults successfully resolve incarnation versus impudence, they are more likely to boomerang to the parental home. Implications for social work include a need for more research into emerging adulthood, implementation of that research into social work practice in order to help young people and their parents better understand emerging adulthood, and normalizing the trend of boomerang living as an acceptable path to adulthood.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Toward a New Theory of Transitions to Adulthood

The transitions to adulthood are as varied as the billions of people around the world who have, in mental, physical, or societal ways, developed from adolescents to adults. While the transitions are unique and occur at different rates and sequences for individuals, some well-accepted events universally signal the transition to adulthood in Western civilization: namely, the completion of education, permanent and full-time entrance into the workforce, marriage, and having one's own children (Shanahan, 2000). In general, when people complete at least one, but usually more, of these developmental "tasks," they are considered adults by social standards (Arnett, 2004).

However, research on the transition to adulthood, and on all human development and life stages, is not without bias. Theorists and researchers are "guided by preconceived visions" (Erikson, 1977, p. 55) of what an adult should or should not be. Their "visions" of adulthood are the product of the society in which they were raised, their own family structures, personal experience, and the current common knowledge of the space and time in which they live (Erikson, 1977). This paper is no exception. The following ideas emerge from research on the generation now labeled the *Millennial generation* (Kohut et al., 2010). While I believe that the following theory and research are applicable and appropriate for the current generation of new and young adults, I accept that this theory may become irrelevant in 20 years and that it will not be without its critics, particularly those whose own transitions to adulthood occurred during a golden era of American and Western culture, the mid-20th century. Never before and never since that period, the post-World War II era and the 1950s to early 1960s, has adulthood been so concrete and achievable by so many (Mitchell, 2006). For this reason I propose a

reexamination of the concept of adulthood and a review of its definition in light of current societal trends (the most salient example being that of *boomerang kids* [Okimoto & Stegall, 1987]) suggesting that the transition to adulthood is not as concrete, achievable, or smooth as it was 50 or 60 years ago.

Like many theories, the Eriksonian theory of emerging adulthood began with a sense of something lacking in previous explanations of how things are and how things came to be. Erik Erikson expounded on Freud's theory, which did not include an examination of the complete life cycle (Erikson & Erikson, 1997; Stevens, 2008). Freud's theory was based upon the works of Jean Charcot and Josef Breuer (Thornton, 2005). By his own admission, Erikson, like Freud, based his theory on his own experiences and personal situations (Coles, 1970; Thornton, 2005). The work leaves little doubt he "indulg[ed] suppressed aspects of the writer's own identity" (Stevens, 2008, p. 98). Erikson cites empirical evidence to support his assertions, and his theories have been empirically tested numerous times since their inception (Stevens, 2008); however, Erikson admits that his personal experiences of growing up and having children of his own impacted his research and theories. Similarly, my theory and interest in the transitions to adulthood was piqued and guided by my own experience as a young person navigating seemingly treacherous channels toward the safe harbor of finally being "grown up."

Following Joan Erikson's example, I add to the Eriksonian theory of psychosocial development. Joan Erikson (1997) added a ninth stage of development, gerotranscendence, as she experienced not only a part of life, but also a feeling *in* life that could not adequately be explained by the original theory. In like fashion, I have, along with so many fellow young people, experienced life in a way that cannot be explained by using present Eriksonian theory or the theory of Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2004), from whom I gratefully borrowed the term *emerging adulthood*, although my operationalization of the term differs slightly from Arnett's definition. My goal was not to contradict Erikson or Arnett but to do what I "had to do to turn what had become 'static' into something again forceful and compelling" (Coles, 1970, p. 60). It is my sincere hope

that readers will view my theory of Eriksonian emerging adulthood as paying tribute to and respecting the theories of Erikson and Arnett while further explaining current social phenomena observed among today's emerging adults.

<p style="text-align:center">1.2 Erikson's Theory in Historical Perspective</p>

Although a comprehensive overview of Erikson's psychosocial development over the lifespan theory is beyond the scope of this paper, one must understand the time and space in which it was conceived and written (Nealon & Giroux, 2003). American and Western family history are characterized by three general time periods: families prior to the 1950s, families during the 1950s, and families after the 1950s. Social trends after the 1950s will be discussed most thoroughly, because these changes have resulted in a recently added primary feature in the new American family: the boomerang child.

1.2.1 American Families Prior to the 1950s

While social commentators often handwring and lament the decline of family life and values, concern over the demise of families has occurred in cycles throughout history (Mitchell, 2006). For as long as families have existed, so have family problems, strife, and worry over what will become of society when family seemingly does not mean what it once did. For example, the first biblical family demonstrated sibling rivalry which resulted in murder and a forced exit from the parental home (Genesis 4:8 New International Version). Hammurabi's Code showed the importance of family by punishing those who did not follow society's family roles or who disturbed traditional family relationships (Pritchard, 1955). However, despite all the problems inherent in family life, family remains the primary social group in which people seek safety, comfort, and belonging. Some may predict disaster and societal collapse when family structures experience change, but history has proven that family, in one form or another, is here to stay.

Prior to the 1950s, the makeup of Western families was not so different than the composition of families today (Mitchell, 2006). Households contained an average of four to five

<p style="text-align:center">3</p>

people (Laslett, 1969), and not all of these people were necessarily blood relatives (Mitchell, 2006). Household members could have included boarders or servants, usually young people who were living away from their families of origin. Contrary to popular belief, young people of past centuries did not always leave home just to marry; they also left home to work. Usually, they lived in other families' households during this time. Because they left the household of their family of origin, but entered into other families' households, they lived "semi-autonomously" (Katz & Davey, 1978). In the late 1800s, about one-third of American young people (both men and women) in their 20s and 30s lived semi-autonomously (Hareven, 1996), compared to about half of the American young people today who will return to live semi-autonomously in their family households (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999). Semi-autonomous living has historically been considered a steppingstone on the path toward full independence and adulthood, as young people spend the time living in another household to save money and obtain the resources necessary to establish their own homes (Katz, 1974, as cited in Mitchell, 2006). Young people who return to their family homes after a period of living autonomously are known as boomerang children.

Of course, young people moving into other households portray only half of the living situation. The needs of the household heads in whose homes the young people live should be considered. In general, it was considered by society to be positive for young people to move into older people's homes. Young people provided financial support to older people by paying for room and board or working as servants (Hareven, 1992; Hufton, 1981), so older people could maintain their households and residential independence. In some cases, as parents grew older and could no longer care for themselves, a child, typically a daughter, remained at the parental home to care for them (Mitchell, 2006). For most families, it was financially difficult for more than one child to stay in the parental house. Consequently, other children were likely to leave home during their teens to work in another household or serve as an apprentice for several years before the establishment of their own households (Hufton, 1981).

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The Industrial Revolution changed not only the economy but also family dynamics (Rosenfeld, 2006). As more families began moving to cities to work in factories, it became possible for families to live together for extended periods because children could find work closer to their family home. Children no longer had to travel to distant farms or neighboring towns for work as urbanization increased local opportunities (Mitchell, 2006). By the mid- and late-1800s, societal attitudes toward childhood began shifting in Western countries. Reports of the horrors of child labor in factories throughout England and the United States caused public outrage (Del Col, 2002). The growing middle-class and burgeoning social work profession began social campaigns to keep children out of the workforce and in schools (Coontz, 1992). Although the first statewide child labor and compulsory education law in the U.S. passed in 1836 in Massachusetts, it took over a century for the federal government to enact the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to regulate the minimum age for employment and the maximum hours per week for work (University of Iowa Labor Center, n.d.). This law prolonged childhood and adolescence as it required children to remain more dependent on their families of origin for a longer period of time.

Dependence on the family of origin also increased as a result of better health and greater life expectancy between 1850 and 1940. A White male born in 1850 had a life expectancy of only 38.3 years (Bonnett, 1994)). By 1910, life expectancy for White males increased to 50.23 years. Many transitions to adulthood during the late 1800s and early 1900s were "involuntary" (Gutmann, Pullum-Pinon, & Pullum, 2002), suggesting that children were forced to become independent and to fend for themselves (i.e., become adults) because they were orphaned or due to extreme poverty, perhaps as the result of the primary breadwinner dying. As Americans began living longer and healthier lives, involuntary homeleaving decreased. Parents could support their children within the household until the children were older and able to leave the parental home voluntarily for marriage or work (Mitchell, 2006). This shift in household functioning allowed young people to stay home longer.

From 1880 until 1940, the median age for White American men to leave the parental home rose from 22.3 years to 24.3 years. For White American women, the median age increased until 1950 from 19.4 years to 23.3 years. For Black American men, the increase was more moderate from 1880 to 1940, from 20.3 years to 21.6 years. Similarly, the age at homeleaving increased for Black American women until 1950, from 18.3 years to 21.3 years (Gutmann et al., 2002). Although longitudinal data are unavailable, from the 1880s to the mid-1900s, young people generally lived with their families of origin until their early or mid-20s.

Contrary to popular belief, young people generally did not leave their parents' households to immediately marry and establish their own households. As indicated previously, often during a period of several years, young people lived semi-autonomously or autonomously to better prepare for marriage and families. However, cohabitation (moving in with a boyfriend or girlfriend) also was an option for young people. Historically, cohabitation was a common occurrence in many cultures, and these common-law marriages often had the same privileges and recognition as official (legal or religious) marriages (Wu & Schimmele, 2003). In the U.S., cohabitation was relatively rare and more common among the uneducated (Kamerman & Kahn, 1997, as cited in Mitchell, 2006); but, beginning in the 1940s cohabitation began to increase throughout American social strata (Cherlin, 1992).

Marriage, although not the only homeleaving path, has remained one of the primary homeleaving paths. Young people could live semi-autonomously, autonomously, or cohabitate, and unmarried young people also could live with or rely on their families of origin. Conversely, married young people were unlikely to live with their parents or parents-in-law. In 1900, 9.4% of married White American males and 4.9% of married White American women lived with their parents or in-laws. For Black married males, only 4.3% lived with their parents or in-laws, while 4.6% of Black married women lived with their parents or in-laws (Gutmann et al., 2002). Typically, these married couples lived with parents or in-laws temporarily while they looked for more permanent living arrangements (Chudacoff & Hareven, 1979).

Historically, marriage occurred later in life than commonly thought. Although the U.S. did not display "the European Marriage Pattern" of the 1800s in which marriage occurred very late for both men and women and many individuals never married (Hajnal, 1965, as cited in Mitchell, 2006), the age of first marriage increased in the U.S. during the late 1800s. In 1880, the mean age for marriage was 26.5 years for men and 23.0 years for women. By 1900, the average age at first marriage had risen to 27.6 years for men and 23.9 years for women (Haines, 1996). Clearly, not all American women fit the stereotypical view of the teenage bride going straight from her parents' home to her husband's home: there were several stops in between the two homes.

With marriage occurring later in life, so did childbearing. Having children has typically occurred after marriage, but not long after. More than half of married women aged 20 to 24 years had at least one child during the first 3 years of marriage in 1910. Between 1910 and 1940, the duration between marriage and childbearing increased partly due to economic uncertainty and contraceptive knowledge (Cherlin, 1992).

Homeleaving has been highly correlated with social trends over time. During the Great Depression, the percentage of young people living with their parents was extremely high due to economic conditions (Elder, 1974, as cited in Mitchell, 2006). Young people could not afford to establish their own households and the age of first marriage increased during this time period (Haines, 1996). Additionally, parents often could not afford to maintain their households without the support of their adult children, as the Social Security Act was not enacted until 1935 and personal savings were likely inadequate for survival following the collapse of the banking industry in 1929. The society-wide impact of the Great Depression showed how susceptible American families can be to changes in political, economic, and social order. However, another massive historical event – World War II – so greatly impacted American families that current generations of Americans look back on the era with nostalgia for the way things were during this brief time in history.

1.2.2 American Families During the 1950s

From the conclusion of World War II to the mid-1960s, America experienced what many people consider the golden era of family life which was marked by prosperity, security, and stability (Mitchell, 2006). However, the family life considered common in the U.S. from 1946 to 1964 did not "just happen." The phenomenon was the result of several social and economic factors that occurred during the time period (Coontz, 1992). Much of the family life experience of the 1950s and early 1960s was created by economic growth (Coontz, 1998). The great economic expansion in the U.S. following World War II enabled wages to increase, and Americans had saved and sacrificed during wartime, so for the first time in decades, many Americans were financially well-off (Easterlin, 1980). The now prototypical American dream of owning a house, having at least one car, and creating a family became achievable with a single income. The male householder became the breadwinner and the female householder became a full-time wife and mother. Mortgages became affordable, veterans took advantage of educational benefits, and newly designed and constructed highways allowed people to live in the suburbs and commute to cities for work (Coontz, 1992).

Homeleaving ages began to decrease when the U.S. entered World War II, first for men and then for women. This homeleaving trend was obviously precipitated by the war during which men enlisted or were drafted for military service. By 1950, 73.3% of White American men ages 15 to 19 years had served in the military; among Black men ages 15 to 19 years, 58.5% were veterans (Gutmann et al., 2002). During the war, more women began working in traditionally male fields as the workforce required new laborers, as it was depleted when men entered the military. This labor-market shift provided opportunities for women to become financially independent of their parents and husbands and the impetus for young women to move to metropolitan areas to obtain work. By 1960, only 42% of the young people ages 18 to 24 years were living at home with their parents compared to 63% just 20 years earlier (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999).

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From 1945 to 1965, later known as the "baby boom," the age at which young people married and began families declined. Marriage rates reached 95%. Half of all women were married by the age of 20 and half of men were married by age 23 (Glick, 1992). As a result of early marriage and economic prosperity, couples had children earlier than in previous generations. Children were typically born soon after marriage, and children were born close together, within a few years of one another as opposed to previous decades, in which children could be born ten or twenty years apart (Hareven, 1992).

The suburban life transformed the role of mother into more than just a provider of care. The mother and wife of the 1950s was responsible for creating a "perfect" family life for her husband and children (Friedan, 1963). This phenomenon was highly correlated with the expansion of mass media, because by 1950, televisions could be found in about 6 million American homes. By 1955, this number increased to 39 million homes, and by 1960, 60 million American homes had television (Elert, 2007). Televisions provided not only entertainment for families, but also, via commercials and sponsored programs, instructions for obtaining the "good life" (Guardo, 1982). Publications such as *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Good Housekeeping* became more popular and helped spread the message that women should strive to be good wives and mothers and that careers outside of the home were detrimental to children (Margolis, 1984, as cited in Mitchell, 2006).

However, while most American households did follow the pattern of a working father, stay-at-home mother, and several children, many did not. Recent immigrants, Blacks, and families of lower socioeconomic statuses did not experience the idyllic family life associated with the 1950s (Coontz, 1992). This family pattern lasted for a relatively short period of time, and by the mid-1960s, family trends began shifting once again.

<u>1.3 Social Dynamics of Mid and Late 20th Century</u>

Arnett (2000, 2004) posited that the new developmental stage of emerging adulthood came into being as a result of five social phenomena that occurred in the U.S. (and other Western cultures) during the last half of the 20th century.

1.3.1 Birth Control and the Sexual Revolution

First, birth control and antibiotics became widely available in the mid-20th century, and the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s freed young people to become sexually active with less risk of unplanned pregnancies, less risk of dying from syphilis, and less societal disapproval of pre-marital sex. While pre-marital sex and crude forms of birth control have existed in history (Riddle, 1999), dating as it is understood today is a relatively new social development (Bailey, 1989). In the 1920s, going out on dates in public places became more popular than calling on a young woman by visiting her family home. With car ownership becoming more widespread, it became easier for teenagers and young people to get to know one another in private spaces without being seen by protective parents' prying eyes. As one would expect, this flexibility often led to close physical interpersonal encounters or even sex. The trend continued up until World War II, with the major shift of people getting married at earlier ages, which meant that dating became serious at younger ages (Arnett & Taber, 1994). By the early 1950s, young people commonly married their high school sweethearts immediately after high school or during college (Cherlin, 1992). However, abstinence before marriage (at least in some populations) was still common as 60% of college students in the 1950s reported that they were saving themselves for marriage (Dreyer, 1982).

This report by college students would change in the 1960s and continue declining through the 1970s. The sexual revolution that took place in Western societies changed how many people viewed sexual activity and behavior. Abstinence or pressure to have sex with only one person during one's lifetime was considered oppressive and sexist. By 1975, only 25% of college students reported that they were saving sex for marriage, compared with only 20%

today (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996). Ideals about sexuality and sexual partners also changed during the sexual revolution, as most Americans became "okay" with the idea of sex before marriage. Part of this change was due to the decreased risk of pregnancy from pre-marital sex. Nearly all (98%) of sexually active American women have used some form of birth control, usually condoms or the pill. Contraceptives in the U.S. are widely available, and the majority of teens and emerging adults use contraceptives (Abma, Martinez, Mosher, & Dawson, 2004). The trend of acceptance of premarital sex continues today; most Americans are tolerant of sexual relationships between unmarried young adults as long as not "too many" partners are involved and the sexual relationships are not started "too young," although the age at which sex becomes tolerable continues being debated (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1995).

1.3.2 Higher Education

Second, the number of people obtaining higher education and the number of years people dedicate to obtaining their higher education has increased in the last 60 years. In 1950, only 53% of American adults were high school graduates, and 8% had college degrees (Mitchell, 2006). Due to the high number of manufacturing jobs available in the U.S. during the mid-20th century, it was possible for young people to earn a medium or high income with relatively little education. However, as the U.S. shifted from an industrial and manufacturing economy to a post-industrial and service economy, expecting a high-paying career without obtaining a higher education is no longer realistic (Arnett, 2004). Currently, jobs in the manufacturing sector no longer offer the salaries or job security available in the 1950s. Incomes for manufacturing jobs have decreased, and unemployment of people who traditionally work in this sector is especially high (Halperin, 1998). Thus, many emerging adults, especially those who desire a high income and steady employment, need higher education in order to achieve their goals.

From 2002 to 2008, first-time enrollment in two-year or four-year colleges immediately after high school hovered between 64% and 69% (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). This

percentage of enrollment is higher than at any other time in history (Arnett, 2004). On average, American students take longer than four years to complete bachelor's degrees. While a student who attends school full-time and does not drop out for longer than six months can complete a bachelor's degree in 4½ years, completion of a four-year degree more commonly requires as long as five to six years (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Most young adults who pursue higher education want to earn at least a bachelor's degree prior to committing to grown up responsibilities (Arnett, 2004). With credentialism on the rise, emerging adults may seek post-graduate education in order to increase both earning potential and career opportunities. Approximately 10% of American adults over the age of 25 have graduate degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). With higher education becoming the norm, financial strain during emerging adulthood is becoming more widespread. The cost of higher education has increased more than 35% from 2002 to 2007 while federal financial aid to students has declined (Block, 2007).

1.3.3 Work

In Western societies, work is of central importance in the lives of individuals. The emphasis placed on career is evident from early childhood, with children commonly asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?". However, work is more than a means of financial provision particularly for Americans with at least some college education. Work offers the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities and to pursue dreams, ideals, and hopes (Baum & Ma, 2007a). Younger generations hold great expectations for work because they seek careers in which they can find fulfillment.

Most adolescents and emerging adults will at some point hold a "McJob," a way to make ends meet or earn spending money while focusing on other aspects of life, such as school, or waiting for a better job (Coupland, 1991). The McJob may consist of working at a fast food restaurant or at a retail shop in a mall, and it is not in the field in which young people plan to work for the length of their employable lifetime. The McJob typically pays low wages, has no benefits (e.g., health insurance and retirement plan), and has little or no room for advancement

or promotion. As a result, young people show little commitment to these jobs. However, as emerging adults grow older and reach the final few years of their education, they start focusing on what they want to be when they "grow up" and finish school. They may actively seek internships or entry-level positions in their field of interest to begin their careers, and they may change their career choice (and subsequently college majors) several times during the course of a few years.

In the 1950s, the idea of so many career changes or working for several different companies over the span of a career seemed irresponsible or risky. Women typically would work for a short period of time and then exit the paid workforce to become a homemaker. Men would commonly work for the same company and in the same position for decades. Men often had several dependents by the time they reached their late 20s and did not have the luxury of searching for a job in which they could find satisfaction or fulfillment. If a job provided an income to support the family, it was sufficient (Modell, 1989).

Now, because many young people postpone marriage and children until their late 20s, they can look for a job that they believe fits their personality, training, or interests (Arnett, 2004). Today's young people have few obligations requiring them to maintain a steady income, and they are likely to look for a career prior to looking for a long-term relationship partner. Emerging adulthood serves as a time to explore career options or interests. Many young people drift from job to job and location to location after the completion of their education (Kodrzycki, 2001). This behavior contrasts with those of young people in other societies where they usually follow in the career path of their parents. In the U.S., youth are told from an early age that "they can be anything they want to be" (Shapiro & Crowley, 1982). Unfortunately, for many young people this mantra means that they have difficulty finalizing a field of interest (Alfeld, 2003, as cited in Arnett, 2004). This indecision may represent a part of the "quarterlife crisis" (Robbins & Wilner, 2001) or Erikson's (1968) psychosocial moratorium.

1.3.4 Meaning of Adulthood

Fourth, a profound paradigm shift has occurred over the past few decades regarding "how young people view the meaning and value of becoming an adult and entering the roles of spouse and parent" (Arnett, 2004, p. 6). In the 1950s (and throughout history and different cultures), marriage and parenthood were viewed as significant life achievements, possibly the primary goals of life (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). Marriage and parenthood were easily reachable and definitive markers of adulthood. Today, many young people do not consider marriage an achievement, and marriage no longer signals adulthood. Most people who get married are already considered adults (Arnett, 1998).

This change in the status of marriage has happened as a result of several social factors. Cohabitation has become socially acceptable (over the past 40 years, cohabitation has increased tenfold [Strong, DeVault, & Cohen, 2008]) and fairly easily reversible. For most of the 20th century, divorce rates increased to the point that, on a societal level, marriage was no longer considered a lifelong commitment. In the past decade, divorce rates have decreased from their highs in the 1980s; however, marriage rates have decreased as well (Strong, DeVault, & Cohen, 2008). Similarly, having children is considered a detrimental situation by many young people. To have a child in one's late teens or early 20s may be considered "the end of spontaneity [and] the end of a sense of wide-open possibilities" (Arnett, 2004, p. 6). While most young adults in the U.S. still desire some manner of the American dream (and will get married and have at least one child by the age of 30), emerging adults are more likely to defer these obligations (Cherlin, 2003; Mitchell, 2006). They want a marriage, children, a home, and a career, just not in their early to mid-20s (Arnett, 2004).

To be an adult requires a young person to be self-sufficient, which includes taking responsibility, making independent decisions, and financial independence (Arnett, 2004). The actions associated with adult responsibility include deciding on personal or communal values and beliefs, earning an income, choosing a partner, and living on one's own. During emerging

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adulthood, young people are very much adults in some aspects, but not in others. They continue to rely on their parents for some things yet begin to assert their independence in other areas. By the time young people reach the age of 30, 90% believe themselves to be fully adult (Arnett, 2001). However, the remaining 10% of 30 year olds who still do not consider themselves as adult are unlikely to achieve adulthood over the coming few years. These people, despite their actual age, may choose a life path that is between adolescence and adulthood. They may renounce adult roles and responsibilities indefinitely (Arnett, 2001; Côté, 2000).

1.3.5 Role of Women

The last social phenomenon leading to emerging adulthood, as Arnett (2004) defines it, is the changing role of women in Western cultures. In the 1950s, early marriage and childbearing were the norm for most women due to occupational restrictions. During this time, most women could realistically enter only the fields of primary education, nursing, secretarial work, or waitressing. Even these fields were considered temporary employment (Mitchell, 2006), meant to provide subsistence until women found their true calling as wives and mothers (Arnett, 2004; Blagg, 2006; Mitchell, 2006). For women enrolled in college, it was not uncommon to focus primarily on obtaining the "MRS. degree," or finding a husband, and to hope for "a ring before spring" semester from their steady boyfriends (Blagg, 2006, para. 8). In 1950, less than 25% of all higher education degrees were earned by women, and by 1960, this percentage increased only to 34% (U.S. Census Bureau, 1995).

Young women today have myriad options in life compared to women of the 1950s. Except in certain subcultures, women in Western cultures experience little pressure to marry through their early 20s. Women's enrollment and graduation rate from higher education is higher now than at any other time in history. For the 2006-07 academic year, women earned 61% of associate degrees, 57% of bachelor's degrees, and 61% of master's degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). In an even more radical departure from the 1950s-era

socialization of women and – for the first time in history – women received about the same number of professional and doctoral degrees as did men, representing an increase of about 10% in professional and doctoral degrees awarded to women in the last decade (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). Clearly, many women intend on entering and maintaining careers for which they have trained and may further postpone marriage and children. With Western society ripe for changing perceptions about adolescence and young adulthood, due to the effects of birth control and the sexual revolution, increases in education, a paradigm shift in adulthood status, and a transformation of women's roles, the theory of emerging adulthood has gained ecological viability and relevance (Arnett & Tanner, 2005).

1.4 The Impact of Societal Changes on Erikson's Theory

The perspective of sociological imagination allows people to conceptualize how as individuals they can shape society and culture and how society and culture shape individuals (Mills, 1959). Erikson understood this paradigm and believed that individuals were the outcomes of their interactions with their social environments (Berns, 2004). As Erikson stated, "we cannot separate personal growth and communal change, nor can we separate… the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crises in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other" (1968, p. 23). As previously explained, over the past half century, both society and individuals have changed from that which on Erikson based his theory of psychosocial development. It is necessary for students of human development to "re-evaluate [their] thinking in light of acute historical change" (Erikson, 1968, p. 10); therefore, social workers continually refine and rework theory in order to more accurately describe, understand, and address current situations. The boomerang child represents an "acute historical change" in transitions from adolescence to adulthood observable in Western societies.

1.5 An Example of Societal Change: The Boomerang Child Phenomenon

Boomerang children is a term first used by Okimoto and Stegall (1987, as cited in Mitchell, 2006) and refers to young adults who return to live in the parental home after a period

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of living autonomously (Mitchell, 2006). The expressions "fledgling adult" (Clemens & Axelson, 1985), "home returner" (Ward & Spitze, 1996), and "adult child coresident" (Ward & Spitze, 1996) have also been used synonymously to describe boomerang children. Similarly, a boomerang living situation has been labeled "the refilled nest" (Clemens & Axelson, 1985), "crowded nest syndrome" (Jackson, 2006; Shaputis, 2003), and "parent-adult child coresidency" (Ward & Spitze, 1996).

For the past 25 years, the return of young adults to "the nest" has generated much debate and controversy with popular literature and media suggesting something is wrong with adult children coresiding in their parents' households. The phenomenon of adult children returning home is societally and historically unprecedented. After the "Ozzie and Harriet" era of the 1950s, this phenomenon seems not only novel but also anathema to the established life course of today's young people and their parents (Mitchell, 2006). For example, at least three books address the "struggle" for parents to "survive" living with their adult children (Jackson, 2006; Okimoto & Stegall, 1987; Shaputis, 2003). Guides for adult children needing to learn "how to survive living with parents the second time around" have also been published (Furman, 2005). The film *Failure to Launch* (2006) documented the lifestyle of a freeloading 30-something male who seemingly could not move out of his parents' house. Shaputis (2003) called boomerangers "rejects of reality" and advised parents to "know your enemy, you gave birth to them" (p. 13).

Obviously, some middle-aged parents of the so-called boomerang generation dislike the idea of assisting their adult children, as many in their generation pride themselves on early self-sufficiency while failing to recognize that the opportunities available to them during their younger years in the 1970s and 1980s are absent from their children's external environments (Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang, 2001). Likewise, some adult children are not thrilled to return to living in the parental house after 4 or 5 years of living with friends in dormitories and apartments (Sassler, Ciambrone, & Benway, 2008). However, popular publications and media

belie the reality of living in today's boomerang age (Arnett, 2007; Mitchell, 2006). Almost all research on boomerang living suggests that both parents and their adult children are satisfied with the arrangement. While it may not be the favored living situation of 20-somethings, it ranks higher than some of the alternatives (such as dormitories, roommates, or expensive housing) for many young people.

1.5.1 Statement of the Issue

In recent years, parental support of adult children has become more important and critical to the economic, residential, academic, and emotional well-being of emerging and young adults (Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang, 2001). Since the 1970s, housing costs have increased dramatically and disproportionately burdened first-time home buyers and renters, many of whom are young people (Whittington & Peters, 1996). On average, young people of today delay marriage into their mid-20s (Oppenheimer, Kalmijn, & Lim, 1997), pursue higher education into their mid-20s (Wang & Morin, 2009), and increasingly cohabitate with their significant others before marriage because the choice is a fairly easily reversible alternative to matrimony (Mitchell, 2006).

These trends, combined with unfavorable economic conditions since the 1960s, have steadily increased the prevalence of boomerangers in the U.S. (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004). At least 13% of young adults from age 18 to 34 years have moved back home to live with their parents due to current economic conditions (Wang & Morin, 2009). In total, over half of young adults will make at least one residential move back to their parents' home between the ages of 18 and 25 years (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999). For these young adults, their current life paths may not have turned out as they expected, they may be confused about how to proceed in uncertain times, or the stress of coresidency with their parents may impact their personal well-being and relationships with family, friends, romantic partners, co-workers, and college or vocational instructors. Some medical researchers have gone so far as to suggest that coresidency may be partly responsible for psychiatric and social impairment (Pepper, Kirshner,

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& Ryglewicz, 1981/2000). For these young people, social workers may provide direction and facilitate their movement toward long-term self-sufficiency and independence.

For those families who are satisfied with or even enjoy the living situation, researchers have suggested that this satisfaction is somewhat temporary (Aquilino & Supple, 1991). Most young people eventually want to live independently or with a partner (Arnett, 2004). Most young people also want to finish their education, earn money, get married, and have children of their own (Kohut et al., 2010). As some of those life steps are achieved, the ease and satisfaction of living with one's parents decreases. For example, parents are far more likely to provide support for unmarried students than married nonstudents (Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang, 2001). Parents are more willing to support younger adult children than older adult children (Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992). Also, when grandchildren are part of a boomerang living situation, satisfaction with the arrangement decreases (Aquilino & Supple, 1991). One of the primary attributes of boomerang living is that it is temporary: adult children return to their parents' house for a period of time and then leave again. This return to the nest may occur once or several times. However, eventually, emerging adults should obtain self-sufficiency and independence from their parents in order to successfully resolve this stage of development.

1.5.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is explanatory. The primary goal of the research is to test the theory of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood by determining specific characteristics of emerging adulthood. In this study, I will compare the emerging adulthood experiences of boomerang children to those of young people living autonomously. The relationship between place and duration of residence (boomerang child or autonomously living emerging adult) and independent variables associated with Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood will be investigated. Independent variables include experimental sexuality, incarnation, impudence, relationships (temporal and spatial social and intimate), interdependence and self-sufficiency, dependence and helplessness, ideological experimentation, and relativism and absolutism. In the process of

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data collection, descriptive data will be gathered so the population can be better understood. By completing this study, I hope to show emerging adulthood and all of human development can be conceptualized in more meaningful ways.

1.5.3 Significance of the Study

Young adulthood is an important, yet often misunderstood, concept in social work. According to Mizrahi and Davis (2008) in the *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, "young adulthood" should now be thought of as "emerging adulthood," a theory first published by Arnett in 2000 (Miller & Joe, 2008). However, according to Arnett (personal communication, July 16, 2009), young adulthood and emerging adulthood are not synonymous, and Arnett theorized that the two terms represent separate stages of development, with emerging adulthood (ages 18 to 25 years) occurring prior to young adulthood which lasts into the mid-30s (Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007). Many social workers may not yet fully understand some of the important intricacies of the emerging adulthood life stage.

One of the primary missions of the social work profession is to empower self-sufficient and contribution-making members of society, as embodied in the preamble of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2008) *Code of Ethics* in which "social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs." Emerging adulthood begins the life stage during which most people transition toward self-sufficiency. From the ages of 18 to 25 years (or older, depending on the operationalization of the concept), many people transition from being dependent on their parents for emotional, physical, financial, and residential care to being independent from their families of origin while they seek and find romantic partners, possibly obtain higher education or vocational training, begin careers, live away from home for the first time, and begin families of their own (Mitchell, 2006). In essence, emerging adults learn to stand alone as they transition from adolescence to adulthood (Arnett, 1998).

If any force is responsible for the emerging adulthood phenomenon, it is social work. Without the dedication of social work professionals to ensure children attend school as opposed

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to entering the workforce, emerging adulthood would probably not have developed as a social phenomenon in Western culture. However, because social workers made such a profound impact on children's rights in the late 1800s and early 1900s, children came to commonly experience what we now call "childhood." Children go to school, play, have fewer responsibilities and consequences for their actions, and (as a result of not earning an income) remain dependent on their parents for a longer period of time. Those social changes led to the development of the emerging adulthood life stage. The question that now confronts many social workers is how to help emerging adults gain independence from their parents and accept responsibility for themselves – a psychosocial crisis that can be termed "incarnation versus impudence."

