

THE EFFECT OF FAMILY AND WORK TRANSITIONS ON MID-LATER LIFE SATISFACTION DOMAINS

by

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B.A. (Hons., Psychology), University of Calgary, 2008

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Gerontology Department
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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Fall 2011

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of work and family transitions on parental, marital, financial, and leisure satisfaction among mid- and older-aged parents of young adult children (aged 17-35). Guided by the life course perspective, this research, employed a mixed-methodological approach, which entails the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative analysis was conducted on a subsample of 391 married participants (mean age of 55) from the Vancouver-based Parenting Project dataset. In-depth qualitative interviews were also conducted with 12 parents to elucidate key quantitative findings. Findings showed that work and family transitions influence different satisfaction domains, but that these associations depend on the family and work contexts (i.e., presence of children, work/retirement status). Results can be used to assist in the development and implementation of workshops to assist families experiencing concurrent family and work transitions.

Keywords: Mixed methods; life course perspective; satisfaction outcomes; family transitions; work transitions; empty nest; retirement

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance of my senior supervisor, Dr. Barbara Mitchell. Thank you for your mentorship, insight, and support throughout my graduate studies. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. Andrew Wister for his feedback, advice, and encouragement, particularly in guiding me through the statistical analyses. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Andrew Sixsmith, a member of my supervisory committee, as well as the rest of the Gerontology department. Your feedback and encouragement were very much appreciated. Additionally, I would like to thank the families who informed this research by sharing their time and experiences with me, as well as SSHRC for the financial support to carry out this research. Finally, I am grateful for the unconditional love and support from my family, friends, and classmates throughout this process. Thank you for believing in me.

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1: INTRODUCTION

Throughout our lives, we experience many family and work transitions such as getting married and starting a family, launching children into independence, and making the transition into retirement. Although there are certain societal and cultural expectations specifying when these events should take place (Elder, 1998; Hagestad, 1990; Mitchell & Lovegreen, 2009), there can be quite a bit of diversity in how these events unfold for each individual (DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990; Elder, 1998; Mitchell, 2006b; Settersten, 1998). Moreover, the timing of life course transitions and the contextual factors surrounding them are sometimes associated with changes in satisfaction (Atchley, 1992; Kim & Moen, 2002; Marshall, Heinz, Krueger, & Verma, 2001; Mitchell, 2010a; Pinquart & Schindler, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2006b; White & Edwards, 1990). Notably there is often overlap between different spheres of life with some family and work transitions occurring at the same time (Atchley, 1976; Langlois, 2004; Szinovacz, Ekerdt, & Vinick, 1992). This is especially likely for middle generation parents – defined as those with both young adult children and elderly parents.

The rapidly aging Canadian population means that many baby boomers, those born between 1946-1964, are transitioning into retirement. Indeed, never before have we witnessed so many Canadians making the move from full or part-time employment to retirement. In 2006, 16.9% of the working-age population was between the ages of 55 to 64, an increase of 2.8% from 2001 (Statistics

Canada, 2006c). There has also been a significant increase in those choosing to delay retirement – since the mid-1990s, boomers have been working longer (Statistic Canada, 2011). This may be a result of economic factors such as the 2008 financial crisis and the economic slowdown.

Not only is the Canadian population aging, it is also increasing in cultural diversity due to the high rate of immigration, especially from Asian countries. It is expected that if current immigration trends continue, immigrants will comprise 22% of the Canadian population by 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2008a). And, compared to Canadian-born retirees, immigrants tend to retire later. In 2002, the average age of retirement for immigrants was 61.5 years compared to 59.7 years for Canadian-born retirees (Statistics Canada, 2007). Generally, immigrants are less prepared for retirement compared to Canadian-born near-retirees (Statistics Canada, 2007). Therefore, the transition into retirement is variable and is influenced by many socio-demographic and cultural factors.

