



Experiences of Doubling-Up Among American Families With Children

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Experiences of Doubling-up among American Families with Children

A dissertation presented

by

Hope Harvey

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Dissertation Advisors:
Professor Alexandra Killewald
Professor Devah Pager

Hope Harvey

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Abstract

Facing rising rents and economic insecurity, many American families live “doubled-up” in extended households. Households are considered doubled-up if they contain any adults besides the householder and her romantic partner. This dissertation examines the experience and effects of living doubled-up on families with children and highlights variation within this broad category. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of this common alternative housing arrangement, and it contributes theoretical insights to the literatures on social support activation and complex family/household relationships.

The first empirical chapter draws on in-depth interview data from 33 parents who doubled-up in someone else’s home to examine how parents who double-up as guests understand and evaluate their housing options. I find that parents assess the quality of the support itself, their relationship with the provider and other household members, and the conditions attached to the support when considering whether a specific source of support is a desirable, or even available, option. This chapter identifies difficult trade-offs that parents using the private housing safety net often face and provides a framework for understanding instrumental support activation decisions. Chapter two draws on data from 60 householders and guests to examine how families negotiate and contest economic arrangements within extended households. I find that guests frequently contribute towards household expenses, making doubling-up a form of social support that often benefits hosts as well as guests, but successful intra-household economic exchange depends on

household members having a common understanding of the meanings behind exchanges. Disputes about economic arrangements reveal disagreements over the social meanings of household relationships and help explain the instability of double-ups. The final analysis uses data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Youth Adult surveys to estimate the cumulative effects on young adult health and educational attainment of childhood years spent in three doubled-up household types: 1) those formed with children's grandparent(s), 2) those formed with children's adult sibling(s), and 3) those formed with other extended family or non-kin. I find that the effects vary depending on the relationships between household members and conclude that the study of family complexity can be enriched by considering co-residence with adults beyond the nuclear family. Together, these chapters strengthen our understanding of this common private housing safety net and demonstrate the importance of considering heterogeneity in the experience and effects of living in doubled-up households.

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Dissertation Introduction

Facing rising rents and economic insecurity, many Americans live doubled-up with friends or family members. Households are generally considered doubled-up if they include an adult member who is not the householder or romantic partner of the householder. This category includes a broad range of household configurations, from multigenerational homes to roommate arrangements. Rates of doubling-up have increased in recent decades, especially during the Great Recession (Elliott, Young, and Dye 2011; Taylor et al. 2010; Wiemers 2014). By 2010, over 30 percent of adults and nearly 20 percent of children lived in doubled-up households (Mykyta and Macartney 2012). Because doubled-up households are highly unstable, point in time estimates understate the cumulative prevalence of doubling-up. In a sample of children living in urban areas, nearly half doubled-up at some point by the time they reached middle childhood (Pilkauskas, Garfinkel, and McLanahan 2014). This dissertation provides new insight into how families with children experience and are affected by this common housing safety net and highlights heterogeneity within these experiences and effects. In addition to its implications for our understanding of doubling-up a private housing safety net, this dissertation contributes to the study of social support and family complexity.

Background on Doubling-up

Doubling-up is associated with economic disadvantage. Both householders and guests (the additional adults living in the home owned or rented by the householder) in doubled-up households are more likely to have poverty-level personal incomes than non-doubled-up adults (Mykyta and Macartney 2012). Recessions and high unemployment rates are associated with more doubling-up (Lee and Painter 2013; London and Fairlie 2006; Pilkauskas et al. 2014). Though the evidence is limited, higher fair market rent in a city may be associated with higher

rates of doubling-up (Fertig and Reingold 2008). Doubling-up is particularly common for African American, Hispanic, and Asian American families. While slightly less than 20 percent of white adults over age 25 live in doubled-up households, 36 percent of Hispanic adults, 32 percent of Asian adults, and 31 percent of black adults live in doubled-up households. Three-generation households, the most common type of double-up, are more than twice as prevalent among nonwhites as they are among whites (Wiemers 2014).

The composition of doubled-up households can be best understood by considering the relationship between the householder and the household's guests or "additional adult(s)" – adult household members who are not the romantic partner of the householder. Current Population Survey data¹ from 2010 show that adult children accounted for 46 percent of additional adults, making this the most common type of additional household member. Parents of the householder accounted for 13 percent of additional adults. Siblings made up about 8 percent of additional adults, grandchildren 2 percent, and other relatives about 12 percent. About 18 percent of additional adults were not relatives of the householder (Mykyta and Macartney 2012). American Housing Survey data show that additional adults classified as "lodgers" were rare, present in just three percent of doubled-up households (Eggers and Moumen 2013).²

Doubling-up has long served as a housing safety net. A 1935 *American Journal of Sociology* article on "Adaptations of Family Life" warned of "[y]oung parents who should be

¹ Looking only at mothers with young children living in urban areas reveals broadly similar patterns. Co-residence with a parent (63%) is common, and co-residence with non-kin is less so (25%). Mothers with young children may show higher rates of doubling-up with a sibling (25%) (Pilkas, Garfinkel, and McLanahan 2014).

² Mykyta and Macartney define a doubled-up household "as a household which includes at least one "additional adult," a person aged 18 or older who is not enrolled in school and who is neither the householder, the spouse, nor the cohabiting partner of the householder," while Eggers and Moumen define doubled-up households as those that contain an "other household member" who is "any person who is not the householder, the householder's spouse or partner, or a child of the householder younger than age 21." Despite the different definitions and data sets, they produce fairly similar estimates of household composition.

free to make their home life” having to double-up with relatives out of economic necessity (Groves 1935:773). In 1974, ethnographer Carol Stack argued that in the high-poverty community she studied, extended households and flexible co-residence patterns "comprise a resilient response to the social-economic conditions of poverty" (Stack 1974:124). In recent years, studies of housing options of low-income families, particularly unmarried mothers, have highlighted the role co-residence with extended family and non-kin plays in helping families meet their housing needs (e.g., Clampet-Lundquist 2003; Cook et al. 2002; Fitchen 1992; Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan 2002; Skobba and Goetz 2013).

Though poor families have long relied on doubled-up arrangements, recent increases in rates of doubling-up, particularly in response to the financial crisis and following recession, re-focused popular attention on this common household form. Using the 1996, 2001, 2004, and 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation panels, Wiemers finds that, over this period, the number of doubled-up households grew by more than 1.5 million households, with a particularly high increase in the 2008 panel (Wiemers 2014). According to Census data, from 2007 to 2010, the percent of households that were doubled-up increased from 17.0 percent to 18.7 percent (Mykyta and Macartney 2012). Increases in adult children remaining in their parents’ home have been particularly large; the number of adult children age 21 or older living in their parents’ home increased by over 10 percent, from 12.5 to 13.8 million, from 2003 to 2009 (Eggers and Moumen 2013). While most adult children in multigenerational households are under age 25, the number of children ages 26 to 30 increased substantially as well (Eggers and Moumen 2013). Multiple family households – where a family is defined as a married couple with or without children or an unmarried individual with children – also increased substantially, particularly among unrelated subfamilies. The number of households with unrelated subfamilies

grew from 199,000 to 622,000. Though the number of households with related subfamilies did not increase as much, they remained much more prevalent, with 2,846,000 households in 2009 (Eggers and Moumen 2013).

Contributions of this Dissertation

Much of the prior research on doubled-up households discusses double-ups as a single category. My qualifying paper demonstrated that, consistent with this treatment, many parents living as guests in someone else's household do perceive anything beyond the mother-romantic partner-child household – that is, any “doubled-up” household, though this term is not used by parents themselves – to be non-normative (Harvey 2015). However, within this broad category of doubled-up households, there is substantial diversity, and the dissertation highlights variation in parents' perceptions and experiences of different doubled-up household types, as well as in the effects different doubled-up household types have on the children they house. The variation highlighted in this dissertation demonstrates the importance studying doubled-up households as a heterogeneous category. Moreover, the dimensions along which doubled-up households vary provide leverage for studying how different attributes shape social relationships and household functioning.

While doubled-up households appear frequently in qualitative research documenting the lives of the poor (e.g., Desmond 2016; Edin and Shaefer 2015; Mazelis 2017; Watkins-Hayes 2009), relatively few studies take doubled-up households as their subject of interest. Much existing knowledge of doubled-up households come from studies of the housing arrangements of the poor (e.g., Clampet-Lundquist 2003; Cook et al. 2002; Fitchen 1992; Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan 2002; Skobba and Goetz 2013), and these studies have highlighted the important role of doubling-up as a housing strategy for low-income families. This dissertation goes beyond

the housing literature and considers doubled-up households not just as an alternative housing arrangement, but also a form of social support and an extension of family complexity.

Regarding social support, doubling-up can be understood as the provision of housing from social relations, rather than through the private housing market. As increases in housing costs have outpaced wage growth in recent decades, many parents face difficult choices about housing their families. In 2015, nearly 25 million children lived in households that paid over 30 percent of their income to housing (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2017). The public safety net has not kept pace with growing need: only about one in four eligible low-income households receive federal housing assistance (Congressional Budget Office 2015). As residential independence has become increasingly difficult for individuals, especially low-income mothers, to achieve, many families with children turn to relatives and non-kin for help.

By considering doubling-up as a common and vital form of a social support, this dissertation contributes to our understandings of instrumental support activation decisions and the dynamics of exchange within instrumental support relationships. Because doubled-up households involve co-residence, they can shape many aspects of families' lives. Moreover, parents must choose one support-provider at a time but make on-going decisions about whether to remain in the household or seek another source of support. Thus, parents' decisions about doubling-up are both consequential and on-going, making them information-rich sites for studying how parents evaluate their social support options, a topic I address in chapter one. Additionally, housing support brings non-nuclear family members into the intimate home environment and often involves reciprocal benefits for both householders and the guests living in their homes. Chapter two explores how the ambiguity in doubled-up household relationships

shapes the dynamics of social support. Together, chapters one and two also highlight financial and non-financial costs to receiving social support.

Finally, this dissertation extends the study of family complexity to *household* complexity. Family sociologists have made important advances in recent years in the area of family complexity, which is defined as when roles and relationships diverge from the simple nuclear family scheme, but this work has largely focused on mothers' romantic partners. In this dissertation, I treat doubled-up households an extension of the concept of family complexity and consider how coresidence with adults other than romantic partners can influence the lives of adults and their children. In chapter two, I extend the concept of "incomplete institutionalization" (Cherlin 1978) – commonly applied to complex cohabiting and step-families – to doubling-up. Analyzing household functioning in the context of this ambiguity contributes to our understanding of complex family/household relationships and identifies a link between relationship ambiguity and disagreements over the household economy. In chapter three, I show that doubling-up – particularly co-residence with extended family or non-kin – can shape children's long-term health and educational attainment. I argue that this evidence suggests a need to expand the study of family structure to household adults beyond parents and their romantic partners.

Chapter Outline

The first two chapters draw on longitudinal in-depth interviews with doubled-up parents with young children, gathered over three years. These parents are a subsample of the How Parents House Kids (HPHK) study, which interviewed a stratified random sample of parents in the Dallas and Cleveland metro areas. Because the HPHK sample was racially and socioeconomically diverse, these data provide a rare qualitative view of the breadth of doubled-

up arrangements. Following families longitudinally allowed me observe household dissolutions and formations; over three years, I observed over 100 doubled-up arrangements.

In the first chapter, I use data from 33 parents who doubled-up in someone else's home to examine how parents who double-up as guests understand and evaluate their housing options. I find that parents make active decisions about which source of housing support to mobilize by evaluating three main aspects of potential support: the quality of the support itself, their relationships with the provider and other household members, and the conditions attached to the support. By examining how doubled-up parents understand and evaluate their housing support options, this study provides insight into instrumental support activation decisions and complicates current conceptions of support availability. Additionally, this study identifies difficult trade-offs faced by parents using the private housing safety net and helps explain why parents do not always double-up with the householder they perceive will provide the "best" housing for their family.

Chapter two draws on data from 60 householders and guests to examine how families negotiate and contest economic arrangements within extended households. Doubling-up, or sharing a home, is an important private safety net. In addition to providing needy families housing assistance, doubling-up often also economically benefits householders, as guests frequently contribute towards household expenses. I find that successful intra-household economic exchange depends on not only the amount exchanged, but also the shared meanings behind exchanges. Though guests expect to make some material or in-kind contribution to the householder in return for housing, exchanges become contentious when household members disagree about the extent to which their relationship is social or economic. The absence of institutionalized expectations regarding doubled-up household relationships leaves members free

to draw upon competing norms depending on their self-interest, framing the household as either a family-like solidarity unit or market-like direct exchange. However, conflict is mitigated by greater institutionalization of household relationships – as in multigenerational households – and by clear negotiation of exchange relationships prior to doubling-up. Economic arrangements and disputes reveal how doubled-up parents understand their household relationships, help explain the instability of double-ups, and contain insights about the conditions under which money either damages or sustains social relations.

Chapter three examines the cumulative effects of these households on children using nationally-representative data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Youth Adult surveys. In this chapter, I estimate the effects on young adult health and educational attainment of childhood years spent in three doubled-up household types: 1) those formed with children's grandparent(s), 2) those formed with children's adult sibling(s), and 3) those formed with other extended family or non-kin. Using marginal structural models and inverse probability of treatment weighting, methods that account for the fact that household composition is both a cause and consequence of other family characteristics, I find that doubling-up shapes children's life chances, but the effects vary depending on the relationships between household members. While childhood years spent living with extended family or non-kin are associated with worse young adult outcomes, co-residence with a grandparent is not significantly associated with young adult outcomes after accounting for selection into these households, and co-residence with an adult sibling may be beneficial in some domains. By studying the effects of co-residence with adults beyond the nuclear family, this research contributes to a fuller understanding of the implications of family complexity for children.

Choosing a Household: How Parents Navigate the Private Housing Safety Net

Introduction

Nicole, a 22 year-old mother who lived with her two young sons in her mother's home, described her housing positively, "I like the fact that it's a new house, nice area." Yet these unit and neighborhood characteristics were not at the front of Nicole's mind when she pondered her housing options. Instead, she emphasized her relationship with her mother.

I can trust her. I know that she won't do anything to hinder me living there consistently, or do anything that will hurt my kids, or do anything that's going to cause me to have to come home and see something different than what I expected.

Nicole contrasted this arrangement with the uncertainty she associated with living with a friend or acquaintance, saying "things just come that you didn't expect when you made that decision [to live together]. And I don't want anything that can put my kids in harm's way." Nicole's mother's household was not without limitations. Nicole's partner, who lived with his own parents, was not allowed in the home unless her mother was there, and she lamented her sons' lack of "one-on-one [time] with their dad." She had previously lived with her boyfriend's sister, a household where she had more freedom, including to see her boyfriend. But even with its restrictions, Nicole preferred her mother's house, feeling that her familiarity and positive relationship with her mother made co-residence simpler. "I don't know how to say it, but I get to be myself here. I don't have to worry about too much or doing anything wrong or anything like that."

Previous research highlights the barriers many low-income individuals like Nicole face in accessing social support, such as resource constraints and high levels of distrust in their social networks (McDonald and Armstrong 2001; Menjivar 2000; Roschelle 1997; Smith 2005). An ethic of individualism, compounded by such barriers, prompts some people to prefer social

isolation to the entanglement of social support networks (Mazelis 2017; Smith 2007). Parents like Nicole often echo this individualism – they would prefer to live independently. But material circumstances frequently necessitate accessing support. Strict independence is difficult, if not impossible, for individuals in poverty to maintain, particularly given limits of public assistance (Edin and Lein 1997; Mazelis 2017), and ethnographic work from a variety of contexts highlights the heavy reliance of the poor on social support networks, along with the costs of such reliance (Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Nelson 2005; Newman 1999; Stack 1974). For Nicole, housing support is vital; she is on a long waitlist for public housing assistance and her sporadic employment would likely not support private market housing. But accessing support from her mother comes with a cost, as her mother’s rules prevent her children’s father from being fully involved in their lives. This study takes the use of support as its starting point and asks, when accessing social support, how do individuals choose *which source* of assistance to mobilize from among their imperfect options?

I examine parents’ decisions to access an increasingly crucial form of instrumental social support: housing. Extended households have been an important form of social support for decades and remain so today (Groves 1935; Kochhar and Cohn 2011; Ruggles 2007; Stack 1974). In recent years, the number of families burdened by housing costs has increased rapidly (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2016), but the public safety net has not kept pace with growing need: only about one in four eligible low-income households receive federal housing assistance (Congressional Budget Office 2015). As residential independence has become increasingly difficult for individuals, especially low-income mothers, to achieve, many families with children turn to relatives and non-kin for help. Nearly 20 percent of children in the U.S. live “doubled-up”

– in a household with any adult besides the householder and her romantic partner (Mykyta and Macartney 2012).

Drawing on in-depth interviews with 33 parents with young children who doubled-up in 63 different households over a three year period, I examine how parents who double-up understand and evaluate their housing support options. I find that rather than simply falling into an available option, parents make active decisions about which sources of support to mobilize by weighing three main dimensions of potential support providers.³ First, they evaluate the quality of support that potential providers can offer. For parents doubling-up, this includes characteristics of the unit and neighborhood, as well as the social environment of the household and any help or expectations that might accompany co-residence, such as for childcare. Second, they assess their relationships, including their level of familiarity and affinity with the support-provider and other household members. Finally, they consider any conditions they must accept to receive support, such as oversight over their behavior or rules against romantic partner co-residence. By identifying the factors that parents use to evaluate potential households and describing how parents' assessments may change over time, this study provides a framework for understanding parents' instrumental support activation decisions that underscores the importance of support-seekers' constrained agency. Additionally, by analyzing the difficult trade-offs parents in need of housing support face, I contribute to the literature on doubling-up as a housing option for low-income families and explain why parents do not always double-up with the householder whom they perceive will provide the highest-quality housing for their family.

Theoretical Background

From Support Availability to Activation

³ These categories, while theoretically distinct, are empirically overlapping and interactive. For instance, relationship qualities might affect whether a householder was willing to provide childcare.

Social networks provide both instrumental and emotional support that helps families get by in daily life, weather unexpected negative events, and pursue their goals. In this study, I focus primarily on instrumental support, defined as “aid provided for practical, tangible problems” (Meadows 2009:1072). Instrumental support includes housing assistance, as well as things like loans, childcare, and job referrals.⁴

A substantial literature addresses factors that hinder the creation of supportive social networks or deter potentially supportive social ties from providing instrumental assistance (McDonald and Armstrong 2001; Menjivar 2000; Roschelle 1997; Smith 2005). One important finding from this body of work is the role of individuals’ decisions to develop and maintain social support networks in determining what sources of social support they have available (Hansen 2004; Nelson 2005; Stack 1974). For example, when developing childcare networks, parents selectively foster support relationships with certain social ties based on proximity, affinity, and the individual’s childrearing skills (Hansen 2004). On the other hand, people sometimes avoid involvement with social ties who are too needy and request assistance too frequently (Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Stack 1974).

In addition to influencing the composition of their social support networks, actors’ efforts creating and maintaining these networks are assumed to play a central role in disparities in social support availability. Survey data show that disadvantaged mothers are less likely to believe they have instrumental support, including housing, available from their social network (Harknett 2006; Harknett and Hartnett 2011; Radey 2015; Turney and Harknett 2010). Moreover, personal disadvantage is associated with greater declines in social support over time (Radey and Brewster 2013; Schafer and Vargas 2016). These disparities are attributed, in part, to the role of personal

⁴ Though some scholars further distinguish instrumental assistance from financial assistance (e.g., loans) and informational assistance (e.g., knowledge about opportunities) (Henly, Danziger, and Offer 2005), social support is generally categorized as instrumental or emotional (Seeman 2008).

difficulties in making it difficult for actors to develop and sustain supportive reciprocal exchange relationships (Harknett and Hartnett 2011; Radey and Brewster 2013). Yet while a great deal of research addresses the maintenance of support networks and availability of support, support provision depends not just on having a social tie willing and able to assist, but also on the support-seeker's decision to activate help from this person, and such mobilization decisions remain underexplored.

In moments of need, individuals must choose whether and to whom they reach out. Previous research finds that values of individualism and self-reliance can prevent people from activating support from family and friends, even when these relations are willing to assist (Mazelis 2017; Sherman 2013; Smith 2007). By demonstrating that support access does not necessarily beget activation, such findings suggest that support-seekers' decisions play a key role in the provision of social support. But strict avoidance of social support is not the norm; ethnographic research reveals that the poor rely heavily on their social networks for instrumental assistance, including childcare, transportation, and housing (Desmond 2016; Edin and Lein 1997; Nelson 2005). Thus, in addition to making choices about *whether* to mobilize potential support, individuals often face decisions about *which* sources of instrumental support to activate.

Recent scholarship on discussion networks examines support-seekers' activation decisions, but focuses on emotional support and advice. This research finds that actors weigh potential support-providers' characteristics – including accessibility, skills, and resources – when choosing which to activate (Perry and Pescosolido 2010; Small 2017). Moreover, support-seekers consider the norms regarding the relationship, anticipate likely responses of potential confidants, and avoid mobilizing ties when it might result in uncomfortable interactions (Small 2017). These findings provide compelling evidence that decisions about which sources of

emotional support and advice to activate are driven by support-seekers' consideration of both their relationship with the potential discussion partner and the adequacy of emotional support or advice they expect the discussion partner to provide. Whether and how such considerations (or others) apply to instrumental support remains an open question, as instrumental and emotional support differ in important ways. For example, unlike much instrumental support, sharing emotional support or advice often imposes relatively few costs on the provider. In a higher-stakes support situation, such as the provision of housing, support-providers may attach conditions to receiving support, requiring support-seekers to make different evaluations and trade-offs in their support activation decisions. Moreover, while actors can receive emotional support from multiple sources and seek an alternative source if the first option provides unsatisfactory assistance, many types of instrumental support, such as housing or childcare, require support-seekers to choose one support-provider at a time and carry substantial risk if the support provided is inadequate in some way.

While, to my knowledge, no study has systematically analyzed how support-seekers make instrumental support activation decisions, existing research examining flows of support suggests relationships may matter substantially in these decisions. Studies of support exchanged find that close family ties, particularly intergenerational ties, are associated with reliable support, while friendship is associated with more limited support and greater reciprocity obligations (Fischer 1982; Glick and Van Hook 2011; Plickert, Côté, and Wellman 2007; Wellman 1990). Accordingly, several studies find that individuals often call upon close family, particularly parents, first and activate more distant ties as a secondary option, such as when close family is unable or unwilling to help (Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Hansen 2004; Mazelis 2017). Qualitative studies of social support also suggest personal characteristics beyond kinship that

make certain sources of support more or less appealing. Multiple studies provide descriptions of how the stigma and dangers of drug use can complicate support provision, leading individuals with addictions to avoid seeking assistance from non-using family members and vice versa (Desmond 2012; Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Sherman 2006). Likewise, some actors limit or avoid requests for assistance from better-off relatives for shame of asking for unreciprocated assistance and instead engage individuals in similar economic circumstances (Desmond 2012; Nelson 2005).

These examples of reasons that needy individuals avoid certain potentially supportive ties suggest that individuals evaluate potential sources of support and make active decisions about which to call upon in times of need. However, because support activation decisions are not their central focus, previous studies do not provide a full account of the information individuals use to evaluate potential support, consider the trade-offs people face when these factors conflict, or describe whether and why perceptions and evaluations of support may change over time. As such, we have an incomplete understanding of how individuals conceptualize what sources of support are available to them and the logics that lead them to activate the particular sources of support they do, particularly regarding the instrumental social support that is so vital for poor families' well-being.

Doubling-up

This study examines social support activation using the case of doubled-up, or shared, households. Doubled-up households provide an especially appealing case for a study of social support for two reasons. First, because doubling-up is a particularly intimate form of instrumental support that is likely to greatly affect actors' daily lives, they are likely to put considerable thought into decisions about providing or accepting this form of support. When

guests choose a support-provider, they are choosing a household, with its housing characteristics and social environment, for themselves and their family. Moreover, the sudden loss of housing support can place parents in a precarious position, making reliability particularly important. Despite the risks inherent in accepting housing support, parents who double-up must choose one household – they cannot simultaneously live in multiple households – meaning they must weigh the costs and benefits of different potential households against one another and choose. For guests, the high stakes of doubling-up and the fact that parents may only choose one support-provider at a time may make it more likely that parents will be able to articulate their reasons for choosing the double-up they did, compared to support activation decisions that are less weighty or do not require help-seekers to choose one source of support to the exclusion of others.

Second, doubling-up involves a one-time mobilization of support at move-in, but also an on-going decision by guests to remain in the household and by hosts to continue providing support. In fact, even parents who exit double-ups are likely to cycle back into such households (Harvey 2017; Mollborn, Fomby, and Dennis 2012; Pilkauskas 2012). Thus, guests can become acquainted with the costs of activating support over time and choose to activate a different source in the future. Moreover, hosts are able to impose conditions of receiving support that may be more difficult in cases of one-time or infrequent requests for support, such as job referrals (Smith 2007), and may be less clear in studies of multiple types of instrumental support (e.g., Domínguez and Watkins 2003). While these aspects of doubling-up make it an interesting site for studying instrumental support activation, as I describe in the discussion, such characteristics may be more common than previously recognized in the provision of instrumental support.

In addition to its special attributes as a form of social support, studying doubling-up carries substantive significance. Given increasing housing cost burdens (Joint Center for Housing

Studies 2016), doubling-up is an important private safety net, particularly for low-income families with children. Nearly half of children born in urban areas double-up at some point before middle childhood (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). Rates of doubling-up are higher among black and Hispanic families than white families, suggesting potential cultural differences in openness to extended households (Angel and Tienda 1982), but doubling-up serves as a housing safety net across a variety of populations and contexts (Clampet-Lundquist 2003; Desmond 2016; Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Edin and Shaefer 2015; Fitchen 1992; Menjivar 2000; Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan 2002).

Doubling-up is a common response to emergency housing needs. Many families weather eviction and other forced moves by moving in with friends or family (Desmond 2016; Skobba and Goetz 2013), and people who become unemployed are more likely to move in with others (Wiemers 2014). The necessity that forces many families to double-up may suggest that doubled-up parents have little agency over their housing decisions. For example, Skobba and Geotz write that low-income families “frequently lack choice in their move into housing – needing to cobble together shared accommodations with others who are willing” (2013:158). Framing doubling-up this way focuses on the availability of support-providers, rather than on the agency of support-seekers, like much of the literature on social support.

The present study shifts attention to the decisions of support-seekers and contributes to our understanding of doubling-up as private housing safety net. After providing an overview of the events that led parents in my sample to double-up, I ask how these parents decide which source of housing support to mobilize. In identifying how parents understand and weigh the costs and benefits of different households, I show that parents who double-up exercise considerable agency over their housing support activation decisions. However, I also find that parents must

often navigate difficult trade-offs between factors they consider important to their family's well-being. Understanding these trade-offs and the factors that lead parents to perceive housing support as unavailable or undesirable is increasingly important as housing affordability continues to decline and is not met with adequate response from the public safety net (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2016).