1.6 Definition of Terms

Many of the following terms will be more thoroughly defined and explained in the following theory chapter. The definitions follow:

Absolutism: The ritualism aspect of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. The assumption that moral laws exist to govern ethical decision making in any situation with only one right way to handle any situation (Reamer, 1990).

Adolescence: The psychosocial stage occurring previous to Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood characterized by the crisis of identity versus identity confusion (Erikson, 1963). The time frame typically occurs during the ages of 13 and 18 years, although the ages vary from person to person.

Boomerang Kid/Boomerang Child/Boomeranger: A young person between the ages of 19 and 35 who leaves the parental home for a period of at least 6 months and then returns temporarily to live in the parental home (Mitchell, 2006).

Crisis: "A necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (Erikson, 1968, p. 16).

Distantiation: "The readiness to repudiate, isolate, and, if necessary, destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to one's own" (Erikson, 1968, p. 136).

Emerging Adult: A young person between the ages of 19 and 25 years who is in between adolescence and young adulthood. He or she takes on some of the qualities of an adult, but still does not feel completely grown-up. The ages of emerging adulthood vary from person to person (Arnett, 2004).

Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood: A theory of psychosocial development which adds a separate and unique stage between adolescence and young adulthood and is characterized by the psychosocial crisis of incarnation versus impudence.

Experimental Sexuality: The psychosexual aspect of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. This experimentation occurs as the number of sexual partners and sexual encounters increase during emerging adulthood. Experimental sexuality includes establishing a sexual orientation, integration of love and sex, developing sexual attitudes and beliefs, and engaging in interpersonal sexual activities, such as touching, kissing, and sex (Strong, DeVault, & Cohen, 2008).

Helplessness: The basic antipathy aspect of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. Also called "dependence," it is the inability to act or react independently from one's parents. This state is characterized by economic, residential, academic, and emotional reliance on parents (Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang, 2001).

Homeleaving: The first time children leave their parental homes to demonstrate independence and to fend for themselves (i.e., become adults; Gutmann et al., 2002).

Ideological Experimentation: The social order aspect of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. This experimentation occurs as emerging adults explore values and ideals and substitute their own ideologies or world views for those of their parents (Arnett, 2004).

Impudence: The dystonic, or negative, outcome of the psychosocial crisis that occurs during Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. Impudence is characterized by shamelessness, immodesty, and a lack of realistic goals and concrete plans to achieve those goals.

Incarnation: The syntonic, or positive, outcome of the psychosocial crisis that occurs during Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. Incarnation is characterized by the acceptance of adult roles and responsibilities, realistic expectations for the future, and concrete plans to achieve goals.

Intergenerational Coresidence: This living arrangement occurs when members of different generations, usually family members, live in the same residence. Although it can refer to older persons living with children, in the context of boomerang children, intergenerational coresidence refers solely to children living with parents (Mitchell, 2006).

Relativism: The ritualization aspect of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. Ethical decisions are based on the context in which the decision is made. A number of different ways for approaching a situation exist, and more than one "right" answer for a problem may be present (Reamer, 1990).

Ritualism: The "ritual-like behavior patterns marked by stereotyped repetition and illusory pretenses that obliterate the integrative value of communal organization" (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 46).

Ritualization: A "certain kind of informal and yet prescribed interplay between persons who repeat it at meaningful intervals and in recurring contexts… 'This is the way *we* do things'" (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 43).

Self-sufficiency: The basic strength aspect of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood. Also called "interdependence," it is the ability to act or react independently from one's parents and is characterized by the acceptance of responsibility for oneself, making decisions without excessive influence from parents, and becoming financially stable (Arnett, 2004).

Young Adulthood: The psychosocial stage following Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood characterized by the crisis of intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1963). This typically occurs between the ages of 26 and 34 years, although the ages vary from person to person.

<u>1.7 Statement of the Research Questions and Hypotheses</u>

1.7.1 Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the crisis of emerging adulthood?

2. What factors are related to the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood?

3. Does the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood differ for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously from their parents?

1.7.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were put forth in the study:

1. The crisis of emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, resolves as a consequence of at least some of the characteristics of Eriksonian emerging adulthood (experimental sexuality, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence, and ideological experimentation).

2. Living situation is a significant predictor of incarnation and impudence.

3. The resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood differs for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously by postponing the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood in boomerang children.

The following hypothesis was added during data analysis:

4. As emerging adults successfully resolve the crisis of incarnation versus impudence, they are more likely to boomerang to their parental home.

1.8.1 Theoretical Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following theoretical assumptions were (Newman & Newman, 1987):

1. Growth and development occur at every period of life, from birth to death.

2. Individual lives show continuity and change as they progress through time.

3. A need in social work to understand the whole person (somatic processes, ego processes, and societal processes per Erikson, 1963) exists, because people function in an integrated manner on a daily basis.

4. A person's life path, growth, development, and opportunities are highly correlated with and impacted by the time and space in which that person lives (Mitchell, 2006; Nealon & Giroux, 2003).

5. The way in which concepts are defined and theories are formulated is not in accordance with an absolute, natural order, but rather is one of many possible conceptualizations (Tornstam, 2005).

6. Incarnation versus impudence qualifies as the sixth stage of psychosocial development according to Erikson's criteria.

1.8.2 Methodological Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following methodological assumptions were made:

1. Study participants were to provide honest answers about their experiences as adolescents, emerging adults, or young adults.

2. Participation was completely voluntary and confidential.

3. The instruments used to collect data were reliable and valid.

4. Because of the nonrandom sampling procedures of the study, results are not generalizable to other populations of emerging adults.

1.9 Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited by nonrandom and purposive sampling method employed. The emerging adulthood experiences shared may not represent the larger population. It was beyond the scope of this study to explore the emerging adulthood experiences of non-prototypical American and Western young people, such as young people who belong to certain religious sects that explicitly dictate emerging adulthood experiences.

1.10 A Necessary Change to Erikson's Theory: Emerging Adulthood

In light of the social phenomenon of the boomerang child, Erikson's theory was altered and tested to better explain this social trend. In the following chapter on theory, Erikson's and Arnett's theories are explained, critiqued, reconciled, and expanded.

CHAPTER   2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

<u>2.1 Introduction</u>

Although Erikson's and Arnett's theories are not utilized in current empirical literature on boomerang children, the theories offer a fresh perspective for viewing the phenomenon and are appropriate for use in examining young people's experiences during this time in their lives. By examining the utility and shortcomings of each theory separately, implications for future social work theory can be determined by piecing together the theories and incorporating new theory to give social workers direction for working with current and future young people and their families.

<u>2.2 Current Eriksonian Theory Applied to the Transition to Adulthood</u>

In assessing any theory, it is important to consider the space and time in which the theorist lived. Space and time are social constructions and "not a mere setting for the unfolding events of our lives but a force actively involved in shaping our experiences" (Nealon & Giroux, 2003, p. 116). The 1950s represent a singular period of time in American history in which the nuclear family occupied a single household and internal family structure was uniform. Indeed, 90% of households were composed of "traditional" families during this decade. American culture of the 21st century bears witness to a certain nostalgia for the orderliness of this era of the traditional family structure in which father worked, mother stayed home with children, and children fulfilled their obligations to be obedient to their parents and to grow up to work hard like father or to keep house like mother (Coontz, 2005; Davis, 1979). One 1948 educational film on "successful" families cautioned that "no home is big enough to house two families, particularly two of different generations" (Coontz, 2005, p. 42). It is in this setting, from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, that Erik H. Erikson developed and refined his theory of psychosocial development, first conveyed in *Childhood and Society* (first printing 1950; 1963) and further explained in

Identity and the Life Cycle (1959), Identity: Youth and Crisis (1968), *Toys and Reason* (1977), and *The Life Cycle Completed* (first printing 1982; extended version completed by Joan M. Erikson, 1997). Throughout Erikson's work, he develops three primary themes: psychological growth and development throughout life, psychosocial identity and the study of individuals against the background of their time (Stevens, 2008).

The stages of current Eriksonian theory of greatest significance to boomerang children are adolescence, in which adolescents confront the crisis of identity and identity confusion, and young adulthood, in which young adults confront the crisis of intimacy and isolation. To Erikson, "crisis" is not used in the colloquial sense, but is meant to designate "a necessary turning point… when development must move one way or another" (Erikson, 1968, p. 16).

2.2.1 Identity versus Identity Confusion

Identity formation, which takes place primarily during adolescence, takes place when a person develops "some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the effective remnants of his [or her] childhood and the hopes of his [or her] anticipated adulthood (Erikson, 1959, p. 12). Thus, during the successful completion of the adolescent stage of development, one will gain a sense of identity, knowing oneself while integrating childhood identifications with new and mature realizations. The basic strength which emerges as a result of the successful navigation of adolescence is fidelity, which is defined as "the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions and confusions of value systems" (Erikson, 1976, p. 25). Should the adolescent stage come to a close unsatisfactorily, one will be unable to settle on an identity and will not know who one is or what one wants to be (Berns, 2004).

2.2.2 Intimacy versus Isolation

Similarly, young adults are confronted with the crisis of intimacy and isolation. By "intimacy," Erikson means not only sexual intimacy but also closeness in friendships, partnerships, and other important relationships in life. Intimacy is defined as the ability to

commit "to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises" (Erikson, 1950, p. 237). Identity is reestablished as partnerships (especially romantic partnerships) are formed. This is known as shared identity, in which someone "finds himself/herself" by forming a deep relationship with another. The basic strength which emerges as a successful completion of this crisis is love, the "mutuality of devotion forever subduing the antagonisms inherent in divided function" (Erikson, 1964, p. 129). Should intimacy not be achieved, which is likely if the identity stage was not successfully traversed, the young adult distantiates, that is, rejects others and isolates oneself (Erikson, 1968). As a consequence of distantiation, young adults "fortify one's territory of intimacy and solidarity and… view all outsiders with a fanatic 'overvaluation of small differences' between the familiar and the foreign" (Erikson, 1968, p. 136).

2.2.3 Critique and Summary

In the phenomenon of boomerang children, children return to the parental home during the emerging or young adult stages of their lives, and may re-experience part of their adolescence and consequently revisit the identity crisis. It is unknown how "returning to the scene" of one's adolescence impacts the intimacy and identity of young adults. Often cited in qualitative studies and anecdotes is how living with one's parents as a young adult restricts the young adult's dating life and intimate relationships (Arnett, 2004; Furman, 2005; Sassler, 2008). How and if this return to the parents' home affects a young adult's intimacy/isolation crisis is unknown and unstudied. While most young adults do not return to their adolescent roles, they do replicate some adolescent habits (Cohen, Kasen, Chen, Hartmark, & Gordon, 2003; Sassler et al., 2008). Likewise, while most parents do not resume all of their "mom and dad" roles with their adult children, a substantial number of parents and adult children recognize that parents (especially mothers) struggle to treat and relate to their children as adults instead of teens (Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Mitchell, 2004; Sassler et al., 2008; Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992).

Erikson's theory suffers from specific shortcomings that must be addressed. First, his work was primarily focused on the male life experience, and his theories may not be applicable to girls and women (Payne, 2005). In fact, women are likely to confront the crisis of intimacy during or prior to the stage of identity crisis (Matteson, 1993). Women operate contrary to Erikson's statement that, "only after identity is formed is true intimacy possible" (1968, p. 135); thus, identity is not a pre-requisite for intimacy (Levitz & Orlofsky, 1985; Matteson, 1993). Further, Erikson's crises are experienced primarily by advantaged populations, that is, the middle class, the more educated, and those who perceive that they have the option of a turning point, which is not felt by all adolescents or young adults of lesser socioeconomic statuses (Skolnick, 2005).

Erikson had little formal training in theory development and research (Coles, 1970). Erikson and his wife Joan, a dancer, were not academic researchers in the sense of attending college or attended schools of psychology. Erikson attended art school for several years and took various classes in education and medicine at the University of Vienna. While in Vienna, he attended seminars conducted by Anna Freud and other members of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, but he never earned a formal degree. By today's standards, Erikson would probably not be as welcome in the educational circles in which he and Joan traveled; however, at the time, his brief association with Anna and Sigmund Freud afforded him many opportunities to become intellectually enriched (Stevens, 2008). Erikson admitted that his work and theory would have been improved if he had undergone training in research methods and theory building through a formal education (Stevens, 2008).

2.3 Arnett's Emerging Adulthood Theory

Just as Erikson's theory must be viewed in context of the time and space in which it was developed, so must Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood. Arnett became interested in young adulthood in the mid-1990s, when he felt he had finally become an adult. Arnett had achieved most of the sociological markers of adulthood: finishing education, entering into a

career at a university, and settling down and living with a woman with whom marriage was likely. However, the students Arnett taught (who were not much younger than he, but who certainly had not achieved the sociological markers of adulthood) were distraught about not being considered adults in a sociological sense. True, they might not be completely grown up, but they certainly were no longer adolescents. Like most young people of the past few decades, they had taken on some of the roles of adults, but they postponed the decisive choices that are the hallmarks of adulthood in Western society. Most were unmarried, did not have children, were still in school, not earning an income, and were fairly free from grown-up obligations (Arnett, 2004). The times in which Erikson's theory of adolescence and young adulthood and Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood were written were extremely different and led Arnett to propose a distinct stage in development. Arnett (1998; 2000; 2004; 2007) presented the theory in several articles and most fully in his 2004 book, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. Arnett's (1998; 2000; 2004; 2007) theory of emerging adulthood is based on five premises: identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling "in-between," and feeling as if possibilities are seemingly limitless.

2.3.1 Identity Exploration

Freud is often credited with the concept that in order to have a good life, one must be able "to love and to work" (Daniels, 2003; Erikson, 1968). From that statement, emerging adulthood represents the stage during which people learn about "the good life." Emerging adults explore many aspects of their lives, but none so profoundly as the possibilities for love and work and how those parts of their lives will define their identities. While identity formation may begin in adolescence (Arnett, 2004; Erikson, 1968), it continues and intensifies during emerging adulthood. In emerging adulthood young people ask themselves the "hard" identity questions: "Who am I?" "With whom do I belong?" "What work do I enjoy?" "How can I find fulfillment and satisfaction in a career?" (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood is the stage in which identity exploration is not only possible, but encouraged.

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2.3.2 Instability

The second premise of emerging adulthood, and the aspect of it that makes it difficult to research, is instability in relationships, with work, and (most importantly for the purpose of the current paper) in housing. From the ages of 18 to 25, young people make more residential moves than at any other time in their lives. They usually make their first move from their parents' home, either for college or so that they have less parental supervision (and more independence). They move into dorms or student housing, move to an apartment, move in with friends or find roommates, and decide to live with a boyfriend or girlfriend. If the cohabitation, roommate, or friend relationship ends, they make another. For at least half of young people, the path from one of these residential moves will lead back home to mom and dad (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999). These are the young adults and emerging adults known as "boomerang children."

2.3.3 Self-focus

The third facet of emerging adulthood is self-focus. Emerging adults are at a unique time in their lives in that, for the first and perhaps only time, they have few daily obligations and commitments to anyone but themselves. They no longer have to answer to their parents on a daily basis, they can decide when and if they want to go to school or work on any given day, their relationships have not reached the "lifetime commitment" status, and they do not yet have children for whom they must be responsible (Arnett, 2004). It should be noted that self-focus is not the same as selfishness. Being selfish has a very negative connotation in Western culture, while being self-focused does not have the same implications. Selfishness implies disregarding others for one's own advantages or indulgences; emerging adults typically do not disregard others because they do not have commitments to others. Emerging adulthood is a fleeting time in life in which young people learn to take care of themselves before they obligate themselves to taking care of others.

2.3.4 Feeling "In-between"

Emerging adulthood is described as "feeling in-between" (Arnett, 2004, p. 216). Emerging adults feel in-between adolescence and young adulthood; they are not really in one stage or the other, although they tend to feel adolescent in some regards and adult in others. For example, in a survey of emerging adults who were asked "Do you feel that you have reached adulthood?", almost 60% answered both yes and no (Arnett, 2000). This is at least partly explained by the fact that receiving financial assistance from their parents (in the form of tuition, rent, and/or income subsidies, or moving back home deprives emerging adults of being fully grown up (Arnett, 2004).

2.3.5 Limitless Possibilities

Finally, emerging adulthood is marked by feelings of seemingly endless possibilities. Almost all emerging adults believe they will one day achieve their goals and live the life they want to lead (Hornblower, 1997, as cited in Arnett, 2004). Emerging adults see their future selves as exceedingly capable, in part because they have so many options regarding school, where to live, what occupational fields to enter, who to love, and what to do. They have plans, but these plans are malleable and can be changed when things do not work out as expected because so little obligates emerging adults to a certain life path. They can move across the country or around the world, change majors or change universities, fall in love and break up with a significant other, all because of their lack of commitments.

2.3.6 Critique and Summary

While Arnett's theory is relevant and particularly applicable to boomerang children, it has shortcomings. First, Arnett's theory should be interpreted broadly and with flexibility. It does not apply to equally to all Western people between the ages of 18 and 25. In general, this theory may be acceptable to describe most prototypical young people in some way. It is unlikely that each and every one of the five components of emerging adulthood (identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and limitless possibilities) apply to any given young

person. For example, a young person who has a child may feel as if she still discovering herself and is not quite an adult, but definitely not an adolescent; however, she is likely not as self-focused as other young people her age and may not feel as if she can do anything she wants in life. Similarly, young persons from vulnerable backgrounds, such as those from the foster care system, may not feel "in-between" adolescence and adulthood. They may have felt grown up since late childhood, and instability, particularly residential moves, is part of their normal routine. Emerging adulthood would occur as they age out of foster care and may be the first time in their lives during which they feel stability. Arnett's theory, which is about 10 years old, is relatively new and empirically untested. Although the term "emerging adulthood" is gaining popularity in academia, the term is often used improperly as proxy for "young adulthood." As previously noted, despite the interchangeable use of these terms, they are not synonymous. Whether the theory of emerging adulthood will lead to new research in psychology, sociology, family studies, and social work is undetermined.

2.4 Reconciliation of Psychosocial Development and Emerging Adulthood Theories

Erikson believed that individuals were the outcomes of interactions with their social environment (Berns, 2004). His work is no exception, as his theory clearly reflects the norms and mores of prototypical 1950s America. It is necessary for students of human development to "re-evaluate [their] thinking in light of acute historical change" (Erikson, 1968, p. 10); therefore, social workers are directed to continually refine and rework theory in order to more accurately describe and understand current situations. Erikson admitted in his writing that "the youth of today is not the youth of twenty years ago," (1968, p. 26), and added that no one should expect today's young people to behave and live similarly to the young people of 50 to 60 years ago. To attempt to utilize an unchanged theory denies the obvious fact that American society has changed greatly over the course of the past few generations. With that in mind, a reconciliation of psychosocial development theory and modern emerging adulthood theory, which most accurately describes young people and the society in which they live today, is necessary.

<u>2.5 Characteristics of an Eriksonian Stage</u>

Many references to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development strip it down to its simplest components, namely the psychosocial crises (syntonic versus dystonic) and basic virtues. Erikson acknowledges this and admits that he "invited misunderstandings and misuses" of his terms and theoretical bridges (1963, p. 274). He even describes the aspects of a psychosocial stage as "a forbidding array of items and… demanding" (Erikson, 1968, p. 105). In order to develop emerging adulthood as an Eriksonian stage, characteristics of his theory (psychosexual stages and modes, psychosocial crises, radius of significant relations, basic strengths, basic antipathies, related principles of social order, binding ritualizations, and ritualisms) must be explained. With a better understanding of the aspects of an Eriksonian stage, emerging adulthood can be qualified as a new psychosocial stage.

2.5.1 Psychosexual Stages and Modes

Erikson follows and expands on Freud's views of psychosexual stages (Stevens, 2008). In the last half of the first section of *Childhood and Society* (1963), Erikson details his "theory of infantile sexuality" (pp. 48–97). Like Freud, Erikson theorizes that psychosexual development is a sequence of progressive differentiation in which sexual drives are shaped by both the biological timetable of development and the interactions of child and caregivers (Stevens, 2008). Erikson follows Freud's progressive stages (oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital) and adds the psychosexual stages of adulthood (genitality, procreativity, and generalization of sensual modes) which Freudian theory does not address (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). In Erikson's theory, as in Freud's, body modes of each stage (such as sucking or biting at the oral stage and retention at the anal stage) correspond to psychological modalities (such as the desire to incorporate at the oral stage and the urge to eliminate at the anal stage) (Stevens, 2008). Psychological attributes of adults emerge out of biology and biological-based actions undertaken during childhood. The epigenetic nature of psychosexual development is also clearly articulated by Erikson, as he compares childhood development to embryological

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development (Erikson, 1963). He uses this comparison to emphasize the importance of the "proper rate [and] sequence" of development, which indicates that if development is in some way defective (either by excess or deficiency) following stages of development may be hindered (Erikson, 1963, p. 66). Subsequent stages are dependent on preceding stages.

Although Erikson's view of psychosexual stages and modes is little more than an affirmation of Freudian ideas, his original contributions to theory are noteworthy. For example, he devised the epigenetic chart which is found in many social work textbooks and highlights the "unfolding process" of development (Stevens, 2008, p. 22). Erikson also emphasized the mutuality of child/parent interaction. Parents develop with their children and as a result of their children, just as children develop with their parents and as a result of their parents. There exists a "mutual regulation" of development (Erikson, 1963, p. 69).

2.5.2 Psychosocial Crises

A crisis in Erikson's theory designates " a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (Erikson, 1968, p. 16). The idea of a psychosocial crisis began with the recognition of identity crises experienced by veterans of World War II, and Erikson transferred the knowledge he gained from working with veterans to working with young people. Erikson saw "the same central disturbance in severely conflicted young people whose sense of confusion is due… to a war within themselves…" (Erikson, 1968, p. 17).

Crises, which are summed up by Erikson's use of syntonic versus dystonic elements, show a process of negotiating identity problems both within the individual and in the communal culture (Erikson, 1968). Psychosocial crises are "appropriate to [one's] age," which can be seen in Erikson's epigenetic chart: infants cope with the crisis of trust versus distrust, toddlers manage autonomy versus shame and doubt, and so on (Erikson, 1968, p. 29); these crises are induced by new encounters with new situations typically considered particular to each psychosocial stage. For example, infants have no need to manage the crisis of intimacy versus

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isolation – it is not only beyond their mastery, but society does not dictate that infants cope with that struggle. If trust is not gained in infancy, the individual may expect to encounter trust issues in later stages. In addition, favorable resolutions of crises are highly correlated with successful resolutions of subsequent crises. When crises are successfully resolved (there exists "a favorable ratio" of syntonic over dystonic elements), basic strengths result (Erikson, 1968, p. 105). When crises are not successfully resolved, basic antipathies prevail. Psychosocial crises must be dealt with in a given time allowance for optimal personality and identity development (Erikson, 1968).

2.5.3 Radius of Significant Relations

In Erikson's theory, the radius of significant relations (or widening social radius) signifies "the number and kinds of people to whom [an individual] can respond meaningfully on the basis his [or her]… capabilities" (Erikson, 1968, pp. 104–105). Erikson reminds readers of the mutuality of experience in the radius of significant relations. While parents help shape their children's identities and selves, so too are parents' identities and selves are shaped by their children.

In general, the radius of significant relations widens as one progresses through the first decades of life, reaching the largest number of relationships in young or early adulthood and then returning to a smaller number relationships. In early life, family of origin (also called family of orientation) is the most important relationship, and in later life, family of procreation (the family that one creates for oneself through marriage and parenting) tends to be the most important relationship (Newman & Newman, 1987). Many of the personal demands and strains which are felt by individuals are placed on them by the people with whom they interact.

2.5.4 Basic Strengths

Basic strengths result from a favorable ratio of syntonic over dystonic elements and are the foundation for all other psychosocial strengths. One will not achieve later basic strengths (such as love, care, and wisdom) if early basic strengths (hope, will, and purpose) are not

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realized through a child's successful resolution of life's crises (Erikson, 1968). While crisis resolution at any stage will unlikely be completely positive or completely negative, more favorable experiences result in building strengths as adaptive ego qualities (Newman & Newman, 1987). These strengths orient people to certain expectations and approaches to life; in general, when individuals gain adaptive qualities, they will have more positive outlooks on life.

2.5.5 Basic Antipathies

Accompanying every basic strength is a core pathology, also called basic antipathy (Newman & Newman, 1987). Basic antipathies, or weaknesses, result when the unfavorable ratio of syntonic and dystonic elements is present. In the absence of strength, basic antipathies may consume one's sense of self, lead to destructive behaviors, and result in psychopathology, such as depression and paranoia (Palombo, Bendicsen, & Koch, 2009). In extreme cases, core pathologies may lead people withdraw, obsess, or regress toward earlier behaviors (Newman & Newman, 1987). However, these antipathies are not the result of "not trying" or failing to move forward – they are coping mechanisms which are "reinstated in acute crises" (Erikson, 1963, p. 249) as attempts to protect oneself from harm by the avoidance of change (Newman & Newman, 1987).

2.5.6 Related Principles of Social Order

Similar to the way in which resolutions of psychosocial crises leads to basic strengths (adaptation) or basic antipathies (coping), how one understands related principles of social order leads to the syntonic aspect of ritualizations and the dystonic characteristic of ritualisms. Principles of social order are a type of schema that develops within individuals through their interaction with society; one's paradigm or individual philosophy is the result of positive and negative interactions with his or her world (Coles, 1970). Although Erikson's explanation of this aspect of his theory is vague, other theorists have defined the same concept succinctly. Lawrence Kohlberg's (1964) research characterizes moral development and moral judgment as a person's "use and interpretation of rules in conflict situations" (p. 394). Like Erikson,

Kohlberg's theory is sequential, in that individuals pass through stages of moral (or social) order. Related principles of social order guide individuals in their beliefs about society, which in turn dictate actions. People "learn what is right and wrong, what is and is not [theirs], what [people] can and what [people] dare not initiate – all through the experience of approval and disapproval…" (Coles, 1970, p. 288).

2.5.7 Binding Ritualizations

In Erikson's theory, ritualization is defined as "a certain kind of informal and yet prescribed interplay between persons who repeat it at meaningful intervals and in recurring contexts" (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 43). It is the way people in societies adapt and behave so they can live together in an orderly manner. In many circumstances, binding ritualizations seem like the "natural" way of behaving (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 44). Erikson uses the example of mother and infant as a ritualization that is both natural and prescribed. Mothers comfort their babies in certain recognizable ways, such as holding them and feeding them. In this way, mothers fulfill not only their children's basic needs but also the traditional mother's role in the view of society.

2.5.8 Ritualisms

For each binding ritualization, there also exists a form of ritualism, which is the "ritual-like behavior patterns marked by stereotyped repetition and illusory pretenses that obliterate the integrative value of communal organization" (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 46). While ritualizations may be prescribed, they are also natural; in contrast, ritualisms are contrived. Ritualisms may be the result of a kind of addiction or urge to comply with the rules. They are not simply "the way we do things" but "the way we must do things." Thoughts and behaviors become pathological, and actions may be carried out for the sake of "going through the motions." Many religious acts serve as examples of ritualism. As a former priest wrote, "I was obliged under pain of mortal sin to recite the Holy Office… several times a day – an obligation that seemed to me extremely burdensome to carry out" (McNeill, 1996, p. 7). In this example,

the recitations were said not because they were heartfelt, but instead because they had to be said.

<u>2.6 Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood: Incorporation of a New Stage of
Psychosocial Development</u>

Erikson (1968) briefly addressed a phenomenon he called "prolonged adolescence" (p. 169), alluding to a stage between adolescence and young adulthood. Erikson described prolonged adolescence as a time of contradictions: feelings of urgency yet also loss of the concept of time, feeling very young in some regards but old in others, senses of potential and also missed greatness, and a belief of being stuck in an unsatisfactory time and place yet fear of change. Erikson appeared to be describing Arnett's concept of emerging adulthood, but Erikson failed to focus on what occurs *during* this time – instead concentrating on what happened before (adolescence) and what happens next (adulthood).

Arnett's (2004) theory allows researchers to focus on the "here and now" of young people and emphasizes the importance of emerging adulthood. Erikson considered this period an in-between state, a stage that leads to more inventive play, more radiant health, freer sexuality, and finding more meaning in work (1968, p. 53). Certainly, emerging adulthood fits Erikson's criteria for in-between stages, but social changes in the last half-century have made emerging adulthood a unique stage worthy of its own theory and research. According to Erikson, during each stage of development people experience crises from which they learn and grow. What then, is the crisis of emerging adulthood? I postulate, with consideration for the research I evaluate in this paper, that young people in emerging adulthood face the possibilities and limitations of their lives and thus must confront the crisis of incarnation versus impudence.

During this crisis, emerging adults may assume responsibility for handling adult-level problems and make concrete, realistic plans for the future, or they alternately find themselves baffled and operating in child-like ways. In this latter situation, they are immature adults with unrealistic, grandiose dreams and an inability to take action toward purposeful accomplishments. I propose that to successfully resolve the crisis of emerging adulthood, young

people must accept the obligations of the "real world," understand that actions have real and sometimes serious consequences, begin making tangible and realistic goals, and demonstrate effort to achieve those goals. If emerging adults are unable to achieve incarnation, they are in a state of impudence, dreaming extravagantly and believing themselves to be larger-than-life without any particular strategy for realizing their big dreams. They may simply hope for things to work out without taking any interest in how the choices they make impact their lives and the lives of those around them. Yet when an emerging adult confronts this crisis favorably, unrealistic dreams are typically cast aside. For example, during this stage of development, people may realize they most likely will not marry a famous actor or become a rock star. In this stage, as they confront the realities of their lives, they learn to accept and embrace what they have, who they are, and an attainable future. When they confront adulthood constructively, they achieve incarnation.

2.7 Psychosocial Stage VI: Emerging Adulthood (Incarnation versus Impudence)

The goal of incorporating emerging adulthood into Erikson's stages of psychosocial development is to assist social work practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and emerging adults and their families in better understanding what happens during this period – enhancing social work practice and enabling individuals to more effectively navigate their life path. The theory is not intended to provide direct answers to questions concerning emerging adulthood, but to provide one interpretation of this life stage in light of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Table 2.1).

2.7.1 Experimental Sexuality

Although the majority of Americans begin having sex as adolescents (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2002; Levinson, Jaccard, & Beamer, 1995), emerging adulthood is the stage when many young people reach their prime in terms of number of partners and sexual experiences. Modern Western culture assumes young people will date several different people (e.g., serial monogamy) during late adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004), and for most

young Americans, sex and dating occur hand-in-hand (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996). Although the concept of sexual experimentation is well-investigated (Darling & Davidson, 1986; Lear, 1995; Oakley et al., 1995; Rosenbaum & Kandel, 1990), literature seems to offer only one operational definition of sexual experimentation (Wuthnow & Glock, 1973). In Wuthnow and Glock's research, degree of sexual experimentation is a construct of approval of premarital sex, extramarital sex, and number of sexual partners (1973). However, due to the changing nature of sexual norms over the past four decades (Arnett, 2004), this definition may be dated. For the purpose of this research, experimental sexuality will be considered a measure of openness to or acceptance of sexual activities such as straight and gay sex between two persons, straight or gay sex between more than two persons, viewing pornography, masturbation, and recognition of one's own sexual preferences.

Among American college students, sexual permissiveness is the norm (Chng & Moore, 1994), and the college years are viewed as a time of sexual exploration and experimentation (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1988; Desiderato & Crawford, 1995; McDermott et al., 1987; Paul & White, 1990). While this is partly due to the prevalence of alcohol use on college campuses and the concomitant reduction of inhibitions (Cooper, 2002; Desiderato & Crawford, 1995; Leigh & Stall, 1993), it is primarily the result of changing public attitudes about sex (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1995). Compared to previous generations, the current generation of emerging adults has unprecedented sexual freedom and the tacit approval of society in that it is generally accepted that young people will have sex before marriage (Arnett, 2004). Although sexual experiences differ according to gender (Levinson, Jaccard, & Beamer, 1995; Lottes, 1993), religious beliefs (Levinson, Jaccard, & Beamer, 1995), age (Blum et al., 2000; Day, 1992), ethnicity (Day, 1992; Espinosa-Hernández & Lefkowitz, 2009; Wright & Reise, 1997), and sexual orientation (Gardner & Wilcox, 1993; Tomassilli et al., 2009), among other factors, common themes exist in the experiences of emerging adults in college (Espinosa-Hernández & Lefkowitz, 2009; Patrick, Maggs, & Abar, 2007).

