

Living with parents in adult life can prolong family conflict

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Living with parents in adult life can prolong family conflict. Credit: SINC

Researchers from the University of La Laguna have monitored 240 bi-parent families to observe the impact involved when children continue living in the family home during their late teens and early twenties (18 to 25 years old). According to the results, if children live with their parents at this age, the number of conflicts increases.

"We have worked with young people, in this case, in the family environment, to see what happens during the 'full nest syndrome', i.e., when [children](#) reach 18 years of age and they continue living at home," explained Beatriz Rodríguez, researcher from the University of La

Laguna and co-author of the study.

Researchers classified adolescents into three stages: early teens (12 and 13 years), mid-teens (14 and 15), and late teens (16-18). Those 18-25 were called 'emerging adults'.

In Spain, given the country's social, economic and cultural characteristics, children leave the family home a lot later than in north Europe and the USA. Our case is more similar to other Mediterranean countries, such as Greece, Portugal and Italy.

According to the experts, there are more domestic disputes because emerging adults are continuing to live at home with their parents. "[Conflicts](#) during adolescence reach a peak at the start of this period, they decrease during the mid-teens, and increase again in the late teens," Rodríguez pointed out.

"Furthermore, at this stage (16-18) the subject of conflict is also different, mainly as a result of some more symmetrical relationships between parents and children, and their increased independence," noted the researcher.

School-related conflicts, normal during teenage years, make way for conflicts related to more personal or moral values concerning prospects for the future.

"There is dissociation between what mothers and fathers expect of their children in this evolutionary stage and what the emerging adults expect of themselves. In addition, there is a divide between social values and their personal expectations," the study reports.

Furthermore, there is a change in the strategies used to resolve conflicts. As adolescence advances, individuals develop more constructive

strategies to resolve conflicts and negotiation strategies increase when reaching adulthood.

"From our perspective, we believe that a social policy is needed to help young adults leave their [family](#) homes. However, while the situation is what it is, [parents](#) should also recognise that their children are going through the transition to adulthood and understand that their social and cultural situation is different from the one that they lived," concluded Rodríguez.

More information: Beatriz Rodríguez, María José Rodrigo López. "El 'nido repleto': la resolución de conflictos familiares cuando los hijos mayores se quedan en el hogar", C & E: Cultura y educación 23 (1): 89-104, 2011.

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