Data and Methods

Data for this study came from 93 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 33 parents with young children who doubled-up in someone else's home. These parents are a subsample from the How Parents House Kids Study (HPHK), a study of the residential decisions of parents in the Cleveland and Dallas metropolitan areas. Both metropolitan areas have relatively low housing costs; Cleveland's median rent is just \$712, while Dallas's is close to the national median at \$863. However, in each city, a substantial portion of the population is cost burdened by rent; 39 percent of renters in Dallas and 44 percent of those in Cleveland pay over 35 percent of their income in rent (Flanagan and Schwartz 2014). Public housing assistance is limited in both cities as well, with a six month average wait in Cleveland and an average wait of over three years in Dallas, according to housing authority websites. The HPHK sample was based on a random sample of block groups in the counties encompassing each metropolitan area, stratified by race and income with an oversample of low-income relative to mid- and high-income block groups. From each block group, HPHK fieldworkers screened a random sample of households for eligibility and invited primary caregivers of children ages three to eight to participate in the survey. The HPHK response rate was high, with participation from approximately 80 percent of households who were deemed eligible or not contacted (omitting ineligible or vacant addresses).

HPHK interviews were conducted in summer 2013, with follow-ups in 2014. Interviews typically lasted about two hours and were conducted in parents' homes. They were semi-structured and primarily focused on parents' residential history and perceptions of housing, neighborhoods, and schools, with follow-up interviews focusing on changes since the previous interview. Respondents chose a pseudonym to represent them in the study. From the HPHK data, I identified English-speaking parents who doubled-up in someone else's home at some point during the fieldwork period, and I conducted additional follow-up interviews with these respondents focused on their past and current experiences doubling-up. For six HPHK respondents, I included a co-resident adult from their household in my sample. I contacted parents who doubled-up in 2013 for an additional follow-up in spring 2014. Parents who doubled-up in either 2013 or 2014 were either asked questions about doubling-up in their 2014 HPHK follow-up interview or were interviewed in summer 2014 exclusively about doubling-up (in addition to their HPHK follow-up). I also contacted parents in 2015 for a final follow-up interview. Of the 33 parents in my sample, seven were interviewed one times, five were interviewed two times, eight were interviewed three times, and thirteen were interviewed four or more times.⁵ The longitudinal fieldwork offered the opportunity to develop greater rapport with parents and observe as they made decisions about staying or moving in or out of different households. The parents in my sample lived in 63 different doubled-up households during fieldwork.

Interviews were professionally transcribed. I analyzed the data inductively using the qualitative analysis program NVivo. I read full transcripts, wrote summaries of each incident of doubling-up, and wrote memos on emerging themes, then coded the interviews with these

⁵ In addition to these interviews, unrelated studies using HPHK subsamples interviewed two parents in 2015 and six parents again in 2016. Because these interviews did not focus on housing, I do not include them in the interview counts presented above, but I do use relevant information from these interviews in my analysis.

themes. Respondents' characteristics, shown in Table 1.1, were consistent with national trends. African American parents were overrepresented in my sample, and parents tended to be relatively disadvantaged in terms of income and education level. Most parents doubled-up in multigenerational households with their own parents or grandparents, but a substantial number also doubled-up with their partner's parents, their own or their partner's extended family (usually a sibling or cousin), or non-kin.

Table 1.1: Sample Characteristics

City:	
Cleveland	0.58
Dallas	0.42
Household Types: ¹	
Multigenerational	0.79
Partner's parents	0.24
Extended family	0.18
Partner's family	0.09
Non-kin	0.24
Race:	
White	0.09
Black/African-American	0.73
Hispanic/Latino	0.18
Gender:	
Male	0.12
Female	0.88
Education level: ²	
Less than high school	0.18
High school	0.39
Some college	0.39
Bachelors or more	0.03
Relationship status:	
Married	0.21
Cohabiting	0.21
Unpartnered	0.57
Income (median)	\$15,024
Age (median)	29
<i>Observations</i>	<i>33</i>

¹ Proportions do not sum to 1 because some parents lived in multiple household types during the fieldwork period.

² Education level, relationship status, income, and age measured in summer 2014 interview. 2013 data used if 2014 interview unavailable. Income includes cash income from formal and informal employment, SSI/SSDI, and child support. If the parent shared income with a co-residential romantic partner, the partner's income is included in this amount as well.

Findings

To provide context behind parents' housing support activation decisions, I first describe parents' reasons for initially doubling-up.⁶ In my sample, just over half of parents first doubled-up in response to a crisis that made their previous non-doubled-up housing untenable. Housing crises were particularly common; about 40 percent of parents doubled-up after being forced to move by things like eviction, disrepair, safety concerns, or because they were unable to afford their unit. Other crises were the result of a romantic relationship conflicts or break-ups that forced parents to move (12%). Nearly one-third of parents had never lived independently. About one-third of these parents only doubled-up in their natal home,⁷ while two-thirds exited their natal home into another double-up. Finally, a smaller group of parents doubled-up to obtain desired, but not urgently required, support (15%). These parents described doubling-up as a temporary tool to help them save money while pursuing a goal, such as completing education, paying off debt, or saving to purchase a house.⁸

Many parents, particularly those who doubled-up in response to a crisis or had never lived independently, faced difficult obstacles to (re-)entering the private housing market. Many parents lacked income high enough to consistently cover monthly rent or struggled to save enough for move-in costs, and some reported difficulty finding units due to criminal backgrounds or eviction history. Doubled-up parents often reported being on long waitlists for

⁶ For parents who doubled-up multiple times (i.e., exited to residential independence before doubling-up again), I use their first incident of doubling-up during the fieldwork period.

⁷ Unlike the other parents in this study, parents who lived in their natal home from childhood did not have a clear moment of support activation. However, their reasons for remaining in these households were similar to the logic of other doubled-up parents, though differences in their priorities may have led them to remain in their natal home rather than exiting to another double-up or risking instability by moving into independent housing while financially unstable.

⁸ One mother did not fit into these categories, as she described doubling-up after moving from out of state to assist her elderly mother. While her move was prompted by her mother's needs, economic limitations due to sporadic employment kept her doubled-up by the time we met her.

housing assistance (cf. Leopold 2012). In part due to such barriers to residential independence, many parents spent prolonged periods doubled-up. Nearly 40 percent of parents in my sample moved into their most recent double-up not from independent housing, but from another double-up. Thus, parents decided which source of housing support to activate when first doubling-up, but also often decided to end this support and activate a different tie at a later point. Both types of decisions – initial double-ups and household changes – are included in this study, and I analyze how experiences doubling-up informed parents’ decisions about whether to continue receiving housing support from this tie and whether to activate them again in the future.

Of course, when facing a housing need, doubling-up was just one of parents’ options. Some parents, particularly those who doubled-up to pursue a goal, perceived that they could live independently but would have to accept a lower quality unit or neighborhood and/or would not be able to save money. However, most parents in my sample would likely have struggled to obtain and support independent housing in the private rental market. Even for parents unable to afford independent housing, doubling-up was not their only housing option; for example, parents could – and in some cases did – avoid doubling-up by accessing emergency housing services or sleeping in vehicles. I limit the scope of this study to parents’ experiences doubling-up to focus on social support activation decisions.⁹

Activation Decision Components

When considering their housing support options, parents perceived that potential support-providers differed in ways that made them more or less attractive for parents to activate, sometimes so much so that they were not even perceived to be options. Parents evaluated three main factors: the support itself, their relationships with the support-provider and other household

⁹ For discussions of how individuals understand public support options and how they compare them to social support options, see Edin and Lein (1997) and Sherman (2006).

members, and the conditions of receiving support. Parents weighed attributes of each of these factors when they experienced a new need to double-up, as well as when they were already doubled-ups but considering moving from one household to another.

Level of Support

When deciding which source of support to activate (and when to change the source of support they activated), parents evaluated attributes of the potential support. Because the decision of what source of support to activate was fundamentally a decision about where to live, aspects of the potential unit and neighborhood were important concerns. However, doubling-up was not only a housing arrangement, but also involved sharing a household, and parents evaluated the social environment the household would provide, as well as how reliable they expected the housing support to be. Finally, because doubled-up parents often share a variety of resources (Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Harvey 2018; Stack 1974), they also evaluated potential help and expectations in other areas, such as childcare or material support, that might accompany co-residence.

June lived with her son in her mother's house when health problems caused her mother to lose her home to foreclosure. Her mother moved, along with her two teenage sons, into a tiny rental unit in a new neighborhood. June's aunt offered to let June move into her home, and a mix of considerations, including the size and location of her aunt's home compared to her mother's, led June to accept.

Well, for the simple fact, my Mom lost her house on the other side of [town]. [My aunt] was like okay well I have an extra room. You and your son can come here since I know you pregnant with the baby. I can help you out with the babysit. It's a little easier for you, and you be close to the hospital... That was kind of easy because it's only one bus to get to the hospital. If I had an emergency, and nobody was here, I was still able to get to the hospital.

Parents like June evaluated potential support-providers' abilities to provide housing with sufficient space and convenient location.

Distance or insufficient space led parents to not consider some potential housing options. Lola was living independently with her three children when an angry ex began making her feel unsafe. After he threw a cinder block through her window, Lola felt she had to move. "Anything could have happened, so I just didn't want to take the risk of staying in that place where he knew where I was at." Unable to get an immediate refund on her deposit, Lola moved in with her mother. Asked how she decided where to go, Lola said,

I didn't really have no choices. I don't have family other than her. And my brothers. I have brothers, but one is incarcerated, and the other one is here with his girlfriend and his baby. And my other brother has a house with his wife and their baby. So we don't fit. And my other brother – my two sisters and other brother live in New York.

Though Lola described her relationship with her mom as "just terrible," distance and space considerations led her to conclude that her other potential support-providers were unavailable (see also Domínguez and Watkins 2003).

In addition to housing considerations, parents evaluated the social environment inside the household. Escaping an abusive relationship, Gail moved with her four daughters to her father's house, which he shared with her nephew. Gail, who moved from an affluent suburb, described concerns about her father's neighborhood, but she also worried that living with a young adult male cousin might put her daughters at risk (see also Edin and Shaefer 2015).

And you just don't want your girls around men like that to me, I don't, I didn't...My mama just put that, instilled that in me, you know, you just have to be safe with girls...My nephew was about I'd say 20, and it's just not a good – you just got to be safe with girls, and I'd just rather have been somewhere else. You just got to be safe...You just have to make sure, I didn't know his friends. They didn't really come around to the house, but me, you don't take chances. You know, you just don't take chances. And he's at that time he was, you know, he's young, have his own friends, and his girlfriend and all these people he's hanging with, so the house just basically was a free house, available.

Unhappy with the living arrangement, Gail complained about concerns with the neighborhood to her sister and her husband. When her brother-in-law offered to let her and her daughters join their household, Gail accepted the invitation, “My sister, where [she lived], everything was like more safer to me. The environment was safe.”

Parents often assumed that close family and particularly intergenerational ties were invested in their well-being and, especially, the well-being of their children and would thus provide a more nurturing environment for children than might co-residence with more distant relatives or non-kin. Additionally, parents often assumed multigenerational households would provide relatively dependable housing and would not end unexpectedly, leaving parents scrambling to find another source of housing.¹⁰ To obtain legal residency, Teresa’s husband needed to return to Mexico for an unspecified amount of time, leaving Teresa and her children on their own with a substantially reduced income. Concerned that their savings might not cover the rent until he returned and not wanting to deplete their savings, Teresa moved in with her parents.

Interviewer: Did you think about any other, like any other options, like getting a roommate?

Teresa: I didn’t. I’ve never been good with that. Even when I was in college, I couldn’t find, I mean, I was just so scared of thinking of getting a roommate and what if it didn’t work out, and things like that. I mean, I probably will, if I had to.

Interviewer: Yeah. But you’d rather be here [at your parents’ home]?

Teresa: I’d rather be by myself. But right now, I’ll be with my mom, at least someone that I know and I can trust, and especially with my kids, everything has to do with my kids so when I think about doing something.

Parents like Teresa assumed that multigenerational households were the safest support option.

¹⁰ Of course, multigenerational households were not always ideal environments, and some did dissolve unexpectedly. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to say whether parents’ general perceptions of multigenerational households as the most reliable and safest double-ups were accurate.

The final aspect of the level of support that parents evaluated was the financial and in-kind assistance that they might receive or be expected to contribute as a member of the household. Above, June's aunt's offer of babysitting assistance factored into June's decision to move in with her. Likewise, Jade doubled-up when medical bills put her behind on her bills. She described considering what the householder would expect from her in exchange for her family's co-residence when she explained why she preferred to live with family, particularly her cousin or her mother, rather than a friend. "Family would probably deal with you a little more. Friends are like, they'll expect you, they're helping you, but then they expect from you too more than family." Though Jade's explanation drew on assumptions about the strength of kinship ties, non-kin and fictive kin sometimes provided a similar level of support. Soon after Jade moved into her own unit again, a pest problem required her to move again, but she was unable to afford move-in costs for another unit. She doubled-up again, this time with her "Paw," the elderly widower of her former in-home care patient. Paw let Jade and her daughters stay rent-free in his home and provided free childcare.

Relationship Qualities

While the quality of support offered was important, parents doubling-up also had to consider their personal relationship with the potential support-provider and the interpersonal dynamics of doubling-up in a given home. Parents evaluated four primary aspects of relationships when assessing potential support. First, they considered how well they knew the support-provider, concerned that unexpected issues might arise with less familiar support-providers. Second, they considered their comfort with the support-provider and anticipated how difficult it might be to navigate daily life in the household. Third, parents' affinity with the support-provider played an important role, as not being able to get along with the other

household members could make co-residence nearly unbearable and might even result in the parent being put out of the home. Finally, a small number of parents described householders' needs contributing to their decisions.

Parents often faced substantial uncertainty in their decisions about doubling-up – they were not sure exactly what living in different households would be like. Some parents, like Gail, learned the disadvantages of a household after moving in, then chose to activate a different source of support. Given the uncertainty associated with doubling-up, parents preferred householders they knew well, as moving in with someone less familiar risked instability and conflict. While living with his parents, Elijah described considering asking a friend to host his family. “Because he’s got a good working ethic and he’s not going to get into nothing stupid or have nothing dumb going on in his house. He’s a more responsible person I guess, you know what I mean?” But while Elijah trusted this friend, he felt that sharing a household required a closer relationship than they had. Elijah worried that moving into his home might over-burden his friend. Additionally, he felt that doubling-up involved substantial risk and that their relationship was not close enough relationship to gather needed information.

No, I wouldn't do it just because – oh shoot – because I would feel like I was intruding on his space. And then another thing is he, I don't really know what goes on there at all. I've been knowing him for a long time. But I don't know what goes on at his house. And there's no telling, there might be some crazy chick stalking him who might think I'm him one day, I don't know, you know what I'm saying? Like so I would have to ask questions like that and I wouldn't want to ask him nothing like that, you know what I'm saying?

In addition to the safety familiarity promised, it also meant that parents were more aware of the expectations of the household and felt that communication could be more straight-forward. Asked about differences between living with her son in her grandmother and mother's home and what it would be like to live with a roommate, TaKayla explained:

I think it's different because it's family. It's what we're used to. I've been here since birth and we're just kind of used to the whole setup and the rules and what's expected of me.

Whereas living on my own with a roommate I would have to get used to what they expect, what they expect from me. And then it might be times where I just want to be at home alone and they want to have their company and I'm like "Please, no." And they'll be "Well, I pay bills here too so I can do what I want." And I can't say "no" because they would be right.

Not knowing what to expect from another double-up and what problems might arise, TaKayla preferred to live with her mother and grandmother. In addition to their experiences in their natal households, parents' assumptions about kinship roles, such as those articulated by Teresa, led some to perceive that multigenerational relationships were more amenable to doubling-up than were non-kin.

While knowing the potential host well could alleviate some of the uncertainty involved in doubling-up, it could also provide parents with specific information about why they should avoid the household. Many doubled-up parents drew on information from current or previous instances of doubling-up, trying to avoid continuing or repeating negative experiences. Eva's difficult relationship with her mother, who struggled with addiction, led her to avoid multigenerational co-residence. After a period of cycling between her mother's and her partner's mother's houses, she decided to move permanently to her partner's mother's house, in part because of space, but also to avoid her mother, who was soon to be released from jail again.

[My mom's] was too small for us. And then I just felt like my mom was home. The place is too small. You know what I mean? Like it was just bad, and I know it would have turned bad if we would have stayed because how me and my mom are after a while and how she is just by herself. Like it would have just turned bad. So it was – it just made more sense for us to stay at [his] mom's because it was way more space for us.

Likewise, Annalise tried to avoid her grandmother's home, which served as a housing safety net for her and her extended family. Soon after we met her, Annalise was evicted from her apartment and moved in with her grandmother. Activating support from her grandmother came with psychological costs: Annalise knew that when she joined the household "there would be a lot of talking and all that stuff" about her returning because "[m]y grandmother doesn't want us

here, but she's not going to put us out because of the kids.” After repeated fights with other household members, she moved out again within the year, using a student loan to cover move-in costs. Her father and his girlfriend, happy she was gone, quickly took her space in the house.

And the day I moved out, literally, the day. They came over here and they put everything out and put their stuff in...They threw all the stuff that I had left out on the front porch. They just tossed it like it was nothing...I was so angry and so mad.

When Annalise was evicted again a few months later, she was still on bad terms with her family and was unwilling to return to live with them. “I just couldn’t move here [with my grandmother], because there was a little bit of drama going on with me and everybody in the house.” Annalise moved into her partner’s mother’s overcrowded unit, where they lived with his mother, uncle, three sisters, two brothers, cousin, and young nephew.

In addition to limiting her willingness to return to her grandmother’s house, negative relationships limited Annalise’s other household options as well. At a later interview, Annalise had broken up with her partner and was living in the unfinished basement of her grandmother’s house. The basement was deemed unsuitable by a child protective services case worker, but Annalise still did not consider returning to the main house an option. She continued living in the basement, but arranged to spend a couple nights a week at her friend’s house in exchange for childcare assistance. Because she perceived that doubling-up required substantial affinity, Annalise would not move into the friend’s home.

I didn’t have any place to go. I really didn’t have anywhere else to go was the thing. I can’t live at [my friend’s] house, because we don’t get along well enough to see each other all the time. She has her beliefs and she lives the way she lives. And I have mine and I live the way I live. So... Just being there a couple nights a week. And I will go over there... She usually got to be at work at ten or eleven, so I will go at like eight o’clock and we will sit around, talk a little bit before she goes to work. She comes home. I let her sleep for a couple of hours. Then, I leave. So, we don’t have that much interaction. I’m just...I’m helping her, she is helping me. And that is what it is.

Finally, some parents described their concern for the householder as one motivation in

their housing support activation decision. After Julie separated from her husband and needed to stop working due to health issues, she and her young granddaughter, over whom she had custody, doubled-up with her adult daughter in Dallas. Julie described how, if she hadn't doubled-up with the daughter she did, she would have moved out of state to live with her other daughter, who was financially better-off and able to provide more for Julie. Yet Julie chose to remain in Dallas.

Because [my daughter], like I say, she got four kids and she's already sickly, too, and she don't really eat and take care of herself like she should so I kind of moved in with her to kind of try to help her get that sugar under control...So I kind of moved in to come help her try to, like I told her, "Look, I done lost one daughter from being diabetic and kidneys and all that done shut down by it. You gone have to do better with yourself." The kids, like I say, with them four kids, I know she's stressing trying to be there and trying to work with all four of them, so I just moved in to give her a helping hand with them. Because like I say, I raised four, so I know how it was with me, because I was a single mom. I know how rough it can be being a single parent and raising four kids.

Though she did eventually move to live with her better-off daughter, Julie explained her initial decision to double-up with her daughter in Dallas with her concern for her daughter's well-being.

Conditions of Receiving Support

In addition to considering the level of support and the quality of their relationship with household members, parents evaluated conditions of receiving support. By conditions, I mean stipulations attached to the support, such as a host's willingness to provide housing for a parent but not their romantic partner; rules that must be followed for support to be provided, such as curfews; and the level of oversight that would accompany co-residence. Parents avoided households with what they saw as overbearing rules and sought households that would allow them more autonomy. Leeann, who became a mother while living in her childhood home, described moving from her mother's to her grandmother's house: "Pregnant with my second kid and like I just moved out. 'Mom, moving out.' We moved to Grandma's house because

Grandma's house had no rules. I can come and go as I please.” While her mother had attempted to retain rules from Leeann’s childhood, her grandmother provided housing with fewer conditions. “Over there I didn’t have no curfew.”

When Tee’s girlfriend’s mother kicked him out because he was unemployed and unable to adequately contribute to the household, Tee was concerned about being “another person to feed, another person to take care of” for his mother, who was already overburdened by his three younger siblings. Tee considered moving in with his father.

Tee: He always tell me I could come over there if I want to come over there but he won’t, he gonna set rules and stuff.

Interviewer: Okay, like what?

Tee: Like cause he have to go to sleep cause he got to get up early for work so he probably try to make me have a bedtime and all that, and I don’t want no bedtime.

The relative freedom he would have in his mother’s home, along with the rent he expected his father to charge him, convinced Tee to return to his mother’s apartment, despite his concerns.

After dropping out of college, Simone returned to live with her father and soon began dating Darnell, whose mother lived next door. When they started to get serious, they began cycling between homes of friends and extended family members, avoiding their parents, who disapproved of the relationship. While these housing arrangements tended to be cramped and unstable, Simone described how moving in with her mother would be a last resort, despite the quality of support she would be able to provide.

That means I have to have absolutely no other freaking choice. To call my mom and tell her, can you please let me move back in? And I just don’t want to do that. I worked too hard... ‘Cause my mom is the worst. I don’t want to live with her and follow all her rules and she don’t want certain people coming to the house. She don’t want this, she don’t like that, don’t want you coming in at this time. Don’t want you leaving at that time. She wants to know this, that, that ... She has a nice house [big and in a nice part of town]. But I’m not on it. I can’t do it. She wants to know things like how you’re spending your money and everything, like. She would have something to say about me even smoking cigarettes around her, because my granddad died from lung cancer. So she wouldn’t even let me smoke in the

house. I would have to go outside. She don't like loud music. She doesn't like kids running all over the place. Not a good combination because I love listening to music, I've got [Darnell's son] running all over the place.

While her mother's many household rules made her home a last resort, one rule in particular was a deal-breaker: Simone refused to live apart from Darnell. For parents seeking housing support, support-providers' unwillingness to allow parents' romantic partners to join the household could drive parents to refuse assistance. Simone described how, feeling like she was approaching the end of her housing options, she called her mother.

I called, well, my mom wasn't having it...Back then, my mom or my dad wasn't having it [because of Darnell] ...So there was no way that was happening, we had to split up. They did that easily. I could've moved back with my mom, he could've moved back in with his mom. And I was like hell, no, I'm not moving back in with my mom...She told me I could move back and it was just me, and I was like no, I'm cool. We all need a place to stay, I'm not going to jump ship like that. All three of us are in this mess together, all three of us need a place to stay. Flat out. I kind of made it very clear to everybody that he's rolling with me. So if you don't like that, then he doesn't have to, you don't have to be around me then. I won't bring him around. We're a unit right now.

Though Simone's mother would host her, the conditions of this support led Simone to not consider it an option. Simone and Darnell continued to live together and away from their parents by bouncing between the homes of friends and extended family.

Anrisa's housing troubles began when her husband Phil was jailed for non-payment of child support and Anrisa was unable to keep up with rent on their unit. When Phil was released, Anrisa was living with their two children in her mother's house. The four bedroom home was spacious, and because Anrisa was not working, her mother did not require that she contribute towards household expenses beyond using her food stamps to cover her family's food needs. Phil initially joined Anrisa's mother's house, but he soon returned to jail. When he was released, Phil was not welcome at the mother's home, but they were unwilling to live apart. Anrisa had previously doubled-up with her sister, but the sister had even stricter conditions: Phil was not

allowed inside for even a brief time unless the sister was there. “We knew, you know: ‘My house, don’t be in my house when I ain’t here.’”

Unable to find a rental with their criminal records and limited income, Anrisa and Phil moved in with Charles, a friend Phil met in prison. Charles inherited a two-bedroom home from a family member and was accustomed to renting his spare bedroom. He charged them “\$40...a day, something like, kind of like being at like a, a motel,” and Anrisa and Phil regularly had to sell their food stamps to cover the cost. Despite the financial difficulties, Anrisa described the payments as “pretty fair stuff for my family to be together.” The home was crowded – in addition to Anrisa’s family, Charles shared his home with his brother and adult nephew and had many other people “coming through.” Moreover, because of household members’ drug use, Anrisa felt the home was not as positive of an environment for her children as her mother’s home was. However, she described having to make some compromises given her mother’s unwillingness to allow Phil to move in.

Anrisa: We doing what we trying to do to keep our families together, but some –

Interviewer: What do you mean to keep your family together?

Anrisa: Like for all of us to be together – me, my son, my daughter, and [Phil], so I mean, just for all of us to be together. This is, I have my family but this is my family. You know, so I want all of us to be together.

For Anrisa, the more expensive and crowded double-up was preferable to living in her mother’s house, where Phil was not allowed. In this way, Anrisa’s family paid a premium, in terms of both finances and perhaps safety, for the freedom to live together.

Priorities and Choosing a Household

Decisions by householders about whether to provide or withhold support were undoubtedly central in shaping the households in which parents doubled-up. However, my data suggest that how parents prioritized the often competing goals described above – living in a safe,

high-quality environment; sharing a residence with individuals with whom they had a high degree of trust and low level of conflict; and maintaining autonomy – was another important determinant of which source of support they chose to activate.

Nearly all guest parents in my sample relied on multigenerational co-residence with their parent(s) or grandparent(s) as the householder at some point, and most relied on it at least once during the fieldwork period. Parents' experiences in multigenerational double-ups meant that the costs and benefits of these households were generally relatively well-understood by parents debating which source of support to activate. Parents who prioritized the level of support or their trust in the support-provider frequently landed in multigenerational double-ups, often despite knowledge of the restrictions on parents' behavior that this co-residence imposed. While multigenerational households were not immune to overcrowding and negative influences, parents generally associated the multigenerational bond with a shared interest in their family's well-being and frequently felt that grandparents' homes provided the safest environment for their children, as described above.

In contrast, parents who prioritized autonomy weighed conditions of receiving support heavily and sought households that, though often providing a lower level of support or less positive household environment, imposed fewer rules and psychological costs on the parent. Parents familiar with the conditions of multigenerational households often turned to more distant family, particularly siblings and cousins, or friends, expecting that such arrangements would have fewer rules than multigenerational co-residence. About half of parents in my sample doubled-up in a non-multigenerational household. When doubling-up in non-multigenerational arrangements, parents turned to their own (n=8 households) or their partner's¹¹ (n=6 households)

¹¹ In nearly all cases, the parent moved in with their current partner's family. However, one mother moved in with family related to her child's father, with whom she was no longer romantically involved.

extended family, usually a sibling or cousin; their partner's parent(s) (n=8 households);¹² or friends¹³ (n=10 households). However, residence in non-multigenerational double-ups frequently came with extensive rules for household use as well (Harvey 2015), and parents who prioritized autonomy often found themselves cycling between households as they learned the conditions set by different source of support. During fieldwork, parents who ever lived in a non-multigenerational household doubled-up with an average of 2.8 different householders.¹⁴

While parents distinguished between potential households based on the level of support, the social relationships involved in receiving support, and the conditions of receiving support, parents could not be neatly classified by the attribute they prioritized.¹⁵ Instead, for many parents, how they weighed these three factors varied with time and circumstances. To illustrate, I provide an extended example of the residential trajectory of Shay, a mother of two.