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For example, young people typically have some relationships in which marriage or long-term commitment may not be the goal. Most college students have sexual relationships, and as many as half have at least one casual sex encounter (a "hook-up" or "one-night stand") during their emerging adulthood (Feldman, Turner, & Araujo, 1999; Jonason, Li, & Cason, 2009; Lottes, 1993; Maticka-Tyndale, Herold, & Mewhinney, 1998; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). It is not uncommon for compromise relationships, such as "friends with benefits" (Grello, Welsh, & Harper, 2006) and "booty calls" (Jonason, Li, & Cason, 2009), to develop during the emerging adulthood years. These types of relationships not only provide short-term gratification, but they also allow young people opportunities to explore their sexual and relationship possibilities (Jonason, Li, & Cason, 2009).

Among those who participate in unconventional sexual behaviors, it is likely that the exploration of unusual sexual practices began during their emerging adulthood, even if they began having sex as an adolescent (Sandnabba, Santtila, & Nordling, 1999). People who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (GLBT) typically instigate same-sex sexual relationships and "come out" as emerging adults, not as adolescents (Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, Braun, 2006; Tomassilli, Golub, Bimbi, & Parsons, 2009). In late adolescence, social factors create both a desire and a need to comply with perceived sexual norms, many of which dictate heterosexuality as the "preferred" sexual orientation (Winslow, Franzini, & Hwang, 1992). However, by the time a young person reaches emerging adulthood, the need to be true to one's sexual orientation or sexual preferences may become more important than the need to conform to societal expectations (Savin-Williams, 1995).

Although emerging adulthood shares some characteristics of young adulthood in regard to psychosexuality, there are important differences. The psychosexual stage of young adulthood is genitality, defined as the capacity for sexual fulfillment with a partner of the opposite sex (Erikson, 1963). Erikson's theory, like many others developed at that point in history, does not address sexual possibilities beyond male-female relationships (Stevens, 2008). Genitality can

and does exist in emerging adulthood, but what makes emerging adulthood unique is the experimental and playful nature of sex among young people in the emerging adulthood phase. Experimental sexuality may or may not involve intercourse with a partner of the opposite sex, and it may not involve intercourse at all. Current researchers are realizing that sexual research on emerging adults, particularly college students, must go beyond questions of sexual intercourse (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). While emerging adults are having sex, their attitudes toward sociosexuality and the importance of sex as a social construct also should be examined.

2.7.2 Incarnation versus Impudence

The syntonic element, or positive outcome, of the psychosocial crisis of emerging adulthood is incarnation. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2nd edition) defines incarnation as the process of expressing an idea or other abstraction in a concrete or definite form. The term also refers to the realization, actualization, or embodiment of an idea (Simpson, 1989, p. 783). When an emerging adult confronts incarnation, he or she is expressing his or her vision of what it means to be grown up and then reconciling that often lofty vision with one's personal reality.

Not all emerging adults mature to the point of incarnation, and few, if any, are able to achieve incarnation and the accompanying sense of independence without setbacks. Independence may give way to helplessness as the challenges of emerging adult seem insurmountable. Common struggles include debt incurred from student loans, failure to achieve career success after earning a degree (Arnett, 2004), and, especially for the Millennial generation, moving back to the parental household (Mitchell, 2006). When feelings of helplessness overwhelm emerging adults, it is likely that, at least at that time, the syntonic outcome of incarnation has been overcome by the dystonic element of impudence.

Impudence usually provokes negative reactions. The OED defines it as "lacking shame, decency, and modesty" (Simpson, 1989, p. 753). Chaucer (1386) described an impudent

person as "he that for his pride hath no shame of hise [sic] synnes [sic]" (as cited in Simpson, 1989, p. 753). While the supposed sinfulness of impudent acts is not at issue, emerging adults exhibiting impudence may be seen as presumptuous, entitled, forward, and even disrespectful. Many of these individuals may later look back on their emerging adulthood with pride for their "glory days" filled with bravado and a devil-may-care attitude.

Incarnation can be seen when emerging adults begin making the transition to adulthood by accepting responsibility for themselves, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent (Arnett, 2004). By contrast, impudence can be viewed as the denial of responsibility, overreliance on parents' input to make decisions, abdicating decision making altogether, and dependence on parental financial resources. Impudent behaviors frequently involve irresponsible consumption of material goods and spending of parental resources without a return on that investment for the parents, such as household help or attainment of a college degree by the emerging adult. Incarnation versus impudence is clearly illustrated in an emerging adult's living situation. Qualitative research by Sassler and associates (2008) showed how some emerging adults confront the crisis of incarnation versus impudence as they negotiate living as boomerang children or autonomously.

2.7.2.1 Incarnation in Emerging Adulthood

The acceptance of full responsibility for actions is a major departure from adolescence for most emerging adults, and responsibility for consequences is met with both trepidation and excitement. Although parents desire to protect their children from harm (perhaps as part of their own crisis of generativity versus stagnation [Erikson, 1950]), emerging adults should be allowed to make their own mistakes as well as reap the benefits of making good choices in many of the challenges of growing up. One male emerging adult described his frustration with his father and mother's relentless career advice:

It's like they're doing just the parent thing, where I'm trying to learn. The way you learn

is through your mistakes in life and they're trying to prevent me from making any, but

that's the only way I'm going to learn, you know? (Sassler et al., 2008, p. 688)

Independent decision making and feelings of autonomy are thought to be restricted in

boomerang living situations (Sassler et al., 2008). However, emerging adults need to establish

themselves as separate from their parents in order to achieve incarnation. While most emerging

adults keep their parents relatively informed about their activities (such as if they are going to be

out late) for safety reasons (Sassler et al., 2008), many young women feel as though their

parents are overbearing and that they must respond to unreasonable parental demands

(Mitchell, 1998). One woman refused her father's request that she carry and answer a cell

phone at all times, and her parents accepted her decision (Sassler et al., 2008). Another young

woman was compelled to obey a curfew in spite of a history of responsible behavior. As a result

of the disagreement over the curfew, this woman moved away from her parents' house for a

period of time (Sassler et al., 2008). Although arguments over curfews or choice of companions

may seem petty to parents, those issues represent important facets of emerging adulthood, as

adults are not expected to seek permission to engage in typical social activities, such as dating

or spending time with friends. Interestingly, few male emerging adults report the same level of

parental supervision (Mitchell, 1998; Sassler et al., 2008). A young man stated that as an

emerging adult, he was more empowered to disagree with his parents than he had been as an

adolescent: "I'm much more in control…I didn't have the strength in high school just to go and

even say my opinion if I did disagree. Just wasn't in me" (Sassler et al., 2008, p. 687). Several

other emerging adults echoed the sentiment that openly disagreeing with or defying parents had

made them feel more grown up and equal to their parents. Even though "[parents] have

problems with that…because they can't tell [emerging adult children] what to do" (Sassler et al.,

2008, 688), forming one's own opinions and voicing disagreements is crucial to changing the

family dynamic to something more akin to peers instead of a superior-subordinate relationship.

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One emerging adult in a boomerang living situation described his relationship with his parents as "…more give and take, rather than from the top down" (Sassler et al., 2008, p. 689).

Despite general parental opposition to financial contributions, emerging adults may view paying even modest amounts of money for rent and other expenses as an important step in asserting independence. For example, a male who moved in with his parents while working full-time stated that even though "it's only $50 a week [in rent]… it's making me push harder… I just feel like I really had it too easy there for a while…. Financially, I have been making a point on my own to pull my end of it" (Sassler et al., 2008, p. 683). Most parents do not request or permit their boomerang children to pay rent (Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Ward & Spitze, 1996) but will gladly accept other forms of compensation, such as helping with housework (Mitchell, 1998). While few emerging adults perform as much housework as they would if living alone, young women were more likely than young men to say that they clean up after themselves. Another emerging adult purchased items his single mother wanted but could not afford, such as a new front door and dinners at restaurants (Sassler et al., 2008). Most of the emerging adults who agreed to make financial contributions to the household, regardless of parental requests, agreed it was a mark of maturity (Sassler et al., 2008).

2.7.2.2 Impudence in Emerging Adulthood

Impudence in emerging adulthood is characterized by failure to accept responsibility, overreliance on parental guidance, and financial dependence. Although some emerging adults deny that boomeranging back to the parental home makes them feel less of an adult (Sassler et al., 2008), adolescent modalities often result from being in their childhood and adolescent environment (Cohen et al., 2003). A female emerging adult stated she still seeks her mother's approval and praise for cleaning her room (Sassler et al., 2008). For some emerging adults, reliance on parents to make decisions allows them to deny responsibility for the resulting consequences. One female student reported returning to live with her parents solely because her father did not believe she needed to continue living at the college campus (Sassler et al.,

2008). In this case, the daughter clearly abdicated her decision about living arrangements to her father, even though she claimed to want to live on campus for all four years of college. She deferred to her parent's judgment without expressing her discontent or discussing other living options, such as moving in with a roommate to reduce costs. Another emerging adult woman said that since she moved in with her parents she had been "a lot less independent. Not because I want to be… I try to look at myself as being independent but it's like they only allow so much of it" (Sassler, 2008, p. 686).

Impudence in financial matters is a common struggle of emerging adulthood. An Army veteran who moved in with his parents while he attended college demonstrated high levels of impudence in regard to making financial contributions to the family:

> I'll walk in with a bag from the mall…and she'll [his mother] be, 'Don't you owe me 50 bucks?' And I ain't going to pay it. See, I try to weasel out just like any other son or daughter would do on their parents, you know. (Sassler et al., 2008, p. 681)

Some emerging adults view finances individualistically, without regard for how their actions may impact other members of the household. A young woman admitted she still regularly accepts pocket money from her mother but realizes it may be hindering her goal of adult status: "I'm reaching a point in my life where I can't always depend on mommy, so I think that dependence was really getting to me" (Sassler et al., 2008, p. 690). Yet many emerging adults view their return home as beneficial to their family's finances even if they do not make monetary contributions, because if they lived on-campus while in college, for example, their parents would pay for their dormitory or apartment expenses (Sassler et al., 2008; Schoeni & Ross, 2005).

2.7.3 Temporal and Spatial Social and Intimate Relationships

Emerging adults who move away from the parental home report higher levels of satisfaction in their relationship with their parents than emerging adults who live with their parents, in part because of less friction on a day-to-day basis (Arnett, 2004). Approximately 57% of college students live away from their parents, either in dorms or off-campus housing

(King, 2002). Although many emerging adult college students (particularly freshmen) report communicating with parents by phone, text, email, or instant message daily (Coburn, 2006; Cutright, 2008), the intimacy of the relationship greatly diminishes (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adults who live away from the parental home have a unique opportunity to be selective in how much they tell their parents about their lives. Since universities are no longer permitted to act in loco parentis after the enactment of the Buckley Amendment (1974, also called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA]), access to information about student activities has been curtailed (Cutright, 2008). Students are unlikely to share information that would displease their parents, such as mention of skipping classes, drinking alcohol, or staying out all night. By choosing to keep this kind of information private, emerging adult students ensure a more harmonious relationship with their parents (Arnett, 2004); however, the relationship changes character. However, the adage that "absence makes the heart grow fonder" is usually short-lived for college students. After a period of time, it seems as if the maxim "out of sight, out of mind" is more appropriate. In Western societies, in-person communication is considered the ideal form of interaction (O'Sullivan, 2000). As face-to-face communication becomes less frequent and less intimate, relationships are thought to suffer (Miller & Parks, 1982). This is true not only for parent-child relationships, but also for emerging adults' relationships with friends and romantic partners.

Beginning in adolescence and continuing into emerging adulthood, the parent-child relationship weakens as the child's affections shift toward peers and romantic partners (Bowlby, 1979). Adolescents were found to value their current romantic and friendship experiences more than past or possible future experience (Connolly & Johnson, 1996), a result that emphasizes the importance of proximal relationships for young people. Although between 57% (Knox, Zusman, Daniels, & Brantley, 2002) and 75% (Guldner & Swensen, 1995) of college students report involvement in a long-distance dating relationship (separation of romantic partners by at least 200 miles for at least three months) at some point, almost half of those involved in long-

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distance relationships report that their relationship either suffered or ended within five months due to the separation (Knox et al., 2002). Furthermore, those college students whose relationships suffered as a result of distance were very unwilling to consider another long-distance relationship (Knox et al., 2002).

While technology has made keeping in touch easier for romantic partners, couples still require at least some face-to-face contact in order to feel satisfied in their relationships (Dainton & Aylor, 2002). Dating couples require face-to-face contact at least once a month (Holt & Stone, 1988; Magnuson & Norem, 1999), although some research suggests that secure relationships can be sustained through periods of separation as long as three or four months (Guldner & Swenson, 1995). Most long-distance couples in college see each more than once during a semester, but in general, sporadic contact is not enough to sustain these dating relationships (Knox et al., 2002). The radius of significant relations during the emerging adulthood years shifts from the peer groups of adolescence to social and intimate groups that are proximal to emerging adults.

2.7.4 Interdependence and Self-sufficiency

Emerging adulthood bridges the gap between adolescence and young adulthood. Independence, and its accompanying concept of interdependence, is in a way the "play" of emerging adulthood. Emerging adults play with independence and interdependence in order to create "model situations and to master reality by experiment and planning" (Erikson, 1950, p. 199). Independence can be defined as making decisions for oneself, while interdependence is making decisions for oneself but with consideration for the needs of others.

One of the most cited reasons for leaving the parental home is to gain independence (Arnett, 2004). Ironically, those emerging adults who leave their parents' home in order to seek independence are also among the most likely to boomerang home (Mitchell & Gee, 1996). The fostering of independence and a beneficial parent-emerging adult child relationship is

exemplified in several college orientation guides aimed at parents, such as *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me)* (Savage, 2009).

Arnett identified some of the bases of feeling adult as "accepting responsibility for [one]self, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent" (2004, p. 48). It should be noted that while cornerstones of adulthood involve independence, it is not an abstract concept. Feeling grown-up involves independence specifically from one's parents (Arnett, 2004). Responsibility for actions, making decisions, and financial support is the realm of parenthood. Parents assume sometimes full responsibility for their children and continue to assume some responsibility for their children even as they become adults. The partial responsibility of parents to their emerging adult children is not only financial (such as subsidizing rent or paying for education), but also emotional as emerging adults turn to their parents for advice in work and love.

2.7.5 Dependence and Helplessness

Erikson suggests that frustration and disappointment in one stage leads to regression or retreat to earlier stages (Stevens, 2008). Should independence be stifled, helplessness emerges. When an emerging adult is not provided the opportunity to experiment with independence, it could lead to a regression to adolescent modalities, which may include permitting or requesting that parents continue their roles of advocate and protector.

Nowhere is helplessness and dependence more visible in emerging adulthood than in the phenomenon of "helicopter parents." Helicopter parents are defined as "the baby boomer generation of parents who hover" around their college student children and intercede inappropriately in their daily college experience (Coburn, 2006, p. 9). This may involve calling professors on behalf of students to complain about grades, discussing their child's degree progress with academic counselors, or talking to residential advisors about roommate issues. University employees have noted a substantial change in the dynamic of the relationship between emerging adults in college today and their parents (Coburn, 2006; Cutright, 2008).

Contact between college-going emerging adult children and parents increased in frequency and comfort, and those students are regularly involving their parents in their academic and social lives.

Furthermore, parents have begun to expect that involvement, especially due to the significant financial investment most parents make in their child's education (Coburn, 2006). As tuition and other higher education costs have increased at rates higher than inflation (Baum & Ma, 2007b), education is increasingly viewed as a commodity, much like a new car or house (Cutright, 2008). Parents want to ensure their children are getting the family's money's worth.

Parents who intercede in their emerging adult children's lives can at certain times benefit their emerging adult children's development. The University of Minnesota's "Parent Program" website (2010) provides information that will help parents understand when they should allow their children to handle situations on their own and when to intervene. The site suggests that, in general, parents should "support student success" by allowing their students to make independent decisions and be accountable for the consequences, except in cases in which the mental, physical, or emotional well-being of the student is jeopardized (University Parent, 2010). For the most part, parents should encourage their emerging adult children to be their own advocates in order to foster a sense of independence and competence.

2.7.6 Ideological Experimentation

Many university students undergo changes in their principles of social order, values, personal orientation, and ideologies (Savage & Page, 2000). Research indicates that changes in ideologies occur during emerging adulthood regardless of college attendance (Lehmann, Sinha, & Hartnett, 1966), although college may accelerate or intensify ideology changes (Plant, 1962, as cited in Lehmann et al., 1966). The college years are viewed as the formative years for values and ideologies (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969, as cited in Hoge & Bender, 1974; Freedman, 1962, as cited in Hoge & Bender, 1974).

Erikson (1959) represented the nature of this experimentation as follows:

In their late teens and early twenties, even when there is no explicit ideological commitment or even interest, young people offer devotion [while] at the same time they show a sharp and intolerant readiness to discard and disavow people (including, at times, themselves). (p. 39)

Epistemological perspectives, which are "conceptions of reality, views about the nature and locus of causality, and general biases in interpreting human behavior and other events," often change during the university years (Savage & Page, 2000, p. 45). Sheldon, Arndt, and Houser-Marko (2003) thought that as adolescents transition into their next life phase, their "organismic valuing" processes shift. Organismic valuing helps people integrate internal information (such as feelings) with external information (such as the responses of others) in order to make future choices in a manner congruent with their experiences (Sheldon, 2005). During the course of university education, emerging adults embrace ideologies which they perceive as more consistent or appropriate with their current life experiences and knowledge, particularly knowledge which is directly related to their major field of study (Guimond, Begin, & Palmer, 1989; Milem, 1998; Savage, 1994; Weidman, 1979). Usually, this involves "positive" ideological changes, as students move away from an emphasis on extrinsic values (financial success, popularity, and physical attractiveness) and toward greater focus on intrinsic values (community, intimacy, and personal growth) (Robins, Fraley, Roberts, & Trzesniewski, 2001; Sheldon, 2005). William G. Perry's (1968) seminal work on value change during college identifies four primary clusters of intellectual value positions (duality, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment; Martin, Silva, Newman, & Thayer, 1994), and this ideology may shift either toward a relativist or absolutist view.

Ideological changes may be related to normative personality changes (Erikson, 1950; 1963) in which adolescents begin to shift their focus from identity and identity confusion to the emerging adult focus of incarnation and impudence. As adolescents change into emerging adults and then young adults, ideologies are thought to mature from self-centered (one's

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personal identity; Levine, 1980 as cited in Pascarella, Ethington, & Smart, 1988) to community-centered (one's intimate relationships with others; Pascarella et al., 1988).

2.7.7 Relativism

Relativism is the ritualization, or positive stance, that results from a successful negotiation of principles of social order. Relativism is defined by a social constructionist epistemology, which dictates that reality is subject to interpretation and perceptions are variable, formed by social, historical, and temporal contexts (Gergen, 1985). Using Perry's scheme of intellectual and ethical development, Eriksonian emerging adulthood's relativism is similar to the position of multiplicity which includes honoring multiple viewpoints, considering all opinions, and the knowledge that the "right" answers are not necessarily known (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Although ideologies change throughout the life cycle (Hoge & Bender, 1974), much of the ideological experimentation which occurs during one's life cycle happens during the emerging adulthood stage. The successful resolution of ideological experimentation during emerging adulthood occurs when the emerging adult reaches Perry's definition of relativism. In Perry's scheme, relativism is a more mature point of critical thinking ability. When the formerly multiplistic young people achieve relativism, they realize the importance of supporting, analyzing, and thinking critically about multiple viewpoints. The perspectives and opinions which were previously honored during the multiplicity stage no longer have the same authority or credibility. Relativistic thinkers understand that some opinions or beliefs have little value to them or are altogether invalid when applied to their lives. However, relativists comprehend that people can have differing opinions or ways of living and recognize that different approaches to living and problem solving may be equally valid (Evans et al., 1998).

2.7.8 Absolutism

When the outcome of ideological experimentation is negative and confining, absolutist viewpoints emerge. Absolutism is characterized by a logical positivist epistemology, which

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prescribes that reality is stable, objective, inherently governed by biological principles, and predictable (Leahey, 1987). According to Perry's theory, absolutists are likely to embrace the lower level thinking positions of dualism. Dualism represents a dichotomous worldview. Decisions are good or bad, right or wrong, or black or white (Evans et al., 1998).

Dualists may have the same opinions relativists, but their method of reaching those views is entirely different. Dualists tend to completely "swallow," that is assimilate, an idea that originated from authority figures (parents, teachers, religious leaders, etc.) and completely deny ideas from non-approved authorities and powers. Dualists believe that things are right or wrong because someone "said so." Little or no critical thinking occurs when determining the validity of the opinions of others. Relativists may come to the same conclusion as dualists, but their thought processes are much different. Ideas may be accepted or rejected, but only after careful consideration and weighing of merits and drawbacks (Evans et al., 1998).

Table 2.1 Emerging Adulthood in Relation to Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

	Psychosexual Stages and Modes	Psychosocial Crises	Radius of Significant Relations	Basic Strengths	Basic Antipathies	Related Principles of Social Order	Binding Ritualizations	Ritualisms
I. Infancy	Oral-respiratory, Sensory-kinesthetic (Incorporative Modes)	Basic Trust v. Basic Mistrust	Maternal Person	Hope	Withdrawal	Cosmic Order	Numinous	Idolism
II. Early Childhood	Anal-urethral, Muscular (Retentive-Eliminative)	Autonomy v. Shame, Doubt	Parental Persons	Will	Compulsion	"Law and Order"	Judicious	Legalism
III. Play Age	Infantile-Genital, Locomotor (Intrusive, Inclusive)	Initiative v. Guilt	Basic Family	Purpose	Inhibition	Ideal Prototypes	Dramatic	Moralism
IV. School Age	"Latency"	Industry v. Inferiority	Neighborhood, School	Competence	Inertia	Technological Order	Formal (Technical)	Formalism
V. Adolescence	Puberty	Identity v. Identity Confusion	Peer Groups and Outgroups	Fidelity	Repudiation	Ideological Worldview	Ideological	Totalism
VI. Emerging Adulthood	Experimental Sexuality	Incarnation v. Impudence	Temporal and Spatial Social and Intimate Relations	Interdependence and Self-sufficiency	Dependence and Helplessness	Experimental Ideology	Relativism	Absolutism
VII. Young Adulthood	Genitality	Intimacy v. Isolation	Partners in Friendship, Sex, Competition, Cooperation	Love	Exclusivity	Patterns of Cooperation and Competition	Affiliative	Elitism
VIII. Adulthood	Procreativity	Generativity v. Stagnation	Divided Labor and Shared Household	Care	Rejectivity	Currents of Education and Tradition	Generational	Authoritism
IX. Old Age	Generalization of Sensual Modes	Integrity v. Despair	Mankind	Wisdom	Disdain	Wisdom	Philosophical	Dogmatism

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Methods

For this research review, I examined articles addressing quantitative data in peer-reviewed journals. I located articles by using the following databases: Academic Search Complete, Social Services Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and Google Scholar. Search terms included "boomerang," "adult child*," "coreside*," "young adult*," "emerging adult*," "home leaving," "home returning," "transitions to adulthood," "college," "higher education," and "intergenerational households." In addition to searching the databases, the reference lists of articles, books, and reports were examined in order to locate additional pertinent studies. *The Journal of Marriage and the Family* was searched as a separate database due to the high volume of relevant research published in the journal.

The collected articles were published from 1985 to 2004, with a notable literature gap from 2004 to the present observed. Suitor and Pillemer (1988) identified Clemens and Axelson's (1985) article as the first example of empirical research in this area, thus no research prior to 1985 was included or sought. Some data used in the articles dated from the early 1900s (a comparative study of time spent in the parental home; Weinick, 1995) and the 1960s (a longitudinal study; Goldscheider et al., 2001, and a comparative study of young adult housing trends (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004). The most recent articles included in this review were published in 2004 (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz; Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell, Wister, & Gee, 2004). The most recent research on the topic, a 2009 Pew Social and Demographic Trends report by Wang and Morin, was excluded because it was not published in a peer-reviewed journal. The most recent peer-reviewed article, from 2008 by Sassler et al., was also excluded because it was purely qualitative in nature. Articles remained eligible for inclusion even if the year of data

collection could not be determined based on the information provided in the peer-reviewed article.

Most of the researchers used data collected in the U.S. (Aquilino, 1990; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Cohen et al., 2003; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Suitor & Pillemer, 1998; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996; Weinick, 1995; White & Rogers, 1997) or Canada (Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell, Wister, & Gee, 2004), although two publications focused on the British boomerang experience (Ginn & Arber, 1994; Jones, 1987). If data were collected from countries other than the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, or Australia, the article was not used; it was beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to analyze the home-leaving and home-returning experiences of young adults in non-Western cultures. Because culture plays a significant role in the home-leaving experience of young adults (Mitchell et al., 2004), culture is considered only as it relates to Western (e.g., prototypical American, Canadian, British, and Australian) experiences.

Not all articles specifically address boomerang children, which is unsurprising because of the many facets of parent-adult child coresidence. However, due to the dearth of empirical research on this topic, articles with examinations of any part of the boomerang experience, as either an independent or dependent variable, were included in the review in order to provide the most complete picture of the present state of the research. Despite efforts to locate more articles, only 19 articles met the criteria for inclusion. The research methods and findings for the articles are synthesized in the results.

<u>3.2 Results</u>

3.2.1 Purpose of Articles

The purposes of the studies were divided primarily between examining predictors of young adult coresidence in parental homes, the home-leaving and home-returning trends of young adults, and coresidential experiences for parents and children living in boomerang

households. Seven studies (36.8%) examined parental perceptions and experiences (Aquilino &

Supple, 1991; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Ginn & Arber, 1994; Goldscheider & Goldscheider,

1993; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988), one study (5%)

investigated emerging adults' perceptions of and experiences with coresidency (Ward & Spitze,

1996), and three studies (15.8%) investigated both parent and adult child perceptions and

experiences (Goldscheider et al., 2001; Spitze & Ward, 1995; White & Rogers, 1997). Eight

studies (42.1%) identified predictors of young adults' home leaving and return to the parental

home using the demographic characteristics of the parents and children (Aquilino, 1990; Cohen

et al., 2003; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Jones, 1987; Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004; Ward

et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996). Two studies (10.5%) examined home-leaving and home-

returning trends across the 20th century (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Weinick, 1995).

3.2.2 Theories Guiding Research

While theories of young adulthood, emerging adulthood, and parent/adult child

interactions are prevalent throughout literature (Antonucci, 1990; Arnett, 1998, 2000; Blatterer,

2005; Erikson, 1968; Mancini & Blieszner, 1989; Marcia, 2002; Mitchell, 2000; Reifman et al.,

2007), relatively few empirical articles utilize theory to guide research. Mitchell (1998, 2004) and

colleagues (Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004) are the only empirical researchers of

boomerang households who consistently utilize theory, namely life-course theory, which

emphasizes the relationship between the norms, expectations, and timing of age-related life

transitions. Aquilino and Supple (1991) also base their research on life-course theory. Another

popular theoretical perspective is exchange relations theory, operationalized in some form in

three articles (15.8%; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; Ward & Spitze, 1996; White & Rogers, 1997). In

other articles, the link between research and theory is either vague (e.g., Cohen et al., 2003;

Ginn & Arber, 1994; Spitze & Ward, 1995) or completely unidentifiable (as in the presentation

by Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1993), even when researchers claim to have theoretical

bases for their hypotheses,

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3.2.3 Research Questions

Although research on home leaving and home returning has myriad possibilities, the research questions investigated thus far are relatively narrow. Parental, family, and societal expectations of home leaving are research topics in 36.8% of the articles (Aquilino, 1990; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Jones, 1987; Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004; Weinick, 1995). These articles thematically imply that the sociocultural environment has the greatest propensity to impact young adults' life trajectories. Another question researched in 21% of the articles concerns the division of household responsibilities when adult children live with their parents (Mitchell, 1998; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996).

3.2.4 Research Hypotheses

While some researchers do not state or imply any predictions in their articles (Aquilino, 1990; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Jones, 1987; Ward et al., 1992), hypotheses abound in other work. While the literature review contains dozens of hypotheses, only the most common are presented here.

Many hypotheses predict the level of parental satisfaction with a boomerang living arrangement. For example, parents are expected to find the coresidence situation more appealing if the adult child is a daughter as opposed to a son (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; Ward & Spitze, 1996). Originally-married parents (i.e., the biological or adoptive parents of the adult child) are expected to provide a more congenial residential situation and report more satisfaction with coresidence than single, divorced, widowed, or remarried parents (Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996). As far as race and ethnicity are concerned, some researchers predict no differences in the residential transitions of young adults representing different backgrounds (Cohen et al., 2003), while others suggest ethnicity and race to be major factors in home leaving, home returning, and coresidency (Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004; Spitze & Ward, 1995). The socioeconomic

status (SES) of parents is purported to impact young adults' decisions about coresidency. Children from higher SES are alternately predicted to remain more residentially dependent on their parents (Cohen et al., 2003) or less residentially dependent on their parents (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004; White & Rogers, 1997), compared with children from lower SES backgrounds.

The number of other children in the household also is postulated to have an impact. In families with more children, adult children are not expected to boomerang into the parental household, and if they do, the living situation is not predicted to be satisfactory (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004). However, Aquilino and Supple (1991) have predicted an inverse situation, in which more children in the home leads to a more satisfactory coresidence. In terms of household responsibilities, researchers have predicted that coresident daughters perform more household tasks and provide more support than coresident sons (Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; Ward & Spitze, 1996).

3.2.5 Operationalization

Overall, the operationalization of adulthood is not well-defined, which may be the result of the complexity of the construct (Arnett, 2000). The reviewed articles lack consensus on the definition of key terms such as young adulthood and boomerang child, and researchers show no agreement on the age marking the beginning of young or emerging adulthood. While most Americans recognize the age of 18 as the beginning of adulthood, there is by no means universal agreement on this concept (Arnett, 2000; Blatterer, 2005).

In fact, few empirical articles define adulthood as beginning when the child attains 18 years of age (Aquilino, 1990; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993). Although Aquilino (1990) defined adulthood as starting at age 18, Aquilino used only young adults aged 19 and older in his sample. Most researchers seem to believe that age 19 (Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell

et al., 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward & Spitze, 1996; White & Rogers, 1997) or age 20 (Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Weinick, 1995) represents the optimum age to begin research in the field of residential autonomy and dependency. However, in Great Britain, people as young as 16 (Jones, 1987) and 17 (Ginn & Arber, 1994) are considered adults. The age range for initial transition to adulthood in American research is from age 17 (Cohen et al., 2003) to age 22 (Ward et al., 1992).

Just as little consensus exists on when adulthood transition studies should begin, there are varied opinions on when these studies should end. While not every article dictates the age at which to conclude research (Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Ginn & Arber, 1994; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze 1996), several researchers focus their studies on a specific age group they deem to be "young adult." Researchers were evenly split on when young adulthood concludes: (1) during the mid-20s (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Weinick, 1995), (2) late-20s (Aquilino, 1990; Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 2004), or (3) early- to mid-30s (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004). Mitchell's (2006) seminal book on boomerang children confines young adulthood within the ages of 19 through 35, which is a wider time span than that used by Arnett (2000) to define emerging adulthood within the ages of 18 to 25.

Clearly, adulthood is a concept that researchers have struggled to define and operationalize. Due to the obvious intricacy of the subject, researchers appear hesitant to define adulthood simply by a chronological age and to operationalize the variable as a number. Instead, adulthood is viewed as a process and a series of transitions. For example, Cohen et al. (2003) conceptualized adulthood as the aggregate of four distinct domains that signify transitions between residence, finance, romance, and parenting. All of these domains are scored on a 100-point scale, with higher scores indicating the participant is more grown up (or adult), regardless of chronological age. Jones (1987) used a hierarchy of living situations that range from independent to dependent. For example, while students living in dormitories and

young people living in apartments both live independently from their parental families, the student in the dorm is rated as more dependent on the parents than the apartment-dweller.

Just as little consensus exists on the beginning of adulthood, disagreements among researchers about when a young adult becomes, simply put, an adult. While not every article dictates the age at which to conclude the research (Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Ginn & Arber, 1994; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze 1996), several researchers focus their studies on a specific age group deemed to be "young adult." Researchers were evenly split on when young adulthood concludes during the mid-20s (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Weinick, 1995), late-20s (Aquilino, 1990; Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 2004), or early- to mid-30s (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004). Mitchell's (2006) seminal book on boomerang children confines young adulthood within the ages of 19 through 35 years, which is a wider time span than that used by Arnett (2000) to define emerging adulthood (within the ages of 18 to 25 years).

