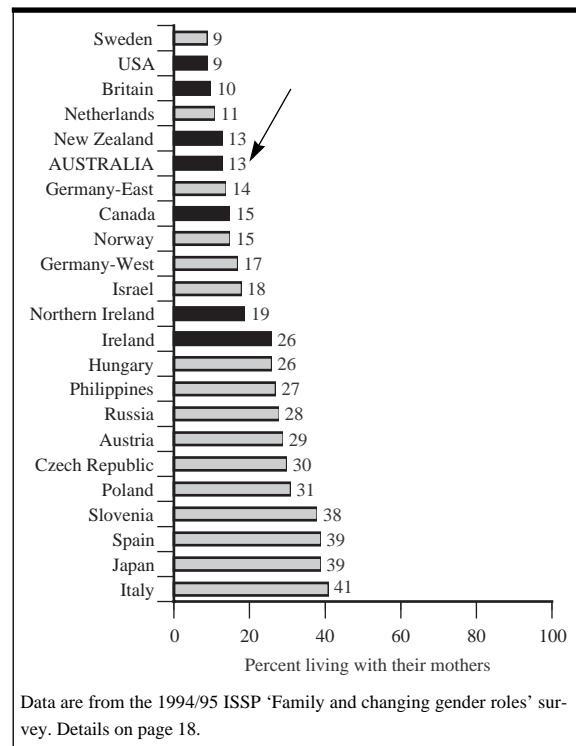


Residence: Sharing the nest?

Do separate homes make for good family relations, or is sharing a roof with one's extended family the ideal? Countries around the world have dramatically different habits about adult family members sharing a home. The portion of adults living with their mothers ranges from a low of 9 percent in Sweden to a high of 41 percent in Italy. Australians are in the low end of the range with just 13% sharing a home with their mothers. As well as Australia, the other former British colonies—Canada, New Zealand, and the United States—all have 15% or less sharing a home with their mothers. This pattern of separate residences has been observed in Britain at least since Elizabethan times, and it seems to be part of Australia's British heritage. In other parts of Northwest Europe, too, adults have long lived separately from their parents. Interestingly, the dramatic economic growth of the post-war period seems not to have homogenized country differences. Widespread home-sharing of adults with their grown offspring occurred in the Mediterranean world and Eastern Europe at least since the eighteenth century and continues to this day. Sometimes this can make for serious intergenerational clashes among immigrants from the Mediterranean world to Australia, with the older generation clinging to the habits of their homeland and the younger generation turning to the Australian way.

Living with mothers



Home-sharing seems to be generally high in Asia, but with considerable variation among countries: Fully 39% share in Japan and, rather less, 27% in the Philippines.

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