After an eviction, Shay called her children's father's cousin for help. Shay considered her housing options extremely limited; when asked what she would have done if the cousin had not taken her in, Shay suggested that she might have turned to illegal activities. "I have to do what I have to do to survive and if she would have never taken me in ain't no telling what I be doing. Just trying to make it." While Shay initially suggested she lacked other potential support-

¹² Though households formed when parents moved into their romantic partner's parent or grandparent's home were multigenerational households, the mostly unmarried parents in my sample did not generally attribute to partner's parents the same level of trust and reliability that they attributed to their own parents.

¹³ Most non-kin households involved a parent moving in with a householder with whom they had a long-standing social relationship, but two households were formed with what might be characterized as "disposable ties" – relationships that formed quickly in response to need (Desmond 2012).

¹⁴ This average excludes two parents who did not participate in the study for the full three years; the average including these parents is 2.7. The median was two.

¹⁵ One potential exception are parents who doubled-up to pursue a goal. Each of these five parents lived in multigenerational households and did not cycle to other household types (though one moved from her mother's to her father's house). Their experiences suggest that parents who double-up by choice rather than necessity may be less likely to prioritize autonomy, perhaps because they would live independently if they did.

providers, she later acknowledged that her mother would be willing to help, but Shay's previous experience in the household led her to not consider this an option.

Because who wants to live with their mom? Oh, my mom's cool and I love her but I need my own space. I mean I can't do what I want to do, like, she always got something to say. Then she want me to do stuff and she not even doing it, like you want me to constantly clean up and you're not even constantly cleaning up, like.

The oversight that was a condition of co-residence with her mother led Shay to prefer living with her cousin. Though she could "barely afford" the \$150 bi-weekly the cousin charged, "I paid it because I really didn't want to move to my mom's house."

However, Shay did eventually return to her mother's house. By our next interview, she had moved to her friend's house,¹⁶ but her daughters' father did not approve of the arrangement, "And then my baby daddy don't like my best friend so he found out that I was moving with her, he was upset. He was like, 'Hell no, I don't want my kids up there in their environment.'" Shay largely agreed with his assessment, though she preferred to stay:

If it was up to me- don't get me wrong, it wasn't a bad, just, terrible ass environment. It could have been better, but it wasn't just the worst environment ever. My kids' life wasn't in danger. I don't feel like that anyway because if I feel like they life was in danger I would have never had them there in the first place.

When the friend allowed a male cousin to move in, Shay's daughters' father demanded his daughters leave the household. Shay worried about living under her mother's rules, as well as the distance between her mother's house and her job. "At first I was like 'Hell no! I'm not going back into that house. I refused to go into that lady house.'" However, she eventually relented. Though Shay doubled-up in various households over the course of fieldwork, when prioritizing a safe environment for her children, her mother's house was the clear choice:

¹⁶ Shay's best friend offered to take her in after Shay complained about a fight over money with the cousin. Shay's "incidental" activation of her friend echoes findings from the discussion networks literature that accessibility of the tie at the time of need can greatly influence actors' decisions about support activation (Small 2013; Small and Sukhu 2016).

Yeah, well no, I really didn't have no other options. To me my mom's house is the safest place for them. I know that going to get treated right. I know they going, you know they going to be good over there. If they need anything, my momma going to make sure she get it for them, if I can't. I got, every now, you know like when I have job interviews or something, I always have a babysitter.

Though Shay viewed her mother's house as a last resort due to the conditions of co-residence, she trusted her to provide quality support, including a safe haven for her daughters and help with material needs and childcare.

Just as parents' priorities and circumstances could shift over time, so could the level of support householders were willing or able to provide, parents' relationships with household members, and the conditions of receiving support. For June, described previously, the level of support her mother was able to provide changed as her own housing circumstances became unstable, leaving June to prefer moving in with her aunt. Likewise, householders could adjust the conditions they attached to support, particularly if they saw the parent unwilling to accept these conditions but struggling to find other housing options. While Shay was living with her mother, they fought about Shay's boyfriend staying over.

Then it got to the point where...he moved in, well not even moved and because he didn't, she didn't even want him to be inside, so he was sleeping in the car. And it was nights where I was sleeping in the car with him because you know I just wanted to make sure that he was all right. Like I'd take my girls a bath, feed them, put them to bed, and when they go to sleep, then I go out there in the car with him. And then she, I guess they started, [my mom] and her boyfriend started feeling bad. I don't know what to say about that. They started saying that he didn't have to sleep in the car, that he can come in or whatever. But he have, he was gonna have to pay.

When Shay's mother adjusted her rules – allowing Shay's boyfriend to move in as long as he contributed towards household expenses – Shay found the conditions of co-residence once again acceptable, and she and her boyfriend moved into the house. As Shay's case illustrates, the characteristics of different potential sources of support could change over time, as could parents'

understandings and prioritization of these different characteristics. Support activation decisions were the product of on-going negotiation and continuously updated perceptions and preferences.

Discussion and Conclusion

Research on social support availability and receipt generally asks whether and why potentially supportive relations (do not) exist and are (not) willing to provide assistance. This study extends this line of research beyond the availability of support-providers by focusing attention on how support-seekers understand and evaluate their instrumental support options. Using data from in-depth interviews with parents who doubled-up in someone else's home, I find that parents often had limited options when doubling-up, choosing a household from among a set of undesirable alternatives. But despite these constraints, parents' preferences shaped which sources of housing support they perceived to be options and which they perceived to be desirable. I identify three factors that parents considered when evaluating potential support: the level of support, the social relationships involved in accessing support, and the conditions of receiving the support. Few potential households provided an ideal option – a high level of support with few conditions, coupled with a close, positive relationship with householder members – so parents frequently faced difficult trade-offs and how they prioritized these factors shaped the household they chose.

These decision-making processes were not always fully reflective or conscious, of course. However, doubling-up involves an on-going decision to continue accessing support from a given provider (or a decision to activate a new support-provider), and parents' reflections on their reasons for living in one household over another provide insight into how they understand their options at the time. These understandings shape decisions about whether to remain in the household, even if it is difficult to know how fully each parent weighed these advantages and

disadvantages prior to doubling-up. Parents who moved between households or who chose to avoid a householder they previously activated provided particularly clear evidence that parents' evaluations of different households along the three dimensions described in this paper did drive their activation decisions. For example, in her previous housing crises, Annalise tended to activate housing support from her grandmother. But when her relationships with household members there deteriorated, she stopped identifying her grandmother as a tenable support option and sought an alternative.

In my sample, parents who prioritized the level of support frequently doubled-up in multigenerational households. Parents generally associated intergenerational ties with a shared interest in their family's well-being and felt that multigenerational homes provided the safest environment for their children, often referencing norms about the reliability and trust of family ties. However, based on previous experiences living in their natal home, parents were also often well-acquainted with the potential downsides of multigenerational co-residence, including relationship difficulties and the conditions of receiving support. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that in addition to their positive attributes, close family ties, particularly intergenerational ties, are often considered difficult or draining relationships (Connidis and McMullin 2002; Luescher and Pillemer 1998; Offer and Fischer 2018). But while the results of this study corroborate the idea that close family ties are often associated with trust and reliability (Fischer 1982; Wellman 1990), they do not suggest that close kin are consistently the first line of defense for individuals' instrumental support needs. Parents who prioritized autonomy – seeking the lowest level of restrictions and expectations – often treated multigenerational households as a last resort, hoping that non-multigenerational householders would impose fewer conditions on the support they provided. However, many parents exited

double-ups with extended family or friends as well after they learned the full costs of these households (cf. Harvey 2015). The greater level of uncertainty parents often accept when moving into non-multigenerational double-ups may be one mechanism driving the higher level of instability of non-multigenerational double-ups compared to multigenerational (Glick and Van Hook 2011).

Social Support Activation Processes

Bringing support activation decisions to the forefront provides insights that can inform social support research more broadly. The findings contribute to the growing literature showing that individuals make selective decisions about which social relations to mobilize for assistance, matching their choices to their goals for the support rather than simply falling into any available option. Prior research on support-seekers' activation decisions has largely focused on discussion networks, showing how recipients evaluate supportive ties' skills, availability, and relationship with the recipient when seeking advice or emotional support (Perry and Pescosolido 2010; Small 2017). This study extends the finding that individuals make active choices about support mobilization to the realm of instrumental support. As when seeking emotional support and advice, actors seeking instrumental support consider the quality of support and their relationship with the potential support-provider.

Additionally, this study identifies a novel reason that individuals avoid potential sources of instrumental support: support may be contingent on accepting the conditions set by the support-provider. Because housing is a particularly intimate form of social support and one that requires on-going decisions to continue providing and accessing it, it may be an extreme case of how conditions of receiving support can deter potential support-seekers. However, such conditions are potentially relevant for many forms of instrumental support beyond doubling-up.

For example, a car-owning friend may provide transportation for errands, but require that the support-seeker accommodate her schedule. Family members might help mothers with childcare only so long as the mother is engaged in productive activities, like work or school. And parents might help their young adult children with college expenses, contingent on the child attending a university of which the parent approves. As these examples make clear, conditions of receiving support are not specific to impoverished parents, but likely shape perceptions of support availability and desirability in many forms of instrumental support.

Temporal Dimensions of Support Availability

That support-seekers' perceptions of whether support is "available" are contingent on their willingness to accept this support, in addition to whether they have a social tie willing and able to provide this support, has implications for the study of social support availability. I find that parents construct their understanding of support availability based on their perception, at the time, of their willingness to activate that source of support. Previous research generally measures support availability using dichotomous questions about whether the individual perceives that they have someone they could count on to provide a particular type of support, such as housing (Harknett and Hartnett 2011; Su and Dunifon 2017; Turney and Kao 2009), and low levels of support availability are largely assumed to mean the individual lacks someone willing and able to help. Yet my data suggest that individuals responding to survey questions about support availability may evaluate not only what assistance their social relations are willing and able to provide, but also their relationship with potential support-providers and whether they feel willing to accept the terms of this support. A source of support that a parent believes they cannot bring themselves to activate may be understood to not be an option.

Moreover, while individuals might not perceive support to be available in hypothetical scenarios, when in dire need, they may concede to activating support they had not previously considered viable or may convince support-providers to alter the terms of their support. For example, Shay did not name her mother as a support option at first because the conditions of receiving support from her mother were particularly undesirable, but when her needs and priorities shifted, she described her mother as not only available, but her only choice. These findings suggest that perceptions of support availability based on hypotheticals may understate the actual assistance one can invoke in times of crisis, in part because support that appears unacceptable at one time may seem more tolerable at others.

When evaluating potential support-providers, parents' previous experiences doubling-up informed their decisions. For doubled-up parents, support activation decisions were on-going, and many of the respondents in this study chose a support-provider not only when they first doubled-up, but also when they decided to switch households. Parents described similar considerations – evaluating the level of support, relationship qualities, and conditions of support – for both types of decisions, but their access to information expanded after doubling-up in someone's home. Parents' experiences doubling-up could lead them to avoid previous sources of support or even not consider them an option in the future. While such learning is particularly clear with doubling-up because parents make on-going decisions to activate support or end the support relationship, it likely occurs with other types of instrumental support as well. For example, an individual shamed for asking for financial assistance may learn that receiving support from that provider involves heavy psychological costs and may avoid activating support from her in the future (cf. Desmond 2012; Nelson 2014).

As parents learn the disadvantages of different sources of support over time, their perceptions of support availability may decrease, even if their networks remain willing to provide support. Such learning may be one mechanism contributing to the tendency for individuals with greater levels of need to report less support availability and to experience greater reductions in support availability over time (Harknett 2006; Radey and Brewster 2013). While individuals whose support availability is purely hypothetical might remain ignorant of the downsides of receiving support, individuals who have accessed this support in the past know the details of the support and disadvantages of accessing it, and they may report that they are unwilling to activate this support in the future. Unlike most research, which has attributed changes in support availability to changes in social relations' ability and willingness to assist, this study suggests an important role for decisions by the support-seeker.

Non-Material Considerations and Constrained Choices

These findings contribute to our understanding of the residential attainment of low-income families. While previous studies of housing decisions focus on how parents evaluate units, neighborhoods, and schools (e.g., Harvey et al. n.d.; Lareau and Goyette 2014), this study highlights how parents who double-up must additionally consider dynamics inside the home, including the composition of the household and conditions of co-residence. Given that nearly half of mothers in urban areas double-up while their child is young (Pilkauskas et al. 2014), the decision of which household to double-up in represents an important factor shaping residential attainment of low-income families. In addition to shaping their housing outcomes, parents' housing support activation decisions had far-reaching implications for their daily lives, from their children's social environments to their family structure. By examining how parents think about the availability and costs of different sources of housing support, this study highlights the

challenges parents who utilize the private housing safety net face and deepens our understanding of the housing options and decisions of the poor.

My findings reveal that parents do not always access the “best” housing support they have available. They do consider material aspects of the support itself, such as the quality of the unit and neighborhood and its proximity to work. Sometimes – as with June, who moved into her aunt’s home after her mother moved to a tiny unit across town – these factors even determine which household they join. But even when parents have a social relation willing and able to provide a spacious unit in a safe neighborhood, parents may choose not to activate it, or even not perceive it to be a viable option, if it involves co-residence with an unfamiliar or disagreeable social relation or comes with unacceptable conditions, such as rules against partner cohabitation. Doubled-up parents’ decisions to prioritize psychological and social needs over housing characteristics builds on a long line of research demonstrating that parents’ choices in difficult financial circumstances are designed to meet psychological needs in addition to material ones. For example, even when shelter is available, some individuals facing homelessness avoid the strict structure of emergency shelter in favor of the relative autonomy of sleeping outdoors (Snow and Anderson 1993). Likewise, when poor parents respond to additional income by spending it on extras rather than saving for a financial emergency, these decisions can be understood through the psychological benefits that such purchases convey, such as dignity and a sense of being a “normal” American (Desmond 2016; Sykes et al. 2014). For doubled-up parents, non-material aspects of support receipt, such as social relationships and stipulations of receiving support, deeply affect their daily lives, so parents who double-up sometimes prioritize such factors over the tangible support they would receive in the housing arrangement.

While the necessity leading many families to double-up does not remove parents' agency over their housing decisions, it does constrain their choices. Often, parents who double-up face difficult trade-offs as they try to balance goals that they see as central to their own and their family's well-being – for example, weighing a desire to keep one's family in a single household against a desire to house their children in the best environment possible. Making these decisions more difficult, parents generally assess the relative merits of different households with uncertain information about what doubling-up in different households would be like. These constraints raise questions of what it means to exercise agency. As in the decisions of homeless individuals described by Snow and Anderson, in parents' decisions about which source of private housing support to activate, frequently “the choice is of the lesser of evils and takes on a rather different meaning than if it were made in the face of more attractive options” (Snow and Anderson 1993:255). Seeking a minimum level of acceptability, rather than making a choice between desirable options, left some parents in my sample with a perceived *lack* of agency; parents like Lola and Annalise justified their household outcomes with statements like, “I didn't have any place else to go.” Thus, although I find that doubled-up parents accepted and discounted potential support based on their preferences rather than simply activating support where it was available, the agency that parents exercised was so severely circumscribed that it was sometimes unrecognizable as such to parents themselves.

Economic Exchange and Relational Work within Doubled-up Households

Introduction

Household economic arrangements – who contributes how much, how resources are shared, and what one’s contributions buy – are central issues in studies of family functioning. Questions about economic arrangements have important implications for material well-being, but they also provide insight into relationship dynamics. For example, scholars have examined the extent to which couples pool their income together or maintain separate accounts, linking variation in income management to the degree of commitment and cohesiveness in the romantic relationship (Addo and Sassler 2010; Heimdal and Houseknecht 2003; Lauer and Yodanis 2011; Oropesa, Landale, and Kenkre 2003; Treas 1993). Others have examined the symbolic importance of earnings and employment outside the home within the gendered institution of marriage, identifying how husbands’ ability to fulfill the normative male breadwinner role is associated with marital formation and stability (Killewald 2016; Sweeney 2002; Xie et al. 2003).

Such insights are possible, in part, because of what Zelizer calls economic relational work: the care that individuals take “to find economic arrangements that both confirm their sense of what the relationship is about and sustain it” (2012:152). In this process, people mark boundaries around different types of relationships by engaging in distinct types of economic transactions within those relationships. Relational work – much of it unconscious and guided by internalized norms – abounds in daily household life. For example, because the family is traditionally understood as a non-commercial domain, offering to pay a spouse wages would be considered inappropriate, but giving gifts is common practice. The example of gifts highlights

how successful relational work allows economic activity within social relationships to strengthen, rather than damage, the intimacy of the relationship (Zelizer 1989, 2005).

This article advances the study of household economies by examining relational work in the context of doubled-up, or extended, households. Doubling-up is a common experience for American families with children: nearly half of kids living in urban areas spend time in such a household before middle childhood (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). Households are considered doubled-up if they include any adult other than the householder and her romantic partner. This category includes a range of household configurations, from multigenerational homes, the most common form, to co-residence with extended family, friends, or roommates. Doubled-up households are an important form of social support, providing housing assistance in times of need (Desmond 2016; Skobba and Goetz 2013; Wiemers 2014). But while doubling-up is typically framed as a safety net for guests, doubling-up often benefits householders as well, as the entry of additional adults into the household is associated with higher household incomes and lower poverty rates (Angel and Tienda 1982; Mykyta and Macartney 2012). Both householders and guests in doubled-up households can benefit from economies of scale and pooling resources with other household members (Clampet-Lundquist 2003; Domínguez and Watkins 2003). In this way, doubled-up households blur the line between unidirectional assistance and mutually-beneficial exchange.

How do doubled-up household members understand their exchange relationships? How consistent are these views, both within and across household members? In this study, I draw on over 173 interviews with 60 doubled-up parents to examine economic exchange and the process of relational work – attempting to match economic arrangements to social relationships – within this common but non-normative household form. Doubled-up households provide a particularly

interesting site for exploring economic relational work because doubled-up adults must negotiate economic arrangements that align with their understandings of household relationships without the benefit of either socially- or legally-enforced guidelines. Though increasingly common, doubled-up households remain “incompletely institutionalized,” meaning they lack taken-for-granted norms governing household functioning and relationships (Harvey 2017; cf. Cherlin 1978). When relationships are ambiguous and economic exchanges not clearly scripted, relational work becomes more elaborate, as “individuals have to engage in a process of mutually defining the nature of the relationship, establishing basic ground rules, and determining what will and will not be exchanged” (Bandelj 2012:185). Negotiations over intra-household economic exchanges send messages about the content of household members’ social relationships and reveal taken-for-granted meanings and obligations that parents attach to family and household roles. Ultimately, negotiations over economic exchange have high stakes: disagreements over how economic arrangements should be matched to the social relation can lead to household dissolutions. In sum, examining the negotiation of economic arrangements not only provides insight into exchange within doubled-up households, but also reveals how doubled-up household relationships are socially understood.

Theoretical Background

Theories of family complexity can inform our understanding of complex doubled-up households. Carlson and Meyer define family complexity as, “when marriage and legal ties, living arrangements, fertility, and parenting are not coterminous, that is, when roles and relationships diverge from the simple nuclear family scheme” of married husband and wife and their minor children (2014:7). Compared to simple nuclear families, complex family forms like stepfamilies and cohabiting couples are “incomplete institutions,” because relationship

expectations within such families are ambiguous. As theorized by Cherlin, the American family as an institution, including its socially- and legally-enforced expectations for relationships, was shaped by the needs of first marriages. Thus, its conventions are poorly matched to more complex family forms and the additional roles and relationships they introduce (Cherlin 1978).

Given the lack of taken-for-granted patterns of behavior, individuals in incompletely institutionalized family forms are left to independently negotiate appropriate rights and responsibilities (Cherlin 1978; Nock 1995). Consequently, the economic arrangements of incompletely institutionalized complex families are more flexible than are those of simple nuclear families. For example, while most married couples pool their income, cohabiting and remarried individuals more often maintain some or all of their incomes separate and negotiate a method of splitting common expenses (Burgoyne and Morison 1997; Kenney 2006). Such money management techniques reflect broader resource sharing – and hoarding – patterns. While higher household income is associated with lower likelihood of material hardship, increases due to a spouse's income are more protective than are increases due to a cohabiting partner's income, suggesting that cohabiting couples face less obligation to help one another in times of need than do married couples (Bauman 1999). Similarly, blended families report maintaining separate accounts to reflect differential responsibility for stepchildren (Singh and Morley 2011).

I argue that double-ups can be understood as an incompletely institutionalized household form and that the lack of taken-for-granted norms results in disagreements about the content and meaning of intra-household exchange. As with family complexity, doubling-up produces households whose compositions diverge from the simple nuclear family model, and there are fewer tacit understandings about appropriate household roles and relationships. In previous work, I showed that in the absence of institutionalized norms guiding how they should interact,

doubled-up household members must negotiate their own household roles and relationships. However, the tension parents experience between their independent nuclear family¹⁷ ideal and the reality of living doubled-up makes navigating roles and relationships with household members outside the nuclear family particularly difficult – these roles are not “supposed” to exist at all (Harvey 2015).

In this article, I bring the lens of economic relational work to the study of exchange arrangements within doubled-up households. This perspective argues that individuals distinguish between different types of social relations and the economic arrangements appropriate to them. Zelizer describes “relational packages” consisting of “combinations among (a) distinctive interpersonal ties, (b) economic transactions, (c) media, and (d) negotiated meanings” (Zelizer 2012:151). In this view, in order for intra-household exchange to be sustainable, doubled-up household members must not only agree upon a price for co-residence, but also share a common understanding of their relationship; the economic practices appropriate for it, such as payment or gift-giving and pooling income or maintaining separate finances; the monetary and in-kind goods and services to be exchanged and how to value such media; and the meaning behind economic exchanges.

Given the incompletely institutionalized nature of their relationships, doubled-up household members have many options for how to frame their interpersonal ties and thus considerable flexibility in how they engage in and interpret intra-household economic exchange. On one hand, doubling-up can be understood as the provision of housing by social ties, rather than through the private market. Householder-guest relationships in double-ups can resemble landlord-tenant relationships: the householder provides housing, and the guest makes some

¹⁷ Throughout the paper, I refer to the mother, minor child(ren), and mother’s romantic partner (if applicable) as the nuclear family, to distinguish this normative household unit from extended household members.

contribution, often financial, to the householder. For many families, doubling-up provides an alternative to unaffordable market-rate housing, especially in times of economic need, such as after job loss or eviction (Desmond 2016; Skobba and Goetz 2013; Wiemers 2014). Among a sample of mothers living in urban areas, doubling-up in someone else's home was associated with an average rental savings worth more than one-quarter of mothers' annual earnings (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). At the same time, doubled-up householders benefit financially as well: over 70 percent of mothers doubled-up in a home owned or rented by someone else pay rent, and householders can benefit from non-cash assets guests bring into the home, such as food, and services guests provide, such as childcare (Domínguez and Watkins 2003; Pilkauskas et al. 2014; Stack 1974).

While these findings suggest that doubling-up may often be an exchange rather than a one-way flow of assistance, it is not clear how household members interpret these exchanges or doubled-up tenancy. In the renting relationship, money purchases the renter certain rights, but the landlord is not responsible for the renter's well-being. Likewise, the tenant does not pay more when the landlord is in need nor is she expected to continue renting from the landlord out of concern for the landlord's well-being. Yet the clear-cut boundaries and expectations of a landlord-tenant relationship are less likely to extend to the formally undefined relationships within doubled-up households.

Double-ups are more than an alternative housing arrangement; they also involve sharing a household. Traditional models of household relations, which assume a single nuclear family household, treat the household as a single economic unit, with all members enjoying a roughly similar standard of living (Bennett 2013). For example, Parsons's (1949) classic description of the "isolated conjugal family" describes it as a "solidarity unit," sharing a common residence,

economic resources, and importantly, a collective set of interests. Similarly, the home economic model assumes that nuclear family members work to maximize their collective, rather than individual, welfare (Becker 1981). Likewise, social exchange theorists describe how generalized exchange, in which resources flow one-way and there is no expectation of immediate or in-kind return from the recipient, implies a high degree of social solidarity and is most common within a household (Ekeh 1974; Sahlins 1972). While traditional models likely overstate the extent to which nuclear family households truly act as one unit with shared interests (Bennett 2013), they reflect popular conceptions of the household as a distinctly non-commercial sphere. In contrast to the self-interest of the workplace, the home has historically been considered the realm of altruism and solidarity (Folbre and Nelson 2000; Zelizer 1989). This assumption is reflected in household behavior: in single family households, members take care to symbolically preserve the solidarity of the household unit in their monetary relations by avoiding direct, negotiated exchange with other household members (Zelizer 2005).

Throughout discussions of economic solidarity units, scholars tend to use the terms household and family interchangeably. Yet in doubled-up households, the household and the nuclear family are not coterminous. Because the nuclear family household is the assumptive family form, established norms do not specify which rights and obligations are associated with household membership and which are reserved for the nuclear family. Instead, doubled-up household members themselves must determine how to define household relationships and what distinctions, if any, to draw between economic transactions that are appropriate for household members and those that are appropriate for nuclear family members.

Because intimacy and the market are popularly assumed to be incompatible, doubled-up households – which combine elements of market exchange with the intimate home environment

– require careful relational work. Individuals must negotiate the amount, form, and meaning of intra-household economic transactions while navigating normative expectations of the household as a uniquely non-commercial domain. Moreover, because doubled-up household relationships are defined by few long-standing norms or legal guidelines, this work is particularly open-ended and likely to be contested. Studying the process of relational work reveals the social meanings attributed to relationships within this common but non-normative household form. Additionally, this case offers insights into when relational work efforts are more (or less) successful and the conditions under which the entry of monetary exchanges into a non-market domain may either strengthen or damage intimate social ties (cf. Bandelj, Wherry, and Zelizer 2017).

Data and Methods

Data for this study come from a subsample of participants in the How Parents House Kids study (HPHK). HPHK data was collected in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and Dallas County, Texas, which are home to the cities and inner-ring suburbs of Cleveland and Dallas, respectively. In each site, the study drew a random sample of block groups, stratified by income and racial composition with an oversample of lower-income relative to middle- and upper-income neighborhoods. Randomly chosen addresses from each block group were tested for eligibility. If the selected household included one or more children between ages three and eight, researchers invited the primary caregiver of the child(ren), usually the mother, to participate in the study.¹⁸ Doubling-up is an important housing strategy for low-income families with children (Pilkaukas et al. 2014). Moreover, focusing on families with children provides an interesting, and possibly particularly contentious, site for studying economic relational work as doubled-up parents

¹⁸ In my sample, guests included three fathers and hosts included four fathers, one grandfather, and five grandmothers.

advocate on behalf of their children as well as themselves and must decide the extent to which they want to keep their nuclear family unit independent from the extended household.

A team of interviewers, including the author, completed the HPHK interviews during summer 2013 and summer 2014. The two-year response rate was 79.6%, reflecting the number of respondents interviewed relative to the total number of respondents who were interviewed, refused to participate, and were not contacted, omitting ineligible or vacant addresses.