No clear definition of home leaving and home returning is provided in the current literature (Mitchell, 2000). However, Mitchell unambiguously defines the "boomerang child" as a young adult between the ages of 19 and 35 years who returns to the parental home after leaving for at least six months (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996). Furthermore, in later works, Mitchell (2000) suggests a four-month duration away from the parental home is a sufficient leave period. This view is shared by Ward and Spitze (1996). No other articles define or attempt to operationalize "boomerang child," "home returner," or any synonymous term.

3.2.6 Type of Design

Research design refers to how the authors attempt to test their hypotheses. All articles involved nonexperimental designs. In the majority of the studies, the participants were interviewed or completed self-administered questionnaires. Four studies were longitudinal (Cohen et al., 2003; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Ginn & Arber, 1994), although Goldscheider et al. (2001) employed only a cross-section of a larger

longitudinal study for the purpose of their article, thus making the study cross-sectional. Ginn and Arber (1994) mined data from 3 years of the British *General Household Survey* and chose to collapse the data into a cross-sectional design.

Cohen et al. (2003) used a retrospective design. The researchers asked their cohort to think back to the time when they were between the ages of 17 and 27 years and to determine where they were living, their employment status, if they were in a romantic relationship, and if they were raising children. Similarly, Jones (1987) and White and Rogers (1997) used two cross-sectional studies in an attempt to longitudinally study home leaving. Two comparative studies examined American home-leaving trends of the 20th century, and data were aggregated by decade (Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Weinick, 1995). By aggregating in decadal increments, the researchers determined if young adults of today were more, less, or just as likely to live with their parents as young adults of the past.

In the 11 (57.9%) similar cross-sectional designs, participants (either the parent of a boomerang child, the boomerang child, or both) were asked about their living situation at the current time or at the time in which they were coresidents (Aquilino, 1990; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996).The cross-sectional design studies involved data collected over time and from different time periods and regions, spanning over 2 decades and from Vancouver, Canada to rural New York. Thus, the results of the 11 cross-sectional studies differ.

Finally, 21% of the studies were conducted according to mixed methods procedures for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Cohen et al., 2003; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Mitchell, 2004). The use of triangulation in the methods of these four studies provided more complete and more thorough pictures of the boomerang experience (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006).

3.2.7 Sampling

In research, selection of subjects and the units of analysis are important factors to ensure the validity of the study and that the stated purpose is achieved. The researchers tended toward the use of purposive sampling techniques, even when utilizing existing datasets. For example, while Suitor and Pillemer (1988) obtained data originally collected from a stratified random sample, only parents who shared a residence with an adult child 18 years of age or older were included in their research.

Some samples were composed of data from individuals who took part in a broader, national data collection project, for example, the American *National Survey of Families and Households* (Aquilino, 1990; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward & Spitze, 1996; Weinick, 1995) and the British *General Household Survey* (Ginn & Arber, 1994; Jones, 1987). Researchers then selected a subsection of the data with a sample that met their needs. These samples were generally larger than samples of data collected by independent researchers or universities.

Many researchers used the same samples multiple times as they mined large data sets; due to the cost of data collection and effort of analysis, this practice is unsurprising (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). In the Vancouver studies by Mitchell (1998, 2004), Mitchell and Gee (1996), and Mitchell et al. (2004), phone surveyors utilized random digit dialing, purchased random sample extractions of area telephone directories with ethnic surnames, employed snowball sampling, and engaged those who replied to advertisements in local newspapers in order to increase their sample size among some populations.

Sample sizes of the studies varied widely. Clemens and Axelson's (1985) study of "fledgling" adults has drawn harsh criticism from researchers such as Suitor and Pillemer (1988) because of its relatively small sample size of 39 respondents. Of the 39 participants, 33 (84.6%) respondents were attending a workshop designed to assist parents struggling with their adult children. Studies with data drawn from both parents and adult children included sample sizes

with a few hundred to several hundred participants. Mitchell's (1998) study contained 218 sets of parents and children (*n* = 436), Goldscheider et al. (2001) obtained data from 894 mothers and 899 children (*n* = 1,793), and Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1993) collected approximately 5,000 responses from children and their parents by mining the much larger *High School and Beyond* survey database.

3.2.8 Data Collection

The most popular methods to gather data were surveys and interviews. Telephone interviews were employed to collect data in seven of the studies (Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; White & Rogers, 1997). Suitor and Pillemer (1988) conducted in-person interviews when a telephone interview could not be completed. Only across-the-board personal interviews were used for the data presented in 6 articles (31.6%; Aquilino, 1990; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Spitze & Ward; Ward et al., 1992; Weinick, 1995); however, most of these interviews were derived from the same set of interviews found in the data for the *National Survey of Families and Households.* Most interviews were conducted in English (as the regions in which the participants lived were predominantly English-speaking), although Mitchell (2004) used data collected as part of the larger *Culture and Coresidence* study, in which interviews were conducted in the preferred language of the respondents, who self-identified as Chinese, Indo, Southern European, or British.

The other popular data collection method was self-report questionnaires. In some questionnaire studies, only parents responded (Clemens & Axelson, 1985), while only adult children responded in others (Ward & Spitze, 1996). In the Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1993) article, the adult child participants were first surveyed during high school classes. Researchers mailed out follow-up questionnaires every 2 years until the participants turned 24, and the parents of the children participated by also responding to questionnaires. This is similar to the Goldscheider et al. (2001) study, in which mothers were interviewed and answered

questionnaires six times during their child's upbringing, and when the children turned age 18, they were also interviewed.

3.2.9 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses of the data included various statistical functions, usually several per study. Descriptive statistics were employed for initial analyses of some data in 63.1% of the articles (Aquilino, 1990; Cohen et al., 2003; Ginn & Arber, 1994; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Jones, 1987; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward & Spitze, 1996; White & Rogers, 1997). In two articles (10.5%), descriptive statistics represented the only analyses presented (Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Weinick, 1995).

Basic linear regression was used in four analyses (21%; Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell et al., 2004; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward & Spitze, 1996). Logistic regression was a technique used in eight analyses (42%; Aquilino, 1990; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell, 1998; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996). Cross-tabulation was the analysis method of presenting results for six articles (31.6%; Aquilino, 1990; Cohen et al., 2003; Jones, 1987; Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Ward et al., 1992). The chi square statistic was used to compare responses between groups in six articles (31.6%; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Ward et al., 1992; White & Rogers, 1997). Structural equation modeling was used only by Aquilino and Supple (1991).

Seventeen studies included comparison groups, particularly those representing the demographic or personal characteristics of parents and children (i.e., race, ethnicity, age, gender, primary language spoken, SES, social class [which combines occupation and SES], family size, marital status, religion, religiosity, and health; Aquilino, 1990; Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Cohen et al., 2003; Ginn & Arber, 1994; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Jones, 1987; Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell

& Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996; Weinick, 1995; White & Rogers, 1997).

3.2.10 Studies' Results

Because of the different research aims of the studies, not all results are directly comparable. In addition, the researchers' findings were not universally consistent. However, more recent results were often congruous, unlike earlier research presentations.

For example, in the area of parental satisfaction with coresidency, Clemens and Axelson (1985) stated that grown children in the parental home significantly and negatively affected parental marriage satisfaction. Only about 40% of parents surveyed wanted the boomerang living situation to continue (Clemens & Axelson, 1985). However, Aquilino and Supple (1991) found that 70% of parents with boomerang children agreed that the living situation worked out "very well," the maximum level of satisfaction on their 7-point Likert scale (p. 17). Mitchell (1998) supported the findings of Aquilino and Supple (1991), with 55.3% of respondents reporting that their coresidency situation was working out "very well," and just 8.8% calling the situation "very poor" or "somewhat poor" (p. 28). Ward and Spitze (1996) found the quality of the relationships between parents and their boomerang children was generally positive. Clearly, more recent research has conflicted with the idea that "crowded nest syndrome" is wreaking havoc on parents' lives (Shaputis, 2003).

Popular research questions involve whether male or female home returners are more satisfied with coresidency and whether gender of the adult child has an impact on parental satisfaction in a boomerang living situation. No significant gender differences have been reported between sons and daughters in terms of parental satisfaction with their boomerangers or the likelihood of adult children returning home (Aquilino & Supple, 1991; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996; White & Rogers, 1997). Ward and Spitze (1996) and White and Rogers (1997) found that, like parents, both daughters and sons were very satisfied with coresidency. Mitchell (1998) found that daughters were less

satisfied with parental coresidency and reasoned the lack of satisfaction to be a likely result of daughters being more closely supervised than sons. Mitchell (1998) added that parents prefer their boomeranging child to be a son as opposed to a daughter. Disagreements between parents and coresident adult children are few; 64% of parents claimed to have no disagreements with their adult children in the previous year, and only 18% of parents reported more than three disagreements in the previous year (Suitor & Pillemer, 1988). It should be noted that parents and their young-adult children who live independently report harmonious relationships, despite periodic disagreements (van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006; Morton & Markey, 2009). From these findings, intergenerational households comprised of parents and their adult children represent generally copacetic environments from both the parents' and children's points of view.

Although mothers bear the substantial burden of care for their young-adult children (Mitchell, 2004), mothers are almost twice as likely as fathers to be very satisfied with their adult children returning home (Mitchell, 1998). Mothers often cited that they enjoyed adult children living at home because of the companionship, friendship, and emotional support provided to them by their children (Mitchell & Gee, 1996). Both mothers and fathers report that they enjoyed spending time with their coresident children on several occasions each month (Aquilino & Supple, 1991). While Mitchell (1998) claimed that parents enjoy spending more time with coresident sons, Aquilino and Supple (1991) asserted that parents prefer time spent with daughters over that spent with sons.

The number of children in the household may or may not have an impact on boomerang living situations. Some researchers found that more children in the family (siblings to the boomerang children) result in less support to adult children (Goldscheider et al., 2001; Mitchell et al., 2004). However, Aquilino and Supple (1991) suggest that parents prefer having their boomerangers at home when younger children remain in the household, likely because these parents have yet to become empty nesters and because older children take on some of the

responsibility of caring for siblings. Other researchers found that the number of other children in the household has no impact on home returning or on satisfaction with coresidency (Aquilino, 1990; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Ward et al., 1992). After controlling for marriage, Aquilino (1990) found that daughters are more likely to boomerang back home if their parents are older, but sons are more likely to return home to younger parents. However, Messineo and Wojtkiewicz (2004) found that, regardless of parental age, sons are more likely to return home.

Household responsibilities comprised a major area of study for several articles. Unsurprisingly, the more help boomerang children provided around the house (e.g., cooking and doing chores, laundry, and home repair), the more likely parents were to enjoy their company (Mitchell, 1998). However, studies consistently showed that coresident adult children performed a modest amount of housework, an amount that is believed to be over-reported. For Spitze and Ward (1995), daughters reported spending about 17 hours per week on housework, while sons indicated performing an average of 14 hours per week on household chores. Parents claimed that coresident adult daughters actually perform as little as 10 hours per week and adults sons 7 hours per week, with daughters consistently performing at least 3 hours of chores more than sons weekly (Ward et al., 1992; Ward & Spitze, 1996). While Spitze and Ward (1995) reported that older daughters perform more household tasks than younger daughters, Clemens and Axelson (1985) suggested that older coresident children are less likely to help their parents with housework.

The religion and religiosity of parents, especially of mothers, is often thought to have an impact on parent-adult child coresidency. Mothers who identify as Jewish or fundamentalist Christian expect to provide more help to their children than those who are involved in mainstream Christian denominations. Mothers who are less religious expect to provide their adult children more support regardless of religious affiliation (Goldscheider et al., 2001). Meanwhile, Mitchell et al. (2004) found that parents' religiosity does not influence coresidency.

Race differences in boomerang experiences are not supported by all studies (Cohen et al., 2003; Weinick, 1995). Mitchell (2004) and Mitchell et al. (2004) assert that young adults from highly family-centered and traditional cultures are likely to remain at home longer than young adults who identify as British. However, while those who identify as British are likely to leave home at a younger age, they also are more likely to boomerang than are those from different cultures (Mitchell, 2004). While Blacks are more likely than Whites to coreside, racial differences are almost completely explained by differences in marital status (Aquilino, 1990).

Socioeconomic differences definitely impact parental support of adult children. Those children from lower SES backgrounds are much more likely to be living with and supported by parents than those from higher SES backgrounds (Cohen et al., 2003). However, while Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1993) have agreed that residential independence among young adults is positively correlated with higher SES, they added that parental SES actually does not influence likelihood to boomerang. Jones (1987) asserted that the primary impact of SES on the reversibility of home leaving relates to adult children from higher SES backgrounds being able to return home more easily than children from lower SES backgrounds. However, Jones also found that while lower SES adult children often leave the parental home earlier, they are more likely to live with other relatives during their young adulthood.

3.2.11 Research Limitations

Relatively few researchers identified any sort of research limitation, although a number of limitations require discussion. First, the samples often have not investigated or sufficiently included minorities or recent immigrants (Cohen et al., 2003; Goldscheider et al., 2001). Only Mitchell (2004) collected data from participants speaking languages other than English. The lack of language flexibility may have precluded non-English speakers from participating in other studies and decreased the number of minorities or immigrants who could participate (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & Gee, 1996); many of the samples were composed primarily of young White people (Ward & Spitze, 1996). Mitchell (2004) produced the most diverse sample but

interviewed only young adults who identified as representing one of four distinct ethnic groups. This sampling choice prevented young adults from mixed heritages or those who identified with another ethnicity from participating.

Most of the researchers (52.6%) who collected original data (as opposed to conducting a secondary data analysis of a census-related or other large data set) focused on participants living in very specific regions, such as Greater Vancouver (Mitchell, 1996, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004), Greater Detroit (Goldscheider et al., 2001), areas in New York state (Cohen et al., 2003; Ward et al., 1992), Greater Boston (Suitor & Pillemer, 1988), and an area of western Virginia (Clemens & Axelson, 1985). While these articles often contain a depth of data not present in secondary data analysis, the results lack generalizability.

Another limitation involves using parents as research participants (Aquilino, 1990; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988; Ward et al., 1992). Because young people are so residentially mobile, keeping track of young adults and their life trajectories can be difficult with longitudinal designs. However, asking parents about their child's young adulthood activities probably does not produce a depiction of the young adult's situation that would match a description given by the young adult himself or herself (Ward et al., 1992).

<div align="center">3.3 Implications for Social Work Research</div>

The overall lack of research focusing on young adults is troubling given the direction of current intergenerational exchange; in the U.S., parents provide most of the help young adults receive, except in cases where the parents are elderly or suffer medical problems (Ward et al., 1992). In fact, middle-aged Americans feel more of an obligation to assist their adult children than to assist their own elderly parents (Goldscheider & Lawton, 1998).

3.3.1 Directions for Further Research

Although methods, findings, and conclusions differ in the presented research, there is an evident need for further research on young adulthood, home leaving, and home returning. First, if research is to focus on young people (the boomerangers) as opposed to their parents, it

would be beneficial to use theories that are designed with young people in mind. One of the most salient directions for further research is to use more recent data and study contemporary cohorts (Goldscheider et al., 2001). The data analyzed in the articles presented in this review are, in some cases, now 30 years old (Jones, 1987) and the most recent data available were collected in 2000 (Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004). A more current boomerang child dataset exists with data collected in October 2009; however, that dataset had not yet been made accessible to researchers (Wang & Morin, 2009). Even though anecdotal evidence alludes to the number of boomerang children increasing during the current economic recession (Meyers, 2009), supporting empirical evidence is not available (Wang & Morin, 2009).

Research is severely deficient as it relates to a focus on minorities and different cultural and ethnic groups as well as comparisons between minority and predominant-culture young adults' home leaving and home returning experiences (Aquilino, 1990; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Goldscheider et al., 2001; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004). Mitchell (1998, 2004) is the most vocal advocate of exploring the young adulthood periods for those representing different cultural groups, and she is the most published researcher on the ethnocultural repercussions of home leaving and life course trajectory. However, Mitchell's research is based upon samples of young adults in Greater Vancouver (Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004) and is not generalizable to young adults in the U.S. who have boomeranged home.

Goldscheider et al. (2001), Suitor and Pillemer (1988), and White and Rogers (1997) suggest that data need to be collected from both young adults and their parents simultaneously in order to triangulate data, avoid recall bias, and increase reliability. Aquilino (1990) considered collecting survey data from only parents a strength, although Aquilino's reasoning for this method (which purportedly allowed a more thorough examination of the household) is questionable. Researchers should use a comparison group of adult children residing independently from their parents. Additionally, both qualitative and quantitative data can be

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collected to examine the family relationships for both independently living young adults and boomeranging young adults (Suitor & Pillemer, 1988).

Longitudinal studies can be used to assist researchers in understanding young adulthood as a series of transitions, many of which are reversible. Research following young adults from the conclusion of high school into their early 30s may be invaluable in determining both the short-term and long-term outcomes of the many residential situations that young people experience (Cohen et al., 2003; Mitchell, 1998, 2004; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Spitze & Ward, 1995; Ward et al., 1992).

Currently, researchers are unsure of the implications and long-term impacts of boomerang living situations at the microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem levels (Cohen et al., 2003; Messineo & Wojtkiewicz, 2004; Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004; Ward et al., 1992; White & Rogers, 1997). The available and primarily cross-sectional data (Aquilino, 1990; Mitchell, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2004; Ward et al., 1992) cannot provide the depth of knowledge required for developing a fuller understanding of boomerang phenomena. Although White and Rogers (1997) combine two cross-sectional studies in order to create the appearance of longitudinal data, this technique represents a flawed longitudinal research design.

From the findings of this research review, there is a definite complexity to the nature of young adulthood, home leaving, and home returning. Inconsistent results indicate that the research on boomerang children is far from complete. Multi-disciplinary implications, including the mental health of young adults and family members who may be impacted by a boomerang situation, the financial impact of prolonged dependence on parents who may be struggling to provide for themselves, and the effect of changing social norms on future generations, provide fertile ground for research on the topic in the fields of psychology, family studies, demography, anthropology, economics, sociology, and most importantly, social work. The relationships between variables such as gender, race, SES, home leaving, and home returning show that

social workers have great opportunities for addressing social injustice and ensuring all young

adults receive the best possible start on their path toward independence and self-sufficiency.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was explanatory. The primary goal of the research project involved testing Eriksonian emerging adulthood theory by determining specific characteristics of emerging adulthood relevant to Erikson's psychosocial development theory. Emerging adulthood experiences of boomerang children were compared to those of young people living autonomously to determine whether psychosocial development is different for young people who live with their parents and those who do not. The relationship between residential situation (boomerang child or autonomously living emerging adult) and independent variables associated with Eriksonian emerging adulthood were investigated. The independent variables included experimental sexuality, incarnation, impudence, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness, and ideological experimentation (relativism and absolutism). The dependent variable was crisis resolution. No control variables were used.

4.2 Research Design

The research design was quantitative, correlational, non-experimental, and retrospective or cross-sectional, depending on the age of participants (de Vaus, 2001). Participants older than emerging adults were asked to think back to their early twenties and base their answers upon what they remember feeling or doing at that time. Adolescents and emerging adults were asked to think about their current feelings and actions. Self-report questionnaires were used to collect data about the independent variables that may impact emerging adults' development, including experimental sexuality, incarnation, impudence, relationships, interdependence, dependence, and ideological experimentation. The survey

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included demographic questions about participants, their families, and their living situations; an instrument that asked about willingness to engage in certain behaviors that embody different features of emerging adulthood in relation to psychosocial development theory (Patterson's Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey; PEEAS); and other measurements of emerging adulthood (Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood; IDEA), sociosexuality (Sexual Socialization Instrument; SSI [short form]), relationship structures (Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures; ECR-RS) and independence from parents (Psychological Separation Inventory – Short Version (PSI-SV). The survey was administered online through SurveyMonkey.com.

4.3 Sample

Purposive sampling was utilized to gain the necessary number of study participants. The sample was comprised of American men and women from the ages of 18 to 68. The final sample size was 586 participants. In order to help build the sample, a Facebook page bringing attention to the survey was created. Emerging adults enrolled in four-year universities, two-year community colleges, and vocational schools at which the researcher had professional contacts were also recruited. Professional contacts were sent emails asking them to inform students and other interested parties about participation in dissertation research. Snowball sampling was used by asking participants in the survey to pass the survey link along to friends or family by posting a link on their Facebook walls with information about the research. Although participants were not compensated for their participation, $1 was donated to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum for each survey completed. Some participants indicated they completed and made friends aware of the survey because of the donation to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum.

4.4 Instruments

Data collection for this study utilized a self-report survey. The instruments created to measure Eriksonian emerging adulthood drew from research on emerging adulthood

(specifically, the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood [IDEA]; Reifman et al., 2007), identity and intimacy development (Marcia et al., 1993), Perry's scheme of intellectual development (Perry Position Assessment [PPA]; (Arvidson, 2002), psychological separation from parents (Psychological Separation Inventory [PSI]; Hoffman, 1984), sexual attitudes and behaviors (Sexual Socialization Instrument [SSI]; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998), relationships (Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Adult Attachment Questionnaire [ECR-R]; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), and the Millennial generation (January 2010 Millennial Survey; Kohut et al., 2010). Patterson's Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey (PEEAS) was developed for the purpose of hypothesis testing and tested for concurrent validity with the aforementioned instruments. The PPA was not used in final data analysis due to low reliability and poor factor loadings.

4.4.1 Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA)

The Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood is a 31-item instrument designed to measure views of life during emerging adulthood and individual differences among emerging adults (IDEA; Reifman et al., 2007). The dimensions measured include identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling "in-between," and feelings of seemingly limitless possibilities. Another dimension, other-focus, was developed to serve as a counterpoint to self-focus, but it was not part of the original conceptualization of emerging adulthood. These dimensions comprised the six subscales of IDEA.

IDEA was originally tested using convenience samples at a state university in Texas. Females comprised 57% to 66% of the samples, and 72.5% to 87% of the samples identified as White. Undergraduates who fell into the relevant age group (18 to 23 years) were surveyed and asked to administer the surveys to friends and associates who fell within other age groups. Reifman et al. (2007) hypothesized that the emerging adult age group (18 to 23 years) would score higher on the measure than other age groups.

The instrument consisted of a self-report checklist with a Likert-type rating scale (strongly disagree = 1, somewhat disagree = 2, somewhat agree = 3, strongly agree = 4). The instrument asked participants to think about "this time in your life" which is "the present time, plus the last few years, and the next few years to come." Participants then checked the rating that indicated the degree of agreement or disagreement with certain phrases, such as "Is this period of your life a time of many possibilities?"

Scores for the IDEA subscales depend on the number of items averaged in order to obtain the subscale score. There is no overall score for the IDEA instrument. The identity exploration subscale and negativity and instability subscale scores can range from 7 to 28. The experimentation subscale score ranges from 5 to 20. Other-focus and feeling "in-between" subscale scores range from 3 to 12. The self-focus score can range from 6 to 24. Higher scores indicate a greater propensity toward classification as an emerging adult. Means and standard deviations for IDEA subscale norms were not available.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the instrument supported the instrument's conceptualization of emerging adulthood (Reifman et al., 2007). Internal consistency reliability is strong, with Cronbach's alpha between .70 and .85 (Reifman et al., 2007). Test-retest reliability over a 1-month interval ranged from .64 and .76 for all subscales except "feeling in-between," which was low at .37 (Reifman et al., 2007). The IDEA subscales appear to have concurrent validity, via acceptable factor structure, strong reliability, and significant correlations with existing instruments, including the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993) and the Consideration of Future Consequences Scale (Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Edwards, 1994).

The 18 to 23 age group scored higher on the IDEA instrument than did other age groups, both older and younger (Reifman et al., 2007). Eighteen to 29 year olds who were married or engaged were compared to never-married 18 to 29 year old individuals. Those who responded that they had never been married scored higher on the experimentation and endless

possibilities subscales and lower on the other-focus subscale than the married or engaged group.

Comparisons were made between 18 to 29 year olds based on employment, living arrangements, and education (Reifman et al., 2007). Number of hours worked was positively correlated to the degree of other-focus and negatively correlated with the experimentation subscale. Participants who paid all of their own living expenses were the most other-focused, while participants who paid for none of their own expenses were the least other-focused. Young people who lived with friends scored higher on experimentation than those who lived with a romantic partner or spouse. When young people's future career goals required extensive education, their scores on identity exploration, feelings of possibilities, and instability increased; however, focus on others decreased. The only significant difference between emerging adults in college and those not pursuing higher education was on the subscale of feelings of possibilities. College students scored higher than non-college students and felt as if they had more possibilities (Reifman et al., 2007).

Comparisons between males and females, Whites and Hispanics, and working-class and middle- or upper-class young adults showed few differences. Women scored higher than men on the self-focus subscale, but no significant differences on the other subscales were observed (Reifman et al., 2007). No significant differences were found between Whites and Hispanics; the samples did not contain enough individuals of other ethnicities for other comparisons, a weakness of the instrument's validity. Working-class individuals scored higher on instability than middle- and upper-class respondents, while middle- and upper-class individuals scored higher on self-focus than the working-class respondents (Reifman et al., 2007).

4.4.2 Identity Status and Intimacy Status Semi-structured Interviews

Some background items asked of participants in the present study were gathered from Marcia et al.'s (1993) *Ego Identity: A Handbook for Psychosocial Research.* Specifically, the

Identity Status Interview: Late Adolescent College Form (Marcia & Archer, 1993) and the Intimacy Status Interview (Orlofsky & Roades, 1988) were used to establish the background items and some aspects of the current lives of emerging adults. This group of semi-structured interview items was chosen for application in the current survey for flexibility and adherence to Eriksonian theory. Although none of the questions from Identity Status Interview or Intimacy Status Interview were asked directly, the interview forms served as guides for content development of the force choice questionnaire items. By basing the questionnaire on interview questions that conformed to Eriksonian principles, it ensured that all aspects of Erikson's theory were addressed.

The Identity Status Interview: Late Adolescent College Form examines demographics, vocational plans (or alternatively, vocational activities for participants who are employed), marriage and the role of husbands and wives, childrearing and the role of parents, family and career priorities, religious and political beliefs, and sex-role attitudes. The interview consists of polar questions, asking participants to recall certain times or experiences in their lives, how they believe their parents or friends think of them or their actions, their expectations of the future, conditional questions, and Likert-type questions on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important), such as "How important is [this aspect] of your life?"

The Intimacy Status Interview is comprised of two sections. Part 1 includes questions about relationships with friends and about friendship. The friendship section of the interview examines general questions on friendship and close friendships, including activities participants enjoy with friends, closeness and emotional aspects, what is liked and disliked about particular friends, disagreements between friends, and changes participants would like to see in their friendships. Part 2 includes questions about romantic partners and love. The dating and love relationships section first addresses current relationship status. For participants who are married or in committed relationships, several pages of questions are asked about that relationship, such as what one's partner "is like," emotional closeness, conflict resolution,

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involvement and autonomy, sexuality, and commitment and future plans. For participants reporting committed relationships in their pasts, participants are asked about why the committed relationship ended, their dating lives, their preferences for future relationships, and their past experiences with partners. Participants who have never been in a committed relationship but date or go out are asked another set of questions which reflect their relationship status. For participants who have never been in a committed relationship and do not date, a few general questions on relationships are asked. Most of the questions ask participants to recall certain experiences or specific relationships and share examples from their life. The length of the intimacy interview depends greatly on the responses of participants.

4.4.3 Perry Position Assessment (PPA)

The Perry Position Assessment (PPA) is a 16-item self-report survey used to categorize the intellectual and ethical development of participants into the four broad clusters of Perry's developmental positions: dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment (Arvidson, 2002). The dimensions of the PPA follow Perry's positions; items address concepts of dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment. For each item, participants answer if they agree with a statement (true) or disagree with a statement (false). In order to score the PPA, items which were answered "true" are added together based upon the dimension measured. Items 1, 9, 13, and 16 were designed to measure dualism. Items 3, 5, 8, and 12 were designed to measure multiplicity. Items 4, 7, 10, and 11 were designed to measure relativism, and items 2, 6, 14, and 15 were designed to measure commitment. Higher scores on subscales indicated a greater propensity for those developmental positions.

Reliability and validity statistics for the PPA were not available prior to conducting this study. The instrument's factors, reliability, and validity were determined as part of the current research. The reliability of the PPA did not meet the minimum requirements for inclusion in the analysis (α = .551). Other options for measuring intellectual and ethical development were not used in anticipation of the PPA being a sufficiently reliable and valid instrument. The Learning

Environment Preferences inventory (LEP; Moore, 1990) and the Scale of Intellectual Development (SID-XII; DeMars, & Erwin, 2003) also assess development using Perry's scheme. Even though these two instruments were considered for inclusion in the proposed study, they were rejected because of their length and failure to adequately measure development on all of the positions and clusters of Perry's development scheme.

One of the advantages of the PPA was the relatively short length of the questionnaire (16 items). The LEP is a 65-item instrument, and the SID-XII contains 119 items. Because the PPA instrument was one of several to be used in the current study, brevity was an asset. The PPA included items related to all four primary Perry clusters, which include the nine Perry positions. The LEP measures only five positions, position 1 (basic duality) through position 5 (relativism). Moore (1990) believed that the more advanced stages of ethical and intellectual development could be best measured by qualitative research. The SID-XII measures four clusters of stages: dualism, relativism, commitment, and empathy. Dualism, relativism, and commitment correlate to Perry's theory, while empathy is an extension of Perry's model theorized by Erwin (1983). Multiplicity is not measured by the SID-XII. Due to the conciseness of the PPA instrument and the dimensions covered by the PPA, it was likely the most appropriate measure of Perry's intellectual and ethical development. However, after data collection, it was discovered to not be sufficiently reliable, and only one factor, dualism, appeared to be sufficiently developed based on the factor analysis results.

4.4.4 Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI)

The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) is a 138-item psychoanalytically-based questionnaire designed to measure separation individuation of late adolescents from their parents (Hoffman, 1984). Separation individuation, or psychological separation, is defined as the ability to psychologically separate from parents and gain a sense of separate identity in order to progress toward healthy adult adjustment (Hoffman, 1984). The PSI is comprised of four scales, which measure the primary factors of late adolescent psychological separation:

functional independence (the ability to manage and direct practical and personal affairs without the help of parents), attitudinal independence (the image of self as being unique from parents and the possession of independent beliefs, values, and attitudes), emotional independence (freedom from excessive need for parental approval, closeness, togetherness, and emotional support), and conflictual independence (freedom from excessive guilt, anxiety, mistrust, responsibility, inhibition, resentment, and anger in relation to parents).

Each of the items is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (not at all true of me = 1, a little bit true of me = 2, moderately true of me = 3, quite a bit true of me = 4, very true of me = 5) to indicate degree of agreement for how the statement describes the young person (Hoffman, 1984). Half of the 138 items relate to separation from mother while the other half relate to separation from father. The items are identical except for the parent referenced. Each of the 69 parent-specific items relate to one of the four independence scales (functional, attitudinal, emotional, and conflictual), and the items result in eight subscales. The functional independence scale contains 13 items, attitudinal independence contains 14 items, emotional independence contains 17 items, and conflictual independence contains 25 items. Each item is weighted equally.

The mother-subscale and father-subscale differ on the total number of items used to measure independence (Hoffman, 1984). On each parental subscale, scores range from 13 to 65 on functional independence, 14 to 70 on attitudinal independence, 17 to 85 on emotional independence, and 25 to 125 on conflictual independence. The total score for each subscale is subtracted from the total possible score; higher scores reflect greater psychological separation, that is, better adjusted young adults.

The PSI originally contained 280 items, 26 of which were eliminated due to ambiguity prior to the first administration of the instrument (Hoffman, 1984). The 254 remaining items were combined with 80 attitudinal independence items and administered to 150 undergraduate students in introductory psychology classes at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (50%

female; 87% White; 13% Black). Of these students, 62% were freshmen, 24% were sophomores, 12% were juniors, and 2% were seniors. Participants were required to be between the ages of 18 and 22, unmarried, and living away from the parental home during college. In addition, each student's natural (birth) parents had to be married and living with one another.

Based on the results of the 150 undergraduate surveys, the 200 items with the highest correlations with their respective total scores composed the next version of the PSI (Hoffman, 1984). The PSI scales were then further pared by using factor analysis to provide an empirical check on the conceptual distinctions between the subscales. Items with factor loadings of less than .35 on the functional, emotional, and conflictual independence scales and less than .60 on the emotional independence scale were eliminated. In all, 62 items were eliminated after factor analysis. The final version of the PSI contained the 138 items from the functional, attitudinal, emotional, and conflictual scales.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the scale on the original 150 respondents (Hoffman, 1984). For emotional independence, α = .88 (mother) and .89 (father); for conflictual independence, α = .92 (mother) and .88 (father); for functional independence, α = .84 (mother) and .85 (father); and for attitudinal independence, α = .91 (mother) and .90 (father).