Traditionally, retirement was assumed to be a transition that occurred after children are independent and no longer living at home (Herzog, House, & Morgan, 1991). However, in modern families retirement does not always mean that the “nest” is empty (Hayward & Liu, 1992). This is the result of another trend in Canadian demography – the increase in adult children who are remaining at home longer, delaying independence. In some cases parents are delaying retirement due to the increased dependence of young adult children. In 2006, 43.5% of children aged 20-29 were still living at home or had returned to live with their parents, an increase of 11.4% from twenty years ago (Statistics Canada,

2006a). In some cases, a “boomerang kid”, who has already left the home and been independent, may return to live with their parent(s). In Canada, approximately one-third of all young adults aged 19-35 that leave home will return at least once in their lifetime, with most of their parents being in their 50's and 60's (Mitchell, 2006a; Statistics Canada, 2006b). Home leaving trajectories, such as the age a child leaves home and their reason for leaving, have also been found to vary by cultural background (Gee, Mitchell, & Wister, 2003; Mitchell 2004; Mitchell & Lovegreen, 2009; Mitchell, Wister, & Gee, 2004). Similar to work transitions, family transitions are also influenced by many factors.

The aging of the population, the increase in individuals choosing to delay retirement, and the delayed independence of adult children increases the likelihood of overlap between family and work transitions. Thus, the experience of entering retirement with an empty nest is no longer necessarily the norm. Couples are also waiting longer to have their first child (Statistics Canada, 2008a; 2008b). This means that compared to previous generations, children will generally be older when their parents reach retirement age. And since adult children are delaying independence (Mitchell 2006a; Statistics Canada, 2006a), there is a greater chance they will still be living at home as parents prepare to enter retirement. This trend is magnified by factors mentioned previously such as the abolition of mandatory retirement policies and the current economic recession; uncertainty about savings, pensions etc., which means many parents cannot afford to leave the security of their full-time paid work. Job or financial insecurity also increases the number of adult children choosing to delay

independence or move back home. Other reasons for delaying independence include the current high cost of living, increasing post-secondary enrolment (Statistics Canada, 2009), and later ages of marriage and family formation (Statistics Canada 2006a; 2008a; 2008b).

While most parents may enjoy having their adult children at home, it can also be disruptive – financially and socially – given that some parents are looking forward to an “empty nest.” There may also be role and spousal conflicts due to the fact that children who return have already been independent (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Changing family dynamics can further complicate the transition from full-time employment to retirement. Individuals may find it hard to adjust to family and work transitions if they occur too close together, or at the same time (Atchley, 1976; Szinovacz et al., 1992). The adjustment to retirement is dependent on economic, household, and family factors, and has been shown to vary throughout the transition to retirement. The majority of retirees report increased life satisfaction following retirement with only a small number reporting a decline or no change (Pinquart & Schindler, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2007). Variation in retirement-related life satisfaction was associated with retirement age, gender, SES, marital status, physical health, and region (Pinquart & Schindler, 2007).

Currently there is a paucity of research examining concurrent family and work transitions, and their impact on life satisfaction among aging middle generation parents. The majority of research in this area tends to focus on only a single measure of satisfaction. Further understanding of such transitions can help

us to understand and explain how family role demands or conflicts affect life satisfaction during the transition to retirement. This knowledge is important because the timing and nature of life course transitions can have significant physical and mental health consequences (George, 1993). As such, this study contributes to this research gap through the examination of multiple types of satisfaction: parental, marital, financial, and leisure satisfaction / happiness. In an attempt to fill these research gaps, the present study aims to examine concurrent family and work transitions using a mixed-method, life course approach (Creswell, 2003; Elder, 1998). The present study seeks to examine the following research questions: 1) How do different work and family transitions affect parental, marital, financial, and leisure satisfaction? 2) What are the implications of these findings with respect to policy/practice? For example, how might these findings help professionals working with aging families?

2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Perspective

The present study draws on fundamental aspects of the life course perspective (Elder, 1995; 1998), an interdisciplinary approach to studying transitional behaviours in aging families. The life course perspective is one of the most popular theories used in social gerontology. This approach has been used in disciplines such as psychology, criminology, sociology, and gerontology. It allows us to study individual outcomes such as satisfaction, and its relation to transitional life stages and events (i.e., the transition to the empty nest or retirement).