Interviews, generally conducted in the home, were semi-structured and lasted about two hours.

Respondents chose a pseudonym to represent them in the study. The initial 2013 interviews gathered information on respondents' current and previous homes, neighborhoods, and schools.

The summer 2014 interviews asked about changes since the previous interview and, when applicable, about current and past experiences doubling-up.

My sample for this study is comprised of English-speaking respondents who reported doubling-up at some point during the 15 months of HPHK fieldwork. For seven respondents, I also included a co-resident adult from their household in my sample. I considered parents doubled-up if they lived in a household that included any adult (18+) besides the householder and her romantic partner. Adults were counted as living in the household if they were regularly sleeping there and did not have a home of their own that they could return to. In addition to the HPHK interviews, I conducted additional interviews, focusing on current and past experiences doubling-up, in January-March 2014 and summer 2015. To facilitate free discussion, I often conducted these interviews outside the home. Of the 60 respondents in my sample, 13 were interviewed once, 6 were interviewed twice, 16 were interviewed three times, and 25 were interviewed four or more times. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and I

analyzed the data inductively using the qualitative analysis program NVivo. I read full transcripts and wrote memos on emerging themes, then coded interviews with these themes.

Because there is no clear sampling frame for doubled-up households, the stratified random sample of the HPHK study provides a rare opportunity to capture a diverse set of doubled-up households. The sample includes parents who doubled-up as guests and householders, as well as parents who doubled-up as both a householder and a guest at different points during fieldwork. Respondents were located in neighborhoods across the Dallas and Cleveland metro areas, including both suburbs and inner-city communities. Table 2.1 shows demographic characteristics of the sample, divided by householder and guest status. Consistent with national patterns, the parents in my sample are predominately black or Hispanic, unmarried, and had relatively low education and income levels (Pilkauskas et al. 2014).

The study's longitudinal design helped develop stronger rapport with respondents and allowed me to observe parents in multiple households. In total, the 60 respondents lived in 132 different double-ups during the study. The types of double-ups experienced by respondents during the study are given in Table 2.1. Parents most frequently lived in multigenerational households with their own or their partner's parents, grandparents, or adult children. Of parents who doubled-up as a guest at some point during fieldwork, nearly all (91%) lived in a multigenerational household as a guest, and of parents who doubled-up as a host during fieldwork, a majority hosted a multigenerational household. However, double-ups formed with extended family, such as siblings, cousins, or aunts, or with non-kin were not uncommon. Of parents who ever doubled-up as a guest, approximately one-fifth lived as a guest with extended family and one-fourth with non-kin. Of parents who ever doubled-up as a householder, half hosted extended family and about one-fourth hosted friends.

Table 2.1: Sample Characteristics, by Host/Guest Status

	Guest Only (n=22)	Both Guest & Host (n=11)	Host Only (n=27)
Doubled-up as a guest:			
Multigenerational	0.95	0.82	
Extended family	0.14	0.36	
Non-kin	0.14	0.45	
Doubled-up as a host:			
Multigenerational		0.18	0.78
Extended family		0.64	0.44
Non-kin		0.27	0.22
City:			
Cleveland	0.50	0.73	0.56
Dallas	0.50	0.27	0.44
Race:			
White	0.09	0.09	0.15
Black/African-American	0.73	0.73	0.67
Hispanic/Latino	0.18	0.18	0.15
Asian	0.00	0.00	0.04
Gender:			
Male	0.09	0.18	0.15
Female	0.91	0.82	0.85
Education level:			
Less than high school	0.23	0.09	0.19
High school	0.41	0.36	0.30
Some college	0.32	0.55	0.41
Bachelors or more	0.05	0.00	0.11
Relationship status:			
Married	0.14	0.36	0.41
Cohabiting	0.32	0.00	0.19
Non-cohabiting relationship	0.14	0.36	0.11
Single	0.41	0.27	0.30
Income (median)	\$17,760	\$12,000	\$19,800
Age (median)	29	29	39

* Income includes formal and informal employment, SSI/SSDI, and child support. If the parent shared income with a co-residential romantic partner, the partner's income is included in this amount as well. Education level, relationship status, income, and age were calculated at the summer 2014 interview. 2013 values were used if 2014 values were unavailable. Host/guest status is determined by the name on the lease/mortgage or, in the rare cases where multiple household members are named on the lease/mortgage, by the household member who remained in the home after the double-up dissolved.

Findings

Intimate Social Ties and Economic Arrangements

Most doubled-up households in my sample were formed on the foundation of a lasting social relationship. Whether providing housing support as a host or receiving housing support as a guest, parents tended to double-up with family and close friends. Of the 132 doubled-up households I observed during fieldwork, over half were multigenerational homes, consistent with national trends. Nearly one-third were formed with extended family. As these numbers indicate, doubled-up household relationships were largely embedded within existing familial relationships. However, the norms governing these familial relationships do not involve co-residence, and as I describe below, doubling-up introduced new questions about appropriate economic arrangements for extended family members when sharing a household. Double-ups formed with non-kin were the least common in my sample (16% of households). In double-ups formed with non-kin, parents generally described a long history of friendship, often dating back to childhood. Parents who doubled-up with non-kin frequently used fictive kin terms for household members, sometimes revealing their non-familial relationship only after direct questioning about whether they were blood relatives. While recent research has highlighted the importance of “disposable ties” that form quickly in response to need and act as temporary sources of social support (Desmond 2012), my sample suggests that, at least for housing assistance, many families continue to rely primarily on family and, to a lesser extent, on established friendships.¹⁹

Though parents described long-standing and close ties to other household members, doubled-up households did not act as fully-integrated economic units. None of the households in

¹⁹ In my sample, I observed four double-ups – by three respondents – that involved co-residence with disposable ties. I did not find substantial differences between the economic arrangements of these households and those formed by mutually needy friends or extended family members.

my sample fully pooled or jointly managed their income. In my sample, about two-thirds of respondents' most recent double-up involved monetary payments from the guest to the host.²⁰ These contributions most frequently were paid directly from guest to householder, but sometimes guests took responsibility for household utility bills. In double-ups where the guest made a monetary contribution, the median value was \$300 a month,²¹ a substantial amount considering that median gross rent was \$736 in Cuyahoga County and \$895 in Dallas County, and many hosts paid well below the median area rent, received subsidized housing, and/or owned their home outright. In many homes, guests' contributions were an important source of income for the householder, covering a substantial portion of, and sometimes all or even more than, their monthly rent. Such contributions were often vital for allowing householders to maintain their standard of living.

Moreover, guests frequently contributed other resources to the household, either in addition to monetary payments or, particularly when the guest had very little or no cash income, in lieu of them. Many doubled-up guests contributed food to the household or, in some cases, turned over some portion of their food stamps benefits to the householder. Guests often worked within the home as well, providing childcare or cooking and cleaning for the householder. Guests sometimes equated such services with rent payment. Toni described how she provided food and took on housework for her nephew, who allowed her family to move into his home rent-free: "I wash the dishes, I cook, I make sure like, I try to clean. We do things around the house to make them, you know, to kinda like, cover a cost or something like that." Likewise, when Gail lived

²⁰ Including all double-ups documented during fieldwork yields a similar percentage. This percent is slightly lower than the proportion of guests in Fragile Families data who paid rent to the host (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). The difference may be due to sampling, the relatively low cost of the Cleveland and Dallas housing markets, or some mothers' categorization of non-cash contributions, such as food stamps, as "rent" on the Fragile Families survey.

²¹ Median excludes two households in which the guest contributed towards household expenses, but the respondent was unable to estimate an exact amount.

with her father, her only income was from food stamps, “And so that, to me that was my way of providing. I would get the food stamps and have a meal for him, cook him something and that was my way of paying.”

Guests nearly universally asserted that they did not object to contributing something as a member of the household. Many professed a moral duty to contribute where they live, emphasizing that they were willing to pay their way and not trying to “mooch.” Kevin described why he paid his mother for allowing him and his daughter to stay, “Like I know, ain't nobody going to let you stay free. So you know, everybody needs help.” Similarly, when Jennifer and her family moved from her mother’s home to her father’s home, she insisted on paying her father the same amount she had paid her mother, though he would have allowed them to stay for free.

We just felt like we weren't going to live there for free. I don't know why. I guess we're just not used to it. We weren't, you know, I mean I don't know. We just didn't. I don't think we were going to be able to sleep you know at night comfortable knowing. It's just better – I don't know. It's just at least to offer to give something.

Even in households where the host did not receive a contribution from the guest, guests frequently offered payment, even if the host refused to accept. Jade, who lived with her daughters in the home of an elderly friend, described, “I just try to give him money, but he said, ‘No. Just use it for the girls.’”

Conflicts over Exchange

Though doubled-up household members generally agreed that some contribution was appropriate, they frequently disagreed about the meaning of these contributions, how economically integrated the household should be, and how much obligation household members had to others’ well-being. At the core of each of these disagreements was a lack of common understanding of the nature of their relationship and the appropriate corresponding economic arrangement. The incompletely institutionalized nature of doubled-up households inhibited

relational work because household members had neither a unified nor consistent understanding of household relationships. Household members disagreed with one another about the content of their relationships, and parents' conceptions of household relationships shifted based on their self-interest in a given situation.

Interdependence

Though guests generally contributed something towards household expenses, hosts often downplay the mutual benefit of the relationship. After her landlord went into foreclosure, Leeann continued living in her unit but no longer paid rent. When her sister-in-law needed a place to stay, Leeann offered to let her move in, "[t]o help her save money to get her own place. She's a first-time mom, and I know it's overwhelming trying to juggle a baby and work." However, Leeann was also struggling to meet her four children's basic needs; she had recently overdrawn her bank account while purchasing food. She asked her sister-in-law to pay the gas, electric, and cable bills, a total of about \$200 each month, and to give her most of her food stamps so Leeann could combine them with her own and buy food for the entire household. Leeann recognized the importance of the extra income: "I figured the \$200 could actually help me get back on track of my money that I'm messed up on..." However, she explained her decision to let the sister-in-law join the household not by referring to her own need, but by stressing their familial relationship and her identity as someone who helps others: "I like to help people out. She was staying with my mom and that didn't work out. So now she's here with me. I can't say no. You have my niece."

Despite a shared understanding that guests should contribute to the household economy, hosts and guests frequently disagreed about the significance of such contributions. By framing hosting as a moral act, even when their standard of living depended on guests' payments,

householders laid claim to gratitude and deference from guests. Ron paid less than \$200 in monthly rent for his family's subsidized unit, but regularly hosted others in his home – up to four additional adults at a time during the fieldwork period. He requested that each adult contribute: “\$150 goes towards the rent, gas and the lights. \$100 of food stamps goes into the refrigerator.” While doubling-up was an effective income strategy for Ron, he identified as a benefactor and expected guests' gratitude for his assistance.

I try to help people but, you know, sometimes it could be a little bit too comfortable. And they start thinking that – they're figuring that me actually living with someone...that person's actually helping you out, so it's kind of hard.

Perhaps because feelings of gratitude are characteristic of social exchange, but not economic exchange (Blau 1964), guests sometimes interpreted strict demands for payment as inconsistent with householders' claims of a moral identity.

LaTonya was struggling to keep up with rent after breaking up with her boyfriend and was eager to get away from her drug-filled apartment complex, so she moved in with her mother. While she recognized that she benefited financially from the double-up, LaTonya resented implications that she was not contributing to the household.

[S]ometimes she'll say, 'Oh you're not doing much around here.' Well the little bit that I am doing is helping you so don't act like you don't need my help either...you know you need my help too just as well as I need yours so we in this together, stuff like that.

Particularly when both hosts and guests were needy, hosts' tendency to frame the relationship as one-way assistance rather than a two-way exchange was contested by guests who recognized the importance of the resources they brought into the household. Sometimes, demand for payment led guests to reject the householder's moral identity as someone who was helping the guest. LaTonya paid monthly rent – during fieldwork, it ranged from \$150 to \$350 plus food stamps depending on her income – and resented requests for additional contributions, which she felt limited her ability to save for her own unit. “My mother has a way of like trying to break my

pockets I guess in a way. To me it comes off like so I can't move out, you know what I'm saying, so I can't move out.”

Household Membership

While there was broad agreement that household expenses should be at least partially shared, parents disagreed about the extent to which the household should act as an integrated economic unit. Some adults assumed that all were members of the same household, so everyone should enjoy the same standard of living and should share food, childcare, and other resources, as might happen in a single family household. Other times, adults did not equate sharing a household with sharing other resources, behaving like the household was comprised of independent nuclear family units, which should take primacy.

When Kenya lived with her children in her friend's home, disagreements about whether they should share when faced with food insecurity dissolved the arrangement in less than a year.

She didn't want to buy groceries and then she'd get mad at me if I'd feed my kids. [I said,] "You'd take your stamps and sell them and get mad at me because I can't feed your kids. My stamps is for my kids. If I share with your kids, that mean my kids going to be hungry for like two weeks." So then I had to start feeding my kids in my room. It had gotten uncomfortable.

While her friend assumed joint responsibility for feeding the children, Kenya preferred to “handle my business” and let the friend address her own children's needs.

After being evicted from her apartment, Annalise moved into her partner's mother's home. The three-bedroom house was severely overcrowded – housing Annalise, her two daughters, and her partner, as well as her partner's mother, uncle, three sisters, two brothers, cousin, and two-year-old nephew – but Annalise hoped doubling-up would allow her to save money for the rent and deposit for another unit. The household was economically beneficial, as Annalise only paid for the cost of internet and her family's food, but Annalise and the other

household members argued frequently about the obligation of household adults to treat her daughters the same as the other child in the household.

It was just a problem with my kids. Like everybody always did for [the nephew], but they never did for my kids. And I was like, "That's not fair. I wouldn't ever go out and buy ice cream for my kids and leave him with nothing." Every time I went out and got them something, I got him something, too. Even if it was a juice or a bag of chips. He got something too. Because, it's not fair. But, when they cooked, they cooked for just [the nephew]. They didn't cook for my kids. When they went to the store, they bought for just [the nephew]. They didn't buy for my kids. So, they were always miserable.

After just over a month, Annalise called her grandmother, with whom she had lived sporadically in the past. Though previous conflicts with members of her grandmother's household made her unwilling to stay in the house, she asked if she could move into the unfinished basement.

Annalise worked hard to make the unfinished basement feel like home to her daughters, painting the walls their favorite colors. However, just one month later, child protective services deemed it an unsuitable environment, and because she could not afford her own unit, Annalise again searched for another double-up.

When Paula's cousin was facing eviction after an argument with her landlady, Paula allowed her, her husband, and their one-year-old daughter to join her household. Struggling to pay them herself, Paula asked the cousin and her husband to pay the full cost of her utilities, \$150 monthly. However, they only paid sporadically, arguing that they needed to save for their next apartment, and Paula's utilities were sometimes shut off, as they had been before the cousin moved in. Paula was frustrated by what she saw as a lack of investment in the household, "What used to get me upset was the way her husband would act, like he didn't care about anything, like as long as he had his things he didn't care about anything else." Paula disliked that her cousin and her husband prioritized their nuclear family when food ran short.

She would get her food stamps and I would get mine. If there's was things here that I would buy or whatever, he would take them. I didn't have a problem, because when it comes to food if I have to feed a whole army I would. There's was times that they had a lot of food stamps

on their card, we hardly had anything here, and he would just go buy and eat it...He'll buy and he would keep it upstairs.

Paula felt that co-residence obligated the cousin to share food with her and her four children, saying that “people that do have income plus get food stamps, if they know that they’re living with somebody, they should get some type of share.” After many arguments with the cousin’s husband, the cousin and her family moved into their own unit.

Flexibility of Economic Agreement

Doubled-up household members frequently disagreed about what type of economic transaction was appropriate – whether guests should pay a fixed rent amount or contribute proportionally to their ability and hosts’ need. At times, hosts expected that guests would contribute more when guests had greater income or hosts had greater need than usual, while guests accused hosts of not adhering to previous agreements. Other times, guests expected flexibility when they were unable to make the expected contribution, while householders argued that co-residence was conditional on a fixed payment. In both cases, one household member called upon the norms of a common household with shared interests, while another claimed a fixed, market-like contract and saw deviations from that agreement as an attempt to “take advantage” of them.

After a long spell of unemployment, Dana was living in her cousin’s home with her husband and their young son. Dana’s husband began working, trying to earn enough for them to move into their own place, and they started paying \$50 weekly to the cousin for letting them stay. However, as time went on, the cousin saw that they were doing well financially and got “money-hungry.”

People say they want to see you do good, but when you ask somebody, “Hey, mind if I stay with you for a little bit?” And you try to work out something with them like an agreement or whatever, it always seems like that agreement doesn’t ever stay, you know what I mean.

Because once you go live with somebody, then you're going to see that person every day. It's going to be your everyday life and they are going to see what you're doing, what you got going on, and they are going to feel like you owe them more than what you're giving. And so with you trying to get on your feet and then somebody trying to pull the things that you're using to get on your feet away from you, it makes a hard situation, especially when you got kids. And so the hand starts going like this [asking for more money] and then you are like, I can't afford to do that and so what choice do you have? I got to go – I'm going to have to go find somewhere else to stay.

Dana and her husband felt like their income from his long work hours should benefit their family, while Dana's cousin expected that she should enjoy the same standard of living as the guests in her home. Dana argued that her cousin should remain responsible for the expenses she would have if they were not living with her and should not ask for more money based on how well either she or Dana were doing.

If somebody was asking me to come stay and get on their feet, and they offer me a certain number and I agree to it, and they come here and they hold up their end of their bargain, why should I complain? Unless them coming over here takes me away from something that I was doing...before they came.

Dana's cousin disagreed and ultimately asked them to leave because she felt that they were not helping enough. After moving from the cousin's home, they cycled between other unstable double-ups, living with another cousin as well as Dana's sister.

Star's sister got into a physical altercation with her neighbor and needed a new place to live, so Star let her (and later her boyfriend as well) move in with her and her four children. Star told her to contribute what she could, but she soon realized she needed more than the sister was volunteering.

That's where I messed up at. I should have sat down and made an agreement with her [when she first moved in]. That's what she said, too. I never made an agreement with her, so just give me whatever. I can't just come out of the blue with a price.

Her sister said she was saving to get her own apartment, but Star resented the money she saw her spend on cigarettes and beer, particularly as Star struggled to pay her bills. Waiting for her disability and unemployment applications to process, Star's only income was from child support

and she worried she might lose her home. Two months behind on her mortgage, she approached her sister for help.

No, we try to sit down and talk like, "I pay all the bills and I had a couple friends that's helping me [but are not anymore]." She's like, "I don't have nothing to do with that. You had bills before I moved here."

Star suggested her sister was "just trying to take advantage of me, I believe." Arguments over money and her sister's treatment of Star's children led Star to kick her out, and she and her boyfriend moved in with his brother. When they began fighting with the brother, they called Star with promises to help financially, and Star eventually relented and let her sister and her boyfriend move in. "I said, 'All right, you can come back coz I know I need the help.' I'm like, 'All right, you can come back. This is the last time.'"

Shay, along with her partner and two daughters, moved into the two-bedroom apartment her cousin shared with her partner and their newborn. The cousin initially asserted that she just wanted Shay and her partner to "give us what y'all can," but when rent came due the following month, the cousin demanded half of the full amount, \$350. Because Shay and her partner were both working, they were able to pay, but did so begrudgingly. However, the cousin made it clear that continued co-residence was dependent on payment, telling Shay, "Y'all have to give us this much, this amount of money or y'all got to move." The following month, Shay's income dropped precipitously.

And then the previous month, like that's when he lost his job and it was only me. Then I wasn't, they was cutting my hours and my days or whatever, so I wasn't making much and we had a car note. So it was like, I have to pay the car note and then try to give them what I can.

Though they gave the cousin half of what they brought in from odd jobs and plasma donations, the cousin, who was struggling to cover her rent, was inflexible in her demand and ordered them to leave when they could not pay.

But I guess just because I couldn't give them the whole \$350 at one time, they said we had to go. But I'm pretty sure we gave them almost close to \$200-\$300....Because we couldn't come up with the, give them the money when it was time for them to pay the rent, even though we already done paid y'all money week after week after week...And they was spending that money, blowing it. Y'all was supposed to have been putting it up. That's y'all rent right there.

After her cousin put her out, Shay and her partner began sleeping in their car, leaving Shay's daughters at their grandmother's house, until they eventually doubled-up with a friend. While Shay's cousin asked them to leave and found another way to pay her rent, at least one household in my sample ended in eviction when the host was unable to afford rent payments. Because guests tended to pay the host, rather than the landlord directly, they were dependent on the hosts' judicious use of their rent contributions to maintain the household, but hosts rarely allowed guests much oversight over their spending.

When his nephew was released from jail and needed a stable place to live while on parole, JC allowed him to sleep on the living room couch in the three-bedroom home where JC lived with his four children. Soon, his niece and her husband joined the household as well, preferring it to their previous double-ups. JC asked them to contribute to rent, in addition to helping with childcare, food, and money for gas. Because JC was on medical leave from his usual employment and "not making the money that I need to make right now," the additional assistance was helpful. "So they just kind of helped me out where it made it a little bit more easier."

So it started out real good. They was helping me with groceries, helping me on the little rent, whatever case of it is. Then they got the point they wasn't giving me anything on groceries. They wasn't giving me anything on the rent and they were just here.

JC's nephew and niece asked for flexibility because they were struggling to provide for their non-resident children. However, JC quickly tired of their excuses, "it's amazing how you can help somebody and you really don't have it to give but you give it anyway, and how people take advantage of you when you do what you do." Not believing that they could not come up with

even \$50 a person for rent, JC put his nephew, niece, and her husband out of his house one by one, even calling the police on his nephew.

And I'm giving them sacrifices 'cause they were paying child support as well, but I was getting the worst end of the stick. So you can only do that for a while and you have to let everybody go, and you have to throw them in the water and let them swim.

Guests' Commitment to Hosts

For needy hosts, guests living in their home were valuable – guests contributed resources to the household and could provide last-minute rent money when a householder fell short. Yet guests often prioritized their own families' needs and moved without considering the potential effect on hosts. Household instability made doubling-up an often unrealizable source of income for hosts, with some householders suggesting that guests' self-interested exits were not in keeping with the solidarity they expected.

Michelle and her partner lived in Michelle's friend's home with their children and were actively searching for a home of their own. When asked what her friend, who was used to having someone pay half her rent, thought about their plans to move, Michelle responded.

I don't, I don't really know. I really don't care for real, because, I mean, it's my life. And only way I can make my life happier is I got to do I got to do to make sure me and my kids is cool and my husband. I can't think about nobody else when it comes to our family. So we just trying to move. She know that we trying to move, but. We're trying to leave. We want our own stuff.

Michelle made it clear that she would make housing decisions based on her family's needs, rather than considering the potential effect on her friend's housing arrangement.

Some instability for hosts was caused by guests, who recognized the value of their contributions, feeling that they could get a better rate of exchange at another household. Simone, her partner Darnell, and their young son moved in with Darnell's brother while saving to get their own apartment. However, soon after they moved in he asked them to pay over half of his rent. "No, they both popped up with them prices. They told us that they would give us a place to

stay and then waited and then boom.” Moreover, though it was a fairly large house, Darnell’s brother used one large room as a “man cave,” leaving Simone’s family squeezed into the smallest room in the house. “[We told him] we cannot pay you \$300 a month and have a room that we can’t even put one bed in.” When Darnell’s sister offered them a better deal, they quickly accepted.

We didn’t pay [his brother] nothing. Because the first month was like a trial. Like, all right, at the end of this month, if we’re going to stay here, we’re going to pay him or we’re going to get out of here. And at the end of the month, his sister was like, “I’ve got a bigger room. It’s downstairs. I’ll just put everything else upstairs. And you all can move in my downstairs.” I’m like, “All right. We’ll pay you instead then and move.”

Simone described the double-up as a purely economic transaction – when she saw a better deal, she took it, with little regard for how it might affect her brother-in-law’s financial situation.

Such instability made doubling-up an unreliable source of support for hosts as well as guests, as unexpected dissolutions could leave hosts financially struggling to make up lost household income. Anrisa and her husband were living in a two-bedroom unit with their two children when her husband’s brother and his son moved in, followed by her brother. Both brothers contributed financially, together covering most of her monthly rent, so Anrisa upgraded to a three-bedroom unit.

I was like okay, let’s do this. I’m going to go down here and I’m going to get this three bedroom that way you guys get your own room, you got to get y’all own beds...do what you got to do, but you have your own space. That way I don’t have to come out of my living room, I don’t have your clothes, your basket of clothes and stuff in the living room and you don’t have to feel like you’re a guest all the time so you will be like feeling like at home, so that’s why I got the three-bedroom.

But soon after she signed the lease for the larger apartment, Anrisa’s brother-in-law moved to his uncle’s house. “He got tired of being here after a couple of months...He’s a traveling person. A nomad.” Then her brother lost his job, leaving the household even more financially strained – and “when money get tight, I mean, the air gets real thick,” Anrisa explained. Her brother left to

live with his other sister after a particularly heated argument about whether Anrisa's nephew should have to share his personal pan pizza with Anrisa's children. Anrisa and her husband, who would have struggled to pay rent for even a small apartment without help, were furious that their brothers had moved out.

Like why can't he just pay for his, you know what I'm saying, his time here and move out end of this month and give us some time so we don't get evicted...This is exactly what I tell you, I said family don't fuck over family...And we are actually trying to keep a roof over my children's head. Y'all thinking about money and how y'all do what you want to do, whatever y'all want to do with y'all money, but y'all not thinking about my kids. Me and my kids ain't gonna end up back on the street.

After their brothers moved out, Anrisa and her husband accumulated thousands of dollars of overdue rent and late fees and were at risk of eviction, though they eventually caught up with the payments.

Inconsistent Expectations

Thus far, I have argued that matching economic arrangements to social relationships in doubled-up households is made difficult by the incompletely institutionalized nature of relationships in doubled-up households. Particularly, there are no clear guidelines about the extent to which double-ups are market-like arrangements, with few obligations for hosts and guests to assist one another beyond their direct exchanges, or intimate social relationships, with household members sharing economic interests and a common standard of living. As such, household members often disagreed about the fundamental nature of their relationship, and thus about the appropriate economic exchanges for these relationships. In addition to being inconsistent between household members, individuals' expectations for household relationships were inconsistent over time. Frequently, parents framed the household differently depending on the arrangement that would best suit them in the moment and, because they could draw on

accepted norms about household solidarity or nuclear family independence, they felt justified in applying each of these competing norms.

When Tina's husband was unemployed, they invited his sister and her young son to move in with them. They requested \$350 a month in exchange for a bedroom, but Tina argued with her sister-in-law about whether that payment purchased full membership in the household.

That \$350 didn't include, you know, your bills, your food, your transportation, that \$350 does not cover that. When you go rent an apartment, you pay what they say the rent is, that doesn't mean your refrigerator is going to come fully stocked and you're going to [get] air, lights, water at your - you know, the way you want it, it's not going to happen that way. So by you moving here, you're paying \$350 for your rent.

Consistent with their self-interests, hosts like Tina argued that contributions were payment for being allowed to stay in the home and did not give guests membership within the solidarity unit or authority within the home. For example, though her sister-in-law assumed that she could leave her son home when she ran errands, Tina described babysitting as a transaction requiring further payment: "No, she's not going to get freebies off of us."