Test-retest reliability was calculated for 26 male and 28 female undergraduates of the original sample (Medlin, 1991). These students were retested two to three weeks after the initial administration of the PSI. Correlation coefficients ranged from .49 to .94 for males (median = .83) and from .70 to .96 for females (median = .83). For scale composites, test-retest reliability ranged from .74 to .96 (Medlin, 1991).

In order to calculate construct validity, the PSI was correlated the Adjective Check List (ACL) by Gough and Heilbrun (1980) and to adjustment-related questions referring to academic courses and romantic relationships (Hoffman, 1984). Based on psychoanalytic theory, Hoffman (1984) hypothesized that greater psychological separation of young men and women would be

related to better personal adjustment, represented by the ACL and adjustment-related questions. Significant positive correlations were observed between the PSI and ACL as well as between the PSI and adjustment-related questions for both men and women. However, not all correlations occurred according to the predicted direction. For example, the PSI scales for attitudinal independence from both mother and father subscales were negatively correlated with the ACL (Hoffman, 1984). This indicated that attitudinal similarities between young adults and their parents are related to better adjustment to adulthood.

The PSI was normed on a random sample of White college students from intact families. The mean score of functional independence for male participants was 34 (father; $SD = 11$) and 36 (mother; $SD = 10$). Males scored a mean of 47 (father; $SD = 13$) and 49 (mother; $SD = 12$) for the emotional independence subscale. For the conflictual independence subscale, males scored an average of 83 (father; $SD = 16$) and 84 (mother; $SD = 13$). On the attitudinal independence subscale, males scored 27 (father; $SD = 12$) and 29 (mother; $SD = 10$). For female participants, the functional independence subscale score means were 35 (father; $SD = 11$) and 31 (mother; $SD = 10$). On emotional independence, women scored averages of 44 (father; $SD = 14$) and 42 (mother; $SD = 13$). Conflictual independence means were 82 (father; $SD = 14$) and 80 (mother; $SD = 15$). Attitudinal independence mean scores were 27 (father; $SD = 11$) and 25 (mother; $SD = 11$).

Table 4.1 PSI Subscale Descriptive Characteristics

PSI Subscale	M		SD	
	Father	*Mother*	*Father*	*Mother*
Males (*n* = 83)	*Father*	*Mother*	*Father*	*Mother*
Functional independence	34	36	11	10
Emotional independence	47	49	13	12
Conflictual independence	83	84	16	13
Attitudinal independence	27	29	12	10
Females (*n* = 107)	*Father*	*Mother*	*Father*	*Mother*
Functional independence	35	31	11	10
Emotional independence	44	42	14	13
Conflictual independence	82	80	14	15
Attitudinal independence	27	25	11	11

4.4.4.1 Psychological Separation Inventory – Short Version (PSI-SV)

The PSI contained too many items to be practical for inclusion in an already lengthy questionnaire. In an effort to reduce the number of items in the PSI, the full 138-item instrument was administered during the pilot survey to 45 community college students. Factor analysis of the PSI determined there were two distinct factors with Eigenvalues of 12.457 and 6.942. The 12.457 Eigenvalue factor was labeled the functional subscale, as most of the items were related to functional, emotional, and attitudinal independence. The 6.942 Eigenvalue factor was composed of conflictual independence subscale items.

The PSI-SV subscales' reliabilities with the PSI were strong, with an alpha of .889 for the functional subscale and an alpha of .915 for the conflictual subscale. Correlation between the PSI-SV subscales was low, with an alpha of .014. The PSI-SV functional subscale score ranges from 12 to 60, and the conflictual subscale score ranges from 11 to 55. Higher scores indicate greater independence from parents. Using data from the pilot survey, means and standard deviations were calculated for the PSI-SV. The PSI-SV functional subscale mean was 31.05 (SD = 11.76) and the conflictual subscale mean was 19.36 (SD = 8.63). There is no overall score for the PSI or PSI-SV. Publication of the PSI-SV (Patterson & Arvidson, 2012) is pending.

4.4.5 Sexual Socialization Instrument (Short Form; SSI)

The Sexual Socialization Instrument (short form; SSI) is a 10-item questionnaire which measures influences of parents and peers on sexual permissiveness in adolescents and young adults (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998). "Permissiveness" is defined as the acceptance of nonmarital sexual relations. The instrument provides measurements through two subscales, the Parental Sexual Socialization Scale and the Peer Sexual Socialization Scale. When combined, the two scales present an overall measure of young adults' sexual socialization and reflect parent and peer influences (Bell et al., 1992; Bell, Lottes, & Kuriloff, 1995; Kuriloff, Lottes, & Bell, 1995). This self-report survey uses a Likert-type scale (strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, undecided = 3,

disagree = 4, strongly disagree = 5) to indicate degree of belief in certain statements related to sexual socialization (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998). Five of the 10 items are scored in the reverse direction, for which the scoring follows strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, and so on. Scores can range from 4 to 20, with higher scores indicating more permissive parent and peer influences. Means and standard deviations for the short form of the SSI were not available.

The SSI was designed for use in a longitudinal study that investigated the relationship between backgrounds, residential and social affiliations, attitudes and values, and sexual experiences of university students (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998). The initial study included 557 freshmen students (48% women) and 303 of the same students (55% women) four years later during the participants' senior year in college. Between the first and second phases of the initial study, the number of items in the questionnaire was increased in order to improve internal reliability. The questionnaire contained 10 items (short form) in the first phase and 20 items (long form) in the second phase.

Internal consistency for both the Parental and Peer Sexual Socialization Scales (short forms) was .60 at the first phase of the initial study. At the second phase of the study, the Parental Sexual Socialization Scale internal consistency was .73 (short form). The Peer Sexual Socialization Scale internal consistency was .70 (short form). Test-retest reliability between the two phases of the study was .55 for the Parental Sexual Socialization Scale and .47 for the Peer Sexual Socialization Scale.

Construct validity of the instrument was supported by statistically significant results for hypothesized correlations and group differences (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998). Men scored significantly higher than women on both the parent and peer scales, showing that men felt as if parents and peers were more permissive. Differences were seen between fraternity and non-fraternity men. Freshmen men who pledged fraternities scored higher (more permissive) than freshmen men who did not join fraternities. Senior fraternity members scored higher on the Peer Sexual Socialization Scale than did senior men who were not members of fraternities, indicating

that peers of fraternity members showed more sexual permissiveness. Higher scores on the instrument were positively correlated with number of sexual partners and negatively correlated with age at first intercourse.

4.4.6 Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures (ECR-RS)

The Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011) is a shorter version of the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) and the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Adult Attachment Questionnaire (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The ECR-RS is a 9-item questionnaire for assessing attachment patterns in terms of avoidance and anxiety, and can be used as a short version of the ECR-R (Fraley, 2011).

The ECR-R has been used in several studies, is highly reliable, and has high construct and predictive validity (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Of the 14 instruments used in the original study which resulted in the creation of the ECR-R, the ECR and the revised version appeared to have the highest degree of measurement precision. The ECR-R has more stable test-retest reliability than other attachment scales (Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005), with internal consistency reliability for both scales .90 or higher. Overall, the ECR-R is "one of, if not the, most appropriate self-report measure of adult romantic attachment currently available" (Sibley et al., 2005, p. 1534). Because of the correlation between the ECR-R and the ECR-RS (.66 for romantic partner anxiety and .31 for romantic partner avoidance) and Fraley's assertion that the ECR-RS can be used in place of the ECR-R, the ECR-RS is presumed to also be an appropriate measure of attachment (Fraley, 2011).

The ECR-RS, like the ECR-R, has avoidance and anxiety scores. The ECR-RS has a test-retest reliability of .65 over 30 days when participants are asked to answer the questionnaire in reference to their romantic partner. Cronbach's alpha for the ECR-RS was .91 for the romantic partner anxiety subscale and .87 for the romantic partner avoidance subscale. Each item describes how the participant may feel regarding emotionally intimate relationships.

The participants then score the statement on a 7-point Likert-type scale according to their degree of agreement, with strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 7. Scores for each scale can range from 1 to 7 and are calculated by averaging the scores of individual items in each subscale. Higher scores reflect participants as more anxious about or more avoidant in their relationships. The avoidance score is calculated by averaging items 1 through 6, with items 1, 2, 3, and 4 reverse scored. The anxiety score is calculated by averaging items 7 through 9.

The ECR-RS was normed on 21,838 respondents involved in exclusive romantic relationships with a spouse or partner and who answered an online questionnaire about attachment styles. Most participants were women (81.5%). The average age of the participants was 31.35 years (SD = 11.28). Most of the participants were American (n = 14,718), while British and Canadian participants comprised most of the remainder of the sample. More than 70% of respondents were White, 6.6% were Black, and 4.2% were Latino. The mean for the romantic relationship anxiety subscale was 3.25 (SD = 1.98). The mean for the romantic relationship avoidance subscale was 2.47 (SD = 1.31).

4.4.7 Millennial Survey

The January 2010 Millennial Survey was administered by Pew Social and Demographic Trends in order to determine the demographics, political and social values, lifestyles, priorities, technological habits, and educational and occupational aspirations of the Millennial generation, including those born after 1980 (Kohut et al., 2010). The survey included approximately 50 items, and some questions address conditions influencing participants' previous answers. Questions ranged from simple demographic information and general observations of daily life to deep reflections on past, present, and future experiences. Many of the questions were answered using a Likert-type scale. Items were randomized.

Of the original sample of 2,020 adults, 830 (41%) were between the ages of 18 and 29 years (the target age range for the survey). The survey was conducted via landline telephone calls to 851 respondents and cell phone calls to 1,169 respondents (Kohut et al., 2010).

Interviews were conducted in Spanish and English. Five separate samples were used in order to provide researchers with a representative sample of young adults living in the continental United States. Members of the Millennial generation were oversampled. During the first sampling, 739 interviews were conducted using list-assisted landline random-digit dialing, and 744 interviews were completed using random-digit dialing for cell phone numbers. Interviews were followed by two callback samples, both via landline and cell phone numbers, to conduct additional interviews with 18 to 29 year olds. These callback samples were obtained from recent national surveys conducted by Pew and other survey companies during which respondents answered as aged between 18 and 29 years. The landline callbacks yielded 112 complete surveys, and 244 surveys were conducted via the cell phone callbacks. Researchers used weighting in survey analysis in order to compensate for patterns of non-response and to match demographic distributions to known population parameters.

4.4.8 Patterson's Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey (PEEAS)

The PEEAS was developed by this researcher in order to measure the dimensions of Eriksonian emerging adulthood: experimental sexuality, incarnation, impudence, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness, and ideological experimentation. It was pilot-tested in May 2011 in an online survey with 45 community college student respondents. The PEEAS is composed of six subscales which, in theory, can be added together to obtain an overall crisis resolution score. Overall scores can range from 36 to 185, with higher scores indicating a greater probability of a successful resolution of incarnation versus impudence.

Means for the PEEAS subscales and overall score were calculated for the pilot survey data. The experimental sexuality mean was 24.75 (SD = 3.28). The incarnation subscale mean was 20.13 (SD = 5.67). The impudence subscale mean was 16.89 (SD = 3.98). The relationships subscale average was 23.00 (SD = 2.45). The interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness subscale mean was 14.00 (SD = 1). The

ideological experimentation mean was 26.18 (*SD* = 4.14). The overall score average was

125.50 (SD = 2.12).

Table 4.2 PEEAS Subscales Descriptive Statistics for Pilot Study

PEEAS Subscale	*M*	*SD*
Experimental Sexuality	24.75	3.28
Incarnation	20.13	5.67
Impudence	16.89	3.98
Temporal and Spatial Social and Intimate Relationships	23.00	2.45
Interdependence and Self-sufficiency and Dependence and Helplessness	14.00	1.00
Ideological Experimentation: Relativism and Absolutism	26.18	4.14
Overall score	125.50	2.12

One question of the PEEAS, item 16 (have casual sex without a condom) was removed

from the survey during data analysis of the full study data due to the lack of variability in the

responses. All participants who answered that item (*n* = 19) indicated they were "definitely not"

willing to have casual sex without a condom.

4.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected via Internet-based survey distribution. Internet surveys are

economical, reach large numbers of people, and enable data to be entered directly into a

computer database (Bryman, 2004). Before the survey was distributed for the full study, a pilot

study was conducted with 45 emerging adults completing the questionnaire and providing

feedback to ensure question clarity and readability. The researcher modified the questionnaire

based on feedback. For full study distribution, professional contacts were asked to email the

survey link to their students. Students were informed that participation in the study was

completely voluntary, did not impact their course grades, and all data were anonymous.

4.5.1 Ethics Statement

Because the primary researcher was a University of Texas at Arlington doctoral

candidate, UTA Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to survey distribution.

The study was conducted according to the National Association of Social Workers' *Code of*

Ethics. Risks associated with participation in the study were unlikely. Participants indicated their informed consent online prior to starting the survey.

The only potential risk of participation in the survey was identified as undesired emotional responses triggered by some of the items that asked about family, relationships, and sexuality. Participants were directed to either discontinue participation or to skip any questions they deemed threatening, discomforting, or embarrassing. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, and participants could stop the survey at any time.

Data were kept confidential and anonymous, maintained on a secured laptop in the researcher's possession in a locked office to which only the researcher had access. Participants provided no identifying information as part of the questionnaire, and the researcher has no way of identifying respondents. A summary of results and a copy of this dissertation are available to interested participants via a link on the researcher's Facebook page.

4.6 Data Analysis and Testing of Hypotheses

All participants' demographic data and the demographic data they provided about their families were studied by calculating descriptive statistics and percentages. Descriptive statistics of homeleaving trends were also calculated. Means and standard deviations of instruments by subscale and by overall score (if applicable) were determined.

The hypotheses were tested using the following statistical procedures:

Hypothesis 1. Emerging adulthood qualifies as the sixth stage of Erikson's psychosocial development theory as evinced by the relationship between aspects of Eriksonian emerging adulthood theory and established measures of those same aspects of development.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by calculating concurrent validity (Pearson's *r*) between each subscale of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood and other instruments which measure some of those same subscale aspects.

Hypothesis 2. The crisis of emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, successfully resolves as a consequence of experimental sexuality, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence, and experimental ideology.

Hypothesis 2 was tested using ANOVA to compare the mean crisis resolution scores of three age groups: adolescents (age 18 years), emerging adults (ages 19 through 25 years), young adults and beyond (ages 26 years and older). When ANOVA revealed differences in the mean scores of the three age groups, post hoc tests were run in order to determine where the differences lay.

Hypothesis 3. The resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood differs for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously by postponing the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood in boomerang children.

Hypothesis 3 was tested using a t-test to establish whether a difference existed between PEEAS Crisis Resolution scores for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously.

Hypothesis 4. As emerging adults successfully resolve the crisis of incarnation versus impudence, they are more likely to boomerang to the parental home.

Hypothesis 4 was tested by examining the correlations between boomeranging and scores on subscales used in the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was explanatory. The primary goal of the research was to test the theory of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood and determine which aspects of emerging adulthood are relevant to emerging adults. In this study, the researcher compared the emerging adulthood experiences of boomerang children to those of young people living autonomously.

The survey data analyzed herein was collected from August to December 2011 through SurveyMonkey.com. Participants were found through purposive sampling. Participants were made aware of the research through Facebook, word of mouth, and paper notices that directed them to the SurveyMonkey site. There were 609 survey participants, with 408 completing the survey, for an overall response rate of 67%. However, because survey respondents were directed to skip or not answer any questions they perceived as threatening, discomforting, or embarrassing, the number of responses for each question varied widely. A question regarding casual sex without condom use had the lowest number of participants choosing to answer the question ($n = 19$) and a complete lack of variability (all respondents answered negatively).

The analysis was based upon Erikson's established theory of psychosocial development, Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood, and the researcher's theory of Eriksonian emerging adulthood. Eriksonian emerging adulthood identifies six aspects of development specific to emerging adulthood: experimental sexuality, incarnation versus impudence, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness, and experimental ideology. The theory was applied in order to substantiate the necessity of a change to Erikson's theory which more accurately reflects the social reality of modern Western cultures. Development was measured using an instrument

created specifically for Eriksonian emerging adulthood data collection (Patterson's Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey; PEEAS) as well as established measures of development (IDEA, PSI, ECR-RS, and SSI). The Perry Position Assessment (PPA) was unable to be used in whole due to low reliability (Cronbach's α = .551), however, the PPA Dualism subscale was used (Cronbach's α = .645). The IDEA subscales of Identity Exploration and Negativity Instability were used in place of the PEEAS Impudence subscale when noted due to the small number of participants who chose to answer all of the subscale questions (n = 12) and due to the high correlations the associated PEEAS subscales had with the IDEA's specific subscales.

5.2 Pilot Study

The pilot study was administered through SurveyMonkey.com in May 2011 to 45 community college students. After the pilot study, the survey was altered to decrease the number of items and the amount of time it took participants to complete. The use of the ECR-RS as opposed to the ECR-R allowed approximately 20 questions to be removed from the final survey. The PSI was altered so that items asked about relationships with "parent/s" as opposed to having items ask specifically about "mother" or "father." This reduced the number of PSI items from 138 to 60. However, respondents indicated that they still felt as if this section was too long. Factor analysis was then used to further reduce the number of PSI items from 60 to 23. This version of the PSI is known as the PSI-SV (Psychological Separation Inventory – Short Version). The subscales of the original PSI (emotional independence, functional independence, attitudinal independence, and conflictual independence) were found to load on to only two components, functional independence and conflictual independence, with Eigenvalues of 12.457 and 6.942, respectively.

5.3 Scale Reliabilities

5.3.1 Scale Reliabilities in the Current Study

The reliabilities of each IDEA subscales were good. The Identity Exploration subscale reliability was .867. The reliability of the Experimentation subscale was .739. The Instability

subscale reliability was .839. The Other-focus subscale reliability was .744. The Self-focus subscale reliability was .847. The In-between subscale reliability was .829. Cronbach's alpha for the ECR-RS Avoidance subscale was good (α = .864). The ECR-RS Anxiety subscale's reliability was .907. The SSI Parent subscale's reliability was minimally acceptable at .601. Because the SSI Parent subscale is comprised of only three items, the reliability of this scale was lower than desired, but that was expected due to the few items in the subscale. The SSI Peer subscale's reliability was .729. Overall, the reliability of the SSI was .844. The PPA had the lowest reliability of any instrument used, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .551. The only PPA subscale with minimal acceptable reliability was the Dualism subscale, with a reliability of .645. From the factor analysis, the two components of the PSI-SV were labeled as a Functional Independence subscale (Cronbach's α = .889) and a Conflictual Independence subscale (Cronbach's α = .915). The correlation between the functional independence subscale and conflictual independence subscale was low (Cronbach's α = .014). The reliability of the PEEAS subscales was .878 for the Experimental Sexuality subscale, .774 for Incarnation, .703 for Impudence, .600 for the Temporal and Spatial Social and Intimate Relationships subscale, .635 for the Dependence and Interdependence subscale, and .627 for the Related Principles of Social Order subscale. Although the Impudence subscale's reliability was acceptable, the subscale was not used because of the small sample size completing all items (n = 12). An overall PEEAS score using the original 6 subscales could not be calculated due to the small number of participants who completed all aspects of PEEAS needed to calculate an overall score (n = 7).

5.3.2 Current Study Reliabilities Compared to Previously Recorded Reliabilities

Internal consistencies found in the current study were generally slightly higher than those found in other studies. Cronbach's alpha for the IDEA subscales ranged from .70 to .85 when the instrument was originally validated (Reifman et al., 2007). Reliabilities in the current study ranged from .739 to .867. The reliability of the original PSI subscales ranged from .84 for

the Functional Independence scale calculated for mothers and .92 for the Conflictual Independence scale calculated for mothers (Hoffman, 1984). The current PSI-SV reliabilities were excellent, with reliability values achieving at or above original PSI internal consistencies. The overall SSI reliability was higher in the current study than in the study which originally validated the instrument (.844 compared to .60; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998). The SSI Parent subscale reliability was not as high (.601 to .73), and the SSI Peer subscale reliability was slightly higher (.729 to .70). The Cronbach's alphas of ECR-RS subscales were similar to those found in previous research (.864 compared to .88 for avoidance and .907 compared to .85 for anxiety). The reliability of the PPA was tested for the first time as a part of the current research; however, the Cronbach's alpha obtained failed to meet the minimum standards for internal consistency. Subsequently, the PPA was not used.

<div align="center">5.4 Descriptive Statistics</div>

5.4.1 Participant Demographics

About 64% of respondents were female, and 36% were male (n = 586). Ages of participants ranged from 18 to 68 years. The mean age of the sample was 27.1 years, with a standard deviation of 10.9 years. Ages were divided in to three distinct categories for the purposes of comparison: 18 year olds (adolescents), 19 to 25 year olds (emerging adults), and 26 years and older (young adults and beyond). Those who answered that they were younger than 18 years of age were not allowed to answer further questions and were redirected to a page in the survey that thanked them for their participation and informed them that they were ineligible to continue the survey due to their age. Adolescents comprised 17.9% of the sample (n = 108), emerging adults comprised 36.4% (n = 219), while 43.5% (n = 262) of respondents were young adults or older.

Almost half of the participants identified themselves as White or Caucasian (49.4%). Black or African Americans (19.0%) and Latino or Hispanic (22.2%) comprised the majority of the other respondents. Asians (6.3%), biracial (2.4%), Native American (.2%), and "other" (.5%)

accounted for the remaining respondents. Only 4.5% of participants answered that they were international students. Religious identification of respondents was primarily Protestant Christian (49.7%) and Catholic (15.8%). People who identified as "not religious," including atheists and agnostics, or who chose to skip the question, comprised 27.4% of respondents. All other religious identifications made up 7.0% of responses.

Most respondents indicated that they were unmarried, either single (42.6%) or in a serious dating relationship (17.6%). Married participants comprised 22.1% of the sample. About 10% of the sample (53 individuals) was unmarried and currently living with a romantic partner, and 42.4% of the sample indicated previous cohabitation. This appears congruent with the finding that 65.9% of the sample found no moral objection to cohabitation. Only 16.6% of respondents believed that it was inappropriate to be unmarried and living together, and 17.5% of the sample stated that it the morality of cohabitation depended on individual circumstances.

There were 547 responses to the item that asked about parenthood. Most respondents (72.6%) did not have children. Of the 150 respondents with children, 55.3% of parents reported that their children lived with him or her and the other parent, and 21.3% responded that they were single parents raising their child or children alone.

Most respondents were college students, with 58.9% of the sample (n = 547) attending school full-time and 15.2% attending part-time. College graduates with no plans to return to school comprised 19.7% of the sample. Thirty-six percent of students attended a four-year university, 30.6% were community college students, 21.1% were graduate students, and 10.8% were vocational or trade school students.

The majority (65%) of participants indicated that they were employed full-time, and 18.7% were not employed but did attend school. Unemployed people who were seeking work comprised 8.3% of the sample, and 5.5% were not working and not currently seeking work. For 29.9% of respondents, their employment was described as a job that is enjoyable but not a career, while a similar percentage (29.7%) of employed persons described their current work as

a career. Other individuals (18.6%) stated that their job paid the bills and helped them get by, but they did not find their current work to be a career or a stepping stone to a career. As far as employment hopes for the future, 68.0% of respondents believed they would have a career that paid enough money to allow them the type of life they want, or that their income combined with a partner's income would provide enough for that type of life. About a quarter of respondents indicated that they and/or their partner currently earned enough money to support their chosen lifestyle. Only 4.4% of respondents were pessimistic about their abilities to ever earn enough money to live the life they want.

5.4.2 Demographics of Participants' Families of Origin

The relationship between young people and their parents was investigated in order to determine predictors of boomerang living situations. Most (62.9%) young people responded that they lived with both parents while they grew up. Almost 20% of young people lived with their mother only, and 10% lived with their mother and stepfather. The remainder (5.8%) of young people grew up in the care of their fathers, fathers and stepmothers, other family members, or experienced a different living situation, such as adoptive or foster families. Both parents were alive in most families (82.5%). Almost half (47.8%) of young peoples' parents were married and living together, while 5.9% of parents were married to each other but not living together. Through either divorce and remarriage or widowhood and remarriage, 22.3% of young people had a stepparent. Only 16.4% of young people's parents were never married, divorced but not remarried, or widowed and not remarried.

Table 5.1 Participant Demographics

Variable	n	%
Sex		
Female	370	64.0
Male	211	36.0
Age group		
Adolescents (18 years old)	108	17.9
Emerging adults (19 to 25 years old)	219	36.4
Young adults (26 years and older)	262	43.5
Race/Ethnicity		
White or Caucasian	273	49.4
Black or African American	105	19.0
Latino or Hispanic	123	22.2
Other	52	9.4
Religion		
Christian, Protestant	299	49.7
Christian, Catholic	95	15.8
Not religious	165	27.4
Other	42	7.0
Relationship status		
Single	216	42.6
Serious dating relationship	89	17.6
Married	112	22.1
Cohabitation		
Currently cohabitating	53	10.0
Previously cohabitated	232	42.4
Parenthood		
Not parents	397	72.6
Parents	150	27.4
Student status		
Full-time college student	322	58.9
Part-time college student	83	15.2
Graduates with no plans to return to school	108	19.7
School type		
Four-year university	147	36.0
Community college	125	30.6
Graduate school	86	21.1
Vocational school	44	10.8
Employment status		
Full-time	354	65.0
Unemployed students	102	18.7
Unemployed, seeking work	45	8.3
Unemployed, not seeking work	30	5.5

Respondents provided their parents' levels of education, with 531 participants noting their mother's education and 530 supplying their father's level of education. The responses

indicate that 40.3% of participants had mothers with a high school education or less. Those whose mothers had some college education made up 19.8% of the sample, while 8.3% had mothers who completed an associate degree, 16.2% had mothers who earned a bachelor's degree, and 11.9% had mothers who held an advanced degree. Among participants' fathers, 40% had a high school education or less, 15.5% attended some college, 4.3% earned an associate degree, 17.5% obtained a bachelor's degree, and 14.2% held advanced degrees.

The survey asked participants about the religious identification of their parents. Parents perceived as not religious, agnostic, or atheistic, or whose child skipped the question, comprised 21.8% of the sample. Just over half of respondents identified their parents as Protestant Christian (43.7%), and 23.6% said their parents were Catholic. Other religions comprised the remaining 11.0% of the sample.

Young people were asked about the income of their parents. Some (15.7%) participants were unsure of their parents' financial situation. Parental income of $25,000 or less was reported by 12.8% of respondents, while 20.3% reported $25,001 to $50,000, 19.3% reported $50,001 to $75,000, 11.9% reported $75,001 to $100,000, and 20.1% reported parental income over $100,001. Parents provided a supplemental income or other form of financial assistance to 37.7% of participants.

The number of siblings of participants ranged from 0 (the participant was an only child) to 13, with a mean of 2.4 siblings and a standard deviation of 1.9. Among the participants, 189 (35.9%) were the oldest child in their family, 27.9% were middle children, and 28.3% were the youngest of the siblings. Eight percent of participants were only children. Some participants (43.2%) reported that no children lived at the home of their parents. In 15.8% of families, younger siblings of participants were the only children who lived with their parents. In 17.7% of families, participants and younger siblings lived at home with their parents. In 9.3% of families, the participant was the only child who lived at the parental home. The remaining 14% of

participants reported that other combinations of children, such as older siblings and themselves or older and younger as well as themselves, lived with parents.

5.4.3 Homeleaving Among Participants

Just over 75% of participants had left the parental home, while 24.7% of respondents reported that they had yet to move out of the parental home. The most common age to first leave home was 18 years (35.7%; *n* = 189). Almost 80% of those who left home departed before the age of 20. Participants cited leaving for school as the most common primary reason for leaving home (41.1%). Other reasons to leave the parental home included wanting more freedom or more space (14.4%) and the desire to live with others (spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, or friends [11.1%]).

5.4.4 Boomeranging

Of 527 responses, 37.4% of participants indicated they had boomeranged to their parental home at least once, meaning they left the home for at least 6 months before returning to live with their parents. One boomerang experience (one home leaving and one return) was most frequently reported (experienced by 62.1% of boomerang children). Multiple boomerangs were also fairly common, with 35.3% of boomerang children leaving and returning to the parental home two or three times. However, just 2.5% of boomerang children have experienced four or more boomerangs.

Table 5.2 Participants' Family Demographics

Variable	n	%
Lived with while growing up		
Both parents	334	62.9
Mother only	104	19.6
Father only	10	1.9
Parent and stepparent	62	11.7
Other	21	3.9
Relationship of parents		
Married	253	47.8
Separated	31	5.9
Divorced, both parents single	54	10.2
Divorced, one or both parents remarried	106	20.0
Other	85	16.1
Mother's education		
Did not complete high school	88	16.6
High school	126	23.7
Some college	105	19.8
Associate's degree	44	8.3
Bachelor's degree	86	16.2
Graduate degree	63	11.9
Unsure	19	3.6
Father's education		
Did not complete high school	88	16.6
High school	124	23.4
Some college	82	15.5
Associate's degree	23	4.3
Bachelor's degree	93	17.5
Graduate degree	74	14.0
Unsure	46	8.7
Parent religion		
Christian, Protestant	263	43.7
Christian, Catholic	142	23.6
Not religious	131	21.8
Other	66	11.0
Parent income		
$25,000 or less	67	12.8
$25,001 to $50,000	106	20.3
$50,001 to $75,000	101	19.3
$75,001 to $100,000	62	11.9
Over $100,001	105	20.1
Unsure	82	15.7
Participant birth order		
Oldest	189	35.9
Middle	147	27.9
Youngest	149	28.3
Only child	42	8.0

5.4.5 Reasons for Returning

The most frequent and most important reasons cited for returning to the parental home were financial. The desire to save money, being out of money, and unemployment were important factors in deciding whether to move home. More than half (54.8%) of boomerangers ranked finances as the top consideration for returning home. About a third (35.1%) claimed that parental desire to have them move back home was among the top three reasons why they returned to live with their parents. Other reasons included leaving school because of graduation, taking a semester off, or failing out (22.6%); the end of a romantic relationship (16.4%); or the desire to return to school (11.8%).

5.4.6 Perceptions of Returning

Despite the stereotypical view that boomeranging to the parental home is undesirable, 18.1% of boomerangers reported that they felt okay about moving home – which was the most common response to the question that asked about how they felt. Some boomerang children reported that they perceived their parents to be genuinely happy about them returning home (19.6%). Boomerang children generally perceived that their parents were more positive about the living arrangement than they were, although only about 9% of boomerangers stated that they felt disappointed, frustrated, stressed or depressed. Few boomerang children (less than 5%) reported that they perceived their parents to have negative feelings toward the living situation. Overall, 77.4% of respondents reported their boomerang living experience as generally positive.

5.4.7 Impetus to Leave the Parental Home Again

Boomerang children reported that they anticipated leaving their parental home when they could find a job or a better job (15.6%), when they had enough money for their own place (14.1%), or when their romantic relationship status changed, such as when they could marry (8.0%) or move in with a boyfriend or girlfriend (5.8%).

Table 5.3 Participant Homeleaving Experiences

Variable	*n*	%
Left the parental home		
Yes	399	75.3
No	131	24.7
Age to leave home		
Never moved out	131	24.7
Under 18	85	16.0
18	189	35.7
19	44	8.3
20	32	6.0
21	14	2.6
22	13	2.5
Over 22	10	4.1
Boomeranged		
Yes	197	37.4
No	330	62.6
Number of boomerang experiences		
1	123	62.1
2	47	23.7
3	23	11.6
4 or more	5	2.5
Participant's overall perception of boomerang living		
Generally positive	202	77.4
Generally negative	59	22.6

5.4.8 Instrument Subscale Descriptive Statistics

The IDEA, ECR-RS, and PSI-SV instruments are scored by subscale only, while the SSI (short version) and PEEAS have an overall score that can be obtained by adding the subscales. PEEAS subscales include experimental sexuality, incarnation, impudence, relationships, interdependence and dependence, experimental ideology, and the overall score. The mean score for experimental sexuality was 21.00 (*n* = 124; *SD* = 4.36). The average score of incarnation was 20.95 (*n* = 126; *SD* = 5.60). The impudence subscale mean score was 16.75 (*n* = 12; *SD* = 5.26). The relationships subscale (temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships) had a mean score of 19.83 (*n* = 120; *SD* = 3.49). The interdependence and dependence subscale (interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and

helplessness) had a mean of 23.17 (*n* = 88; *SD* = 4.77). The average score of experimental ideology (relativism and absolutism) was 14.77 (*n* = 130; *SD* = 3.07). The average overall PEEAS score was 123.43 (*n* = 7; *SD* = 15.79).