Work and family careers are interwoven and are influenced by changing conditions and future options as well as short-term transitions such as leaving home, pursuing higher education, marrying, having children, retiring, etc. (Elder, 1995). It is crucial to consider the context, timing, and interdependency of linked lives when examining family and work transitions. The social trajectories that people follow shape developmental processes and outcomes, through good times or bad (Elder, 1995). Families and couples are micro social groups (at the individual/interpersonal level) which are connected to the macro social context (Bengston & Allen, 1993).

The life course perspective includes several fundamental principles: a) Historical time and place; b) Timing of lives; c) Heterogeneity / diversity of life

course transitions; d) Linked or independent lives; e) Human agency and self-regulation; and f) Future shaped by past. These tenets are further discussed below.

2.1.1 Historical Time & Place

Individuals and families are influenced by socio-historical experiences, times, and changing contexts (Elder, 1998; Szinovacz et al., 1992). Individuals are exposed to different historical worlds with different priorities, constraints, and options based on their year of birth (Elder, 1995). For example, the current economic situation and decreased job security may mean that adult children remain at home longer or that parents delay their retirement. It may also increase the likelihood that adult children lose their jobs and move back home with their parents, which could impact the parent-child relationship as well as parental financial, leisure or marital satisfaction. It is important to examine family and work transitions within the socio-historical context, as behaviour and decisions do not occur in a vacuum.

2.1.2 Timing of Lives

The life course perspective assumes that life events, such as work and family transitions, follow a social timetable dictated by cultural social norms. For example, it is generally expected that families will progress through a series of stages such as full nest, emptying nest, and empty nest (Elder, 1998), and that children will progress through “normative” transitions “on time” such as leaving home and becoming independent (Hagestad, 1990). There are also age-based

expectations regarding when it is appropriate for an individual to retire. The developmental impact of life transitions depends on when they occur and the order they occur in a person's life (Elder, 1998). Delayed transitions can have cumulative effects (Elder, 1998); for example, delaying the pursuit of post-secondary education would delay the entry into a full-time job and other adult roles.

Transitional experiences can be reversed, such as when a child returns home (DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990; Mitchell, 2006b; Settersten, 1998). If work or family transitions are viewed as occurring off-time according to social and cultural norms, this may result in adjustment difficulties (Mitchell & Lovegreen, 2009; Szinovacz et al., 1992). For example, one mother was depressed over the measures she had to take – moving to a one bedroom apartment to get her son to leave (Mitchell & Lovegreen, 2009).

2.1.3 Heterogeneity / diversity of life course transitions

Historical changes vary across communities, regions, and societies – the life course is constructed by the individual and influenced by the larger society (Elder, 1995). Family and work transitions are influenced by circumstances, resources, ethnicity, gender, SES, age, and other factors (Elder, 1998; Marshall et al., 2001). For example, the transition from full-time employment to retirement is generally considered an age normative event that is planned and predictable. However, the timing and duration of this transition will vary among individuals. For example, women tend to retire earlier than men. In 2005, the median age of retirement for women was 60.0 years compared to 62.6 years for men (Statistics

Canada, 2007). Retirement can also be impacted by marital problems and family finances (Bosse, Aldwin, Levenson, & Workman-Daniels, 1991). It is important to take into account the context surrounding retirement decisions (Floyd et al., 1992; Marshall et al., 2001; Sharpley & Layton, 1998).

2.1.4 Linked or Independent Lives

The principle of linked lives is a key premise of the life course theory (Elder, 1998). Lives are interdependent and influenced by each other, as well as by social and historical events (Elder, 1995; 1998). This tenet is especially relevant to the present study as family and work histories are interdependent and mutually influential. Thus, one domain cannot be examined in isolation of the other (O'Rand, Henretta & Krecker, 1992; Szinovacz et al., 1992). Therefore, it is important that retirement is viewed within a family context (Dorfman, 2002). In fact, family factors have been shown to be more important than work factors in influencing retirement (O'Rand et al., 1992). Attitudes of family and friends can influence the timing of retirement (Atchley, 1976); social ties become forms of social control and constrain individual decisions and actions (Elder, 1998). In transitioning to retirement the retiree draws on support from his or her family, making retirement a transition that is socially and temporally situated in families' lives (O'Rand et al., 1992; Orit, 2007).