However, when in need, the same hosts would call upon norms of household cohesion and argue that guests should share resources as if they were a single family. Tina described an argument over her sister-in-law's hidden food supply:

Well I started noticing that the little boy would pop out with a juice, you know, and it was like okay...maybe she bought him a juice. And then one day I was driving home from work and pulled up and there she is with her trunk open and all of these little snacks and juices and I was like - and when I go buy groceries, that's how she is in my refrigerator. You know, so why would you do that? And we've never been raised to be like that, to hide food. I mean, it's in there because it's supposed to be eaten, and you put back so we can have to eat more, you know what I'm saying? ...as far as the kitchen, what's in the refrigerator, you know, you go in there - it's our house, it's our family, we're all together, you eat what's there.

The arguments escalated until her sister-in-law announced that she was joining another household. The next day she was gone, not even returning to collect her belongings. Though her sister-in-law's contribution had paid over half their rent, Tina reported, "I was more than happy

for her to go. I could care less about the struggle. I just wanted her to go. I wanted my house back to us.”

Conflict Mitigating Characteristics

Normative Household Forms and Institutionalized Trust

Compared to other double-ups, multigenerational household members were more likely to share a common understanding of their relationship and appropriate terms of exchange. Noelle, a mother of 8- and 9-year old daughters, lived with her mother since childhood. While she planned to eventually move in with her fiancé, they were waiting until both had stable employment and enough savings to cover several months of rent. While she looked forward to the day when, “I will be able to go home and kick my shoes off at my own place. And then, get the rest of my evening started with my family,” Noelle and her mother had minimal conflict and lived together stably for years.

Multigenerational households, particularly those in which the parent never left the natal home, often retained norms from the parent’s childhood. Parents and children generally had assumed solidarity and more often trusted that the other had their best interests at heart. These households also benefited from greater institutionalized expectations about which direction power, gratitude, and resources would flow. Noelle largely accepted her subordinate role as a daughter within the household, and she appreciated “the help that I have in my mom,” including substantial childcare and childrearing advice.²²

Though multigenerational households, like other double-ups, often involve an exchange of resources – usually housing in return for some monetary contribution – such transfers were relatively uncontentious when household members agreed upon the nature of the relationship and

²² In addition to gratitude flowing upwards, a couple householder grandparents who relied heavily on their co-resident adult children expressed substantial gratitude for the assistance, resulting in no conflict over economic exchange.

the meaning of the exchange. When asked about bills, Noelle was unable to provide details on household expenses, except her own contributions towards them. Her voice dropped to nearly a whisper, “That's my mom's business. I'm not too sure if she's renting or owning or still paying on the home.” When Noelle started working after her daughters went to school, she began providing \$300 a month to her mother. “Well, when I just started getting money, I would buy for my kids and I would just give my mom some money, because I just, as a person, wanted to help where I was living.” Unlike parents who argued that their contributions gave them rights within the household, Noelle described hers as “more of a thankful gesture, if anything.” By framing contributions as gifts or entitlements for the host, rather than payments, parents like Noelle emphasized the social nature of the relationship, downplayed its economic nature, and validated the authority of the host (Bearman 2005; Zelizer 1996).

Overall, Noelle and her mother both lived as if they not only shared a household, but were also a family unit – Noelle described how she and her mother are “a little family” held together by mutual love of Noelle’s daughters. This shared conception of the household as a single solidarity unit maintained peace and stability while Noelle and her fiancé tried to become economically stable enough to rent their own home in a good neighborhood. “Well, ready as in, he is ready for the financial responsibility. Because you are not just going to pay the minimum that you are paying at you mom’s house. All of this is going to be you and I.” Because Noelle and her mother had a common understanding of their relationship, their economic exchange – her mother’s provision of housing and Noelle’s “thankful” contributions to her mother – served to strengthen, rather than harm, their relationship.

Importantly, multigenerational households were not always stable or peaceful, and the parent-child bond was not sufficient to ensure household stability. Household peace depended on

a common understanding of household roles and the flow of gratitude, which – while more common in multigenerational households – were not guaranteed by the parent-child relationship. For example, Nicole, who became a mother while living in her natal home, moved out of her mother's house twice due to difficulties adhering to her mother's rules, once to her partner's sister's house and once to her father's home. Before our final interview, however, Nicole reported dramatic changes in her perspective. "I just do what she says. I'm in her house. That's really what you have to do. You know it's really no choice." This new understanding of her relationship with her mother dramatically improved their co-residence.

We just get along better. We don't argue. I make sure the house stays clean. I don't really ask her for much. I give her more than I ask, and – well, I'm not gonna say that because she puts a roof over my head and everything else. But I make sure that I give her something every time I get paid. So she doesn't feel like I'm just taking advantage.

With a shared agreement with her mother about household contributions and gratitude, Nicole lived stably with her mother while she saved for her own unit.

Double-ups formed by childless young adults living in their natal home may retain norms from childhood to an even greater degree than other multigenerational households. My sample included seven such households, and just three involved a monetary payment from the adult child to the parent – two of regular payments when the child was working regularly and one of large lump sums when the mother was in need. Some parents, like Delores, described their adult child continuing (non)exchange arrangements from childhood, "I told you my kids are spoiled; they don't think they have to do that [contribute towards rent] – I'm mom." In contrast, Marla said approvingly that her young adult daughter "does help me out, even if I don't ask her, she does. She helps me out. Whenever she is getting money in and she is working, she does." After discussing it with her cousin to ensure that it would not burden her daughter too much, Marla decided to assign her daughter responsibility for a small bill. "So yeah, I told her, 'Ashley,

you're going to be in charge of paying the insurance on the house, which is \$75 a month.' And she was like 'Yeah, mom. I'll help you. Okay, I'll help you.'" When her daughter stopped working, she was no longer obligated to pay, but as of our last interview, Marla had pushed her daughter, and her daughter's friend who had also moved in, to find jobs. She wanted them both to contribute to the household "just so they can have that responsibility, so they can know they are responsible for something." Such households provide suggestive evidence that compared to the economic arrangements of multigenerational homes including grandchildren, the economic arrangements of double-ups formed with childless adult children may be more similar to childhood arrangements, in which parents assume benefactor roles and only impose expectations that they do not expect will slow the adult child's progression to adulthood and residential independence (see Newman 2012; Reyes 2018; Sassler, Ciambrone, and Benway 2008).²³

Clear Terms of Exchange

Shared understandings of the relationship facilitate a common understanding of appropriate roles and financial responsibilities, and these shared expectations increase the stability and security of doubled-up households. In multigenerational households, such understandings are fostered by institutionalized norms surrounding the parent-child relationship. In addition to such norms, shared understandings were facilitated by assistance going one-way only and from clear negotiation establishing terms of exchange.

Jade moved with her children into her cousin's home after a combination of housing disrepair and financial difficulties pushed her from her previous rental. Her cousin, a stay-at-

²³ While the finding that most guests pay rent is consistent with prior research on families with children (Pilkas et al. 2014), samples that include childless adults find that rent contributions are less common. In a sample of 30 young adults who returned to their natal home after living away, generally for college, Sassler and colleagues (2008) find that despite median annual earnings of \$17,500, most young adults made no contribution towards household expenses. Similarly, Reyes (2018) finds that in two-thirds of extended family households in the Survey of Income and Program Participation, the householder reported that the guest had enough income to live on their own above the poverty line yet contributed nothing towards rent and utilities. The average guest family size in this sample is between 1.2 and 1.4, suggesting that most guests in this sample are childless, unpartnered adults.

home mother of three, was relatively well-off and refused to let Jade, who struggled to provide for her three children, give money for letting them stay. Jade was grateful for the assistance and in return tried her best to not be an inconvenience. “I don’t want to interrupt her life with mine,” she explained. In this household, there were no disagreements about appropriate exchange – Jade received help, and was in turn grateful. The home was financially beneficial for Jade, and her cousin assured her she could stay until she was on her feet. But while a stable source of support, the household was not without non-financial costs. With the householder not benefitting financially from Jade’s co-residence, Jade maintained a decidedly deferential role in the home and struggled to repay her cousin in gratitude and household work (cf. Nelson 2000). She described how, when she returned to living on her own, she was relieved to no longer need to tiptoe around someone else’s home:

I don’t have to worry about the girls like being in people’s stuff...and it’s more comfortable. I can just come home and relax or do whatever. Over there I could relax, but it was just the point knowing that it’s not my own stuff.

In households where both host and guest benefited from the arrangement, clear terms of exchange could mitigate disagreements. Teresa and her two children moved in with Teresa’s parents when her undocumented husband returned to Mexico to gain legal residency in the U.S. Teresa insisted, based on previous experience living with the grandparents, that they negotiate the terms of their arrangement before Teresa moved in.

We picked the price [by telling my parents], we don’t mind, just tell us the price. But I want it to be enough where you don’t - we don’t have problems with, “Hey, you’ve seen too much electricity and not paying enough.” Because I know my kids, they’ll use a lot of stuff, they’ll leave water running sometimes or TV, leave it on, and then they go and leave the light on, and then go...and leave another light on, they have like ten lights on.

They agreed that Teresa would pay \$700 a month, a substantial amount given that the grandparents owned their house outright. However, Teresa was satisfied because the amount was

less than the \$900 plus utilities she estimated she would pay if renting, and she and her mother agreed about the meaning of the exchange.

[My husband and I] just kind of see it like we were in a tough situation and we are being helped and we are helping them back by giving them – because I mean, she would have taken us in without even giving her anything. She would. But I would have felt uncomfortable and that’s why I tell her, you know, “If you don’t charge us, I’m going to feel uncomfortable. And then I feel like I have to do all this extra things in the house, like maybe I have to keep it extra-clean, and be cleaning after everybody, and cooking after everybody because that’s how I feel if it’s not my home.” And right now I feel like – well, I guess it would be our right, I mean, I’m allowed to be lazy. So, I know that I’m paying a certain amount so then I can relax more in that area.

Because of the negotiated monetary payment, Teresa felt less pressure to repay her parents in non-monetary ways. Moreover, the extra income allowed the grandmother to stop working during the co-residence, which made it clear that the assistance was mutual. Teresa’s negotiation of payment with her parents before moving in prevented conflict over the terms of exchange, and by the final interview, Teresa’s husband had returned from Mexico and they were continuing to save, living in the grandparents’ home while searching for an apartment of their own.

Conclusion

This article examines how doubled-up household members understand and dispute their intra-household economic relations. Because people take great care to match their economic transactions to their social relationships (Zelizer 2012), economic arrangements and disputes provide a window into how doubled-up households are socially understood. Doubled-up households lack either laws or strong norms to guide economic exchange, so parents must establish the content and the meanings of intra-household exchanges among themselves. Household members not only debated the amounts exchanged, but also the meaning of these exchanges and whether they were appropriate for the social relationship. To what extent is the host providing altruistic assistance or is the household a form of direct economic exchange? What obligations do household members have to one another in times of need? Should everyone

in the household enjoy a similar standard of living or should each nuclear family remain financially independent? Such questions have no established answer within doubled-up households, and the inconsistent arguments parents deployed regarding economic exchange reflect the ambiguity present in household relationships.

Parents' identities and beliefs about family life shaped their expectations about economic arrangements. While guest parents wanted to be recognized as independent because of their contributions to the household, householders preferred to be seen as benevolent helpers providing housing assistance. While both aspects were often true to some extent, conflicts emerged when parents focused on protecting their own identities rather than validating those of other household members. Additionally, parents tended to bring with them expectations from nuclear family households. Parents simultaneously held beliefs about both the primacy of the nuclear family and the unity of the household, and they identified deviations from either of these norms as inappropriate. Yet in doubled-up households these norms are incompatible, and there is no taken-for-granted way of reconciling them. Both householders and guests argued for arrangements that would benefit their nuclear family, often particularly focusing on the well-being of their children. For example, parents suggested that that adults were obligated to protect and attend to household children equally and, alternately, that parenthood required them to meet their own children's needs before attending to others.

Examining the circumstances in which conflict was more or less likely sheds light on when and how the introduction of economic exchange to an intimate sphere transforms or damages relations (Bandelj et al. 2017). Two characteristics in particular were associated with reduced conflict. First, though many guests in multigenerational households contributed resources to the host, parent-child relationships had taken-for-granted expectations and solidarity

that mitigated disagreements over the economic arrangements. Though multigenerational double-ups lack fully institutionalized household roles (Harvey 2015), the parent-child relationship offers more norms to guide economic exchanges than do extended family or non-kin relationships. The degree of institutionalization within doubled-up households – and likely within other complex family and household forms – is thus best viewed as a spectrum (Sweeney 2010), with consequences for economic relational work. Consistent with national trends (Glick and Van Hook 2011), the multigenerational households in my sample tended to be more stable, due in part to their shared understandings surrounding economic exchange. These households demonstrate that it is not just the presence or absence of an economic transaction that shapes doubled-up household conflict, but how it is interpreted within the relationship.

Second, clear terms of exchange – either due to a one-way flow of assistance or a shared agreement between household members – also made households less prone to contentious economic disagreements. However, many mothers lacked a benefactor who was financially able and willing to support them, and the housing crises that often precipitated doubling-up often prevented parents from negotiating clear terms of exchange before moving in. The role of strict terms of exchange in mitigating conflict demonstrates that the primary issue inhibiting successful relational work within doubled-up households is not the introduction of market-like transactions into the household sphere, but rather the lack of shared expectations of the relationship stemming from the incompletely institutionalized status of doubled-up households. Rather than harming the relationship by making it more market-like, negotiated exchange decreased conflict over economic exchange by decreasing the ambiguity of the relationship.

Together, these findings reveal the importance of common understandings of the relationship for successful economic relational work. When household members shared a

consistent conception of their relationship, they could match their expectations about economic arrangements accordingly. These findings reflect the importance of expectations, not just the precise terms of exchange, in relationship outcomes. In her discussion of married couples, Hochschild (1989) emphasizes the role of the “marital baseline” – what each partner expects of the other – to the flow of gratitude and, in turn, relationship satisfaction. Likewise, what doubled-up household members expect of each other and how shared and consistent these expectations are affects their perceptions of the appropriateness of their economic arrangements. Just as wives’ psychological well-being is predicted not by the amount of housework they do, but by whether they perceive the arrangement as fair (Lennon and Rosenfield 1994), it is parents’ perceptions of the fairness of the flow of resources and gratitude, not just the financial cost of the double-up, that determine household peace.

While doubled-up households may be particularly vulnerable to ambiguity, complex families face similar difficulties reconciling household and family relationships and determining appropriate relationship expectations. Complex families often involve nuclear family relations that span multiple households, and blended families introduce non-blood relatives to the household. As in doubled-up households, complex family forms like cohabiting stepfamilies are characterized by substantial discord about who is in and who is out of the family, known as family boundary ambiguity (Brown and Manning 2009), and this boundary ambiguity is linked to poorer family functioning (Brown and Manning 2009; Carroll, Olson, and Buckmiller 2007). This study shows how stress and conflict over questions of basic household functioning, such as economic arrangements, may be one mechanism contributing to this association. Moreover, while research tends to focus on objective measures, such as biological and marital relationships and the relative and absolute incomes of partners, these findings suggest the importance of

subjective understandings of family boundaries and roles for how complex families arrange and understand their household economies.

While this study has focused on the difficulties incomplete institutionalization introduces to relational work within the household, ambiguous relationship norms complicate interactions across domains. For example, incompletely institutionalized relationships may also increasingly characterize employment relations. For the growing share of the workforce that is engaged in contingent employment, the roles of employer, employee, and client may be less well-defined and the boundaries between work and leisure may blur. Just as in complex families and households, such ambiguities create opportunities for disagreement about appropriate economic exchanges (cf. Mears 2015).

Finally, this study informs our understanding of doubling-up as a private safety net. While extant research tends to conceptualize doubled-up households as social support with benefits primarily for the guest, co-residence with family and friends allowed householders in my sample to afford a larger unit, bring additional income and food into the household, or even prevent housing hardships such as eviction or utilities being shut off. While considering doubled-up households to be a single economic unit would overstate the extent to which these households pool resources (cf. Bauman 1999), doubling-up often provides financial benefits to both hosts and guests. These findings underscore the complexity of social support relationships and suggest that much of what is categorized as social support, especially in survey data, may in fact be similar to direct, and even negotiated, exchange. While qualitative work documents the obligations associated with being enmeshed in a strong support network and the toll these can take on individual aspirations (Garrett-Peters and Burton 2016; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Stack and Burton 1993), my work highlights immediate, and direct, material costs to receiving

housing support. Examining such support as if it is a one-way flow ignores the blurred line between social support and direct exchange.

Ultimately, parents' inconsistent understandings of doubled-up households as a market-like direct exchange or a family-like solidarity unit contributed to conflict and household instability. My data suggest that double-ups dissolved by conflicts tended to confer no gain in residential attainment for guests, who frequently moved to another, often similarly unstable, double-up or even homelessness. Additionally, guests frequently provided valuable assistance by contributing rent money, sharing food, or providing childcare. Exits – especially unanticipated exits – could leave householders struggling to make ends meet, putting them at risk of eviction and material hardship. For parents living doubled-up, relational work is thus highly consequential. When hosts and guests failed to agree upon the nature of their relationship and to enact economic arrangements that matched that understanding, household dissolutions frequently left parents without the support they expected.

Cumulative Effects of Doubling-up in Childhood on Young Adult Outcomes

Introduction

Children's lives are profoundly affected by the adults with whom they live. Previous research has linked family structure to a variety of behavioral and cognitive childhood outcomes, as well as young adult outcomes such as family formation and employment (McLanahan and Percheski 2008; McLanahan, Tach, and Schneider 2013). This research has largely focused on the nuclear²⁴ family – the presence or absence of a father or other romantic partner of the mother and the children such partners bring into the household. Yet looking only at parents' romantic partners and their minor children does not capture the full household experience of many children, particularly those from low-income families, who often spend at least part of their childhood in a household with a more complicated array of residents. Doubling-up – when a nuclear family co-resides with other adults, like grandparents, extended family, or friends – is a common childhood experience. Nearly half of mothers living in urban areas reside in a doubled-up household before their child reaches age ten (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). Despite extensive research on family structure, we know less about how the presence of extended household members affects children.

One reason that doubled-up households are relatively neglected in the family literature may be that they are often considered more of a housing arrangement than a family form (e.g., Skobba and Goetz 2013). Yet, like family structure, household composition shapes children's lives in myriad ways. Doubling-up affects children's access to resources and caregiving time and influences parents' stress levels (Harvey 2015; Kalil, Ryan, and Chor 2014; Mutchler and Baker

²⁴ Throughout the paper, I refer to the mother, child(ren), and mother's co-resident romantic partner, if applicable, as the nuclear family. I use this term to differentiate this normative family unit from extended household members.

2009). In this study, I conceptualize doubled-up households not just as a residential outcome, but also as social environment. I attend to the relational aspects of doubled-up households by considering how the effects of doubling-up may vary based on familial or non-familial relationships between household members. By studying the effects of co-residence with adults beyond the nuclear family, this research contributes to a fuller understanding of the implications of household complexity for children. Moreover, rates of doubling-up increased substantially during the Great Recession (Mykyta and Maccartney 2012), and documenting the effects of these households and how they may vary by household type is important for considering potential repercussions of these changes.

The high degree of instability that characterizes many children's households (Fomby and Cherlin 2007; Perkins 2017) complicates studies of the effects of household complexity on children's long-term outcomes. Children's outcomes are shaped not only by their immediate household environment, but also by the sum of environments they have experienced in the past. Early environments put in motion processes of cumulative advantage and disadvantage which ultimately shape outcomes later in the life course (Elder 1998). Thus, a longitudinal approach, which accounts for household composition throughout childhood, is necessary for understanding long-term effects. Yet, as I discuss later, accurately modeling cumulative effects poses methodological challenges, and studies have tended to estimate the impact of household composition at a single point in time (Astone and Washington 1994; DeLeire and Kalil 2002). These cross-sectional measures ignore the dynamic nature of households for many children. This limitation is particularly problematic for doubled-up households, as most double-ups dissolve within a year (Glick and Van Hook 2011), and many children transition in and out of doubled-up households multiple times (Mollborn et al. 2012; Pilkauskas 2012).

In this paper, I estimate the cumulative effects of the total number of childhood years spent in doubled-up households on young adult health and educational attainment. Recognizing that relationships between doubled-up household members are important for how the household functions, I examine effects separately for three types of doubled-up households: 1) double-ups formed with the child's grandparent(s); 2) double-ups formed with the child's adult sibling(s); and 3) double-ups formed with other adult(s), such as extended family and non-kin. Instead of examining household composition at a single point, I operationalize household composition with a duration-weighted measure of exposure to each household type throughout childhood. I estimate the effects of additional years spent in each household type using marginal structural models and inverse probability of treatment weighting. Unlike conventional regression techniques, these methods account for the fact that household composition is both a cause and consequence of other time-varying family characteristics – such as income and mother's marital status – that affect children's young adult outcomes. By identifying the long-term effects of doubling-up in childhood, this research reveals how adult household members beyond parents and their romantic partners have enduring effects on children's life chances and demonstrates the importance of expanding the study of family complexity to include household members outside the nuclear family.

Prior Research on Doubling-up

Relative to more well-studied forms of family complexity, doubling-up is a common childhood experience. More children live in extended households with a grandparent, other relative, and/or nonrelative than in either stepfamilies or cohabiting families (Kennedy and Fitch 2012). Though we know relatively little about the effects of doubling-up and how these effects vary across household type, previous research does suggest numerous mechanisms through

which doubling-up may affect children. Qualitative work has highlighted the role of doubling-up as a private housing safety net (Desmond 2012; Skobba and Goetz 2013). Relative to living in a non-shared household, doubled-up individuals may benefit from higher household income (Mutchler and Baker 2009; Mykyta and Macartney 2012) and lower housing costs (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). For some families, doubling-up allows children to escape dangerous neighborhoods or attend better schools (Ahrentzen 2003; Goodman and Silverstein 2002; Rhodes and DeLuca n.d.). If doubling-up increases material well-being and improves housing, neighborhood, and school environments, it could be beneficial for children.

Yet other research suggests ways that doubled-up households may negatively affect children. Increasing household size can strain already limited resources, particularly as doubled-up adults are more likely to have poverty-level personal incomes than non-doubled-up adults (Mykyta and Macartney 2012; Rhodes and DeLuca n.d.). Doubling-up can also expose children to overcrowded and unsafe environments (Edin and Shaefer 2015; Seefeldt and Sandstrom 2015). Finally, doubled-up households are often stressful and conflictual environments (Domínguez and Watkins 2003), and disagreement over whether and how household adults should share childrearing is common (Harvey 2015). In sum, extant research hypothesizes mechanisms through which doubling-up may both positively and negatively affect child outcomes, with little consensus about the ultimate direction of the effect.

The effects of living doubled-up likely vary based on the (non)familial relationships between household members. Most existing studies of doubling-up focus exclusively on multigenerational households. Though findings from these studies are inconsistent (see Dunifon, Ziol-Guest, and Kopko 2014 for a review), multigenerational double-ups are often considered supportive environments, especially for young mothers. Children in multigenerational homes

benefit from substantial time investments from co-residential grandparents (Kalil et al. 2014). Previous research has also found positive associations between multigenerational co-residence and mothers' productive activities, like work and school (Gordon, Chase-Lansdale, and Brooks-Gunn 2004; Hao and Brinton 1997). However, other research finds negative associations between multigenerational co-residence and parenting quality (Black and Nitz 1996; Unger and Cooley 1992), and qualitative work highlights the complexity of such households, hypothesizing that there may be a "diffusion of parenting responsibility" in multigenerational homes as both mothers and grandmothers assume the other will take on more of the childrearing responsibility (Chase-Lansdale, Brooks-Gunn, and Zamsky 1994).

In recent years, a growing number of young adults have "failed to launch" from their natal home or "boomeranged" back into it (Berlin, Furstenberg, and Waters 2010). Though common, adult children living in their parents' homes remains non-normative (Furstenberg et al. 2004; Settersten 2011), and these households are "doubled-up" according to standard definitions.²⁵ Adult children are the most common type of non-householder doubled-up adult (Eggers and Moumen 2013:vii; Mykyta and Macartney 2012:3), and much of the recession-time increase in doubling-up was driven by young adults living in their parents' homes (Eggers and Moumen 2013). A growing literature suggests these double-ups are consequential for both adult children and their parents, affecting mental health and well-being, family formation, and financial security (Fingerman et al. 2012; Furstenberg 2010; Maroto 2017; Tosi and Grundy 2018; White 1994). Yet, to my knowledge, no study has examined how adult sibling co-residence may affect the outcomes of minor children living with the parent(s).

²⁵ For example, one HUD analysis considers doubled-up households those with "any person who is not the householder, the householder's spouse or partner, or a child of the householder younger than age 21" (Eggers and Moumen 2013:2). Similarly, a census report defines shared households as "a household with at least one resident adult who [if under age 25] is not enrolled in school and who is neither the householder, nor the spouse or cohabiting partner of the householder" (Mykyta and Macartney 2012:1).

Co-residence with an adult sibling may divert parental resources from minor children. In adult child double-ups, parents typically contribute most of the income and household work (White 1994), and co-resident adult children are associated with declines in parents' savings (Maroto 2017). Likewise, co-resident adult child lengthen the timeline of parenting obligations (Swartz 2009) and increase the likelihood of parents' providing adult children "intense support" (many types of support, several times a week) (Fingerman et al. 2012), which may reduce attention for minor children. Finally, because parents and adult children generally perceive such intensive parental support as aberrant (Fingerman et al. 2012), doubling-up may have psychological costs for both parties. On the other hand, co-residence with adult siblings might be expected to produce supportive childhood environments. Adult children have experience living in their natal home, and while relationships with parents and siblings shift after they enter adulthood, such households likely have more established roles and precedents for household functioning (Harvey 2018). Qualitative work shows parents and adult children often have positive feelings about young adults living in their natal home while pursuing educational or occupational goals (Newman 2012; Sassler et al. 2008). If adult siblings do not increase household stress, they may not negatively affect children's environments. Moreover, supportive older siblings are associated with positive child outcomes (Prime et al. 2014), so these double-ups may be beneficial if the adult sibling is attentive to the younger child's needs.

Though most research on doubling-up focuses on intergenerational relationships, nearly 40 percent of mothers who double-up with someone other than an adult child live in a household that does not include a parent or in-law (Pilkauskas et al. 2014). Double-ups formed with extended kin involve greater sharing of household expenses by household members than double-ups formed with parents or adult children (Reyes 2018), and may also have more disagreement

over household economic arrangements (Harvey 2018). Within-household income inequality is associated with greater instability for double-ups formed with extended family or non-kin, but not double-ups formed with parents or adult children (Glick and Van Hook 2011). While we know relatively little about how double-ups formed with extended family or non-kin might affect children, these findings suggest that such households may be more transactional and involve lower levels of household solidarity, which might make them less supportive environments.