The IDEA identity exploration subscale average was 3.43 (*n* = 478; *SD* = .60). The experimentation subscale (experimentation and feelings of limitless possibilities) average was 3.41 (*n* = 472; *SD* = .66). The instability subscale (negativity and instability) mean was 2.97 (*n* = 465; *SD* = .68). The average of the self-focus subscale was 3.37 (*n* = 467; *SD* = .63), and the average of the other-focus subscale was 2.67 (*n* = 475; *SD* = .82). The feeling "in-between" subscale mean was 3.28 (*n* = 473; *SD* = .78).

The SSI (short version) parent subscale average was 12.02 (*n* = 455; *SD* = 2.58), and the peer subscale was 23.50 (*n* = 450; *SD* = 5.39). The overall SSI (short version) score average was 35.51 (*n* = 446; *SD* = 6.89). The ECR-RS avoidance subscale average was 2.53 (*n* = 435; *SD* = 1.35), while the average of the ECR-RS anxiety subscale average was 3.02 (*n* = 445; *SD* = 1.91). The PSI-SV functional subscale average was 30.75 (*n* = 456; *SD* = 11.25), and the conflictual subscale average was 20.40 (*n* = 455; *SD* = 10.38).

<div align="center">5.5 Results of Hypothesis Testing</div>

In this section, data pertinent to the research hypotheses that guided this research are presented. The hypotheses are restated and the findings are presented. Analysis included bivariate correlations, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post hoc tests, and *t*-tests.

5.5.1 Hypothesis 1

Research Hypothesis 1: Emerging adulthood qualifies as the sixth stage of Erikson's psychosocial development theory as evinced by the relationship between aspects of Eriksonian emerging adulthood theory and established measures of those same aspects of development.

Null Hypothesis 1: Emerging adulthood is not a stage of Erikson's psychosocial development theory due to the lack of relationship between aspects of Eriksonian emerging adulthood theory and established measures of those same aspects of development.

Table 5.4 Instrument Subscale Descriptive Statistics

Instrument subscales	n	M	SD
PEEAS			
Experimental sexuality	124	21.00	4.36
Incarnation	126	20.95	5.60
Impudence	12	16.75	5.26
Relationships	120	19.83	3.49
Interdependence/Dependence	88	23.17	4.77
Experimental ideology	130	14.77	3.07
Overall score	7	123.43	15.79
IDEA			
Identity exploration	478	3.43	.60
Experimentation	472	3.41	.66
Instability	465	2.97	.68
Self-focus	467	3.37	.63
Feeling "in-between"	473	3.28	.78
Other-focus	475	2.67	.82
SSI (short form)			
Parent	455	12.02	2.58
Peer	450	23.50	5.39
Overall score	446	35.51	6.89
ECR-RS			
Avoidance	435	2.53	1.35
Anxiety	445	3.02	1.91
PSI-SV			
Functional	456	30.75	11.25
Conflictual	455	20.40	10.38

The hypothesis was tested by examining concurrent validity between the PEEAS and instruments which measure aspects of the PEEAS and whose validity and reliability is established.

The PEEAS is composed of six subscales that are each designed to measure criteria of an Eriksonian stage. An Eriksonian stage is comprised of eight parts: psychosexual stage and mode, psychosocial crisis, radius of significant relations, basic strength, basic antipathy, related principle of social order, binding ritualization, and ritualism. The following table conceptualizes Eriksonian emerging adulthood, the established instruments predicted to measure the same aspects of Eriksonian emerging adulthood, and the actual correlations between the established instruments and the Eriksonian emerging adulthood subscales.

Table 5.5 Correlations Between PEEAS and Other Instruments

Stage Criteria for all Eriksonian Stages	Specific Stage Criteria for Emerging Adulthood	PEEAS Subscale Items "Think about the time in your life from the ages of 18 to 25. For each of the following statements, indicate the degree to which you are willing to…"	Predicted Corresponding Valid and Reliable Instruments	Actual Correlations between PEEAS Subscales and Corresponding Instruments	
Psychosexual stage and mode	Experimental sexuality	1. Hook up with or booty call someone just to make out or have sex. 2. Be open to sex between yourself and only one other person. 3. Be open to sex between yourself and more than one person. 4. View pornography for the purposes of sexual gratification. 5. Use alcohol or drugs to lower your own or others' sexual inhibitions. 6. Explore sexual preferences, such as sexual orientation and sexual activities. 7. Have sex as part of romantic relationships.	Sexual Socialization Instrument (short form): Parental and Peer Subscales (SSI; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998)	*SSI Peer Subscale*	
				Pearson Correlation	-.198
				r^2	.039
				Significance	.041
				n	107
				ECR-RS Avoidance Subscale	
				Pearson Correlation	-.316
				r^2	.100
				Significance	.001
				n	110
				PSI Functional Subscale	
				Pearson Correlation	-.256
				r^2	.066
				Significance	.006
				n	112
				IDEA Identity Exploration Subscale	
				Pearson Correlation	.214
				r^2	.046
				Significance	.022
				n	115
				IDEA Experimentation Subscale	
				Pearson Correlation	.284
				r^2	.081
				Significance	.002
				n	114
				IDEA Self-Focus Subscale	
				Pearson Correlation	.216
				r^2	.047
				Significance	.022
				n	112

Table 5.5 - *Continued*

| Psychosocial crisis | Incarnation v. Impudence | 8. Disagree with your parents, even if the consequences of the disagreement are undesirable (such as withdrawal of financial support).
9. Take full financial responsibility for your obligations, even if your parents offer to help.
10. Take a job that pays less than desired or is in a field other that your desired occupation.
11. Make and keep a budget without overreliance on loans, credit cards, or family financial help.
12. Abandon some of your childhood or teenage goals in favor of more practical goals.
13. Debate with a professor or other authority figure over the fairness of a policy.
14. Party, drink alcohol, or use recreational drugs.
15. Allow your parents to guide some of the more important decisions in your life, such as where to live or what career to choose.
16. Have casual sex without a condom.*
17. Post messages or pictures on social networking or other websites that show you or your friends intoxicated or in compromising positions.
18. Plagiarize or cheat on a difficult school assignment or exam.
19. Drive after consuming alcoholic beverages or using drugs. | Psychological Separation Inventory (short form): Functional and Conflictual Subscales (PSI; Hoffman, 1984; Patterson & Arvidson, 2012 *submitted for publication*) | *PSI Functional Subscale*

IDEA Identity Exploration Subscale

IDEA Negativity/Instability Subscale

ECR-RS Avoidance Subscale |

PSI Functional Subscale

Pearson Correlation	-.256
r^2	..066
Significance	.006
n	112

IDEA Identity Exploration Subscale

Pearson Correlation	.709
r^2	.503
Significance	.010
n	12**

IDEA Negativity/Instability Subscale

Pearson Correlation	.752
r^2	.565
Significance	.005
n	12**

ECR-RS Avoidance Subscale

Pearson Correlation	-..466
r^2	.217
Significance	.127
n	12**

| Radius of significant relations | Temporal and spatial social and intimate relations | 20. Maintain an exclusive romantic relationship with a high school boyfriend or girlfriend.
21. Have a long distance relationship with someone you see in person only a few times a year.
22. Call or email your mom or dad several times a week while you live away from them.
23. Become "friends" on Facebook or other social networking sites with people you have not met in person.
24. Tell your parents or family what you think they want to hear in order to keep peace in the relationship.
25. Have concurrent romantic or sexual relationships "back home" and away at school (or, as rapper Ludacris would say, "hoes in different area codes"). | Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011)

Psychological Separation Inventory (short form): Functional and Conflictual Subscales (PSI; Hoffman, 1984; Patterson & Arvidson, 2012 *submitted for publication*) | |

PSI Conflictual Subscale

Pearson Correlation	-.234
r^2	.055
Significance	.016
n	105

SSI Peer Subscale

Pearson Correlation	.213
r^2	.045
Significance	.033
n	101

Table 5.5 - *Continued*

Basic strength Basic antipathy	Interdependence Dependence and helplessness	26. Ask or allow your parents to intervene with school officials or professors on your behalf. 27. Contact a family member, friend, or counselor if you feel depressed or overwhelmed. 28. Go to a professor during office hours to talk about potential difficulties you may experience in the class prior to having any problems. 29. Discuss your sexual history and share information about communicable diseases prior to sexual contact with your boyfriend or girlfriend. 30. Obtain a part-time job (if you attend school) or go to school part-time (if you work). 31. Insist on using condoms even if your partner says he or she "has it covered."	Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood: Identity Exploration Subscale (IDEA; Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007)	*IDEA Identity Exploration Subscale* 	Pearson Correlation	.294
r^2	.086
Significance	.007
n	83	 *IDEA Self-Focus Subscale* 	Pearson Correlation	.391
r^2	.152
Significance	.000
n	83	 *PSI Conflictual Subscale* 	Pearson Correlation	-.319
r^2	.102
Significance	.004
n	80	
Related principle of social order Binding ritualization Ritualism	Experimental ideology Relativism Absolutism	32. Change your political affiliation or beliefs. 33. Change your religious affiliation or beliefs. 34. Consider all viewpoints, opinions, and arguments on a particular issue valid and equal. 35. Believe that some opinions or viewpoints have little value or are invalid. 36. Accept or reject an idea based upon the origins of that idea (your parents told you, a professor told you, a friend told you). 37. Think of decisions as right or wrong, good or bad.	Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood: Identity Exploration Subscale (IDEA; Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007) Perry Position Assessment (PPA; Arvidson, 2002)	*PPA Dualism Subscale* 	Pearson Correlation	.029
r^2	.001
Significance	.754
n	123	
	Overall Crisis Resolution			*PSI Functional Subscale* 	Pearson Correlation	-.826
r^2	.682
Significance	.022
n	7**	

The overall score for the PEEAS was unusable due to the small sample of participants who answered all questions of the instrument (n = 7). The impudence subscale was also unusable due to a small sample size (n = 12). However, because of the correlations between the PEEAS impudence subscale and the IDEA identity exploration subscale (r PEEAS Impudence-IDEA Identity Exploration = .71) and the PEEAS impudence subscale and the IDEA instability subscale (r PEEAS Impudence-IDEA Instability =.75), the scores obtained from those two IDEA subscales were substituted for the impudence subscale in the following hypotheses.

Result: The null hypothesis was rejected. There exist significant relationships between theorized aspects of Eriksonian emerging adulthood and instruments which measure some of those same aspects. Although the data are inconclusive in the impudence subscale due to the small number of participants who answered the items which comprised that subscale, evidence suggests that relationships were present.

5.5.2 Hypothesis 2

Research Hypothesis 2: The crisis of emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, successfully resolves as a consequence of experimental sexuality, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence, and experimental ideology.

Null Hypothesis 2: The crisis of emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, is unresolved.

The hypothesis was tested through analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the mean crisis resolution scores of three age groups: adolescents (age 18 years), emerging adults (ages 19 to 25 years), and young adults and beyond (ages 26 years and greater). ANOVA revealed that the obtained F value of 4.122 exceeded the critical value of 3.21 at the .023 level of significance.

Result: The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant difference between the mean crisis resolution scores of the three age groups.

Post hoc tests showed that participants over the age of 25 years (young adults and beyond) had significantly higher crisis resolution scores than participants in the adolescent or emerging adult age groups. The pairwise difference between adolescents and young adults and beyond was greater than that of the pairwise difference between emerging adults and young adults and beyond. The difference between adolescents and young adults and beyond was 11.884 at the .018 level of significance. The difference between emerging adults and young adults and beyond was 8.960 at the .020 level of significance. There was no pairwise difference detected between adolescents and emerging adults.

Post hoc tests showed significant differences in the mean Overall Crisis Resolution score of young adults and beyond compared to emerging adults and compared to adolescents. Participants 26 years of age and older had higher Overall Crisis Resolution scores than participants 25 years and under. The least significant differences (LSD) statistic showed a greater difference between young adults and emerging adults than young adults and adolescents. No difference in the mean scores of adolescents and emerging adults was found.

Table 5.6 Post hoc Tests (LSD)

Age by category (I)	Comparison age groups (J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Significance	95% confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Adolescents (age 18)	Emerging Adults	.903	1.458	.536	-1.96	3.77
	Young Adults	-5.319*	1.441	.000	-8.15	-2.49
Emerging Adults (ages 19-25)	Adolescents	-.903	1.458	.536	-3.77	1.96
	Young Adults	-6.222*	1.168	.000	-8.52	-3.93
Young Adults and Beyond (ages 26+)	Adolescents	5.319*	1.441	.000	2.49	8.15
	Emerging Adults	6.222*	1.168	.000	3.93	8.52

5.5.3 Hypothesis 3

Research Hypothesis 3: The resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood differs for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously by postponing the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood in boomerang children.

Null Hypothesis 3: The resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood does not differ for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously.

The hypothesis was tested with a *t*-test to determine if differences existed between the PEEAS crisis resolution scores of boomerang children (*n* = 25) and emerging adults living autonomously (*n* = 20). No significant differences were found between boomerang children and emerging adults who did not live with their parents. The obtained *t* value was -1.312 with a significance of .197, which did not exceed the critical value of +/-2.017 (*df* = 43).

Result: Because of the obtained *t* value, the null hypothesis was not rejected. No significant differences were found between the resolution scores of boomerang children and children living autonomously.

5.5.4 Hypothesis 4

Research Hypothesis 4: As emerging adults successfully resolve the crisis of incarnation versus impudence, they are more likely to boomerang to their parental home.

Null Hypothesis 4: Emerging adults are no more likely to return to their parental home as they resolve the crisis of incarnation versus impudence.

The hypothesis was tested by analyzing correlations between independent variables and whether a boomerang had occurred. Three correlations were found to be significant. The PEEAS Experimental Sexuality subscale (.272 at the .002 level of significance; *n* = 124) and the PEEAS Incarnation subscale (.333 at the .000 level of significance; *n* = 124) were found to be positively correlated to boomerang living. The ECR-RS Avoidance subscale was negatively correlated to boomerang living (-.133 at the .006 level of significance; *n* = 434).

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Result: The null hypothesis was rejected. Evidence suggested that the resolution of the crisis of incarnation versus impudence is correlated with boomeranging to the parental home. Emerging adults who score higher on the PEEAS Experimental Sexuality subscale (which measures sexual awareness and maturity) also are more likely to boomerang home. The more avoidant emerging adults are in their relationships (as measured by the ECR-RS Avoidance subscale), the less likely they are to return to the parental home.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

This dissertation examined the impact of boomerang living situations on emerging adulthood while proposing an additional stage in Erikson's psychosocial development theory that would be reflective of current trends in the transition to adulthood.

6.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study was explanatory. Up to half of American emerging adults return to the parental home after a period of living autonomously or semi-autonomously (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999); they are a phenomena referred to as boomerang kids or boomerang children. While home-returning is not historically unprecedented, it has created social controversy in the post-World War II era. Academic interest in boomerang children began in 1985 with a study using data collected from a small sample ($n = 39$) of individuals attending a workshop for parents facing problems with their young-adult children (Clemens & Axelson, 1985). Despite numerous other studies that have reflected positively on boomerang living, negative perceptions of the phenomenon are pervasive in academia and popular culture. In this study, I used Erikson's theory to provide an objective view of boomerang children without the inherent bias present in some of the previous research. Classic Eriksonian theory does not adequately address psychosocial development and the transition to adulthood experienced by many emerging adults today. This study used Arnett's emerging adulthood theory to develop Erikson's theory into Eriksonian emerging adulthood theory.

6.1.2 Hypotheses

To guide the study, the following research questions were put forth:

1. What is the crisis of emerging adulthood?

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2. What factors are related to the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood?

3. Does the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood differ for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously from their parents?

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. The crisis of emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, resolves as a consequence of at least some of the characteristics of Eriksonian emerging adulthood (experimental sexuality, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence, and ideological experimentation).

2. Living situation is a significant predictor of incarnation and impudence.

3. The resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood differs for boomerang children and emerging adults living autonomously by postponing the resolution of the crisis of emerging adulthood in boomerang children.

When research hypothesis 3 was rejected, a fourth hypothesis was added:

4. As emerging adults successfully resolve the crisis of incarnation versus impudence, they are more likely to boomerang to their parental home.

6.1.3 Methods

Purposive sampling was employed to gather participants. Quantitative data was collected through a self-report questionnaire administered online through SurveyMonkey.com. Several instruments were used in whole or in part to collect data: the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA; Reifman et al., 2007), the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984), the Sexual Socialization Instrument (SSI; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1998), the Experiences in Close Relationships-Relationship Structures questionnaire (ECR-RS; Fraley et al., 2011), the Millennial Survey (Kohut et al., 2010), and Patterson's Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey (PEEAS).

A total of 602 participants answered at least some portion of the questionnaire, although the sample size for each item varied because respondents were not required to

answer all questions. Missing data limited the types of statistical tests that could be conducted to evaluate the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alphas, Pearson's *r* correlations, ANOVAs, post hoc tests, and *t*-tests were calculated to address the research questions and hypotheses.

6.1.4 Findings

The crisis of Eriksonian emerging adulthood, incarnation versus impudence, was more likely to have been successfully resolved by people who were past the theorized ages of emerging adulthood (over the age of 25 years). No difference was found in the crisis resolution of individuals 18 to 25 years old. Boomerang living was not found to negatively impact crisis resolution; there was no indication that returning home to live with one's parents in any way hindered development into young adulthood as defined by Eriksonian emerging adulthood. On the contrary, successful resolution of incarnation versus impudence was positively correlated with boomerang living situations. Further research is necessary to determine the causal relationship between boomerang living and psychosocial development.

6.2 Discussion of Results

6.2.1 Emerging Adulthood as a Stage in Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory

Although additions and alterations to Erikson's original theory of psychosocial development exist, the present study is the only one testing emerging adulthood stage characteristics through Erikson's paradigm of development. This study's findings provide compelling evidence for the addition of a middle stage between adolescence and young adulthood to psychosocial development theory. A challenge in Eriksonian emerging adulthood is to prove that the successful crisis resolution of incarnation versus impudence during emerging adulthood impacts subsequent life stages. The results demonstrate that older participants (those currently in the young adult stage or in later stages of development) were more likely to have resolved the crisis of emerging adulthood. This finding lent support to previous research in which the operationalization of Erikson's theory was tested.

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The criteria of Erikson's stages (psychosexual stages and modes, psychosocial crises, radius of significant relationships, basic strengths and antipathies, related principles of social order, binding ritualizations and ritualisms) were fulfilled with the following theorized developmental tasks:

Psychosexual stages and modes – Experimental sexuality

Psychosocial crises – Incarnation versus impudence

Radius of significant relationships – Temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships

Basic strengths – Interdependence and self-sufficiency

Basic antipathies – Dependence and helplessness

Related principles of social order – Ideological experimentation

Binding ritualizations – Relativism

Ritualisms – Absolutism

An instrument (PEEAS) was created to operationalize Eriksonian emerging adulthood and correlated instruments were utilized to establish concurrent validity. Evidence shows that with the exception of the PPA (α = .551), concurrent validity with all other instruments was acceptable (.7 ≤ α < .8), good (.8 ≤ α < .9), or excellent (α ≤ .9) (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Based upon the present research, Eriksonian emerging adulthood's crisis of incarnation versus impudence is a valid addition to psychosocial development theory. While it is unlikely that classic Eriksonian theory will be altered to reflect the stage of emerging adulthood, this could be valuable as an addendum to current psychosocial development theory and could represent a conceptualization of emerging adulthood to add to the tome begun by Arnett (2004).

6.2.2 Correlates of Successful Crisis Resolution

The subscales of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood were based upon previous research into adolescent, emerging adult, and young adult behavior and direct observation of emerging adults. Certain trends can be seen as emerging adults reach incarnation. First, incarnate

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emerging adults do not avoid sexuality or deny the important role it has in a young person's life. This is supported by studies that show more emotionally mature people have a healthy view of sexuality (Overbeek, et al., 2007). Sexual experimentation during emerging adulthood, which includes intercourse in relationships, so-called booty-calls and hook-ups, making out, and discovering and accepting what one prefers sexually, appears to bridge adolescent and young adulthood psychosexual modes of puberty and genitality, respectively. During puberty, one becomes aware of sexuality and then explores sexuality throughout emerging adulthood. While sexual experimentation does not stop during young adulthood, the development of serious and exclusive romantic relationships (particularly involving cohabitation) during young adulthood certainly impacts the number of sexual partners one has, thus curtailing one form of experimentation. As people typically have sex earlier now than they did during the time Erikson developed his theory, it is likely that experimental sexuality begins earlier than emerging adulthood (Hofferth, Kahn, & Baldwin, 1987).

As emerging adults reach incarnation, they begin to change how they perceive and form relationships. Peer groups from adolescence disintegrate as young people move away to college or begin work and no longer see each other with the same frequency. Impudent emerging adults may try to compensate for the loss of close friendships through what can be termed "friend inflation." It appears that as the number of one's friends is inflated through social networking sites, the quality of these relationships suffer to the extent that one may not even know their "friends." Unlike young adults, emerging adults are usually not looking for a spouse or partner. Emerging adults report that they are simply not ready to settle down and thus their friendships and romantic relationships are malleable and, sometimes, interchangeable.

Incarnate emerging adults reach a point of satisfaction with how much they depend on others – they are not overly dependent, especially on parents, but they also do not deny loved ones the opportunities to help them. They work through some things independently, but they recognize they have a support group of family, friends, and professionals with which to share

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concerns. People with psychosocial support, such as social work interventions, have a better quality of life than people who do not have support structures or choose to not ask others for help (Rehse & Pukrop, 2003). This level of interdependence may be felt as security in one's relationships. Fraley et al.'s (2011) research into attachment styles shows that interdependence and secure attachment styles are similar. People who score high on the ECR-RS Avoidance subscale do not feel comfortable depending on others or sharing with others – they tend to be fiercely independent. It is more common for impudent emerging adults to score at the opposite end of the spectrum; they tend to depend on others too much. As one approaches incarnation, a happy medium is found in which one can rely on others without being overly reliant on others.

Ideological experimentation was not found to impact achievement of incarnation as much as other aspects of the theory. Perry's (1968) research into intellectual and ethical development of college students served as the basis for including ideological experimentation (specifically the ritualization of absolutism [dualism in Perry's theory] and the ritualism of relativism) as a subscale. There are two primary reasons why participants in this study did not show as much ideological experimentation as expected. First, Perry's validation for his theory of intellectual and ethical development came from 1960s Ivy League college students. The development of privileged university students, in a time and place renowned for social and political change (Timmerman & Worland, 2011), measured over the course of four years is likely to be much different from the participants in the current study. Second, most participants in the current study lived in Texas, where religious views tend to be strongly held (*How Religious is Your State?,* 2009). It is unclear if longitudinal testing would reveal more about ideological development or if surveying during contentious election years may influence ideological experimentation.

6.2.3 Boomerang Living as a Correlate of Incarnation

This study found that boomerang living situations did not negatively impact psychosocial development during emerging adulthood. This is supported by Sassler et al.

(2008), who found that boomeranging to the parental home does not make emerging adults feel less adult. However, feelings of inadequacy seem to be apparent in boomerang children, as some emerging adults reported feeling disappointed about returning home. The specific reasons for the disappointment were not ascertained. It is possible that feelings toward boomeranging had been decided not as much as a result of what actually occurred, but instead by comparing what occurred to dreams of how they envisioned that stage of their lives. By definition, disappointment occurs through a comparison – one is disappointed because reality was somehow less than what was expected.

It was not anticipated that emerging adults would be more likely to boomerang to the parental home as they successfully resolved the crisis of emerging adulthood. There are several possible reasons for the correlation between incarnation and boomeranging. First, it is important to remember the hallmarks of incarnation. Incarnation is seen when young people accept responsibility (particularly financial responsibility) for their actions and make decisions in regard to, but not as a result of, parental guidance. The primary reason given for returning to the parental home was finances. Simply put, those emerging adults felt they did not have the resources to continue to maintain their residential independence and took advantage of an opportunity to live with their parents and save money. In general, parents do not accept financial contributions or rent from their boomerang children (Sassler et al., 2008). Research indicates most emerging adults believe that in the future they will make enough money to live the kind of life they want (Kohut et al., 2010). For some young people, this means making sacrifices now, including residential independence.

For impudent emerging adults, there is typically less thought toward the future. They may not consider how expensive it is to maintain a household or live in school housing, instead adding their living expenses into the cost of college student loans that can be paid later. It was found that as age increases, so does likelihood of boomeranging and likelihood of incarnation. Completion of school is also correlated with age. It is possible that many emerging adults do not

comprehend the reality of their financial situations until they begin working entry-level positions upon leaving school and must begin payment on student loans. The $700 or $1,000 that may have been previously spent on rent may have to be spent on loan repayment instead (Department of Education, 2011a).

The other part of incarnation is the ability to make decisions for oneself. Sassler et al. (2008) found that emerging adults who abdicate decision making to their parents are typically less satisfied with boomerang living than emerging adults who hold their ground when making decisions (and accept responsibility for the consequences of those decisions). Sassler et al. (2008) indicated that autonomy and independent decision making are hindered in boomerang living. However, this may occur more in emerging adults who have not reached incarnation. Impudent boomerangers may allow parents to make decisions for them so they can deny responsibility for actions carried out as a result of those decisions. However, research also found that emerging adults who stood up to their parents (particularly young women who disagreed with their parents' views on dating and curfews) typically reached agreements with parents in which the emerging adults were satisfied – or they moved out (Sassler et al., 2008). Either way, incarnation occurs as the boomeranger disagrees or debates with parents over the fairness of a policy, even if there are undesirable consequences.

Avoidance is exhibited among emerging adults who do not openly disagree or debate with parents. This study showed that the more avoidant emerging adults were (as measured by the ECR-RS Avoidance subscale), the less likely they were to move back home. It is generally easier to avoid people with whom one does not share a living space. It is also easier to avoid conversations one would rather not have by silencing a cell phone as opposed to experiencing a face-to-face confrontation. Avoidance can be seen as an underlying rationale for many impudent behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use (Davis, 1994).

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<center>6.3 Implications</center>

Social work's role in empowering young people during emerging adulthood and in explaining emerging adulthood as a social construct is paramount. The field of social work is only beginning to understand and conceptualize emerging adulthood. This research provided support for one theory of emerging adulthood using the well-established psychosocial development theory of Erik H. Erikson. By showing emerging adulthood as a part of an accepted social work theory, it was hoped that social work researchers and practitioners would give increased attention in this life stage distinguished by experimental sexuality, incarnation versus impudence, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness, and ideological experimentation. With a growing body of research into emerging adulthood, the profession of social work can better help emerging adults cope with the many life transition experiences they face.

6.3.1 Social Work Theory

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is among the most influential social work theories of human development, perhaps second only to Freud's theory of psychosexual development. Because of the pervasiveness of Eriksonian theory in social work, the impact of the addition of emerging adulthood as a stage between adolescence and young adulthood could be significant. Already, the idea of Arnett's emerging adulthood theory is gaining broad acceptance in social work, despite a lack of understanding of his theory by those in the social work field (Arnett, personal communication). By bridging a relatively new and not well understood theory (Arnett's emerging adulthood theory) with a well-established social work theory (Erikson's psychosocial development), Eriksonian emerging adulthood theory may help initiate a dialogue about updating theories to better reflect current trends. By bringing attention to Arnett's theory, misconceptions about emerging adulthood can be brought to light in order to better inform future research.

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6.3.2 Social Work Policy

The study of emerging adulthood and boomeranging should have significant impacts on social, educational, and family policies. The perception that boomerang children are "dead weight" and parents should exercise "tough love" by not allowing emerging adults to return to the parental home may place undue stress on young people and their families. In an era in which college education may or may not pay for itself financially (Vedder, 2004), students need all the help their families can provide in an effort to not "start off behind" in their adult life (Draut, 2006). For most families, the cost of housing their emerging adult in the parental home is negligible compared to the cost associated with student housing or the emerging adult establishing their own household.

The idea of boomerang children failing to accept responsibility is unfounded – in fact, boomerang children are more likely than their autonomously living counterparts to face the "harsh reality" of growing up with maturity, sensibility, and wisdom. PEEAS Incarnation subscale indicators include taking financial responsibility, accepting that one's "dream job" may be unattainable or unrealistic, and standing up for one's beliefs. Even the most outspoken critic of boomerang children would have to consider those thoughts and actions mature and grown up.

Higher education institutions would do well to address the real possibility that students may need or want to live with their parents during their college years, and those who graduate may return to live with their parents as they find their first post-university job and establish their relationships and careers. Many high school seniors dream of going away to college, staying in a dorm or in a fraternity or sorority house, and living the "college experience" depicted in many popular films. The average room and board at a university is more than $9,000 per year, including fall and spring semesters (Lytle, 2011). With tuition averaging $17,000 per year, the cost to live the "college life" for four years is beyond the financial means of many families, even with substantial student aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2011b). The idea that the college years should be glory days consisting of parties, pizza, and beer pong (or even just going to

class and living in a dorm for four years) devastates emerging adults' opportunity to begin their young adulthood free of substantial debt. The "student loan effect" causes young and middle-aged adults to delay marriage, families, and home ownership because of "indentured servitude" required to pay off loans (Pilon, 2010).

Universities overwhelmingly encourage first-year students to live on campus, stating that dorm life "greatly enhances" the university experience, and citing that students who live on campus do better academically and "develop life-long friendships" (Benefits of Living on Campus, 2012). The reality is that universities profit from students living on campus (Randall, 2010) and have structured student life, extra-curricular, and educational activities to favor those who live on campus – while treating commuters as second-class students who are not as invested in or who do not take college as seriously as those who live on campus. For the welfare of an entire generation of college students and their families, universities must validate all college experiences, including the experience of remaining at or returning to the parental home as a cost-saving measure. In addition, many parents have a preconceived belief that at age 18, their children will go off to college and be on their own. Parents may anticipate a period of "childless" years during which they are no longer responsible for daily parenting duties but are still young, full of vigor, and earning income. While parenthood from a distance may be possible for some parents of emerging adults, it is more likely that parents will play a significant, albeit different, role in the lives of their adult children.

6.3.3 Social Work Practice

The many roles of social workers mean they have myriad opportunities to put the results of the present study into practice. At the micro practice level, social workers counseling young people can assure them that feelings of dissociation are not only common, but also necessary aspects of growing up. Social workers should serve as young people's advocates during this metamorphosis to empower them to take charge of their lives while still maintaining realistic goals and solid support systems from family. In mainstream Western culture, there is no

vision quest or sacred ceremony which concludes in one being considered a man or a woman –
growing up is a process that lasts a lifetime. As such, young people can be frustrated in their
attempts to be seen by society as adults while still exhibiting adolescent tendencies. The
commonality of mental health services and support groups at colleges increases the awareness
of the many issues faced by emerging adults. Seeking professional support and guidance
during personal struggles and sharing common experiences with peer groups is a proven
problem-solving method (Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck, 2006). The more conscious social
workers are of the internal conflicts of emerging adults, the more capable they will be to help
young people address the core of the issue as opposed to the symptoms of the dissonance.

Social workers who primarily work with families should recognize the increasing
commonality of intergenerational households, particularly young adults remaining in or returning
to the parental household, and the unique challenges faced by emerging adults and their
parents. However, these challenges are opportunities for family members to get to know each
other in different capacities and improve their relationships as parents and children as well as
peers. The negativity surrounding popular views of intergenerational coresidence casts a pall on
what can be (and usually is) a rewarding experience, which is not only tolerated well, but also
desirable in many families.

At the macro level, communities can prepare for intergenerational coresidence and
emerging adulthood by changing common perceptions of homestayers and boomerang
children. In cultures around the world, most notably in Asian countries, it is the norm for adult
children to remain in the parental home until they begin a family of their own. It is not
uncommon for three generations of family to live within one residence (Asis, Domingo, Knodel,
& Mehta, 1995). Despite the popular Western notion of moving out at age 18 and never
returning, throughout history, families have shared residences for much longer than the first 18
years of a child's life. Satisfaction with family life is fairly high in countries that regularly practice
intergenerational coresidence (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,

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2011). While that may not be specifically because of the coresidence, it is evident that living together does not decrease quality of relationships and life satisfaction.

6.3.4 Social Work Research

The present study provides a theoretical foundation for social work researchers to build upon in future research concerning emerging adults, transitions to adulthood, and family interactions. More research is needed to validate the findings of this study.