Social embeddedness means that individual actions have consequences for kin and friends across the life span. Connections also extend across generations (Elder, 1995). A change in one aspect of life can result in changes in another (Szinovacz et al., 1992). For example, an unanticipated event or change

in family structure, such as the delayed independence or return of an adult child (e.g., failed marriage or career), may shape parents' plans for the later years (i.e. retirement and travel plans) (Elder, 1995). As another example, the divorce of parents of adolescents or economic setbacks could postpone children's leaving home and transition to adulthood (Elder, 1995). Interactions between family and work spheres can influence transitions and life choices (Szinovacz et al., 1992).

Synchrony of individual careers and the lives of significant others is an important part of timing of lives; in fact, the timing of an event can be more important than its occurrence (Elder, 1995; 1998). Some spouses plan their retirements to be "in sync" (Smith & Moen, 1998; Szinovacz et al., 1992). Young couples may schedule work and family events to minimize energy, time, and financial pressures; For example, postponing children until their 30's (Elder, 1995). The effects of certain events will vary in influence and type across the life course, depending on the goodness of fit between lives and new circumstances (Elder, 1995).

2.1.5 Human Agency and Self-Regulation

Individuals are planful and able to select and construct their own life course, but these life choices are based on the opportunities and constraints of social structure and culture (Elder, 1995; 1998). Planful competence includes being able to accurately evaluate personal efforts and intentions, an informed understanding of options, others, and self, and the discipline to pursue chosen goals (Elder, 1995). Individuals with planful competence tend to be more accomplished in terms of work and family careers later in life, and it is associated

with successful aging and personal stability. In other words, the experience of later life is shaped by choices in earlier adult life (Elder, 1995).

Although there are social timetables for transitions to occur, there is a “loose coupling” between social transitions and life stage – individuals of the same age vary in pace and sequencing of major events across the life course (Elder, 1995). Not all events are experienced by all members of a cohort. For example, completing school, entering a full-time job, cohabitation and marriage, and childbearing. Those individuals who do experience these events do so at different times in life as a result of individual agency (Elder, 1995).

Human agency means that planned alterations can occur in the timing of life events (Elder, 1998). For example, adult children choosing to move back to the parental household or individuals choosing to retire early. Families are often able to work out successful adaptations within available options and constraints (Elder, 1998). For example, children who move back home may assume additional responsibilities or chores. Individuals are capable of “building a new life course” (Elder, 1998).

2.1.6 Future Shaped by Past

Early experiences and decisions can exert long-term influences on transitions and major life choices, even into the later years of retirement and old age (Elder, 1995; O’Rand et al., 1992). Human lives are seen as a whole and cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the previous life course (Elder, 1995). For example, retirement is not an isolated event as it is connected to all

spheres of life both past and present; the timing of retirement may be affected by the timing and sequencing of family careers (Szinovacz et al., 1992).

According to the “early timing hypothesis” (Elder, 1998), later entry into life events such as military service, school, etc. is more likely to pull individuals out of adult roles. This would be more disruptive to their life course compared to having these events occur right after highschool. Family transitions can have enduring consequences and affect subsequent transitions, even years or decades down the road – “cumulating advantages and disadvantages” (Elder, 1998). As another example, raising children may delay entry of mothers into the workforce and subsequently delay retirement, depending on factors such as the financial situation and how long it takes for their adult children to reach independence (O’Rand et al., 1992).

2.2 Review of Empirical Research

In this section, studies relevant to this thesis topic will be reviewed. Based on this review and in light of the theoretical material already presented, a number of expected relationships will be highlighted.

2.2.1 Parental Satisfaction

In the present study, parental satisfaction refers to how happy or satisfied an individual is in their parental role, as well as how satisfied they are with the parent-child relationship. There is a paucity of research examining parental satisfaction with adult children, since the majority of research has examined

adolescent children (Downing-Matibag, 2009; Henry, Peterson, & Wilson, 1997; Wickrama, Conger, Lorenz, & Matthews, 1995). Furthermore, the research that has been conducted in this area has resulted in mixed findings.

Some studies find that when children decide to move back home it can result in negative outcomes. For instance, some parents have reported increases in interpersonal conflict and a lack of support from their children (Mitchell, 1998), which has been associated with lower parental well-being and happiness (Ward, 2008). An increase in the number of children living at home and economic distress has also been associated with reduced parental satisfaction (Lavee, Sharlin, & Katz, 1996).