Despite these potential differences, studies of the effects of non-multigenerational double-ups generally consider extended households as a single category. While some studies categorize households based on all co-resident adults (both kin and non-kin) and others categorize based only on co-resident kin, extant research typically groups multigenerational and non-multigenerational households together (Ahrentzen 2003; Aquilino 1996; Entwisle and Alexander 1996; Kang and Cohen 2017; Park, Fertig, and Allison 2011; Thompson et al. 1992). One exception is work by Mollborn and colleagues (2011), which compares the effects of double-ups formed with children's grandparents to those formed with any other adults on cognitive scores and behavioral outcomes at age two. Their results suggest that, for most children, co-residence with grandparents is associated with better early childhood outcomes, particularly cognitive outcomes, than is co-residence with non-grandparent adults.

The research above indicates that doubled-up households vary substantially depending on the relationships between household members, suggesting the importance of considering doubling-up not just as a uniform housing arrangement, but also a social environment with effects that may differ based on household relations. In this analysis, I examine the effects of three types of doubled-up households: those formed with the child's grandparent(s); those formed with the child's adult sibling(s); and those formed with another extended family member

or non-relative. These categories reflect three double-up types that prior research suggests have distinct household dynamics that may influence children's outcomes in disparate ways.

Extant research on the effects of doubled-up households, regardless of type, has generally focused on cognitive and behavioral outcomes in childhood or adolescence (Augustine and Raley 2013; Dunifon and Kowaleski-Jones 2007; Leadbeater and Bishop 1994; Mollborn et al. 2011). While the many economic and social consequences of household composition suggest that it is likely influential in shaping children's long-term outcomes, we know relatively little about how enduring the effects of doubling-up in childhood are. If the effects of doubling-up in childhood persist and shape children's life chances into adulthood, these households may play a role in the transmission of disadvantage across generations.

In this analysis, I examine young adult outcomes in two domains, education and health. As described above, doubling-up shapes children's physical environments and access to material resources, as well as social factors – including the amount of stress in the household and the amount of oversight and support the child receives – that are key to children's cognitive and socio-emotional development and physical health. As my outcomes of interest, I focus on high school graduation and college attendance because of their role in labor market outcomes and depression, smoking, and obesity because of their importance for adult health.

Both educational attainment and health are influenced by household dynamics and parenting practices, which may be affected by doubling-up. Parental stress and household conflict is associated with harsh, inconsistent, and uninvolved parenting, which in turn affect children's academic abilities and propensity for emotional and behavior problems (Conger, Conger, and Martin 2010). Unresponsive parenting and exposure to household conflict are also associated with increased risk of obesity (Rhee 2008). In addition to influencing parents'

behavior, doubling-up puts children in close contact with other adults. Through role-modeling (positive or negative), support, or supervision, household adults may shape children's school engagement and participation in risky behaviors like smoking, which in turn also shape academic attainment (McLanahan et al. 2013). Additionally, material deprivation and difficult home environments affect children's health directly. Childhood stress shapes development in ways that make children vulnerable to depression in young adulthood (Turner and Butler 2003). And children's weight and the establishment of good health behaviors depend on access to healthy food and safe environments that are conducive to physical activity (Kimbrow, Brooks-Gunn, and McLanahan 2011; Rhee 2008), which may be affected by doubling-up (Ahrentzen 2003; Goodman and Silverstein 2002; Rhodes and DeLuca n.d.). Because childhood weight tracks onto risk of obesity in adulthood (Daniels 2006), young adult obesity may be especially susceptible to cumulative effects. Previous research provides strong evidence linking father absence to worse adult mental health and increased substance use, including smoking (McLanahan et al. 2013), suggesting that household composition may be particularly relevant for these outcomes. In this study, I extend this literature to consider how the presence of adults beyond parents and their romantic partners influence these outcomes.

Dynamic Selection into Household Types

As discussed, the instability of doubled-up households makes it important to study household composition longitudinally. Studies that use short-term measures of household composition have two primary limitations. First, static measures compare children who were doubled-up during the survey, many of whom will soon transition out of such households, to all children who were not doubled-up during the survey, though many of these children live doubled-up at some point during childhood. Thus, these studies likely underestimate the impact

of doubling-up on children's outcomes. Moreover, studies that use static measures estimate effects for children who were doubled-up for a short duration along with children who were doubled-up for a long period. The mechanisms through which household composition may affect children – such as changes in material well-being and availability of caregivers – likely have larger impacts over time, suggesting that measuring duration in different household types is key to understanding their cumulative effects.

While there are clear reasons to prefer a longitudinal perspective of household composition, this approach poses methodological challenges. As highlighted by life course theory, early life circumstances, such as household composition, have direct effects on children, but also influence the life course by shaping children's subsequent environments (Elder 1998). Thus, understanding the full effects of household composition requires capturing both its direct and indirect effects. Yet, if time-varying characteristics both predict and are predicted by the independent variable – household composition in this case – conventional static models provide biased estimates of the total effects of that variable. Research on doubling-up suggests that selection into household types is affected by many of the same factors that mediate the relationship between household composition and children's outcomes. For example, individuals who become unemployed are more likely to double-up (Wiemers 2014), and having an unemployed parent also affects children's outcomes, so controlling for maternal employment status is necessary to prevent omitted variable bias when estimating the effect of doubling-up throughout childhood on young adult outcomes. However, doubling-up increases mothers' likelihood of entering the workforce (Hao and Brinton 1997). Given that one pathway through which doubling-up may affect children is a change in maternal work status, controlling for mother's employment throughout childhood would “control away” this pathway and produce an

inaccurate portrayal of the total effect of doubling-up. Conversely, controlling only for maternal employment before the child was born would allow a model to capture indirect effects of doubling-up. However, because such a model would fail to acknowledge that maternal employment may change in ways not caused by household structure, and household structure may then respond to those changes, this model would also produce biased estimates.

Given these issues, I use marginal structural models and inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW) (Robins, Hernán, and Brumback 2000) to estimate the effects of time spent in different household types. IPTW addresses the problem of time-varying confounders by weighting each individual by the inverse of the predicted probability that the individual would be in the series of household structures in which she was observed. IPTW does not solve any issues due to unmeasured covariates that should be included in the model, so accurately modeling selection into doubled-up households is important, as it would be with conventional regression methods. However, unlike conventional regression methods, IPTW provides unbiased estimates of the total effects of household type over childhood if selection into doubled-up households is correctly modelled. Conventional regression methods, in contrast, require the additional assumption that household composition does not affect future values of time-varying confounders.

Data

I employ data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) and Child and Young Adult supplements (NLSY79-CYA). The NLSY surveyed over 12,600 Americans, with an oversample of Hispanic and African American respondents, to create a nationally-representative sample of men and women ages 14 to 21 at the start of 1979. The NLSY79-CYA includes all children born to NLSY79 mothers, and this sample is representative of

approximately 95 percent of all the children ever born to this cohort of women (Bureau of Labor Statistics n.d.). In 2012, the young adult response rate was over 80 percent (National Longitudinal Surveys n.d.). The NLSY is one of few surveys to follow children from birth through young adulthood, and the extensive covariates available from the maternal and child interviews make these data ideal for this analysis.

To study household structure throughout childhood and outcomes at age 20, I restrict my sample to children born between 1979 and 1995, about 80 percent of the original sample. Roughly half of the omitted births occurred prior to 1979 (to mothers age 20 and younger) and half occurred after 1995 (to mothers age 30 and over). Of the children in my sample, 2,576 were lost to follow-up at some point during childhood, and an additional 364 are missing measures on at least one outcome of interest, bringing the final sample size to 6,315. Following Wodtke, Harding, and Elwert (2011), I construct weights to address potential non-random attrition from the sample. The NLSY79 was fielded annually from 1979 to 1994 and biennially since 1994. For years in which there was no survey, I use values from the previous year. For all other missing data, I use multiple imputation.

My treatment variable, created from maternal household roster data, is a duration-weighted measure of exposure to different household types from age 1 to 17. Because I do not have the previous covariate and household structure information needed to model selection into households at birth, household type at birth is incorporated into my prediction models as a baseline confounder and is not used to estimate the effects of household type on child outcomes (Wodtke et al. 2011). My results estimate the effect of an additional year spent in each household type from ages 1 to 17.

I consider a household doubled-up if it contains at least one adult age 21 or over other than the mother and mother's romantic partner (Eggers and Moumen 2013).²⁶ I classify households into five types, depending on whether the child is living: 1) with mother in non-doubled-up household; 2) with mother in double-up formed with the child's grandparent(s); 3) with mother in double-up formed with the child's adult sibling(s); 4) with mother in double-up formed with another adult(s), which I call extended kin/non-kin households,²⁷ or 5) in any household without the mother. In all models, if a household has multiple additional adults, I assign children to the first extended household type listed above for which they are eligible. For example, if a mother co-resides with two additional adults, her mother and adult sister, I consider the household a multigenerational double-up. The ordering of doubled-up household types is intended to reflect the additional adult I expect to be most involved in the child's life.²⁸

Separating extended kin double-ups from non-kin double-ups did not reveal systematic differences between these groups.²⁹ Finally, while I include an indicator for how many years the

²⁶ While some studies count all adults age 18 and over as additional adults (Mollborn, Fomby, and Dennis 2011; Mykyta and Macartney 2012), this definition results in a high prevalence of adult sibling double-ups because it is common for adult children to remain in the natal household at age 18. Appendix 2 shows that using an older age cut-off produces broadly similar results.

²⁷ Of extended kin/non-kin double-ups, about 13 percent were formed with a male non-relative. Because of the possibility that some of these reported double-ups might actually have been cohabiting romantic partner households, I re-ran the analysis categorizing all double-ups identified because of the presence of male non-relatives as non-doubled-up households. The results are very similar with this specification of doubled-up households.

²⁸ Because fewer than 5 percent of adult sibling double-ups also contain an extended family/non-kin household member, altering the ordering for these household types produces minimal changes. Because over one-third of multigenerational households include an extended family/non-kin household member as well, I also analyzed these households as a separate category. I find that the effects of these households tend to fall between the estimates for multigenerational-only and extended kin/non-kin household types (appendix 3).

²⁹ Separating extended kin double-ups from non-kin double-ups produced weights with very high variance, likely due to the small number of non-kin double-ups. The high variance required that I top- and bottom-code the weights at the 5th/95th percentile for the supplemental analysis, though it increases bias in the estimates. Moreover, if the high variance reflects a near-zero probability of being in a non-kin double-up for certain groups, it may also bias the estimates (Petersen et al. 2012). These data limitations prevent me from making definitive claims about the similarities or differences between extended kin and non-kin double-ups, and future research should explore this question.

child spent in a household without her mother, this estimate is not a focus of this research. I include this household type to retain in my sample children who spend some, but not all, of childhood in a household without their mother, such as while living with their father or other relatives, away at school, or on their own. However, because the data for this analysis are primarily drawn from surveys with mothers, they are poorly-suited for studying the effects of non-maternal households, and I do not discuss results for this group.

My outcome variables measure young adult educational attainment and health. I measure whether the child, at age 20: 1) has graduated high school; 2) has ever attended college; 3) has smoked in the past month; 4) has symptoms of depression, measured by a score of 8 or above on the CES-D-SF (CESD-R n.d.; Levine 2013); and 5) is obese, measured by a self-reported height and weight corresponding to a BMI greater than 30. If data at age 20 was unavailable, I accept a measure from age 19, 21, or 22. Because depressive symptom data are only available in 2000 and 2002 for individuals not interviewed in the previous survey round, I also accept measures from ages 18 and 23 for children born in 1979 or 1980.

Table 3.1: Summary of Covariates

Demographic	
<i>Time Invariant</i>	<i>Time Varying</i>
Born in US	Urban residence
Child's race	Region of residence
Child's sex	Child's age
Child's year of birth	
Parents' education level	
Economic Need/Potential	
<i>Time Invariant</i>	<i>Time Varying</i>
AFQT percentile	Earnings
	Received welfare income
	Welfare income amount
	Unemployed
	Education level
	Military service
	Public housing
	Homeowner
	Residential moves
Childcare Needs	
<i>Time Invariant</i>	<i>Time Varying</i>
Age at birth of child	Health limits work
Self-esteem score	Employment status
Child or sibling was low birth weight	Enrolled in school
Drug use	Number of children
Binge drinking	Age of youngest child
	Marital status
	Cohabiting status
	Gained spouse/cohabiting partner
	Lost spouse/cohabiting partner
	Household changes

Predictors

To estimate the IPTWs, I predict household type from a multinomial logistic regression model. Previous research has established the importance of demographics, economic factors, and childcare needs in mothers' likelihood of living doubled-up (Pilkauskas 2012; Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan 2002). Table 3.1 provides a summary of included covariates. Appendix table A1.1 provides weighted descriptive statistics for all outcomes and covariates.

Demographic Factors

To capture demographic factors that may prompt doubling-up, I include child's race (Hispanic, non-Hispanic black, and non-black, non-Hispanic, which I refer to as white)³⁰ and an indicator for whether the mother was born in the U.S. I also include the sex and birth year of the focal child. Time-varying indicators measure whether the family lives in an urban area and the region of residence (south, north central, west, or northeast). As measures of mothers' social origins, I include indicators for the highest reported educational attainment of her parents (less than high school, high school, some college, or 4+ years of college).

Economic Need

To reflect economic need, I include measures of total income of the mother and, if married, her spouse from wages and salary, business or farm income, and/or military income in the previous calendar year (in \$10,000s). This measure is adjusted to 2014 dollars and top-coded at the 95th percentile. Additionally, I include an indicator for whether the mother received any welfare, including cash assistance (AFDC/TANF), food stamps, and/or SSI, in the past calendar year and, if so, a measure of her total welfare income (in \$10,000s), adjusted to 2014 dollars and top-coded at the 95th percentile. Because doubling-up can be a response to unemployment, I

³⁰ Though previous work suggests the effects of doubling-up may differ by race (Foster and Kalil 2007; Mollborn et al. 2011), separate models by race did not reveal systematic differences between groups.

include an indicator for whether the mother reported that either she or her spouse received unemployment income or that she was unemployed at some point during the current calendar year.³¹ To further capture the mother's earning potential, I include time-varying indicators for her educational attainment (less than high school, high school, some college, or 4+ years of college), as well as her 1979 Armed Forces Qualifying Test score percentile, a measure of cognitive achievement.

Because members of the armed forces may receive housing benefits, I include an indicator of whether the mother or, if married, her spouse received any income from military service in the past year. Similarly, I include a measure of whether she and her family ever lived in public housing or received a government rent subsidy in the past year and whether she or her spouse owns or is currently buying their home. These variables capture the availability of housing options. Additionally, public/subsidized housing, military housing, and renters' landlords may all impose rules about occupancy and extended stays by guests, making it less likely that a family will double-up. Finally, to capture overall residential instability that may be predictive of temporary housing arrangements, I include a variable for the total number of previous residential moves.

Childcare Needs

Mothers with greater childcare needs may be more likely to double-up. To capture factors which could limit a mother's ability to care for her child, I include measures of mother's age at the birth of the child and the last observation of her Rosenberg self-esteem score before the child was born. As measures of child and maternal health, I include a time-invariant indicator for whether the child or a sibling was low birthweight and a time-varying measure of whether health

³¹ I use unemployment data from the current calendar year, despite being unable to distinguish whether the unemployment episode occurred before or after the double-up, because I expect the effects of unemployment on doubling-up to occur relatively quickly and assume it is less common that doubling-up would cause unemployment.

limits the mother's ability to work. An indicator for whether the mother reports having used cocaine or crack cocaine ten or more times in her lifetime serves as a rough measure of drug use. I also include a measure of whether the mother reported drinking six or more drinks on a single occasion in the past month. Because the data on self-esteem, drug use, and binge drinking were gathered too inconsistently to be included as time-varying covariates, I used the last observed value before the birth of the child. To account for demands for the mother's time, which may affect her need for childcare assistance, I include time-varying indicators of her employment status in the past calendar year (full-time, part-time, or not employed) and whether she was enrolled in school.

A mother's childcare needs are also influenced by the age and number of children for whom she is responsible. I include time-varying measures of how many biological, adopted, or step-children the mother has in the household, as well as the age of her youngest child. Because romantic relationship status and changes can influence a mother's need for childrearing assistance, I include time-varying indicators for whether the mother is currently married, previously married (including divorced, separated, or widowed), or never married.³² For currently unmarried mothers, I also include an indicator for the presence of a cohabiting partner. I measure changes in the mother's relationship status with two indicators for whether she gained or lost, respectively, a spouse or cohabiting partner between the previous and current survey wave. To account for household instability, I include a variable for the total number of previous

³² Because I am interested in the effects of extended household members beyond parents' romantic partners, I include mother's romantic relationship status as covariates in my prediction equations. However, to explore whether the effect of doubled-up household types vary by mother's relationship status, I stratify the sample by marital status at child's birth in appendix 4. The results produce few significant differences between married and unmarried mothers, but do suggest that extended kin/non-kin households may be more detrimental for children born to unmarried mothers than children born to married mothers.

transitions between household types. This measure excludes transitions into adult sibling double-ups that are the result of the sibling aging, rather than newly joining the household.

Inverse Probability Treatment Weights

Following previous research (Sharkey and Elwert 2011; Wodtke et al. 2011), I use stabilized IPTWs, which have desirable properties over non-stabilized weights, including smaller variance (Robins et al. 2000). The use of stabilized weights also reduces the magnitude of potential bias that could occur if certain subgroups of the sample rarely receive the treatment (i.e., doubling-up) (Cole and Hernán 2008). To construct the weights, I predict the child's household type using multinomial logit models. For each child (i), the probability of treatment is the product of the year-specific probabilities of being in the household type in which the child was actually observed from ages 1 to 17. The year-specific (k) predicted probabilities of an individual being in the household structure in which she was observed (A_{ik}) are based on household structure ($A_{i(k-1)}$) and time-varying covariates ($\bar{L}_{(k-1)}$) measured in the previous year, as well as time-invariant covariates and baseline values of time-varying covariates (\bar{L}_0). This product is the denominator of the stabilized weight. The numerator follows the same form, but excludes time-varying predictors.

$$SW_i = \frac{\prod_{k=1}^{17} P[A_k = a_{ik} | A_{(k-1)} = a_{(k-1)i}, \bar{L}_0 = l_0]}{\prod_{k=1}^{17} P[A_k = a_{ik} | A_{(k-1)} = a_{(k-1)i}, \bar{L}_{(k-1)} = l_{(k-1)i}, \bar{L}_0 = l_0]}$$

Following convention, I construct attrition weights to address the possibility that attrition from the sample before young adulthood is non-random (Lee and McLanahan 2015; Wodtke et al. 2011). These weights follow the same form as the stabilized IPT weights described above, but they adjust for children's probability of remaining in the sample through age 19. In this case, the denominator is the product of the probabilities of the child remaining in the sample in each year, conditional on the child being observed in the previous year, her time-invariant and baseline

characteristics, and time-varying characteristics and household composition observed in the previous year. The numerator is similar, but excludes time-varying covariates. I multiply the IPT weights by the attrition weights to produce the final weights used in the outcome models.³³ To reduce the variance of the weights and lessen the influence of the highly-weighted observations, I top- and bottom-code the weights at the 1st and 99th percentile (Cole and Hernán 2008). This results in a final weight with a mean of 1.06 and standard deviation of 1.40.

Marginal Structural Model using IPTW

I estimate a series of logit models in which each outcome – high school graduation, college attendance, smoking, depression, and obesity – is a function of duration-weighted exposure to each household type from ages 1 through 17. In the equation below, the log odds ratios δ_1 through δ_4 are the estimated impact of spending one additional childhood year in a given household type (multigenerational double-up, adult sibling double-up, extended kin/non-kin double-up, or without mother) on the log odds of experiencing the outcome.

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{logit}_{IPT\text{-weighted}}(P(Y_i = 1)) \\ &= \theta_0 + \delta_1 \sum_{k=1}^{17} a_{1ik} + \delta_2 \sum_{k=1}^{17} a_{2ik} + \delta_3 \sum_{k=1}^{17} a_{3ik} + \delta_4 \sum_{k=1}^{17} a_{4ik} + \gamma_2 \bar{L}_{i0} \end{aligned}$$

Using the stabilized IPTWs requires that the model condition on time-invariant and baseline covariates, \bar{L}_{i0} , in order for doubling-up to be unconfounded with these background traits (Wodtke et al. 2011). For both the prediction models and marginal structural models, I cluster standard errors at the mother level to account for non-independence of observations from siblings.

³³ Following convention for studies using IPTW, I present results of the outcome models weighted by the product of the attrition and IPT weights. When I weight the outcomes models by the product of the IPT weights and the NLSY79-CYA longitudinal weights, which adjust for both attrition and survey design, the results are very similar, though the coefficient on multigenerational households for smoking is slightly larger in magnitude and statistically significant in the NLSY79-CYA-weighted analysis [b=-0.05, CI=(-0.09, -0.00)].

Results

Prevalence and Instability of Doubled-up Households

Table 3.2 reports the proportion of children who experienced each doubled-up household type, weighted to be representative of children born to the NLSY79 cohort of mothers. These results show that living in a doubled-up household is a common childhood experience: 45.1 percent of children experience a double-up at some point from ages 1 through 17.³⁴ The cumulative prevalence of doubling-up underscores the importance of longitudinal measures of household composition. Though nearly half of children double-up at some point, a relatively small proportion (0.10) of all childhood years from ages 1 to 17 are spent doubled-up, suggesting that a single point-in-time measure would miss many previous and future double-ups.

Table 3.2: Proportion of Children Who Ever Experienced Household Type, Age 1 to 17

Household Type	proportion
Any double-up	0.451
Extended kin/non-kin	0.153
Adult sibling	0.187
Multigenerational	0.232
Observations	6315

Sample weighted using NLSY79-CYA longitudinal weights.

Multigenerational households are the most common type of doubled-up household, with over one-fifth of children experiencing this household type between ages 1 and 17. However, adult sibling and extended family/non-kin double-ups are not uncommon. Approximately 19 percent of children lived in a household with an adult sibling and 15 percent in a household with extended family/non-kin. Many children live in multiple double-up types over childhood, and there is substantial overlap in the children who experience multigenerational and extended kin/non-kin households. Over 40 percent of children who ever live in an extended kin/non-kin

³⁴ Because mothers are most likely to double-up when their child is younger (Pilkauskas et al. 2014), these numbers are smaller than they would be if they included mothers who doubled-up in the year of their child's birth.

household also experience a multigenerational household, a rate nearly twice that of children who never live in an extended kin/non-kin household.

Table 3.3: Years Spent in Household Type, Children who Ever Experience Household Type

Household Type	Mean	25 th percentile	Median	75 th percentile
Any double-up	3.894	1.000	3.000	5.000
Extended kin/non-kin	2.433	1.000	2.000	3.000
Adult sibling	2.164	1.000	2.000	3.000
Multigenerational	4.249	1.000	3.000	6.000

Sample weighted using NLSY79-CYA longitudinal weights.

Table 3.3 shows the average number of years spent in each doubled-up household type, from ages 1 through 17, for children who ever experienced the household type. On average, children who double-up spend a total of 3.9 years in these households.³⁵ Children who double-up in extended kin/non-kin households at some point between ages 1 and 17 spend an average of 2.4 years in this household type. Similarly, children who live in an adult sibling double-up spend an average of 2.2 years in such households. Children tend to spend more years in multigenerational households than in other types of double-ups. Children who live in a multigenerational household spend an average of 4.2 childhood years in these households.

These averages conceal considerable variation in the amount of time children spend in each household type, especially for multigenerational homes. While nearly 30 percent of children who live in multigenerational households spend a year or less in these households, over one-fourth spend six or more childhood years in these households. Adult sibling and extended family/non-kin households are more consistently short-lived: over forty percent of children who experience these household types live in such households for a year or less. However, for both adult sibling and extended kin/non-kin double-ups, over a fourth of the children who experience

³⁵ Glick and Van Hook's (2011) analysis of the Survey of Income and Program Participation, which interviews households every four months, finds that most doubled-up households dissolve in less than one year, suggesting that the annual/biennial structure of the NLSY79 likely misses a substantial number of double-ups of shorter duration. By excluding these shorter-duration double-ups, I may underestimate the average total childhood years spent in each household type. On the other hand, by assuming that each observed spell lasts at least a full year, I may be overestimating the average total childhood years spent in each household type.

these respective household types live in these households for a total of three or more years. The variation in number of childhood years spent doubled-up further demonstrates the importance of longitudinal measures of household composition.

Given the high instability of doubled-up households, childhood years spent doubled-up are not necessarily consecutive. Most children who experience an adult sibling double-up have no (24.7%), one (21%), or two (24.3%) household type transitions during childhood (excluding transitions caused by co-resident siblings aging into adulthood), but children who experience multigenerational and extended family/non-kin double-ups are more likely to cycle in and out of different household types. Nearly 20 percent of children who ever live in multigenerational households and approximately 25 percent of children who ever live in extended family/non-kin households experience five or more transitions between household types during childhood.