Samples of college students are readily available to researchers. Although the combination of samples of young people not attending school and college students provides a fuller depiction of the transition to adulthood, researchers should take advantage of the ease of accessing college students when doing preliminary studies. With a larger sample size, more advanced statistical analysis can be conducted. For example, structural equation modeling requires an exponentially larger sample size than the statistical methods used in the current study (Suhr, 2006; Westland, 2010). The PEEAS should be validated with a larger sample before it is used for further research. The PSI-SV should be made available to other researchers as an alternative to the PSI. The PSI has been utilized in several dozen research projects since its creation in 1984; by providing a much shorter, but still valid, version of the instrument, the PSI-SV may spark a renewed use of the PSI and lead to further inquiries of psychological separation from parents.

The missing data in this study also made obvious the fact that young people were extremely hesitant to answer questions about their sex lives for the purpose of academic research, despite assurances that responses would remain completely anonymous and confidential. Much research into adolescent and young adult sexuality exists, and some studies had samples of thousands of young people (Hoff, Greene, & Davis, 2003). It is unknown why some researchers have more success in obtaining honest responses about sexuality. One possibility is that young people feel more confident in answering honestly when sample sizes are extremely large, as in some national surveys. Adolescents and emerging adults may find

security in numbers and feel "more" anonymous. It is also possible that young people do not want to answer questions about sexuality in the same survey in which they have just answered questions about their relationship with their parents. Young people may prefer to keep thoughts about parents and sexuality compartmentalized and not entertain the idea that their relationship with their parents in any way relates to their relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Regardless of why so many participants chose to skip questions about sexuality, the need for more concise questionnaires is apparent. Students are likely to complete a lengthy survey if they are given the opportunity to fill it out during class (Dommeyer, Baum, Hanna, & Chapman, 2004). However, if students are asked to complete a survey online in their own time, the survey must be short, entertaining, and easily understood. Although SurveyMonkey is extremely user-friendly, question and response restrictions can limit data collection. While it may be theoretically possible to collect the desired data, it may be impractical to collect data using pre-existing questionnaire formats. Ethical considerations prevent researchers from incentivizing completed surveys or insisting that participants complete all questions. The convenience and cost-effectiveness of online surveys is undeniable, particularly for unfunded research, but low completion rates limit their use. For example, the Millennial Survey collected data through landline and cellular phone surveys, and the rate of refusal to answer questions (even on sensitive data such as abortion views) was negligible (Kohut et al., 2010). The reliability of the answers may be compromised in in-person or telephone surveys due to social desirability bias (Holbrook, Green, Krosnick, 2003); it is not expected that social desirability bias has as great an impact in anonymous online surveys (Kreuter, Presser, & Tourangeau, 2008).

6.3.4.1 Research Questions for Further Study

Over the course of this research, many questions arose that were unable to be satisfactorily answered by the data collected in the present study. Further research may examine these topics:

1. In what ways does social desirability bias influence responses about risky sexual behavior?

2. Are emerging adults more likely to answer questions about risky sexual behaviors in a survey that does not discuss parental relationships?

3. How can survey response rates about sensitive and/or uncomfortable topics be increased without jeopardizing the quality of the research?

4. What can be done to normalize the emerging adulthood experiences of young people who do not have a "traditional" college experience?

5. How do parental expectations of a "retirement" from day-to-day caregiving when children reach emerging adulthood impact their children's expectations of normality?

6. How does the depiction of boomerang living in popular culture impact emerging adult and parental perceptions of intergenerational living?

7. Does the achievement of incarnation precede or follow boomerang living?

<u>6.4 Limitations</u>

There were several limitations to the present study that must be addressed.

6.4.1 Sample and Missing Data

The sample was based upon a non-probability sample using purposive techniques in an effort to over-represent emerging adults and boomerang children. The results obtained cannot be generalized. Although the sample size (n = 602) was sufficient for some statistical analysis (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), due to the low sample size, more advanced statistical analysis (such as structural equation modeling) could not be performed. Missing data represented a serious shortcoming of the study. Because respondents were directed to skip any question they felt uncomfortable answering and no questions had to be answered in order to proceed to the next part of the survey, a number of questions had few valid responses. Questions that might be considered distressing (such as those related to sex, drugs, and alcohol) were skipped more often than answered. Missing data had the greatest negative impact on the PEEAS Impudence

subscale. Only 11 respondents answered the entire PEEAS Impudence subscale, which obviously severely limited the effectiveness of the subscale as a measure and forced the use of the IDEA Identity Exploration ($n = 465$) and Negativity/Instability ($n = 478$) subscales as a proxy.

The PEEAS Impudence subscale contained many of the questions concerning alcohol and drug use and sexual activity. Item 16 (have casual sex without a condom) was answered by only 19 respondents, for a response rate of 3.2%. This indicates that in this particular study, emerging adults, even when assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of surveys, did not feel comfortable answering questions about sexual activity and condom use. In other research, 20% of emerging adults responded that their last sexual encounter was with a casual sex partner, and 15% of emerging adults reported that they had consumed alcohol prior to their last sexual encounter (Eisenberg et al., 2009). Two-thirds of teens admit that they did not use condoms during their last sexual encounter (Weisman et al., 1991). Obviously, emerging adults are engaging in casual sex and sex without condoms, however, it appears as if young people were hesitant to answer questions about these behaviors in this research.

6.4.2 Perry Position Assessment

The Perry Position Assessment was chosen for its conciseness and pertinence to the related principle of social order aspect of Eriksonian emerging adulthood. However, the PPA was an untested instrument which could not be used due to an unacceptable level of reliability. The PEEAS Ideological Experimentation subscale, which also asked questions concerning relativism and absolutism, served as a better measure of intellectual and moral development.

6.4.3 Survey Design

Although the pilot survey was beneficial in decreasing the length of the survey by more than a hundred items, the length of the final survey still appeared to discourage respondents. Although the pilot study was well-received by the 45 individuals who participated, the actual study was not met with a similar level of interest, and the questions were not answered with the detail necessitated by the survey design. It appears as if the directions given to respondents

were unclear and too difficult to follow. For example, the PEEAS instrument instructed participants to respond in two ways: (1) if they had engaged in the behavior and (2) their willingness to engage in the behavior. Few respondents answered the items in terms of both having acted and their willingness to act. As a result, answers of "Yes, I've done it" were recoded into a definite willingness to engage in the behavior in order to increase responses. Similarly, because of the response setup for the PEEAS instrument, respondents were not prevented from selecting more than one response per item, resulting in multiple responses per item.

6.5 Conclusion

In summary, this study showed that emerging adulthood can be conceptualized as a stage in Erikson's psychosocial development theory. Emerging adults face the crisis of incarnation versus impudence and resolve the crisis through experimental sexuality, temporal and spatial social and intimate relationships, interdependence and self-sufficiency and dependence and helplessness, and ideological experimentation in relativism and absolutism. Research indicated that boomerang children do not suffer developmental setbacks in emerging adulthood due to living in their parental homes. Instead, it is more likely that as emerging adults mature and move toward incarnation, they have a greater likelihood of returning to live with their parents.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF STUDIES:
COMPARISON OF DATA COLLECTION, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, AND ANALYSIS

STUDY	YEAR OF SURVEY	REGION	PURPOSE	DEFINITION	RESEARCH METHOD	SAMPLE METHOD	SAMPLE SIZE	RESPONSE RATE	MODE OF ADMIN.	COMP. GRP.	STAT. ANALYSIS
1. Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang 2001	Study was from 1962 through 1993, but this article uses data collected at the 1980 interview	Detroit Metropolitan Region	To explore the factors that lead mothers to expect to provide support to young adult children focusing on values about family and education. Also ask children about their expectations of support.	Possible Young Adult Child Experiences – UM Stud Away M Stud Away UM NonStud Home M NonStud Away UM NonStud Away Life course of the young adult is based on living arrangements and school progress Support: Financial assistance	Panel study	Probability sample of first, second, and fourth born White children in July 1961 Detroit Metro area	894 Mothers 899 Children	92% of the original sampled mothers participated; attrition not thought to be an issue	6 Interviews of mothers from 1962 through 1980 and children (starting when the children are 18) in 1980 and then for both mom and kid in 1980 1985 and 1993 Questionnaires Qual and Quant.	No	IV: Parental education, family income, number of siblings, mother's marital status, child's living arrangement at time of interview, gender of child, religion Key IVs: two dimensions of their children's future adult lives: college education and marriage DV: expectation of financial support Descriptive Stats, multivariate regression, OLS regression, maximum likelihood logistic regression
2. Cohen, Kasen, Chen, Hartmark, & Gordon 2003	1997-2000 for the interviews	Two upstate NY counties	To increase understanding of this developmental period and of the influences on the processes of	Transition levels for each of four domains – residence, finance, romance, parenting from 0 - 100	Longitudinal cohort study of mostly white children in upstate NY… retrospective longitudinal study in which	Probability sample of children ranging from 1 to 10 years old in 1975 who lived in one of two	240 members of the Children in the Community cohort of 800 young adults.	unknown	Telephone interviews that took 3 to 5 hours to complete… part of a larger longitudinal study from	Compared boys to girls, white to black, Low SES to higher SES	IV: Age, sex, parental SES, parental divorce, race, school attendance DV: Residence, Finance,

| | | | separation, individuation, and autonomy over its course.

1)To examine individual variations in the patterns characterizing the assumption of adult roles in the areas of residence, finance, romance, and parenting

2) to test differences in the average or expected trajectories associated with sex, parental SES, race, and parental divorce

3) test how trajectories were impacted by involvement in educational programs | | | | participants were asked to think back to the period in which they were 17 to 27 years old | upstate NY counties… the current study used a four corners design in which a scatterplot of personality disorder symptom levels (obtained by structured interviews earlier) allowed the researchers to randomly select individuals from each of the 4 quadrants – consistently high, consistently low, high to low, low to high | | 1975. Kids

Qual and quant. | Romance, Parenting Transition Levels

MLM, descriptive, percentages living in certain situations, two level linear and quadratic growth models, chi square, ANCOVA |
| 3. Mitchell

1998 | unknown | Greater Vancouver area | To examine parental satisfaction with boomerang kid living arrangements, investigate the ways in which the quality of parent-child relationships, | Boomerang kid – a young adult between ages 19-35 who returns to the parental home after leaving for at least 6 months to live away from home | Analysis of survey data of home returners as part of a larger study on home leavers and home returners | Random digit dialing | 218 families drawn from a sample of 420 families contacted through random digit dialing. Eligibility criteria were residence in | 50% which was considered acceptable given that 2 family members had to participate | Telephone interviews with a parent and child that took about 30-45 minutes per family member | Compared parent sex (M or F), Parent education (some secondary v. grad), income parent, marriage | IV: sex, income, education, marital status, religion, number of other kids, child sex, number of returns, child's reason for leaving, main activity at last |

			socio-demographic and socio-economic factors influence levels of satisfaction, and to consider the implications for theory, midlife parents' well-being, and social policy.				greater Vancouver area, ability to communicate in English, age (19-35 for kids) and (36-60 for parents) and the child had to have left home for at least 6 months in the past ten years before returning			status, religiousity, number of other kids at home, child sex, reason for leaving	return, helpfulness of child, enjoys activities with child, arguments, disagreements DV: Parental assessment of the living situation Descriptive, logistic regression analysis, likelihood ratio chi-square statistic, frequency distributions (%s)
4. Ward and Spitze 1996	Data from 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households	U.S. Sample	To further understanding of an increasingly frequent arrangement that has implications for financial and psychological well-being	Parent-child coresidence – adult child must live in the parental household and be younger than 40 Home returning – coming back to the parental home after leaving for 4 months or longer	Analysis of survey data taken from a larger study of households	Probability sample of 13017 persons aged 19 and older, representing the noninstitut-ionalized population of the United States…	Picked out the 661 adult children who lived in a parental household and were younger than 40	Unknown	Kid answered questionnaire.	Boys to girls	IV: characteristics of parents and children, household composition, family and coresidency history, race, age, sex, health, income, employment, education DV: payment of room and board, time spent on nine household tasks, parent-child relationships, open

Author/Year	Time period	Location	Purpose	Definitions	Method	Sampling	Sample	Response rate	Data collection	Variables	Analysis
											disagreements in ten areas, coresidence satisfaction
											Regression analysis, descriptive, multivariate analysis
5. Mitchell & Gee 1996	Late 1993 early 1994	Vancouver lower mainland	To provide an exploratory analysis of the marital satisfaction of parents with coresident boomerang adult children. To extend understanding of the levels and the determinants of midlife marital satisfaction in families with BK To discuss our findings in relation to their implications for family practitioners	BK – an adult child who has returned to the parental home after leaving for at least 6 months	Analysis of survey data of home returners as part of a larger study on home leavers and home returners and surveys of families specifically chosen for this	Random digit dialing, snowball sampling and replies to an ad in local papers (about 10%)	172 boomerang families with married parents	unknown	Parents and children were interviewed separately by telephone each taking 30-45 minutes to complete. Probably the same interview that she used for the other article	Parent sex, marriage, high/low income, other children in household, coresident assessment, sex of child, health status, reasons for leaving, number of returns, main activity, relationship with mom/dad (good/bad)	IV: parent sex, marital status, income, number of other kids, parent health, coresident assessment, child sex, child marital status, child health status, child reason for leaving, number of returns, main activity, relationship with mom, relationship with dad DV: marital satisfaction
											Logistic regression, Wald, chi-square
6. Messineo & Wojtkiewicz 2004	Data from 1960 to 1990	U.S. census	To determine if young adults in 1990 are more likely, less likely, or just as likely to live with their parents as they were in the	No definitions given.	Analysis of census data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, a U.S. historical census database. A	Census information, probability sample of all households from the years 1960-1990 with respondents	45,000 randomly selected households from the years 1960-1990 with respondents	unknown	Census data	Married, formerly married, never married	IV: Year, Age, Sex, Race/Ethnicity, marital status DV: Living with Parents

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Author	Dates	Location	Purpose	Theory/Concepts	Data/Design	Sampling	Sample	Response	Data Collection	Comparison	Variables/Analysis
				1960s, 1970s, 80s.	sample of 45,000 randomly selected households from the years 1960-1990 with respondents aged 19 to 30		with parent		aged 19 to 30		Logistic regression, multivariate analysis, bivariate analysis,
7. Mitchell 2004	1999-2000	Greater Vancouver area	To explore the broader meanings and implications of reasons for staying and returning home based on preliminary, descriptive findings of an ongoing SSHRC-funded research project. Socio-cultural and economic dimensions of coresident living arrangements	Heterogeneity- the idea that diversity in resources can affect the propensity for young adults to coreside Linked lives- how patterns of coresidence can affect day-to-day parental responsibilities in relation to domestic labor Ethnic grp – British, Chinese, Indo, S. Euro	Analysis of larger study called Culture and Coresidence Study from 1999 to 2003 Cross sectional design, cohort study of young adults 19-35	Random sample of young adults living in Vancouver area Random sampling from purchased directories and subfiles of ethnic surnames and purchased ethnic directories	790 men and 1170 women 1907 young adults total 502 British, 462 Chinese, 487 Indo 456 SE	51%	Structured interviews by telephone in the preferred language of the respondent and were about 35-55 minutes in length Qual and quant	Ethnic groups	IV: Ethnic groups, living arrangements DV: economic and non-economic reasons for staying home and home returning, living arrangements by ethnic, reason for first homeleaving Descriptives, cross-tabs, univariate
8. Goldscheider & Goldscheider 1993	Spring of 1980	U.S.	To incorporate the parental point of view explicitly in the nest leaving pricess	Premarital residential independence – leaving the household prior to marriage to establish a household for oneself Parent-innovative – when parents expect the kids to move out but kids expect to	Analysis of data collected as part of the High School and Beyond study… 60,000 members of high school classes who would graduate in 1980 or 1982, a nationally representative sample	Purposive	Approx 5000 cases that had information on living arrangement expectations from parents and children	Approx 90%	Questionnaires administered in HS. Panel members were resurveyed with mailed questionnaires every 2 years after high school graduation until age 24	White to others, only child expect PRI to other, protestant to other	IV: PRI Expectations, Marriage expectations, sex, region (South, NE or Pacific), SES, religion, race DV: Route out of parental home Polytomous logistic regression, OLS,

				stay Child-innovative – when kids expect themselves to move out but parents expect them to stay							multinomial logistic equations, ANOVA,
9. Aquilino 1990	1987-1988	Lower 48 States	To determine the likelihood of coresidence based on the parent's point of view	Extended household – includes a member outside of the 2 generational nuclear family Did not differentiate between a parent living with child or child living with parent, but vast majority live with parents	Secondary analysis of 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households	Multistage area probability sample of lower 48	4,893… a subsample NSFH respondents who reported having an adult child or stepchild living at home or living elsewhere… parents living in institutions are not represented	unknown	Personal interviews averaging 102 minutes in length… one respondent per household was randomly selected from adults aged 19 and older… Population of interest is defined as all parents who had at least one living child or stepchild age 19 or older	Compared age groups of parents, races, education, marital status, income, health, other relatives in household	IV: parent's age, race, parent's education, remarried, marital status, parental income, other people living in house, parental health, number of adult children, number of sons/daughters DV: having a coresident adult child Descriptives, Crosstabs involving householder status and coresidence and multivariate regression to estimate the relative influence of child, parent, and family structural characteristics on the likelihood of coresidence. Bivariate probit

Author/Year	Dates	Location	Purpose	Tasks	Design	Sampling	Sample	Response	Method	Variables	Analysis
10. Ward, Logan, Spitze 1992	Sept 1988 to Feb 1989	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY metro area	To see whose needs determine shared housing arrangements by adult children and their parents	Household tasks – grocery, cooking, laundry, transportation, repairs and yardwork, cleaning house Contributions to household based on the completion of household tasks, not on financial contributions	Cross sectional data of parents and adult children who currently coreside	120 block groups in 3 counties with probabilities proportionate to size… within each block group, interviewers selected housing units and adults among those over 40 in the household using random choice methods	811 parents and their 2,348 children age 22+ Mostly white	67.25%	Personal interview survey with the parents… but the units of analysis were respondent (parent) and adult child… no institutionalized parents	Compared age groups of parents, marital status of parents, number of unmarried children, parental health, parental employment, parental education, child age groups	regression IV: parent gender, parent marital satus, number of children, parental health, parental employment, parental education, child gender, child marital status, child health, child employment, number of siblings DV: coresidence, household contributions
11. Mitchell, Wister, Gee 2004	1999-2000	Greater Vancouver Regional District	To examine the strength of ethnocultural variations in homeleaving and returning processes among a sample of urban youths, and to see whether these differences persist with the inclusion of key family and individual-level factors.	Young adults – 19-35	Cross sectional survey of young adults who coreside	Combination of random sampling techniques were employed in order to recruit one individual per family. 90% of interviews were obtained through purchased random sample extractions of	1907 young adults aged 19-35 living in the Greater Vancouver Regional District 502 British 462 Chinese Indo 487 S Euro 456	48%	Telephone interviews lasting 35-55 minutes in length	Sex, Birth Cohort, Main Activity, English/Non English speakers	Crosstabs, logistic regression, chi-square IV: Gender, birth cohort, marital status of kid, family structure, father's education, father birth country, ethnic ID, mother religiosity, number siblings, relationship with mom, relationship with dad, parental financial support

						Greater Vancouver area with ethnic surnames. 10% through random digit dialing					DV: age at first leaving, duration until the child returned Frequency distributions, series of parametric regression models, Weilbull model, correlation matrix
12. White and Rogers 1997	Young adults interviewed in 1992 and their parents were interviewed in 1988	U.S.	To determine relationships between coresidence and parent-child solidarity	Family solidarity – perceived support, actual help received, affective closeness, child gives help	Two cross sectional studies that were combined in order to present a longitudinal study… multiwave panel study?	Use of a sample of young adults from the Marital Instability over the Life Course Study… clustered random digit dialling	435 young adults and their parents	65% initially, for other parent interviews 78%, 66%, and 58%... 88% of children agreed to be interviewed	Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of 2034 married individuals under age 55	Young men to young women	IV: coresidence, developmental status DV: Family solidarity Control: Family structure, Family background, parental reports of family quality Descriptive statistics, chi-square, multivariate regression analysis, OLS
13. Weinick 1995	1987-1988, but also used data from 1900-1979 for comparison purposes	U.S	To quantify living arrangement trends of women and determine if the experience of being a daughter or mother has changed for American women from	Wealth flows – all the money, goods, services, and guarantees that one person provides to another Cohort size hypothesis – relative cohort size impacts	Multistage cohort study?	Probability sample from the National Survey of Families and Households Non institutional-ized populations	7674 women 681 from 1900 to 1914 1193 from 1915 to 1929 1391 from 1930-1944 2921 from	unknown	From Aquilino article…. Personal interviews	By race and by 5 cohort group… also all races vs. blacks only	IV: number of siblings, economic situation, marriage, and education DV: Coresidence behavior Descriptive

	Year	Country	Purpose	Theory/Variables	Data source	Sampling	Sample	Response rate	Data collection		Analysis
			1900-1988.	economic opportunity			1945-1959 1488 from 1960 to 1969				statistics, pearson's R, Easterlin's cohort size?
14. Aquilino & Supple 1991	1988	U.S.	To examine parent-child relationships and parental satisfaction with coresidence when young adult children (19-34) live in their parents' household. To estimate the impact of adult children's growing autonomy and independence on parent-child relationships and on parental satisfaction with coresidence.	Life-course perspective – emphasis on the network of family relationships and the impact of individual life transitions on this network	Secondary analysis of the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households	Multistage area probability sample	609 parents of coresident children	71.6%	From Aquilino article…. Personal interviews	Part were interviews others, other part were self-administered	2 way ANOVA, SEM, chi-square, Maximum likelihood estimates,
15. Ginn & Arber 1994	1988-1990	Great Britain	To examine how the employment and pension plan membership of British midlife women and related to the presence, employment status, and earnings of their adult children	Full-time employment – 31 or more hours worked per week Occupational class – current or last occupation	Secondary data analysis from 3 years of the General Household Surveys.	Nationally representative sample of adults living in private households in GB	9000 women aged 40-59, nearly half who have adult children living with them	Over 80%	interviews	5 groups of women are compared: Childless, children all left home, adult children only at home, both adult and younger children at home, only children younger than 16 at home	IV: adult children at home DV: mother's employment status Logistic regression, descriptives

16. Suitor & Pillemer 1988	Sept. 1985- Feb. 1986	Boston Metro Area	The purpose of the present study is to extend the investigation of intergenerational conflict when adult children share a residence with their elderly parents.	None – unknown how they define elderly	Analysis of data collected for a larger study of the family relations of the elderly	Stratified random sample	372 elderly parents who shared residence with an adult child 18 years or older	72% for the larger study	Interviewed on telephone or in person when a telephone interview could not be completed	none	IV: parental health (measured by a Likert scale of parent's self-perceived overall health), dependence on children (measured by an adaptation of the OARS scale of functional dependency), marital status of child and parent, age of child, and length of time living together DV: intergenerational conflict Multiple regression analysis, descriptives, correlation matrix
17. Spitze & Ward 1995	1987-1988	U.S.	To examine housework performed by adult children as reported by both parents and adult children in intergenerational households	Intergenerational exchanges – when adult children trade housework for coresidence implicitly or explicitly	Secondary analysis of 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households	National probability sample of 13,017 persons aged 19 and over	Focus on households with only one adult child and no other persons above age 19 who are not parents of the adult child… 385 child respondents and 501	Unknown	From Aquilino article…. Personal interviews	Sons/ daughters	IV: household needs, adult child's time and energy availability, parental health, demographic traits DV: time per week spent by adult children in housework OLS regression,

											parent respondents	multivariate analysis, descriptives
18. Clemens & Axelson 1985	Spring and Fall of 1983	Western Virginia	To identify factors for successful living arrangements and areas of conflict and dissatisfaction	Fledgling adult – either not having developed attributes necessary before achieving flight and independent	Two different questionnaire	Purposive sample of married parents with children in the household, also parents who attended a workshop about parenting the adult child	39 respondents, 8 married males, 24 married females, 5 divorced females, 1 separated female, 1 widowed female	N/A	Self-administered questionnaires.	Those who are not married, those married with children at home over the age of 22, those married with children at home being under 22	IV: reason for child living at home, housework help, child characteristics DV: overall satisfaction with living arrangement descriptives
19. Jones 1987	1979 – 1980 And 1981	Great Britain	How do the questions of "when, why and how" people leave the parental home interrelate? How do social class and gender affect the process?	Typology of worker – takes into account both the respondent's occupational class and dad's occupational class, respondent's age at leaving full-time education (Youth Class typology)	Secondary analysis of the General Household Survey (cross sectional data set… a national survey of households from which a subset of 12036 people aged 16-29 years was extracted. Also analyzed The National Child Development Study… a cohort study of all the people born during one week in March 1958. Has cross-sectional and retrospective data. Use of both data	Nationally representative samples	12537 respondents from the combined two surveys examined	71% of birth cohort and 76% of general household survey	interviews	Compared by youth class	IV: class, M/F, Age DV: age at which parental home was left, living situation (with parents, alone, etc.), reason for leaving, reason for return Descriptive statistics, crosstabs

sets in order to
have longitudinal
picture of young
adulthood
transitions in
GB.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF STUDIES:
COMPARISON OF THEORIES, HYPOTHESIS, AND FINDINGS

Study	Theory	Hypothesis	Findings	Limitations	Implications	Future Research
1. Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang 2001	None.	No hypotheses; only research questions. What are the parental experiences, values, and relationships that influence both parent and child expectations of parental support during the children's transition to adulthood? Are these expectations rooted in values about the importance of family, material success, religious traditions, or religious involvement?	Fewer mothers than children expect to provide support for children in early adulthood in almost all circumstances. The only exception is that 88% of moms expected to provide basic living expenses while children were away at school, compared to 83% of children. One quarter to one half of young people expect parents to provide some sort of financial help in young adulthood, but only about one sixth of moms expect they will provide support to their children. No strong gender differences between sons and daughters. No connection between ideas on marriage and level of support. Religious affiliation does impact expectations of support. Quality of relationship with mom is tied to expectations of support. Moms who are divorced or unmarried are not expected to provide as much support, but remarried moms do provide more support for their kids to live away from home. More kids means less support to adult children.	Recent immigrants and racial minorities not represented. Not generalizable.	There are deep divisions in families (a generation gap) as to what kind of support is appropriate in young adulthood. Could be a reflection in the differences in routes out of the parental home; what is appropriate and what is not desirable.	A focus on the very beginning of adulthood is very much needed. A need to focus on more recent cohorts. Need for research on minorities. Need to include father in the research, not just mother. Need data collected from both parents and children.
2. Cohen, Kasen, Chen, Hartmark, & Gordon	Says that current research is based on prior theory, but does not indicate which theory is	Stated: Predict earlier assumption by young women of more adult roles with regard to residential independence, romantic commitment, and child	At age 25, 32.2% men compared to 15.2% of women were living at home and 24.3% of men compared to 12.8% of women were primarily supported by their	No recent immigrants are included. No data on Hispanics or Asians.	Results suggest a further delay in the age when young people become financially independent, especially for men.	What are the long-term outcomes of the fluctuation in the course of

2003	used… It is assumed that Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood is used as Arnett is cited previously.	rearing and family formation. Youth from higher parental SES families are expected to remain more dependent on parents with regard to residence and financial support for a longer period, but will have an increase in trajectory in later years (17-27). Offspring of divorced parents might delay the assumption of a more adult (committed) romantic role. Predict earlier assumption of adult financial roles will also characterize offspring of divorced parents. No difference between Blacks and Whites that cannot be explained by SES.	family. Race differences in living with family and being supported by family were not significant. Those from lower parental SES were much more likely to be living with family and being supported by family than those with high SES (33.6% and 23.9% compared to 14.2% and 13.4%). Individuals varied enormously in the shape of their role assumption curves for residential transitions from the ages of 17-27. Women assumed more adult residential roles earlier than did men and then leveled off, whereas men began to "catch up" in their middle 20s. Other demographic variables (parental SES, divorce) were not found to be related to residential transitions.	Small sample of Black participants.	Social role differences associated with sex, race, and SES persist. Most young people had periods during which they assumed great independence, followed by periods in which a more childlike level of function was characteristic (boomerangers).	development toward adult roles at the societal and individual levels?
3. Mitchell 1998	Life-course perspective, which emphasizes the relationship between norms, expectations, and the timing and sequencing of age-related life transitions.	Stated: Mothers are expected to provide less positive appraisals of a boomerang living arrangement, relative to fathers. Parental income and educational attainment will be negatively associated with assessments of boomerang living arrangements. Remarried or single parents (never married, divorced, widowed) are hypothesized to be less satisfied with a coresident living arrangement, compared to first married parents. Parents who attend religious	The likelihood of parents being very satisfied (vs. less than very satisfied) with coresidence is almost twice as high for mothers compared to fathers, controlling for other variables. The relationships are not in the expected directions of the hypotheses. As hypothesized, the likelihood of parents viewing coresidence as working out very well is almost one-half as large among parents who are single, divorced or widowed compared to those whose marriages remained intact.	Not generalizable. Had to communicate in English only which excluded some people, especially minorities, from participation.	Despite parents having very positive views and experiences with boomerangers, about two-thirds of parents felt that their child took advantage of them sometimes. Virtually all of the parents state that the living arrangement is working out "very well." The benefits of having the adult-child at home seems to override the difficulties. The strongest single finding is that parents are more likely to report being satisfied if the child initially	Conduct research on adult children who return home separate from those who have remained in the parental household. Examine parental gender differences with regards to the perceived benefits and drawbacks associated with

services more frequently are expected to perceive the living arrangement in more positive terms.

The number of children in the home at the time of coresidence has an inverse association with living arrangement satisfaction.

Young adults who provide instrumental support and positive family interactions are expected to increase parental satisfaction with the living arrangement – satisfaction positively related to housework, more enjoyable interactions with the boomerang kid, fewer hostile arguments, fewer disagreements.

Expected that parents will report the living arrangement is more satisfactory if the coresider is a daughter than a son.

Parents will be less satisfied living with returners who return more than once, or with those who return subsequent to seeking independence.

Main activity of a young adult during coresidence is anticipated to affect living arrangement evaluations: returners who are unemployed or employed part-time may be more burdensome than those employed full-time because they are more dependent.

Parents will be more satisfied living with returnees who are working full-time compared to those working part-time, looking

Measures of parental social class, religious participation, number of other children in household are not significant predictors.

Daughters are less satisfied with coresident situations than sons.

Parents have greater satisfaction with boomerang arrangements if the child works full-time as opposed to looking for work, school, or part-time work.

Help with household tasks is very strongly associated with rating the situation as satisfactory.

Contrary to the hypothesis that parents would be more satisfied living with daughters than sons, the data indicates the opposite.

left home for school than if she/he initially left to achieve independence.

It is possible that daughters and parents of daughters are less satisfied with the situation because they place more constraints and expectations on daughters' behavior.

Less than 10% reported that the boomerang situation was working out only somewhat well or very poorly.

boomerangers.

Longitudinal research is needed.

Comparisons between different ethnic groups.

for work, or attending school.

Mothers who engage in paid part-time or full-time employment, compared to fathers, are expected to be less satisfied with the coresident arrangement.

Mothers are expected to experience more stress due to balancing family and work demands.

Mothers are expected to be more satisfied with the living arrangement if they report higher levels of enjoyment with shared activities with the boomerang kid.

| 4. Ward & Spitze

1996 | Exchange relations theory. | Stated: We hypothesize that coresident daughters will engage in more household tasks and will be more responsive to household needs in their performance of housework than coresident sons; coresident sons will be more likely to make room-and-board payments than coresident daughters.

We hypothesize that coresident daughters will have more positive relations with parents, and especially with mothers, than will sons. | Most children reside with both parents (71%).

Coresident children do only a modest amount of housework and that amount is probably overstated.

Daughters spend three hours more per week doing housework than sons.

Very few children pay room and board and it is very modest if they do (mean = $48 a month).

The quality of relationships between parents and children is generally positive and there were no gender differences. Both sons and daughters rate relationship with mom better than dad though.

Disagreement levels are low, but the one aspect of disagreement was on the amount of help around | Mostly young (23 year old), White adults. | Coresident experiences tend to be more similar than different for daughters and sons.

Housework and financial contributions by adult children are modest.