Parental happiness is also associated with the developmental “success” of adult children (Mitchell, 2010a; Umberson & Gove, 1989). For example, when children are “getting on with their lives”, “progressing properly”, and “leaving the nest, learning to fly”, parents report greater satisfaction as a parent. These statements are consistent with the life course perspective in that children are generally expected to progress through a series of stages “on time” (Mitchell, 2010a). When development is “delayed”, it can be seen as a deviation – parents report greater unhappiness in the parental role and worry about their children’s lack of independence and adult responsibilities (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell, 2010a). It is therefore anticipated that ***1a) Parents will report greater satisfaction as a parent if their nest is empty compared to parents with an emptying or full nest.*** An empty nest means that parents have successfully launched their children into independence.

Although some researchers have found that an empty nest is associated with increased parental well-being (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell, 2010a; Umberson & Gove, 1989), other researchers have found this increase in parental well-being to be temporary (White & Edwards, 1990). Once children move out, their connection to their parents is not completely severed. In fact, some children may continue to rely on their parents for emotional or financial support even after moving out (White & Edwards, 1990).

The return to home of an adult child is not always a negative event. In fact, the majority of parents who had a child move back home reported that their current living arrangement was working out very well (Mitchell, 1998). Parental satisfaction was higher if the “boomerang” kid helped out with housework and if the interpersonal interactions between parent and child were positive (Mitchell, 1998). Therefore, it is counter-hypothesized that ***1b) Parents will report lower parental satisfaction if their nest is empty, compared to parents with an emptying or full nest.***

Parental satisfaction tends to be greater among older parents (Umberson, 1989). Mitchell (2010a) found that compared to parents who are working full-time, retired parents are more likely to report being extremely happy as a parent. It is possible that retirement allows more time for better quality relationships to develop (Mitchell, 2010a). It has been suggested that it is the quality of the parent-child relationship rather than the composition of the family that is most important in predicting parental satisfaction (Mitchell, 2010a; Umberson, 1989; Ward, 2008). Retirement allows parents more time to build quality family

relationships, which is a challenge when working full-time. Therefore, it is anticipated that ***1c) Parents will report greater parental satisfaction if they are retired compared to parents who are not retired.***

Also, an interaction effect is expected. Specifically, it is anticipated that ***1d) Parents will report greater parental satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.***

2.2.2 Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction has been defined by Atchley (1992) as an individual's perception of the quality of relationship with their spouse. Empirical research demonstrates a clear link between marital satisfaction and family transitions. Parents tend to report lower marital satisfaction if they still have adult children living at home (Atchley, 1992; Chalmers & Milan, 2005; Umberson, Williams, Powers, Chen, & Campbell, 2005; White & Edwards, 1990), especially when the number of children living at home increases (Chalmers & Milan, 2005). Parents with adult children living at home report more frequent spousal arguments over how to deal with children, money, chores and responsibilities, in-laws, and showing affection (Lauer & Lauer, 1999; Statistics Canada, 2006b).

Marital satisfaction is influenced by parental expectations about the timing and sequence of children's transitions (Mitchell & Gee, 1996). For instance, if children returned to live at home after leaving for reasons of work or school, parents reported less marital satisfaction compared to parents with children who

returned after leaving for reasons of wanting to be independent. Parents might expect that if children leave for work or school reasons they are less likely to return, so if they do return, it is more unexpected than the return of a child who left seeking independence (Mitchell & Gee, 1996).

Parents who report higher levels of marital happiness tend to perceive having more time together as a couple and participate in more activities together. This could be due to having children who are more independent, or the parents may be transitioning into retirement (Mitchell, 2010b). In this study of middle generation marital happiness, one parent commented that with children still living at home, intimacy becomes less of a priority (Mitchell, 2010b). An empty nest allows married couples to spend more time together and concentrate on further developing their relationship. It is anticipated that **2a) Parents will report greater marital satisfaction if their nest is empty compared to parents with emptying or full nests.**

Due to the greater labour force participation of women, retirement is no longer considered an individual transition but a conjoint decision as suggested by similar retirement patterns for both men and women (Hayward & Liu, 1992; Szinovacz et al., 1992). When couples have had strong commitments to both work and family, joint retirement is more likely to occur in favourable economic and household conditions (O'Rand et al., 1992). Retirement is experienced in the context of the couple, which as a result, has an influence on marital satisfaction (Atchley, 1992). Research on the relationship between retirement and marital satisfaction has resulted in mixed results, likely because there are so many

factors at play. Health, finances, family relationships, and marital satisfaction all influence how couples experience retirement (Chalmers & Milan, 2005).