Table 3.4: Prediction Model for Household Type

		Multigenerational		Adult Sibling		Extended Kin/Non-kin	
		b	ci95	b	ci95	b	ci95
Time Varying							
Previous household:							
Multigenerational		4.87***	(4.69 , 5.05)	0.54**	(0.16 , 0.93)	1.89***	(1.67 , 2.11)
Adult sibling		0.74**	(0.23 , 1.25)	3.81***	(3.66 , 3.96)	1.34***	(0.87 , 1.81)
Extended kin/non-kin		1.92***	(1.69 , 2.16)	0.83***	(0.35 , 1.31)	4.18***	(3.97 , 4.39)
Not with mother		2.39***	(2.12 , 2.67)	0.96**	(0.34 , 1.58)	1.32***	(0.90 , 1.73)
Urban residence		0.08	(-0.09 , 0.24)	0.00	(-0.14 , 0.15)	0.20*	(0.00 , 0.40)
Region:							
South		0.21*	(0.02 , 0.41)	-0.17	(-0.36 , 0.02)	0.10	(-0.14 , 0.35)
West		0.17	(-0.05 , 0.38)	-0.10	(-0.32 , 0.12)	0.15	(-0.10 , 0.39)
North Central		-0.08	(-0.31 , 0.14)	-0.30**	(-0.52 , -0.09)	0.03	(-0.24 , 0.29)
Child's age		0.00	(-0.01 , 0.02)	0.05***	(0.03 , 0.07)	-0.05***	(-0.07 , -0.02)
Earnings		-0.02	(-0.04 , 0.01)	-0.01	(-0.03 , 0.01)	-0.05***	(-0.08 , -0.03)
Received welfare		-0.11	(-0.28 , 0.07)	0.08	(-0.18 , 0.34)	-0.12	(-0.34 , 0.11)
Welfare income		-0.14	(-0.30 , 0.01)	-0.35**	(-0.56 , -0.14)	0.01	(-0.18 , 0.19)
Unemployed		0.08	(-0.03 , 0.20)	0.06	(-0.10 , 0.23)	0.11	(-0.04 , 0.26)
Education level:							
Less than HS		0.09	(-0.24 , 0.41)	0.71***	(0.40 , 1.01)	-0.24	(-0.66 , 0.19)
Some college		0.01	(-0.27 , 0.29)	0.26*	(0.02 , 0.50)	-0.45*	(-0.81 , -0.09)
High school		0.04	(-0.24 , 0.31)	0.55***	(0.31 , 0.79)	-0.38*	(-0.74 , -0.01)
Military service		0.09	(-0.20 , 0.38)	0.03	(-0.27 , 0.33)	-0.26	(-0.60 , 0.08)
Public housing		-0.33***	(-0.50 , -0.16)	-0.13	(-0.37 , 0.11)	-0.31**	(-0.53 , -0.10)
Homeowner		-0.38***	(-0.53 , -0.22)	0.01	(-0.15 , 0.18)	-0.01	(-0.18 , 0.17)
Residential moves		-0.05	(-0.09 , 0.00)	-0.05*	(-0.09 , -0.01)	-0.01	(-0.07 , 0.04)
Health limits work		-0.14	(-0.31 , 0.04)	0.17	(-0.03 , 0.36)	-0.04	(-0.27 , 0.19)
Employment status:							
Not working		0.05	(-0.10 , 0.19)	-0.29***	(-0.45 , -0.12)	-0.11	(-0.29 , 0.08)
Part time		-0.18	(-0.37 , 0.01)	-0.09	(-0.27 , 0.09)	-0.31**	(-0.55 , -0.08)
In school		0.11	(-0.04 , 0.25)	-0.00	(-0.22 , 0.21)	-0.18	(-0.40 , 0.03)
Number of children		-0.09*	(-0.16 , -0.02)	0.36***	(0.30 , 0.41)	-0.04	(-0.11 , 0.03)

Table 3.4: Prediction Model for Household Type (Continued)

Age of youngest child	-0.01	(-0.03 , 0.01)	0.12***	(0.10 , 0.15)	0.01	(-0.01 , 0.04)
Marital status:						
Previously married	0.68***	(0.49 , 0.87)	0.04	(-0.14 , 0.22)	0.72***	(0.48 , 0.96)
Never married	0.83***	(0.64 , 1.03)	0.15	(-0.08 , 0.37)	0.78***	(0.53 , 1.03)
Cohabiting	-0.81***	(-1.04 , -0.57)	-0.14	(-0.44 , 0.16)	-0.45**	(-0.75 , -0.14)
Relationship change:						
Gain spouse/partner	-2.73***	(-3.00 , -2.45)	-0.20	(-0.76 , 0.36)	-1.67***	(-2.03 , -1.30)
Lose spouse/partner	2.06***	(1.84 , 2.29)	0.14	(-0.29 , 0.58)	1.70***	(1.42 , 1.97)
Household changes	0.03	(-0.01 , 0.08)	-0.00	(-0.05 , 0.05)	0.10***	(0.04 , 0.15)
Time Invariant						
Born in US	-0.19	(-0.44 , 0.05)	-0.07	(-0.29 , 0.16)	0.05	(-0.24 , 0.34)
Race:						
Black	0.19	(-0.01 , 0.39)	0.60***	(0.41 , 0.79)	0.14	(-0.09 , 0.37)
Hispanic	0.25*	(0.03 , 0.46)	0.35***	(0.15 , 0.55)	0.42***	(0.18 , 0.65)
Child's sex male	-0.01	(-0.09 , 0.08)	-0.01	(-0.10 , 0.07)	0.01	(-0.09 , 0.11)
Child's year of birth	0.00	(-0.02 , 0.03)	0.01	(-0.02 , 0.03)	-0.01	(-0.05 , 0.03)
Parents' education:						
Less than high school	0.01	(-0.24 , 0.26)	0.05	(-0.21 , 0.31)	0.11	(-0.28 , 0.50)
High school	0.05	(-0.20 , 0.29)	0.09	(-0.15 , 0.33)	0.08	(-0.30 , 0.45)
Some college	0.07	(-0.26 , 0.40)	-0.01	(-0.32 , 0.30)	0.24	(-0.18 , 0.66)
AFQT percentile	0.00	(-0.00 , 0.00)	-0.00	(-0.01 , 0.00)	-0.00	(-0.00 , 0.00)
Age at birth of child	-0.01	(-0.04 , 0.02)	0.09***	(0.06 , 0.11)	-0.02	(-0.06 , 0.02)
Self-esteem score	-0.01	(-0.02 , 0.01)	0.00	(-0.02 , 0.02)	-0.00	(-0.02 , 0.01)
Low birthweight	0.16*	(0.00 , 0.33)	-0.01	(-0.17 , 0.15)	0.03	(-0.18 , 0.24)
Drug use	-0.05	(-0.34 , 0.25)	-0.24	(-0.49 , 0.02)	0.18	(-0.06 , 0.42)
Binge drinking	0.14*	(0.01 , 0.28)	0.10	(-0.05 , 0.25)	0.11	(-0.05 , 0.26)
Constant	-11.15	(-66.95 , 44.65)	-25.92	(-77.13 , 25.30)	17.23	(-52.54 , 87.00)
Observations	107355					

Household Type Prediction Model

Table 3.4 presents results from a multinomial logit model predicting residence in each household type, with living in a non-doubled-up household with a mother as the reference category.³⁶ This prediction model provides insight into the characteristics at time $k-1$ associated with residence in each household type at time k . Unsurprisingly, previous household type is a strong predictor of current household type. Living in any doubled-up household in one wave is significantly associated with living doubled-up in the same household type in the following wave, relative to living in a non-doubled-up household. Moreover, residence in any doubled-up household type is associated with heightened risk of being doubled-up in another doubled-up household type in the following wave, relative to being non-doubled-up. This association is statistically significant for all household types, though it is strongest for multigenerational and extended kin/non-kin households.

Mothers with higher income and greater housing options are less likely to double-up. Income from earnings is negatively associated with subsequent residence in all types of doubled-up households, though the association is statistically significant only for extended family/non-kin households. Similarly, for those children whose mothers receive welfare income, the amount received is significantly negatively associated with residence in an adult sibling double-up. Living in subsidized housing is significantly negatively associated with living in a multigenerational or extended family/non-kin household in the subsequent wave, and homeownership is negatively associated with living in a multigenerational home. Additionally, race remains significantly associated with doubling-up, even controlling for socio-economic factors. Compared to being white, being black increases the odds of living in an adult sibling

³⁶ For ease of interpretation, I exclude baseline measures of the time-varying covariates in this model, though they are included in the IPTW prediction model. Appendix 5 shows the full prediction model for the IPTW denominator.

double-up relative to living non-doubled-up, and being Hispanic increases the odds of living in any type of doubled-up household relative to living non-doubled-up.

Relative to being never married, being married lowers the odds of living doubled-up in multigenerational and extended kin/non-kin households relative to living non-doubled-up. Cohabiting is also associated with lower odds of living in multigenerational and extended kin/non-kin households. Additionally, family structure changes predict household type. Having a mother marry or begin to cohabit is associated with substantially reduced odds of living in a multigenerational or extended family/non-kin household compared to not living doubled-up, while having a mother end a marital or cohabiting relationship is associated with higher odds of living in a multigenerational or extended family/non-kin household relative to not being double-up. Household instability driven by non-romantic partners is also predictive: the number of previous transitions between household types is positively associated with residence in extended kin/non-kin households relative to non-doubled-up households.

Effects of Doubling-up on Young Adult Outcomes

Table 3.5 presents the results of the IPT-weighted outcomes models in the right-hand columns, and figure 3.1 graphs the predicted probabilities based on these coefficients. For comparison, the left-hand columns of table 3.5 list the coefficients and confidence intervals for outcome models that are weighted only by the attrition weights and do not account for selection into doubled-up households.

Table 3.5: Household Types and Children's Outcomes

	Unadjusted		IPTW-adjusted	
	b	ci95	b	ci95
<i>Education Outcomes</i>				
High School Graduation				
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.15***	(-0.19 , -0.11)	-0.09*	(-0.16 , -0.02)
Adult sibling	-0.08**	(-0.14 , -0.03)	0.05	(-0.05 , 0.15)
Multigenerational	-0.07***	(-0.09 , -0.05)	-0.01	(-0.06 , 0.03)
College Attendance				
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.15***	(-0.20 , -0.10)	-0.08*	(-0.16 , -0.00)
Adult sibling	-0.07**	(-0.12 , -0.02)	0.06	(-0.02 , 0.15)
Multigenerational	-0.06***	(-0.08 , -0.04)	-0.00	(-0.04 , 0.04)
<i>Health Outcomes</i>				
Depression				
Extended kin/non-kin	0.08***	(0.04 , 0.12)	0.06	(-0.03 , 0.15)
Adult sibling	-0.05	(-0.10 , 0.01)	-0.08	(-0.19 , 0.04)
Multigenerational	0.01	(-0.01 , 0.03)	0.01	(-0.03 , 0.05)
Smoking				
Extended kin/non-kin	0.06**	(0.02 , 0.10)	0.04	(-0.04 , 0.13)
Adult sibling	-0.12***	(-0.17 , -0.06)	-0.12*	(-0.23 , -0.02)
Multigenerational	-0.00	(-0.02 , 0.02)	-0.03	(-0.07 , 0.01)
Obesity				
Extended kin/non-kin	0.05	(-0.00 , 0.09)	0.10**	(0.03 , 0.17)
Adult sibling	0.07*	(0.01 , 0.12)	0.03	(-0.06 , 0.13)
Multigenerational	0.05***	(0.03 , 0.07)	0.02	(-0.02 , 0.06)
Observations	6315		6315	

* p<.05, ** p<.01, and *** p<.001

All models include baseline controls.

IPTW weights top and bottom coded at 1%/99%

Extended Kin/Non-kin Households

The unadjusted models show negative associations between childhood years spent in extended kin/non-kin households and educational attainment and positive associations with adverse young adult health outcomes. For all outcomes except obesity, these associations are statistically significant. While accounting for selection into extended kin/non-kin households attenuates most of these associations, the coefficients for high school graduation, college attendance, and obesity are statistically significant in the IPT-weighted models. In the IPT-weighted model, an additional year in an extended kin/non-kin household is associated with nine percent lower odds of high school graduation and eight percent lower odds of college attendance. An additional year in an extended kin/non-kin household is associated with 11 percent higher odds of obesity. While the coefficients for depression and smoking³⁷ fall from statistical significance in the IPT-weighted model, they remain positive. Overall, the results suggest that years spent in extended kin/non-kin households have negative effects on children's young adult well-being, even after accounting for selection into these households. The first column of figure 3.1 shows the consistently negative association between extended kin/non-kin households and educational attainment, and the first column of figure 3.2 shows the consistently positive association with adverse health outcomes.

³⁷ In these results, I consider a young adult a smoker if she reports smoking at least monthly. Using an indicator for whether the young adult reported smoking daily yields nearly identical results, but the confidence interval for adult sibling households is wider [b=-0.13; CI=(-0.26, 0.00)] and the coefficient for multigenerational households drops to zero [b=0.00; CI=(-0.05, 0.04)].

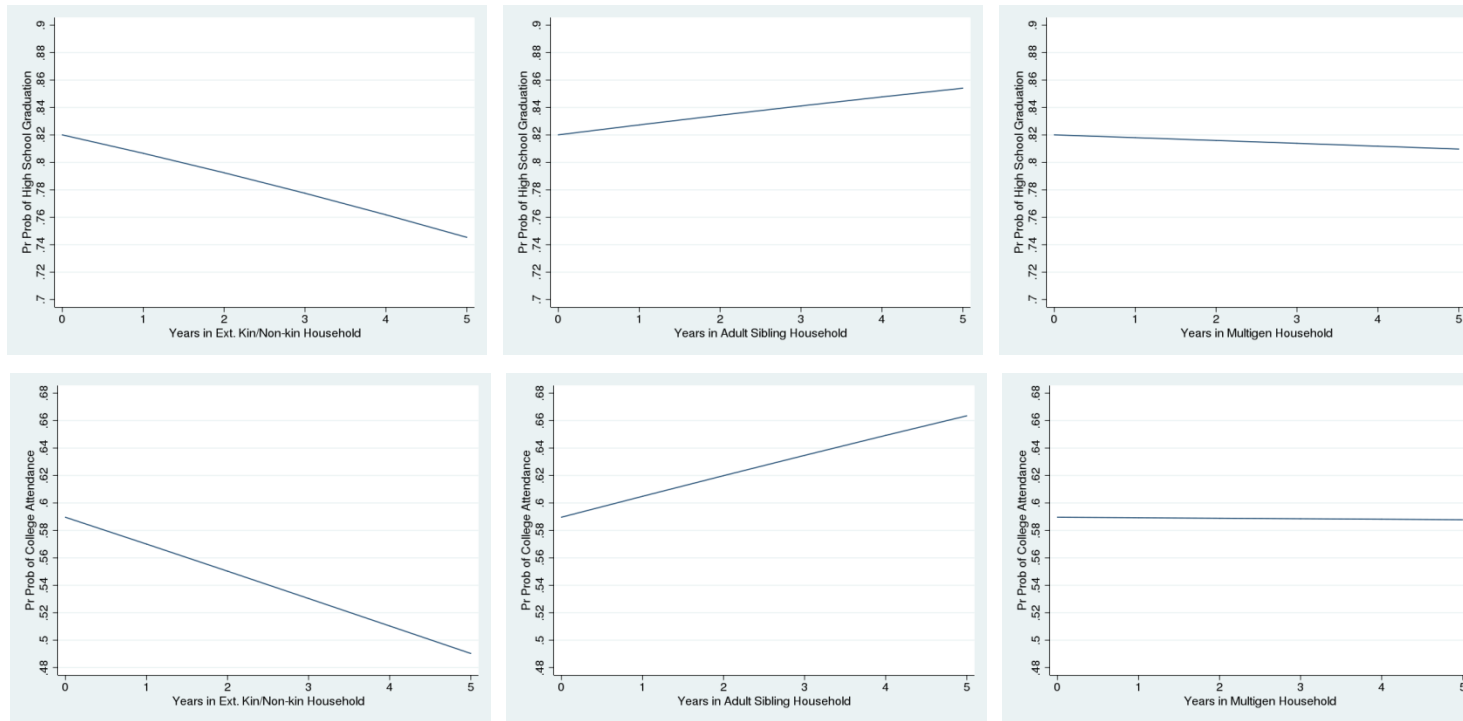


Figure 3.1. Household Types and Educational Attainment. Predicted probabilities of high school graduation and college attendance by years spent in extended kin/non-kin double-ups, adult sibling double-ups, and multigenerational double-ups. Graphs based on coefficients from table 3.5. Predicted probabilities calculated for each household type with years in other doubled-up household types and years in a household without mother set to zero and all other variables at their means.

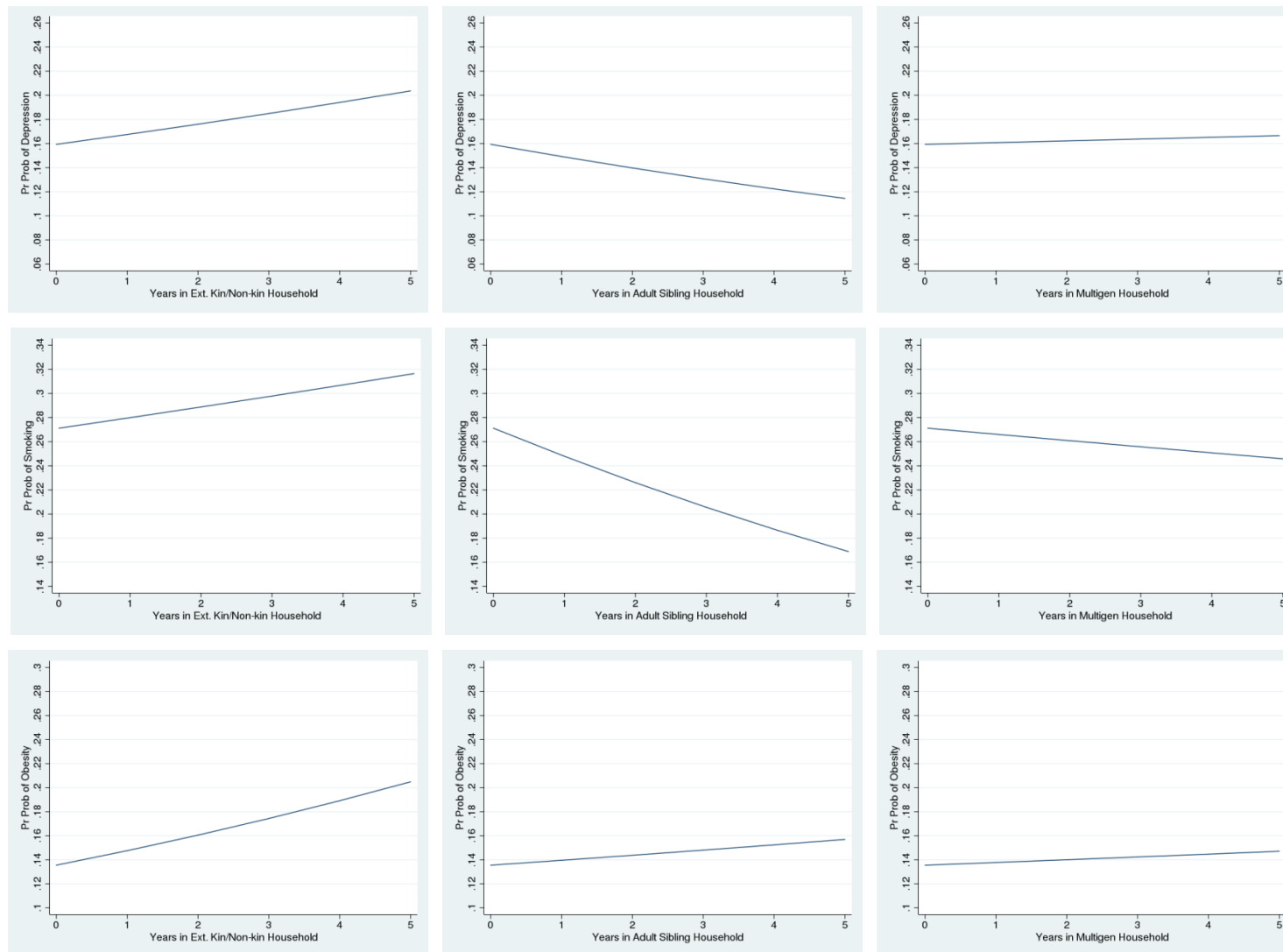


Figure 3.2. Household Types and Young Adult Health. Predicted probabilities of depression, smoking, and obesity by years spent in extended kin/non-kin double-ups, adult sibling double-ups, and multigenerational double-ups. Graphs based on coefficients from table 3.5. Predicted probabilities calculated for each household type with years in other doubled-up household types and years in a household without mother set to zero and all other variables at their means.

Adult Sibling Households

In the unadjusted model, childhood years spent in adult sibling households are significantly negatively associated with both high school graduation, college attendance, and smoking and significantly positively associated with smoking. Accounting for selection into these households changes these associations substantially. In total, four of the five coefficients from the IPT-weighted models suggest positive effects of adult sibling households, and I find no significant negative effects of these households. Years spent in adult sibling double-ups are positively associated with high school graduation and college attendance and negatively associated with depression, though none of these associations are statistically significant. The coefficient for obesity is positive, but insignificant. Only the negative coefficient for smoking reaches statistical significance. In the IPT-weighted model, an additional year in an adult sibling household is associated with 13 percent lower odds of smoking. The predicted probabilities in the second columns of figures 3.1 and 3.2 visualize the largely beneficial estimated effects of adult sibling households.

Multigenerational Households

The unadjusted models show significant negative associations between childhood years spent in multigenerational households and educational attainment. However, adjusting for selection attenuates these associations substantially, and the coefficients from the IPT-weighted models are near zero and not statistically significant. Both the unadjusted and the IPT-weighted models show relatively little association between multigenerational households and young adult health outcomes. Only the positive coefficient for obesity is significant in the unadjusted models, but the estimate is smaller and statistically insignificant in the IPT-weighted model. Together, these results suggest that after accounting for selection into these households, childhood years

spent in multigenerational double-ups have little effect on young adult educational attainment or health, as shown by the relatively flat predicted probability lines in the third columns of figures 3.1 and 3.2.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This analysis remains subject to several important limitations. While the NLSY79 provides an extensive list of covariates I incorporate into my models predicting household type, it does not contain data on all relevant characteristics. Because maternal depression might lead a mother to seek co-residential support, I would like to account for this concept in the prediction model, but a direct measure of maternal depression is only available for 1992 and 1994, so I do not include it in my analysis. However, self-esteem, which is measured at baseline, is associated with depression (Baumeister et al. 2003), and depression should also be partially captured by the time-varying indicator of whether health limits the type or amount of work the mother can do. The differences between the coefficients in the unadjusted and IPT-weighted models – particularly the substantial changes between the unadjusted and adjusted models for educational attainment – provides evidence that the IPT weights are accounting for selection into doubled-up household types, but omitted variables continue to be a consideration in this analysis.

Additionally, the NLSY79 does not specify which adult in a doubled-up household is the householder. Previous research provides some insight into this question; when adults live with their parents, the older generation tends to be the householder, suggesting that the mother is generally the householder in adult sibling double-ups, and the grandparent is generally the householder in multigenerational double-ups (Cohen and Casper 2002; Maroto 2017; White 1994). Whether a mother hosts another adult in her home or lives in someone else's home may shape how the household is experienced by the child, so examining how the effects of doubled-

up household types may differ by mother's householder status is an important question for future research.

Data limitations present another challenge for this analysis. Though often conceptualized as a single household type, doubled-up households represent a diverse group. This study improves upon prior research by examining differences between three different types of doubled-up households based on the (non)familial relationships of household members, but there are many theoretically-relevant ways to categorize doubled-up households, and subgroup sample size presents a challenge to differentiating between doubled-up households along all the potential dimensions. For example, insufficient sample size prevents me from being able to categorize household types by both the presence of mothers' romantic partners and other household adults. My robustness checks shed some light on the impacts of using an older age cut-off for adult sibling double-ups, including double-ups formed with the child's grandparent(s) *and* another non-sibling adult as a unique category, and stratifying by mother's marital status. However, the relatively large confidence intervals in these analyses limit my ability to draw strong conclusions, and questions remain about the ways in which doubled-up household types differ and the dimensions along which they should be categorized.

Data limitations shaped other decisions as well. In this study, the model predicting subsequent household type adjusts for the child's previous household type, but assumes that the association between each of the other predictor variables and subsequent household type is constant regardless of the child's household type in the previous wave. It would be preferable to predict the likelihood that the child is in each household type in the next year separately for each household type, but data limitations prevent me from modeling these groups separately. Similarly, while I explored differences by race, I found no clear patterns, likely due to sample

size. Future analyses should continue examining how families select into and out of doubled-up households and how selection processes and effects of doubled-up household types differ by race and nativity (cf. Kang and Cohen 2017; Mollborn et al. 2011).

As described, the instability of doubled-up households makes studying these households from a dynamic perspective vital. Household instability likely shapes the effects of residence in different type of doubled-up households. Recent studies have focused on the effects of not just family structure, but also family instability (Cavanagh and Huston 2006; Fomby and Cherlin 2007), and recent research demonstrates that transitions by extended family and non-kin in and out of the household also affect children's outcomes (Mollborn et al. 2012; Perkins 2018). In this analysis, I include previous transitions between household types as a predictor of subsequent household type, but do not estimate the relative effects of household structure and household transitions. Disentangling the independent effects of each of these factors is another important challenge for future research.

Conclusion

Prior studies of children's household composition has focused primarily on estimating the relationship between doubling-up, often measured at a single point in time, and childhood outcomes. This study extends this line of research by examining the cumulative effects of doubling-up throughout childhood and showing that childhood household structure can have enduring impacts on young adult well-being. To examine the long-term effects of doubling-up, I draw on longitudinal data that include household trajectories throughout childhood. The results demonstrate the importance of a longitudinal approach: though just ten percent of childhood years from ages 1 to 17 are spent doubled-up, a much larger percentage of children – 45 percent – double-up at some point during childhood. By accounting for household compositions

throughout childhood, rather than at a single point in time, this study reflects an understanding that households are dynamic and children's lives are shaped by the sum of their childhood environments.

I use inverse probability of treatment weighting and marginal structural models to estimate the cumulative impact of years spent in doubled-up households. By employing methods that capture both direct and mediated effects, this study takes seriously the life course theory premise that early environments affect later outcomes both directly and indirectly through their effects on later environments (Elder 1998). Yet unlike other methods that capture full effects, IPTW and marginal structural models also account for dynamic selection into doubled-up household types, allowing for the possibility that the same characteristics that predict household composition are also affected by household composition. I find that selection accounts for the associations between multigenerational and adult sibling households and worse young adult outcomes. However, extended kin/non-kin double-ups' negative associations with educational attainment and positive association with obesity are significant after adjusting for selection into these households. These results underscore the importance of rigorous methods for distinguishing between selection and causal effects while still capturing both the direct and indirect impacts of early environments.

Though qualitative work suggests that different types of doubled-up households vary substantially in the environments they create for children, quantitative research has tended to group all doubled-up household types together or examine only multigenerational households. In this study, I estimate the impact of three main doubled-up household types – those formed with children's grandparents, with adult siblings, and with other extended family or non-kin. I find that the impacts of doubling-up vary by the relationship between household members.

Particularly, the results suggest that childhood years spent doubled-up in a multigenerational home have little impact on young adult outcomes, but that years spent in extended family and non-kin double-ups are detrimental and years spent in adult sibling double-ups appear beneficial for some young adult outcomes. I find that doubling-up with extended family or non-kin is associated with lower educational attainment and higher odds of obesity, and doubling-up with an adult sibling is associated with lower odds of smoking. These differing effects indicate the need for a relational understanding of doubled-up households, reflecting that such households are not merely alternative housing arrangements, but also heterogeneous social environments for developing children.

Additionally, these effects vary by outcome. I find strong evidence of the effects of extended kin/non-kin households on educational attainment and obesity, but less clear evidence linking these households to depression or smoking. This finding is interesting in light of the literature on family structure; studies on father absence consistently find negative effects for adult mental health and substance use, including smoking, but there is little evidence of effects on cognitive development (McLanahan et al. 2013). These divergent results may reflect differences in how or the degree to which family structure and household composition affect children, underscoring the need for future research that examines household composition in concert with family structure.

These findings have implications for our conceptualization of family complexity. That co-residence with adults other than parents and parents' romantic partners influences children's long-term outcomes suggests that the tendency to focus exclusively on the nuclear family – defined by parents, romantic partners, and their minor children – is too limited. For children living with at least one parent, co-residence with grandparents, extended family, and non-kin is

more common than residence in either cohabiting or stepfamily households (Kennedy and Fitch 2012), and I find that some doubled-up household types have lasting effects on children's life chances.

Variation in the estimated effects of doubling-up by household type and outcome suggests potential mechanisms that future research should explore. First, extended kin/non-kin households were the only double-up type with consistently negative estimated effects. These findings could reflect a lower average level of investment in children's well-being by extended family and non-kin, compared to grandparents and adult siblings, suggesting the potential importance of close familial relationships. Given the study's limitations in distinguishing between double-ups formed with extended family and non-kin, future research should work to further identify the role of (non)familial ties in shaping doubled-up households' effects on children. Additionally, my results also show a significant negative association between years spent in adult sibling households and smoking, but no other significant associations between these households and other young adult outcomes. It is possible that co-residence with adult siblings is most beneficial in reducing risky behavior, perhaps by increasing the oversight and positive role-modelling children receive. Together, the findings lend support to differences in household functioning observed in the qualitative literature on doubled-up households, which suggests that double-ups formed by co-residence with an adult child may be relatively peaceful, while extended kin/non-kin households are often more conflictual (Harvey 2018, 2015; Newman 2012). The differential effects of double-ups formed with grandparents, adult siblings, and extended family and non-kin provides evidence against conceptualizing doubled-up households as a uniform category, and future research should continue disentangling how co-residence with different adults shapes children's lives.