Similarities for daughters and sons are inconsistent with our expectations that were based on general patterns associated with parent-child relations and more specifically on patterns of family assistance and caregiving. | No directions for further research. |

			the house.			
			Coresidence satisfaction is high for sons and daughters, but they report different areas of discontent.			
			Contrary to expectations, exchange patterns are not related to satisfaction, disagreements, or quality of relations with mothers/fathers for either sons/daughters.			
5. Mitchell & Gee 1996	Life-course perspective.	Stated: We expect that parental marital status (first v. subsequent marriages) will be related to marital satisfaction during coresidence. Families of lower SES may experience more financial strain due to the prolonged dependence of adult children which will lower parental marital satisfaction. The number of children in the parental home at the time of coresidence may be related to family stress. We expect that parental health, gender, marital status will affect marital satisfaction during coresidence. Children leaving home to pursue pathways that imply permanency, such as leaving home to pursue educational goals (compared to those leaving to achieve independence), are expected to be more disruptive to marital well-being.	Only two parent variables are significantly related to marital satisfaction – marital status and health status. If the couple are the parents of the coresident child, satisfaction is higher. Healthier parents are more satisfied with the arrangement than unhealthy parents. The strongest factor in marital happiness was the number of returns home. Parents are willing to accept one or two returns home, but a pattern of bouncing back and forth strains family relationships. The main reason for leaving home (the first time) is also an important factor for parental marital satisfaction during a return. Children's relationship with their mothers during coresidence also significantly influences parental marital satisfaction. Mothers often reported that one of the positive aspects of having a coresident adult child is the	Ability to communicate in English required. Absence of more in-depth data	When parents launch children by having them leave home for school or work, it appears as if they feel like their job as parent is finished. They are less satisfied when their kids return. However, when the kids just leave home to seek independence, the parents expect them to come back and so are not as dissatisfied when children return. Findings emphasize the importance of relationships with children for marital satisfaction. A coresident adult child may be an important social convoy by providing intergenerational assistance in the form of ongoing emotional support. Results suggest that parental expectations about their children's timing and sequence of living arrangement transitions during early adulthood play a significant role in their marital satisfaction. Overall level of marital satisfaction among parents living with boomerang kids is quite high – 73% were very satisfied.	Future studies should include additional measures of marital quality, stability, and change, as well as variables relating to family members' communication, personality, and conflict resolution strategies. Should study cultural effects. Longitudinal study with boomerangers and non-returners.

		The child's main activity at the time of coresidence is also anticipated to affect marital satisfaction; children who are working or attending school may be less stressful to parental marriages than those who are unemployed because they are considered to be autonomous and on the pathway to independence. We expect that the number of returns, reasons for leaving home, sex, marital status, as well as the health status of returnee children will be related to parental marital satisfaction. Daughters are expected to provide more social and instrumental support to mothers and fathers than sons during coresidence, thereby contributing to parental marital satisfaction.	companionship, friendship, and emotional support provided. Sex of parent, number of children, SES, child's sex, relationship with father were not reported to impact parental marital satisfaction.		Coresidence likely has a positive effect on marriages. Financial factors are not involved in parental marital satisfaction during coresidence. Include adult children in any sort of intervention concerning marital problems.	
6. Messineo & Wojtkiewicz 2004	"Theoretical" scenarios proposed, but no theory.	Stated: The propensity to live with parents was greater in 1990 than in 1960. The increase in the propensity to live with parents from 1960 to 1990 is due to the decrease in the proportion married across that period. Part of the increase in the propensity to live with parents will remain once the decrease in the proportion married is controlled.	Between 1960 and 1990, there was an overall increase in the propensity to live with parents among those aged 19 to 30 from 21.0% to 28.9%. Propensity to live with parents is strongly associated with age and sex. Younger children more likely to live with parents. Men more likely to live with parents. Increase in percentage living with parents for men and women and for all age groups from 1960-1990. Marital status impacts likelihood of living with parents – married children less likely to live with parents.	None discussed.	When the decline in marriage is controlled for, there exists a propensity that makes young adults less likely to live with their parents. Adult children are more likely to be seeking independence than being dependent on their parents for residential support.	Future research efforts could explore this phenomenon over the long term, asking whether this trend will continue, to what advantage, and at what cost. Researchers should consider how the labor and housing markets impact the process of attaining residential

			Increase in adult children living at home is related to the decrease in marriage for young adults.			independence.
7. Mitchell

2004 | Life-course theory. | Stated: Young adults' decision to live in the parental home will be affected by cultural membership. Canadian young adults from highly familistic or "traditional" cultural backgrounds (Indo) are expected to remain at home longer and to leave home mainly for conventional or family-centered pathways such as marriage.

Those from more "individualistic" backgrounds (British) are more likely to leave home at earlier ages to achieve "independence" because of a stronger preference for individual autonomy. | The primary reasons for staying at home is divided between economic (56.2%) and non-economic reasons (43.8%). However the primary reason for returning home is for economic reasons (85.7%).

Mothers provide large amounts of domestic support for adult children.

Homestaying or delayed homeleaving is more common among young adults from traditional ethnic backgrounds

British young adults are the least likely to be living at home and more likely to be homeleavers than other groups. However, they are more likely to have boomeranged back home than other groups. | Includes only young adults who self-identify as British, Chinese, Indo, or Southern European.

Provided interviews in languages other than English, which is good. | Living in the parental home provides young adults with a means to ease the transition to adulthood.

There is considerable diversity in social and economic resources that influence the desirability and benefits of coresidence.

Economic situations can trigger a return back to home, but it is also influenced by social and ethnocultural factors.

There is greater reliance on parental households until older ages.

Even though mothers continue to do the bulk of household tasks, mothers also report that they thoroughly enjoy providing care and assistance to their adult children. This may be because of the companionship children provide.

The prolonging of reliance on parents may put additional strain on women and deepen gender inequalities. | Future research is required to fully understand cultural differences in the propensity to return home.

Disentangle economic and sociocultural factors in homeleaving and homereturning.

How is domestic labor divided when young adults live with parents?

Conceptualize homeleaving as multidimensional.

Examine social policy issues in the areas of education, labor, and housing.

Assess long-term and short-term outcomes of intergenerational coresidence. |
| 8. Goldscheider & Goldscheider

1993 | Claims that theories are complex, but never identifies or discusses theory. | Stated: Parental expectations should have a very strong impact on their children's nest leaving.

We predict the likelihood of forming a first independent | Young adults underestimated the likelihood that they would delay leaving home until marriage, while parents overestimated the extent of marriage as the route for leaving home during these years. | No limitations identified. | While marriage timing primarily involves decisions by the young adult, leaving the parental household is a joint decision that directly involves the parents. | No directions for further research. |

residence either via premarital residential independence or marriage in the six years after high school, when more than 96% of high school students were living with their parents.

Young adults left home much more slowly and that fewer enjoyed a period of residential independence prior to marriage than had been anticipated.

Both parents and kids overestimated the extent to which the young adults would achieve residential independence by six years after high school.

Parental and young adults' expectations have essentially the same impact on the likelihood that the route to establishing a separate household is premarital residential independence.

When both young adults and their parents expect that the young adult will leave home before marriage, premarital residential independence is highly likely (81%).

The likelihood of premarital residential independence is considerably higher for those with higher SES, non-Southerners, and greater among Jews and Protestant non-Hispanics Whites than among Catholics, Hispanics, Asians, or Blacks.

Parental support is a key factor strengthening the relationship between young adults' expectations and their eventual decisions about residential independence. This contrasts with the finding that greater parental SES did not facilitate young adults achieving their expected routes to residential independence.

Increasing parental support for premarital independence is very important in the trend toward earlier residential independence. As the level of support for premarital residential independence among parents reaches that of the generation of young adults, the age at leaving home should continue to fall.

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9. Aquilino 1990	None.	No hypotheses; only research questions: What is the extent of coresidence over the life course of parents? Which generation's vulnerability, needs, or dependence predisposes parents and their adult children to coreside? What parental household structure makes parent-adult child coresidence more likely? Is there a cultural propensity, by race or ethnicity, for parents and adult children to coreside, or are racial and ethnic differences in coresidence accounted for by differences in economic hardship or marital status?	Parental resources need not matter very much in route to residential independence. 93% of parent/adult child coresidence occurs in the parental household. Across the life course, parents were much more likely to provide a home for their adult children, than adult children were for their parents. Parents 54 and younger are more likely to have a coresident adult child than those older than 54. Significant interaction between race and education and coresidency. Child's age, sex are significant indicators of coresidency. Controlling for marital status, daughters were more likely than sons to coreside with older parents; sons were more likely than daughters to live with younger parents. Parent divorce greatly decreases the chances of having a coresident adult child. Family size was insignificant. Although many more Blacks than Whites coreside, the racial differences were entirely accounted for by children's marital status. For Chicanos it depends on the age of the parent. Higher levels of parental education	Only parents participated. Cross-sectional data.	Taking parents as the unit of analysis allowed for a more thorough examination of the household. Unmarried children receive much more support than married children. No evidence of cultural differences among Blacks and Whites.	Need for a multi-variate approach in exploring the origins of racial/ethnic differences in living arrangements or household structure.

Study	Theory	Hypotheses/Research Questions	Findings	Limitations	Conclusions	Future Research
			increased the likelihood of having unmarried children but, with marital status controlled, decreased the likelihood of coresidence.			
10. Ward, Logan, & Spitze 1992	None.	No hypotheses; only research question: Whose needs determine shared housing arrangements by adult children and their parents?	About 30% of persons aged 40-69 coreside with an adult child over the age of 22. Having unmarried children is strongly associated with coresidency. Coresidence is more common with healthy parents than unhealthy. Age of the child is a major factor in coresidence. The younger the child, the more likely it is that they coreside. Gender has little relationship to coresidence; marriage has a strong relationship. Number of siblings is unrelated, as is health status. Parents perform more household tasks than children. Daughters perform more than sons.	Information on children was gathered by proxy by parent reports. No information on child SES. No information on household contributions (financial) by child. Cross-sectional only. Takes child as unit of analysis to get better picture of situation.	Coresidence is least likely for parents who, by their age, would seem to benefit the most from coresidence. On the whole, it is relatively common throughout the life course, at least up to age 70, for parents to live with an adult child. Parental need is not the issue. Child characteristics are the most important predictors of coresidence. Family history and structure impact coresidence.	More information on economic status of parents and children. Look carefully at prevalence of caregiving in coresidence situations. Longitudinal research needed. Need to investigate risks and rewards of coresidence.
11. Mitchell, Wister, & Gee 2004	Life-course theory and social capital theory.	Stated: Durations at home before a home leave will be higher among those from more traditional ethnocultural environments compared to those from more individualistic backgrounds, after controlling for other factors. Duration at home will be higher among young adults with more positive relationships with parents compared to those with more negative ones, and the duration away from home after	Young adults who identify with a traditional ethnocultural heritage stay at home longer than those who identify as British. For family environment variables, relationship with mother is the most important aspect, it increases time spent at home and decreases time between leaving the house and returning if the relationship is excellent. Having more siblings shortens duration at home by a factor of 2%	Data not generalizable because it was collected from one major city. Possible recall bias	Better parental relationships are associated with a lower propensity to leave home. Parental SES is an important predictor of young adult independence. Young people have different exposure and access to various types of social and economic capital embedded within families and individuals.	Extend study to other cultural groups as well as different cultural factors. Comparative cross-national research. How social capital enmeshed within family bonds underlies

		an initial departure will be lower. Duration in the parental home will be inversely associated with family and individual resources to achieve residential independence, and the duration away from home will be longer among those with more resources. The rate of returning home will be influenced by the timing and reasons for (first) homeleaving.	for each sibling… it also increases time away from home by 29% for each sib. Parent religiosity did not influence duration, but parental financial support decreased time at home. Girls leave home faster than boys. Chinese have shorter survival times between leaving the home and a return home. Those who are financially supported by their parents stay gone 115% longer than those who are not financially supported. Leaving home at later ages decreases the duration before a home return.			homeleaving processes and intergenerational solidarity. Empirically investigate the idea of a boomeranger as a misfit or failure. Living arrangement research. Labor market and opportunities research. Mobility and migration patterns.
12. White & Rogers 1997	Social exchange theory.	Stated: We hypothesize that coresidence is associated with higher levels of exchange and perceived support. No prediction is made about the sign of the association between coresidence and affective closeness. That coresidence has more positive effects when children are further along the transition to adulthood and when parents have lower SES, and that it has more positive effects for young men than for young women.	Odds of coresidence are significantly higher when parents have attained less education, when the parents have been married continuously, when children are divorced or never married, or when children are younger. The quality of past family life and even the direct measure of whether parents wanted to have their children out of the house are unrelated to coresidence. No evidence here for a positive selection into coresidence of parents and children with particularly harmonious relationships. Coresident children are different from children who live apart from their parents, even if they live in	Only used parental reports. There was a 4 year gap in children interviews and parent reports. Does not talk about frequency of contact and interaction.	Frequency of contact is a better predictor of helping behavior than attitudinal or personality measures. Coresidence does appear to increase the exchange of resources between parents and adult children, but this occurs at some cost to relationship quality.	Examine conclusions from both parent and child points of view. Explore outcomes of well-being for family.

			same neighborhood. Men's and women's relationships with parents are equally affected by coresidence. There is no evidence that daughters find coresidence less rewarding than sons. Child's age is important. School enrollment increases positive feelings about living at home.			
13. Weinick 1995	Easterlin's cohort size hypothesis – relative cohort size affects that cohort's economic opportunity. Caldwell's wealth flows theory – there are two types of fertility regimes: no economic gain from restricting family size leads to large families and an economic gain from restricting family size leads to childlessness.	Stated: I hypothesize that cohorts of young women born later in the century therefore will be more likely than young women of earlier cohorts to make return trips to their parents' homes.	Coresidence in parent's homes is largely determined by the child's needs (95% of the time). Results for Whites and all other races are virtually identical. The number of return trips made to parents' homes under age 25 has increased steadily from .18 to .50 for the cohorts studied.	Only examines women.	Place of coresidence is an appropriate proxy for the direction of assistance. The circumstances of young women's launching from their parental home have changed along with a rise in semiautonomous living situations and a concomitant increase in unstable young adult independence. The proportion of time spent in a parent's home is about the same for daughters… they used to stay longer, but now they leave earlier and return often.	No directions for further research.
14. Aquilino & Supple 1991	Life-course perspective.	Stated: We test the prediction that, when young adult children and parents live together, children's movement toward adult roles and independence has important implications for parent-child relations and for parental satisfaction with living arrangements.	70% of parents said that coresident living situations were working out very well. Only 17% of these parents indicated considerable dissatisfaction with the situation. Levels of conflict are relatively low. Enjoyable social interaction is	No limitations discussed.	When adult children remain or return home, parent and child must renegotiate roles and responsibilities. Conflict is not always a negative indicator in the parent-child relationship – conflict may be an inevitable result of the child moving toward adulthood.	No direction for future research.

common for parents and their
coresident children. 75% said
they had enjoyable times with their
kid several times a month.

Coresidence satisfaction and
conflict did not differ by sex of
parent or child. However, parents
are more involved with their
daughters than sons.

Children's employment status and
their financial dependence on
parents had significant direct
effects on parent-child conflict.

Payment of room and board had
no impact on satisfaction. Only
25% of children pay any room and
board.

Having grandchildren in the house
decreases satisfaction with the
living arrangement.

Child age did not change
perceptions of satisfaction.

Both moms and dads report that
they enjoyed more time with
daughters than with sons.

Having other children in the home
(younger kids) increased
satisfaction with coresident
children.

Coresidency in early adulthood
has the potential to enhance
intergenerational solidarity and to
set the stage for closer parent-
child relations after children
become independent adults.

Parents' development in midlife
must be viewed in light of the
return of adult children as a social
trend.

| 15. Ginn & Arber 1994 | "Swollen nest" life phase. | Stated: We argue that the presence in the home of adult children, defined here as those aged over 16, has implications for women's need and opportunity for paid employment. This in turn impacts on women's opportunity to accumulate | Hypotheses were supported. Nearly half of the women in the survey had adult children living at home. Among those with coresident adult children, two-thirds had an employed child, but the child's wages were low – only 1/5 of | No limitations discussed. | British midlife women with adult children (like women with younger children) take part-time employment in order to reconcile the dual needs to earn money and to accomplish the physical, emotional, and psychosocial work generated in families. | Need information for mother's motivation for employment and coresident arrangement |

		pension entitlements and hence on their financial well-being in later life.	children earned more than $150 a week. There is no evidence that adult children's employment reduced women's need to earn wages.		The price paid by women who care for their families is not confined to the periods of caring for young children. The longer adult children remain at home, the less likely are midlife women to undertake the full-time employment which would help to secure their financial well-being later in life.	
16. Suitor & Pillemer 1988	Exchange theory.	Stated: We anticipate that conflict between adult children and their elderly parents would be least when a) the parent was in good health; b) the parent was less dependent upon the adult child; c) the child and the parent occupied the same or similar marital status; and d) the child was older. Also, we anticipated that the least conflict would be found in mother-daughter dyads, followed by mother-son dyads, father-daughter dyads, and father-son dyads.	The frequency of disagreements between adult children and their parents is surprisingly low. 64% of respondents reported that they had no disagreements with their resident child during the previous year, and only 18% reported having three or more disagreements. There is less conflict between parents and children when the children are older and when they share the same marital status. No support for other hypotheses. Parent's health and dependency on adult child were unimportant factors in coresidency.	Data only collected from parents.	Low levels of conflict may be due to selectivity in deciding to coreside – if one argues with one's parents often, coresidency is probably not an appealing option. Most parents and coresident children have a very harmonious relationship.	Data should be collected from both parent and child to avoid biases. Measures of conflict should have a comparison group of parents and children who do not live together. Ask about equity of living situation. Qualitative and quantitative data should be collected.
17. Spitze & Ward 1995	Traditional gender roles/ division of labor in household.	Stated: We expect adult children to do more when the household need is greater. Adult children will do more housework when there are fewer older children, fewer adults, or more younger children, when the parent is in poor health or quite elderly, and when all parents are employed.	Adult children are about 24, most have completed high school, 38% women, 15% Black, most have fewer than one sib in the household. Two-thirds live in a two parent household. One-quarter are enrolled in school and they work, on average, 25 hours a week.	Cross-sectional data only.	Daughters probably respond more to household need – they spend more hours doing housework, help more when parents are sick, care for other children. Coresident children are treated more as spouses in the household as opposed to children.	Need for longitudinal data.

		The adult child will do more when he or she is perceived as having more available time and energy. Adult children will do more housework when employed fewer hours, not enrolled in school, and healthier. We expect differences in relation to the demographic traits of race, education, and gender. Daughters will do more than sons. We also expect children of Black and less educated parents to do more due to norms of familial obligation.	Adult sons report doing 14 hours of housework a week and adult daughters report doing 17 hours per week. Sons report 14 hours a week while their parents only report that they do 7 hours a week. Parents report about 40% less time for housework than the daughters do. Older daughters do more work than younger daughters, while age doesn't matter for sons.		Coresident daughters start acting as wives and mothers – typical female responsibilities for family and kinkeeping.	
18. Clemens & Axelson 1985	None. Erikson is mentioned, but only in the discussion. Not based on Erikson.	None stated or implied. Research question is exploratory in nature: What are the predictors of boomerangers, what are areas of conflict, who are they, what do they do?	The most frequent reason for the adult child to live at home is for education, then financial problems. Children of intact families generally did not pay room and board, but children of divorced parents did more frequently. The older the child, the less likely he or she was to help with housework. For parents with adult children over age 22, 80% had not planned on having a child living at home. The older the child, the less satisfied the parents are with the living arrangement. 40% of respondents did not want the living situation to continue. Parents complained about the hours their children kept and household chores.	Very small sample size. Participants were mostly people attending a workshop on parenting young adults – not representative.	It would appear that the parental goal is to have children on their own by the late teens or early 20s. Considerable amount of stress is put on marital relationships in a boomerang situation. In a boomerang situation, the young adult is often encouraged to continue behaving in immature, dependent ways, and the parents continue to act in caretaking roles. This prevents young adults from being responsible and essentially growing up. Fledgling adults stay at home longer to make up for a lack of emotional closeness in the family – if they can't be emotionally close, they can be physically close. Parents may also not develop and continue to mature if their children stay at home or come back.	Studies with larger samples. Role confusion in family. Ethnicity and young adulthood. Immigration and young adulthood.

			38.5% of the parents had a boomerang kid.		Most parents do not welcome their young adults back home. Fledgling adults are usually welcome if they are under age 22 and the stay is brief (under 6 months).	
19. Jones 1987	None.	No hypotheses; only research questions: When, why, and how people leave the parental home and how do these aspects interrelate?	47% of men and 25% of women are living with their parents. By the age of 23, 65% of men and 84% of women had left the parental home. The stable middle class appear to leave home earlier because they leave to go to college. 30% of males and 38% of females (of those living at home) are boomerangers. Differences in the reversibility of homeleaving by class – richer can come back while poorer typically stay gone. Reasons for leaving home greatly depend on the child's age and their social class. Temporary and permanent nature of homeleaving depends on the reason why the child left. It is not uncommon for working class young adults to leave their parents' home in order to live with other relatives.	No limitations discussed.	Class differences in homeleaving and homereturning is greatly related to opportunity for higher education. For the middle class, young adulthood transitions (moving out, getting married, having a baby) are spread out over a decade. For the working class, young adult transitions often take place within a year. Concept of adult transitions is simplistic. Protracted period of youth exists only for the middle class. Impact of housing policy on young adulthood housing options.	No directions for further research.

APPENDIX C

ONLINE SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT

Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Research - Final Version

INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR NAME: Alicia V. Patterson
██████████@yahoo.com

TITLE OF PROJECT: Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Survey

INTRODUCTION: You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary. Please email the researcher if there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE: The primary goal of the research is to test the theory of Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood by determining which aspects of emerging adulthood are relevant to emerging adults and transitions to adulthood. In this study, I will compare the emerging adulthood experiences of boomerang children to those of young people living autonomously. In the process of data collection, descriptive data will be gathered so that the population can be better understood. By completing this study, I hope to show emerging adulthood and all of human development can be conceptualized in more meaningful ways.

DURATION: The survey will take between 10 and 20 minutes to complete.

PROCEDURES: This survey utilizes multiple choice questions and scales to measure certain aspects of emerging adulthood.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: You and others may benefit from the findings of this survey in the form of a contribution to academic knowledge.

COMPENSATION: You may receive extra credit in your classes for participating in this survey. All extra credit is given at the sole discretion of your class instructor. The researcher has no authority to authorize extra credit.

In addition to possible extra credit that may be given to participants, the researcher will donate $1 to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum for every 5 completed surveys, up to $1000 total. More information about the National September 11 Memorial and Museum can be found at http://wtcmf.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=New_Home.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study, other than the time and effort to complete the survey online.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS: If you choose not to participate in the survey, there are no alternative procedures for you to complete.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY: You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Approximately 1000 participants are expected to enroll in this study.

Eriksonian Emerging Adulthood Research - Final Version

CONFIDENTIALITY: All research data is anonymous and confidential. No information from the surveys can or will be linked to any individual participants. No participants in this research will be named or directly referenced. Data will be kept on a secure laptop in the direct possession of the researcher. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then The University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: Questions about this research or your rights as a research subject may be directed to Alicia V. Patterson at ███████████████████████. You may contact the chairperson of the UT Arlington Institutional Review Board at 817-272-3723 in the event of a research-related injury to the subject.

CONSENT:
By clicking the "Accept" button below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you click "Accept," and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By clicking the "Accept" button, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and the you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

◯ Accept   ◯ Decline

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Dear Colleague,

My name is Alicia Patterson, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Arlington, School of Social Work. Dr. Maria Scannapieco is my dissertation chair. I am presently working on my dissertation research which concerns the addition of a stage to emerging adulthood to Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory. I am specifically researching if boomerang children (emerging adults who return to live in their parental home after living away from their parents) experience emerging adulthood in different ways compared to emerging adults living autonomously or semi-autonomously (such as in their own households, in college dormitories, with roommates, with a romantic partner, etc.).

I am collecting data for my dissertation research using an online questionnaire. The online survey takes your students only between 10 and 20 minutes to complete and is composed of questions relating to demographics, living situations, relationships, sexuality, and ideology. My population of interest is English-speaking emerging and young adults, ages 18 through 30, although anyone over the age of 18 is welcome to take the survey.

I would appreciate any help you could give me by making students or other contacts aware of this survey and encouraging their participation. If you would like to take the survey yourself or view the survey prior to your possible distribution to others, please follow the SurveyMonkey link provided. Please feel free to answer as many or as few questions as you feel comfortable. Some questions are personal in nature and may be perceived as discomforting or embarrassing; feel free to skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may ignore this request to participate in the research and/or distribute links to the survey. If you want to provide extra credit to students who participate, I was told by an online professor that having students email the screen shot of the final screen thanking the participants for completing the survey to the professor works very effectively and students will complete the survey within 24 hours of receiving the offer to do so.

I as the researcher will donate $1 to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum for every completed survey, up to $1000 total. More information about the National September 11 Memorial and Museum can be found at http://wtcmf.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=New_Home.

The survey can be found at the following link:
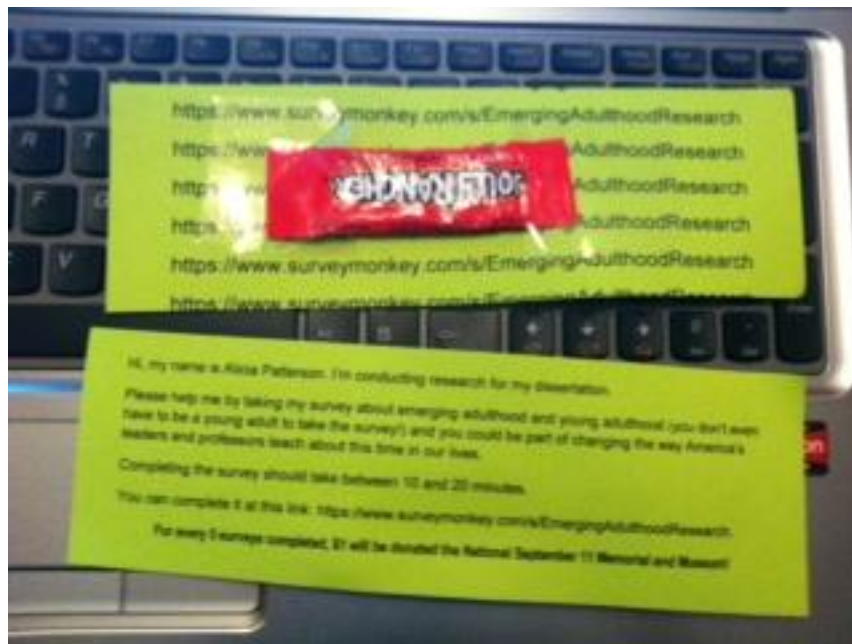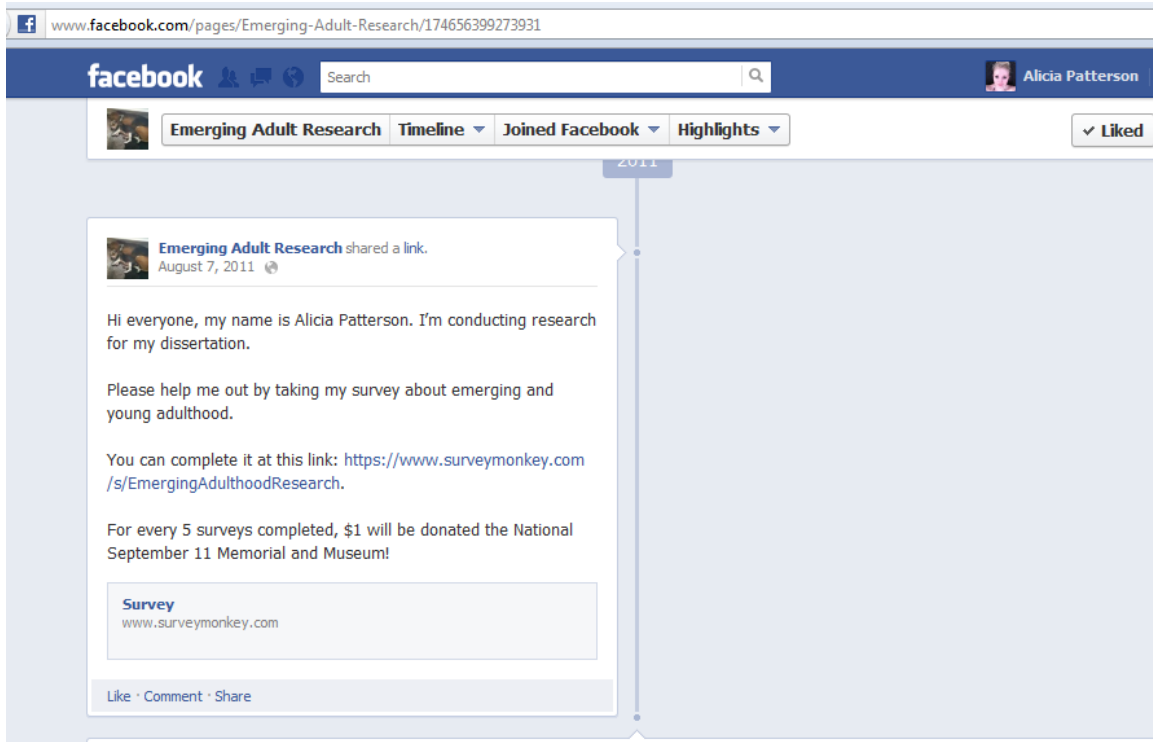https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EmergingAdulthoodResearch

Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you taking the time to help me complete my dissertation research.

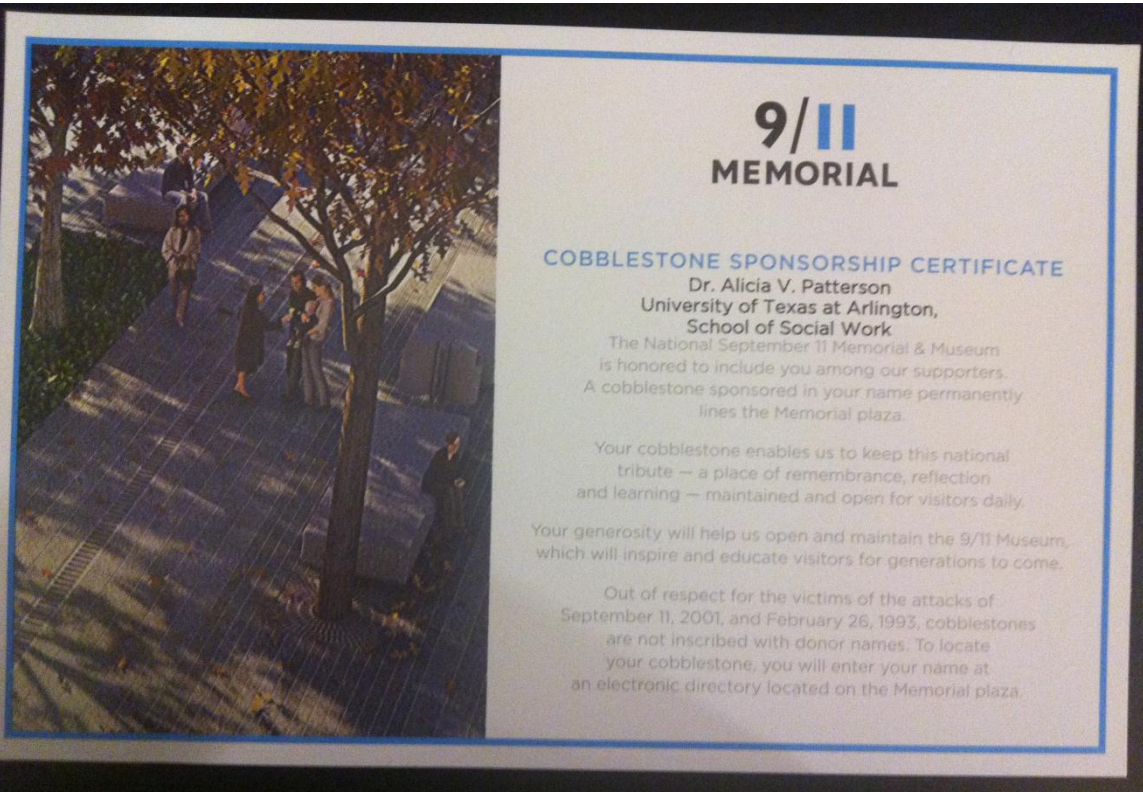If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

 Alicia V. Patterson, MS

███████@yahoo.com
█ █ █

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APPENDIX E

DONATION TO THE SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

9/11 MEMORIAL

COBBLESTONE SPONSORSHIP CERTIFICATE

Dr. Alicia V. Patterson
University of Texas at Arlington,
School of Social Work

The National September 11 Memorial & Museum
is honored to include you among our supporters.
A cobblestone sponsored in your name permanently
lines the Memorial plaza.

Your cobblestone enables us to keep this national
tribute — a place of remembrance, reflection
and learning — maintained and open for visitors daily.

Your generosity will help us open and maintain the 9/11 Museum,
which will inspire and educate visitors for generations to come.

Out of respect for the victims of the attacks of
September 11, 2001, and February 26, 1993, cobblestones
are not inscribed with donor names. To locate
your cobblestone, you will enter your name at
an electronic directory located on the Memorial plaza.

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