Some researchers have found that compared to those who were retired or employed, being newly retired was associated with increased marital conflict and dissatisfaction. This suggests that it is the retirement transition, rather than the state of being retired that predicts reduced marital quality (Kim & Moen, 2002; Moen, Kim, & Hofmeister, 2001). However, other research has found that couples reported greater relationship quality if they were retired compared to those still working (Chalmers & Milan, 2005). Dual-earner spouses experience time constraints and multiple demands (marriage, work, children), leaving little time to focus on one's marital relationship. Such couples may view retirement positively, since it means less stress and more time spent together (Anderson, 1992). Although the research findings are mixed, it is anticipated that **2b)**

Parents will report greater marital satisfaction if they are retired compared to parents who are not retired.

Also, an interaction effect is expected. Specifically, it is anticipated that **2c)**

Parents will report greater marital satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.

2.2.3 Financial satisfaction

Financial satisfaction has been associated with general life satisfaction (Statistics Canada, 2007), parental satisfaction (Mitchell, 2010a), and marital satisfaction (Mitchell, 2010b). Furthermore, satisfaction with financial situation

has also been associated with the presence of children. Aquilino (1991) found that parents perceived their financial well-being more negatively if they had co-resident children aged 19-21, but more positively for older children. Perhaps older children are more likely to contribute financially compared to younger children. When adult children return home or turn to their parents for assistance, the financial strain on parents can obviously increase (Cassidy, 2006; Raymo & Sweeney, 2006). Indeed, some adult children have been described by their parents as a “financial drain” or as “expecting way too much” (Mitchell, 2010a). Thus, financial dependence of children should be reduced once they move out and establish independence. It is therefore anticipated that ***3a) Parents will report greater financial satisfaction if their nest is empty, compared to parents with full or emptying nests.***

Retirement entails changes in the availability of resources (i.e. financial, personal, social-relational, and time) (Hopkins, Roster, & Wood, 2006), which has been found to partially mediate the relationship between psychological well-being and retirement (Kim & Moen, 2002). Limited financial resources following retirement have been associated with lower retirement satisfaction and greater stress (Marshall et al., 2001; Van Solinge & Henkens, 2008). Adequate resources and financial security allow for a smoother transition into retirement, and a more positive appraisal of retirement (Atchley, 1976; Hopkins et al., 2006). Financial resources may decline following retirement, but this may be offset by gains in leisure time or time spent with friends and families (Hopkins et al., 2006).

“Complete” retirement tends to be delayed if children are still living at home or if parents are providing financial support to dependent children, especially when the number of children increases (Henkens, 1999; Pienta, 2003; Raymo & Sweeney, 2006; Reitzes, Mutran, & Fernandez, 1998; Szinovacz, DeViney, & Davey, 2001). Financial or instrumental support provided to children may hasten or delay retirement plans of parents, or affect their adaptation to retirement (Szinovacz et al., 1992). An example of this was provided by Mitchell (2010a) where a respondent’s family delayed retirement in order to help their son get on with his life. In addition to postponing retirement, parents may withdraw money from savings or even go into debt to assist children (Cassidy, 2006).

Financial obligation to support dependent children appears to be an important factor when forming retirement preferences (Raymo & Sweeney, 2006; Reitzes et al., 1998). However, it could be that parents are more willing to provide financial support to their children if they have no immediate plans to retire (Szinovacz et al., 2001). Although the trend of retiring with children still at home is increasing, the majority of parents who retire will be doing so with an empty nest. Furthermore, feeling financially secure is often necessary before the decision to retire is made. It is anticipated that ***3b) Parents will report greater financial satisfaction if they are retired, compared to parents who are not retired.***

Also, an interaction effect is anticipated. Specifically, it is anticipated that ***3c) Parents will report greater financial satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full***

nest. If parents are able to retire as planned without having to worry about supporting their children financially (i.e. an empty nest), there will be less financial strain.