Regardless of the mechanisms at work, the negative effects of extended family/non-kin households identified in this study are troubling given large recent increases in multiple family households. The number of households with unrelated subfamilies experienced sharp growth during the Great Recession, more than tripling between 2003 and 2009 (Eggers and Moumen 2013). These findings raise concerns about how this increasingly common household type is influencing children's lives. However, young adults living in their natal home remain the most common type of doubled-up household member (Eggers and Moumen 2013). My findings suggest that adult children living with their parents do not tend to create harmful childhood environments for their younger siblings. While more research is needed on how children experience co-residence with adult siblings, the results of this study are reassuring given the increasingly extended transition to adulthood.

Dissertation Conclusion

This dissertation examines the formation, dynamics, and effects of doubled-up households. In this project, I take seriously the possibility of heterogeneity within the category of doubled-up households; each chapter reveals important variation in how different doubled-up households are perceived and experienced by parents and how they affect families. In addition to the substantive contribution to our understanding of doubling-up as an alternative housing arrangement, this dissertation makes theoretical contributions to the literatures on social support and family complexity.

In chapter one, I show that parents seeking to double-up exert constrained agency over these instrumental support activation decisions. When deciding whether doubling-up in a particular household is desirable and whether it is even considered an option, parents evaluate the level of support itself, as well as the social relationships involved and the conditions of receiving the support. This chapter contributes to our understanding of how parents think about social support availability and activation, and it identifies difficult trade-offs parents using the private housing safety net face.

Chapter two examines how household members negotiate and contest their economic exchange relationships. I argue that a lack of taken-for-granted understandings of household members' relationships and obligations to one another hinders successful intra-household exchange and contributes to the instability of doubled-up households. This chapter provides insight into how doubled-up households are socially understood and highlights the mutual benefits of many doubled-up households for both householders and guests.

Finally, chapter three examines the effects on young adult health and educational attainment of three types of doubled-up households: those formed with grandparents, with an

adult sibling, and with extended family or non-kin. I find little evidence of an impact of years spent in multigenerational households. However, my results suggest negative effects for years spent in extended kin/non-kin double-ups and potential positive impacts for years spent co-residing with an adult sibling, though the evidence for adult sibling double-ups is weaker. This chapter shows that doubling-up in childhood can have a lasting impact on children's long-term well-being, but the effects vary by household relationships.

Along with the substantive contributions, this dissertation makes data and methodological contributions. Chapters one and two are based on longitudinal, in-depth interview data from a sample of doubled-up parents with young children. While much previous research describing doubled-up households has relied on highly disadvantaged samples (e.g., Clampet-Lundquist 2003; Desmond 2012; Rhodes and DeLuca n.d.; Skobba and Goetz 2013), I identified parents who doubled-up from a large-scale study employing a stratified random sample. Thus, the sample is more geographically, racially and ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse than many studies of doubled-up parents, and I captured parents in a wide range of doubled-up households, including double-ups formed with parents, siblings or cousins, partners' kin, and friends and "disposable ties" (Desmond 2012).

Chapter three makes a methodological contribution by applying inverse probability of treatment weighting and marginal structural models to examine the long-term impacts of childhood years spent doubled-up. These methods of causal inference for time-varying treatments allow me to capture the full effect of household composition throughout childhood while still accounting for other time-varying covariates that might predict household composition. I use these methods to look beyond the short-term impacts of doubling-up at a single point in time often examined by previous research and ask whether the cumulative effects

of childhood years spent in doubled-up households persist into young adulthood, where they may shape children's long-term life chances.

The findings from my three empirical chapters provide new insight into doubled-up households, but also offer many avenues for future research. Prior research links doubling-up to specific events like eviction and unemployment, but chapter one shows that parents describe a variety of reasons for doubling-up. I find that while many parents are pushed into double-ups by housing crises, others double-up after romantic break-ups or to save money while pursuing a goal, and a substantial minority have never lived independently. Future research should explore variation in how doubling-up fits into parents' overall residential trajectories. Do most parents use double-ups to weather temporary set-backs and exit after (re)gaining financial security? Which parents frequently cycle between households? Are there groups for whom doubling-up is a long-term housing strategy? This knowledge would contribute to the literature on residential mobility by showing how doubling-up, as a common housing strategy for low-income households, shapes families' residential patterns. Additionally, variation in the role of doubling-up in parents' residential trajectories reveals the dynamics of social support and can provide insights into the conditions under which housing support helps families achieve long-term stability.

This dissertation identifies the effects of different types of doubled-up households on child well-being and suggests several potential mechanisms behind these effects. Chapter three shows that childhood years spent in extended kin and non-kin double-ups are associated with worse young adult health and educational attainment, while childhood years in multigenerational households and adult sibling double-ups do not appear to have a negative impact on children's long-term outcomes. Chapters one and two suggest important differences between household

functioning in multigenerational and extended family/non-kin double-ups, which may contribute to their different effects. Findings from chapter two show that multigenerational households are associated with greater institutionalization of relationships. While this chapter focuses on the role of institutionalized household roles in mitigating conflict over intra-household exchange, greater agreement over household roles likely reduces the overall level of stress and conflict in the household, with possible benefits for children. Additionally, both chapters one and two underscore the relative trust associated with multigenerational relationships and the greater stability of multigenerational arrangements.

Chapter one shows that parents often associate multigenerational households with a relatively high level of support because grandparents are perceived to be invested in children's well-being. While I lack objective measures of the quality of support in different households, if parents' perceptions are correct, grandparental households may provide more positive environments for children than do non-multigenerational double-ups. Additionally, parents who double-up in multigenerational households often do so despite knowing the conditions that parents place on this support, sometimes including expectations about behavior. If grandparents' expectations about parental behavior create more structure for children in multigenerational households compared to non-multigenerational households, these conditions may have positive ramifications for children's well-being.

While this dissertation suggests several mechanisms that may contribute to the differential effects of multigenerational and non-multigenerational households, further research is needed to test these mechanisms. Future research might examine how, for example, parenting styles, the home environment, childcare arrangements, material well-being, and residential outcomes change depending on the type of household in which the family is doubled-up. In

addition to identifying the mechanisms driving the effects of extended kin/non-kin double-ups on children, such research might inform how we think about what categories of doubling-up matter. In this dissertation, multigenerational and non-multigenerational households emerged in chapters one and two as an important distinction, while chapter three shows that households formed with adult siblings – a group barely represented in the qualitative data – may represent another distinct group. Further knowledge of the mechanisms linking doubling-up to child well-being may suggest that these are the distinctions most important for how doubled-up households function and affect their members, or it may suggest other ways of categorizing doubled-up households, such as by relative age of the household members, whether the household members are kin or non-kin, or some other dimension.

While this dissertation focuses on the presence of additional adults within the household – defined as adults besides the householder and her romantic partner – future work should expand on these findings by incorporating information about parents' romantic partners as well. Fully incorporating household composition into the study of family complexity requires attention to all members of the household, both those in the nuclear family and those outside the nuclear family. For example, future research should categorize household types by both family structure (i.e., mother's romantic relationship status) and household structure (i.e., doubled-up status) to shed light on potential interactions between family and household composition. Such research could clarify the extent to which household structure is unique from, or simply a full measure of, family structure and provide a fuller understanding of children's complex household environments. Additionally, future research should examine how household and family structure may affect one another. For example, scholars might consider how the presence of householders' or guests' romantic partners may affect the dynamics of doubling-up or test how doubling-up

may affect mothers' decisions about romantic relationship transitions (cf. Sassler and Miller 2017; Smock, Manning, and Porter 2005).

As rates of housing cost burden continue to increase without matching growth in wages or public housing assistance, doubled-up households are likely to remain an important alternative housing option for low-income families. This dissertation shows that doubling-up often forces parents to make tough trade-offs in their housing decisions and raises questions about what constitutes a family that can impede household functioning. By revealing some of the difficulties parents face navigating the use of doubling-up to meet their housing needs, this dissertation suggests the importance of continued research into this private housing safety net to better understand the experiences of doubled-up families.

Appendix 1: Descriptive Statistics

Table A1.1: Descriptive Statistics

	mean	sd
Outcomes		
High School Graduation	0.80	
College Attendance	0.62	
Depression	0.17	
Smoking	0.28	
Obesity	0.15	
Household Type		
Not doubled-up	0.86	
Multigenerational	0.06	
Adult sibling	0.02	
Extended kin/non-kin	0.02	
Not with mother	0.04	
Household type transitions	0.72	1.28
<i>Time Invariant Covariates</i>		
Born in US	0.95	
Race:		
White	0.73	
Black	0.18	
Hispanic	0.09	
Parents' educational attainment:		
Less than high school	0.29	
High school	0.42	
Some college	0.12	
College	0.16	
AFQT percentile	45.75	28.21
Child's sex male	0.51	
Low birthweight	0.14	
Age at birth of child	26.24	4.60
Self-esteem score	23.02	4.21
Binge drinking	0.17	
Drug use	0.08	
<i>Time Varying Covariates</i>		
Urban residence	0.74	
Region:		
Northeast	0.17	
South	0.35	
West	0.17	
North Central	0.31	
Earnings	6.23	4.63
Received welfare	0.17	
Welfare income	0.15	0.44
Unemployed	0.19	

Table A1.1: Descriptive Statistics (Continued)

Education level:		
Less than HS	0.12	
High school	0.45	
Some college	0.24	
College	0.19	
Military service	0.04	
Public housing	0.06	
Homeowner	0.61	
Residential moves	1.66	1.79
Health limits work	0.11	
Work status:		
Not working	0.36	
Part time	0.18	
Full time	0.45	
In school	0.09	
Number of children	2.31	1.14
Age of youngest child	6.16	4.92
Marital status:		
Previously married	0.19	
Never married	0.10	
Married	0.71	
Cohabiting partner	0.06	
Family change:		
Gain spouse/partner	0.03	
Lose spouse/partner	0.04	
Household type transitions	0.72	1.28
Observations	113670	

Sample weighted by NLSY79-CYA longitudinal weights.

Appendix 2: Alternative Age Cut-off

In the original analysis, I consider a household doubled-up if it contains at least one adult age 21 or over other than the mother and mother's romantic partner. Adult siblings may maintain residence in their family home in the years following high school while they attend college or begin their career, and co-residing with these relatively young adult siblings may be a substantively different experience than co-residing with an older adult. To examine the extent to which young adult siblings, especially those who may be attending college, are driving my results, I re-ran the analysis excluding adult siblings under age 24 when determining the household's double-up status.³⁸ As appendix table A2.1 shows, the results of the outcome model using the older age cut-off are broadly similar to the original analysis. The primary differences are that the coefficient on depression increases in magnitude and becomes statistically significant, while the standard error on smoking increases such that the coefficient is no longer statistically significant with the older age cut-off. Excluding households with younger adult siblings does not affect the overall finding that co-residence with adult siblings appears to not be detrimental to children's long-term outcomes.

³⁸ Young adult students under age 24 are considered "traditional college-age students" (Horn, Nevill, and Griffith 2006:vi).

Table A2.1: Household Types and Children's Outcomes, Alternative Age Cut-off

	b	ci95
High School Graduation		
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.08*	(-0.15 , -0.00)
Adult sibling	-0.00	(-0.16 , 0.16)
Multigenerational	-0.01	(-0.06 , 0.03)
College Attendance		
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.06	(-0.14 , 0.01)
Adult sibling	0.04	(-0.08 , 0.16)
Multigenerational	-0.00	(-0.04 , 0.04)
Depression		
Extended kin/non-kin	0.08	(-0.01 , 0.16)
Adult sibling	-0.17*	(-0.33 , -0.02)
Multigenerational	0.01	(-0.04 , 0.05)
Smoking		
Extended kin/non-kin	0.03	(-0.05 , 0.11)
Adult sibling	-0.14	(-0.30 , 0.01)
Multigenerational	-0.03	(-0.07 , 0.01)
Obesity		
Extended kin/non-kin	0.10**	(0.02 , 0.17)
Adult sibling	0.04	(-0.11 , 0.19)
Multigenerational	0.02	(-0.02 , 0.07)
Observations	6315	

* p<.05, ** p<.01, and *** p<.001

All models include baseline controls. IPTW weights top and bottom coded at 1%/99%

Appendix 3: Alternative Household Categories

Because about 28 percent of multigenerational households include an extended family/non-kin household member as well, I also analyzed these households as a separate category from multigenerational households. That is, in this supplementary analysis, I classify households into six types, depending on whether the child is living: 1) with mother in non-doubled-up household; 2) with mother in double-up formed with the child's grandparent(s) *and* another non-sibling adult, which I call multigenerational plus households; 3) with mother in double-up formed with the child's grandparent(s); 4) with mother in double-up formed with the child's adult sibling(s); 5) with mother in double-up formed with another adult(s), which I call extended kin/non-kin households, or 6) in any household without her mother. As with the original analysis, I assign children to the first extended household type listed above for which they are eligible.

Appendix table A3.1 shows that omitting households that contain extended family or non-kin from the multigenerational household category does not change the estimated effects of multigenerational households: they remain small, inconsistent in direction, and not statistically significant. The magnitude of the coefficients for multigenerational plus households tend to fall between the estimates for multigenerational only and extended kin/non-kin household types. Though the estimated effects of multigenerational plus households are significant only for depression, the direction of the coefficients suggests potential negative effects of these households relative to living not doubled-up.

Table A3.1: Household Types and Children's Outcomes, Alternative Categories

	b	ci95
High School Graduation		
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.09*	(-0.16 , -0.02)
Adult sibling	0.04	(-0.07 , 0.15)
Multigenerational	0.01	(-0.05 , 0.06)
Multigenerational Plus	-0.06	(-0.18 , 0.05)
College Attendance		
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.08*	(-0.16 , -0.01)
Adult sibling	0.05	(-0.03 , 0.14)
Multigenerational	0.00	(-0.04 , 0.05)
Multigenerational Plus	-0.06	(-0.14 , 0.03)
Depression		
Extended kin/non-kin	0.05	(-0.04 , 0.15)
Adult sibling	-0.09	(-0.20 , 0.02)
Multigenerational	0.01	(-0.04 , 0.05)
Multigenerational Plus	0.09*	(0.01 , 0.17)
Smoking		
Extended kin/non-kin	0.04	(-0.05 , 0.12)
Adult sibling	-0.12*	(-0.23 , -0.02)
Multigenerational	-0.02	(-0.07 , 0.02)
Multigenerational Plus	0.01	(-0.07 , 0.09)
Obesity		
Extended kin/non-kin	0.09*	(0.02 , 0.17)
Adult sibling	0.04	(-0.06 , 0.13)
Multigenerational	0.02	(-0.03 , 0.06)
Multigenerational Plus	0.06	(-0.02 , 0.14)
Observations	6315	

* p<.05, ** p<.01, and *** p<.001

All models include baseline controls.

IPTW weights top and bottom coded at 1%/99%

Appendix 4: Stratifying by Mother's Marital Status

Appendix table A4.1 presents the estimated effects of an additional year in each household type on young adult outcomes when the sample is stratified by the mother's relationship status (married or not currently married) at child's birth. The smaller sample sizes produce large confidence intervals, but the results for children born to married and unmarried mothers are largely similar. Extended kin/non-kin households are consistently associated with negative outcomes for both groups, with the exception of smoking. Adult sibling households are largely associated with positively outcomes for both groups. However, for children born to unmarried mothers, year spent in adult sibling households are slightly negatively associated with college attendance and are positively associated with obesity, though these estimates are not statistically significant. Finally, the estimated effects of multigenerational households are not statistically significant, generally small, and inconsistent in direction for both groups. Overall, the imprecision of the estimates in this subgroup analysis preclude strong conclusions about whether the effects of doubling-up differ by mother's marital status, but do not suggest dramatic differences.

Table A4.1: Household Types and Children's Outcomes, by Marital Status at Child's Birth

	Married Mothers		Unmarried Mothers	
	b	ci95	b	ci95
High School Graduation				
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.07	(-0.16 , 0.03)	-0.08	(-0.17 , 0.01)
Adult sibling	0.03	(-0.10 , 0.16)	0.05	(-0.11 , 0.21)
Multigenerational	-0.01	(-0.07 , 0.05)	-0.02	(-0.08 , 0.03)
College Attendance				
Extended kin/non-kin	-0.05	(-0.15 , 0.04)	-0.06	(-0.19 , 0.07)
Adult sibling	0.09	(-0.02 , 0.20)	-0.02	(-0.15 , 0.12)
Multigenerational	-0.01	(-0.06 , 0.05)	0.01	(-0.05 , 0.06)
Depression				
Extended kin/non-kin	0.11*	(0.01 , 0.22)	0.01	(-0.12 , 0.14)
Adult sibling	-0.07	(-0.21 , 0.07)	-0.06	(-0.22 , 0.11)
Multigenerational	0.05	(-0.01 , 0.10)	-0.04	(-0.10 , 0.03)
Smoking				
Extended kin/non-kin	0.04	(-0.05 , 0.14)	-0.02	(-0.16 , 0.12)
Adult sibling	-0.10	(-0.22 , 0.03)	-0.11	(-0.29 , 0.07)
Multigenerational	-0.05	(-0.10 , 0.00)	-0.04	(-0.09 , 0.02)
Obesity				
Extended kin/non-kin	0.07	(-0.10 , 0.23)	0.16**	(0.04 , 0.28)
Adult sibling	-0.01	(-0.13 , 0.11)	0.09	(-0.07 , 0.25)
Multigenerational	0.01	(-0.05 , 0.07)	0.02	(-0.05 , 0.09)
Observations	4139		2176	

* p<.05, ** p<.01, and *** p<.001

All models include baseline controls.

IPTW weights top and bottom coded at 1%/99%

Appendix 5: Full Prediction Model for Household Type

Table A5.1: Full Prediction Model for Household Type

	Multigenerational		Adult Sibling		Extended Kin/Non-kin		Not with Mother	
	b	ci95	b	ci95	b	ci95	b	ci95
Time Varying								
Household type:								
Multigenerational	4.70***	(4.53 , 4.87)	0.56**	(0.18 , 0.94)	1.84***	(1.62 , 2.05)	2.08***	(1.84 , 2.32)
Adult sibling	0.73**	(0.22 , 1.23)	3.78***	(3.63 , 3.93)	1.33***	(0.86 , 1.80)	0.77**	(0.31 , 1.24)
Ext. kin/non-kin	1.93***	(1.70 , 2.16)	0.85***	(0.38 , 1.33)	4.12***	(3.91 , 4.33)	1.44***	(1.12 , 1.75)
Not with mother	2.34***	(2.07 , 2.62)	0.85**	(0.22 , 1.47)	1.35***	(0.94 , 1.76)	5.31***	(5.09 , 5.53)
Urban residence	-0.08	(-0.27 , 0.10)	-0.05	(-0.21 , 0.10)	0.07	(-0.18 , 0.32)	-0.10	(-0.27 , 0.08)
Region:								
South	0.04	(-0.39 , 0.47)	-0.24	(-0.56 , 0.08)	-0.12	(-0.54 , 0.30)	0.04	(-0.29 , 0.37)
West	-0.00	(-0.42 , 0.41)	-0.32	(-0.71 , 0.06)	0.12	(-0.41 , 0.65)	-0.10	(-0.53 , 0.33)
North Central	-0.21	(-0.73 , 0.30)	-0.32	(-0.77 , 0.13)	-0.25	(-0.83 , 0.32)	-0.27	(-0.69 , 0.16)
Child's age	0.00	(-0.02 , 0.02)	0.07***	(0.05 , 0.09)	-0.06***	(-0.09 , -0.03)	0.08***	(0.05 , 0.10)
Earnings	-0.02	(-0.04 , 0.01)	0.00	(-0.02 , 0.02)	-0.03	(-0.06 , 0.00)	-0.05***	(-0.08 , -0.02)
Received welfare	-0.08	(-0.25 , 0.10)	0.05	(-0.21 , 0.32)	-0.13	(-0.36 , 0.10)	-0.07	(-0.28 , 0.14)
Welfare income	-0.18*	(-0.33 , -0.02)	-0.34**	(-0.55 , -0.13)	0.02	(-0.17 , 0.22)	-0.49***	(-0.68 , -0.31)
Unemployed	0.08	(-0.03 , 0.20)	0.05	(-0.12 , 0.21)	0.11	(-0.04 , 0.26)	0.13	(-0.01 , 0.28)
Education level:								
Less than HS	0.07	(-0.38 , 0.51)	-0.23	(-0.69 , 0.22)	-0.53*	(-1.06 , -0.00)	0.20	(-0.52 , 0.92)
Some college	-0.00	(-0.35 , 0.35)	-0.07	(-0.40 , 0.26)	-0.79***	(-1.20 , -0.38)	0.21	(-0.37 , 0.78)
High school	0.07	(-0.32 , 0.46)	0.04	(-0.33 , 0.42)	-0.68**	(-1.16 , -0.20)	0.07	(-0.57 , 0.71)
Military service	0.15	(-0.15 , 0.45)	0.11	(-0.21 , 0.44)	-0.24	(-0.66 , 0.19)	-0.13	(-0.51 , 0.25)
Public housing	-0.31***	(-0.48 , -0.15)	-0.20	(-0.44 , 0.04)	-0.30**	(-0.51 , -0.08)	-0.06	(-0.28 , 0.16)
Homeowner	-0.35***	(-0.50 , -0.20)	0.02	(-0.15 , 0.19)	0.06	(-0.12 , 0.24)	-0.40***	(-0.56 , -0.24)
Residential moves	-0.03	(-0.08 , 0.01)	-0.06**	(-0.10 , -0.02)	-0.02	(-0.07 , 0.04)	0.09***	(0.05 , 0.13)
Health limits work	-0.17	(-0.34 , 0.00)	0.13	(-0.07 , 0.33)	-0.03	(-0.26 , 0.19)	0.01	(-0.17 , 0.18)
Employment status:								
Not working	0.04	(-0.10 , 0.18)	-0.29**	(-0.46 , -0.11)	-0.04	(-0.22 , 0.14)	0.33***	(0.17 , 0.48)
Part time	-0.14	(-0.33 , 0.04)	-0.10	(-0.28 , 0.09)	-0.26*	(-0.49 , -0.02)	0.09	(-0.13 , 0.30)

Table A5.1: Full Prediction Model for Household Type (Continued)

Multigenerational	0.52***	(0.38 , 0.67)	-0.08	(-0.25 , 0.09)	0.17	(-0.03 , 0.36)	-0.06	(-0.23 , 0.11)
Ext. kin/non-kin	-0.05	(-0.23 , 0.14)	-0.09	(-0.35 , 0.16)	0.23*	(0.05 , 0.40)	0.16	(-0.06 , 0.38)
Urban residence	0.28**	(0.08 , 0.48)	0.15	(-0.02 , 0.31)	0.24	(-0.01 , 0.49)	0.13	(-0.06 , 0.33)
Region:								
South	0.19	(-0.23 , 0.60)	0.13	(-0.18 , 0.44)	0.26	(-0.16 , 0.68)	-0.06	(-0.39 , 0.26)
West	0.21	(-0.21 , 0.62)	0.26	(-0.10 , 0.62)	0.02	(-0.51 , 0.55)	-0.01	(-0.44 , 0.42)
North Central	0.15	(-0.35 , 0.64)	0.04	(-0.39 , 0.48)	0.30	(-0.26 , 0.86)	0.14	(-0.28 , 0.55)
Earnings	0.01	(-0.02 , 0.04)	-0.01	(-0.04 , 0.01)	-0.06**	(-0.09 , -0.02)	-0.01	(-0.04 , 0.03)
Any welfare	-0.10	(-0.24 , 0.04)	0.03	(-0.14 , 0.20)	0.05	(-0.11 , 0.21)	-0.03	(-0.21 , 0.15)
Welfare income	0.10	(-0.04 , 0.23)	0.00	(-0.14 , 0.15)	-0.03	(-0.17 , 0.11)	0.03	(-0.12 , 0.18)
Unemployed	-0.01	(-0.11 , 0.08)	0.08	(-0.03 , 0.19)	-0.00	(-0.12 , 0.11)	0.06	(-0.07 , 0.18)
Education level:								
Less than HS	0.01	(-0.49 , 0.50)	1.09***	(0.62 , 1.56)	0.37	(-0.25 , 1.00)	0.77*	(0.00 , 1.54)
Some college	0.01	(-0.42 , 0.43)	0.44*	(0.08 , 0.80)	0.41	(-0.05 , 0.87)	0.21	(-0.42 , 0.85)
High school	-0.07	(-0.53 , 0.39)	0.61**	(0.21 , 1.02)	0.37	(-0.21 , 0.95)	0.54	(-0.17 , 1.25)
Military service	-0.07	(-0.30 , 0.16)	-0.14	(-0.37 , 0.09)	-0.08	(-0.40 , 0.25)	0.02	(-0.27 , 0.31)
Public housing	-0.12	(-0.27 , 0.04)	0.16	(-0.00 , 0.33)	-0.02	(-0.21 , 0.18)	-0.14	(-0.35 , 0.07)
Homeowner	-0.11	(-0.29 , 0.07)	-0.01	(-0.15 , 0.12)	-0.17	(-0.41 , 0.07)	0.08	(-0.12 , 0.27)
Health limits work	0.07	(-0.05 , 0.19)	0.04	(-0.08 , 0.16)	-0.06	(-0.18 , 0.06)	-0.01	(-0.14 , 0.12)
Employment status:								
Not working	0.01	(-0.13 , 0.15)	0.02	(-0.12 , 0.15)	-0.15*	(-0.30 , -0.00)	0.07	(-0.09 , 0.24)
Part time	-0.17	(-0.35 , 0.01)	0.15	(-0.00 , 0.31)	-0.18	(-0.38 , 0.02)	-0.13	(-0.34 , 0.07)
In school	0.02	(-0.10 , 0.15)	0.14	(-0.02 , 0.30)	-0.04	(-0.20 , 0.12)	0.15	(-0.02 , 0.32)
Number of children	0.04	(-0.04 , 0.12)	0.16***	(0.09 , 0.23)	-0.04	(-0.12 , 0.04)	0.17***	(0.08 , 0.25)
Marital status:								
Previously married	-0.10	(-0.31 , 0.12)	0.01	(-0.19 , 0.22)	-0.47**	(-0.77 , -0.18)	-0.09	(-0.37 , 0.20)
Never married	-0.10	(-0.29 , 0.09)	-0.19	(-0.40 , 0.02)	-0.28*	(-0.53 , -0.04)	-0.20	(-0.44 , 0.04)
Cohabiting	-0.05	(-0.27 , 0.18)	0.09	(-0.15 , 0.33)	0.13	(-0.12 , 0.38)	-0.02	(-0.27 , 0.24)
Constant	-0.56	(-55.38 , 54.26)	-18.56	(-70.54 , 33.41)	16.33	(-52.82 , 85.48)	0.99	(-64.57 , 66.56)
Observations	107355							

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