2.2.4 Leisure satisfaction

There are differences in how leisure is defined by those who are working and those who are retired. Retirees tend to emphasize relaxation and enjoyment, whereas those in the work force with constraints on time and activity are more likely to define leisure as “free time” (Roadburg, 1985). Satisfaction with leisure activities has been identified as an important determinant of life satisfaction (Brown & Frankel, 1993) and marital satisfaction (Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill, 2006).

Parents experience additional time demands from their children who live at home, which reduces the amount of leisure time parents have (Mitchell, 2010a; 2010b; Statistics Canada, 2006b; Szinovacz, 1992). This has been associated with increased parental frustration, especially when an adult child returns home (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Parents often experience an increase in tasks such as laundry and cooking. There is also a loss of privacy for both children and parents, meaning parents have less time for each other (Lauer & Lauer, 1999). Parents with children aged 25-29 were found to be less satisfied with their social life and privacy (Aquilino, 1991). An empty nest implies that all children have been launched successfully, and parents now have more leisure time and privacy. Leisure is important because it contributes to overall health and life satisfaction (Roadburg, 1985). It is therefore anticipated that **4a) Parents will**

report greater leisure satisfaction if they have an empty nest compared to parents with an emptying or full nest.

As the number of hours in paid work decreases, work commitments begin to be replaced with leisure activities (Statistics Canada, 2007). For some, retirement is a “new lease on life” whereby individuals take on new interests and hobbies (Kim & Moen, 2001). Participation in leisure activities in retirement is influenced by available opportunities, having someone to participate with, access to transportation, gender, marital status, household composition, time, and financial constraints (Roadburg, 1985; Szinovacz, 1992).

A longitudinal study on German retirees identified three patterns of change in leisure satisfaction (Pinquart & Schindler, 2009). It was found that the majority of participants experienced a linear increase in leisure satisfaction from four years preceding retirement to a few months after. There were two smaller groups that experienced either no change in leisure satisfaction during the retirement transition, or a sudden large increase in leisure satisfaction the year before and after retirement. These three groups varied by gender, marital status, SES, pre-retirement leisure activities, physical health, and retirement age (Pinquart & Schindler, 2009). Overall, it seems that retirement-related increases in leisure time offer a new source of satisfaction for most individuals (Pinquart & Schindler, 2009). It is therefore anticipated that ***4b) Parents will report greater leisure satisfaction if they are retired compared to parents who are not retired.***

Also, an interaction effect is expected. Specifically, it is anticipated that **4c)**
Parents will report greater leisure satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.

In summary, the present study utilizes the life course perspective to examine transitional behaviours in aging families. The six life course tenants include: a) Historical time and place; b) Timing of lives; c) Heterogeneity / diversity of life course transitions; d) Linked or independent lives; e) Human agency and self-regulation; and f) Future shaped by past.

The research on parental satisfaction and family transitions is mixed. Some studies have shown that parental happiness is associated with the developmental “success” of adult children “getting on with their lives” However, other research has shown that parental satisfaction is not necessarily associated with an empty nest as the connection to one’s child is not severed once the child moves out. In some cases parental happiness was positively associated with retirement or the quality of the parent-child relationship. Furthermore, the return of an adult child to the parental household would be a negative event.

Research has shown the association between marital satisfaction and family transitions to be stronger, with empty nest parents reporting higher marital satisfaction. Once their children move out, parents find they have more time to spend together and refocus on their relationship. The literature on retirement and marital satisfaction was mixed; although the transition to retirement can be a source of strain on one’s marriage, retirement means less stress and more time together. The literature shows a negative association between financial

satisfaction and adult children still living at home. Furthermore, when children are financially dependent on their parents, this may alter or delay their parent's plans to retire. In terms of retirement, financial resources may decrease but this tends to be offset by gains in other areas such as increased leisure time and reduced stress. The research demonstrates a strong association between leisure satisfaction and family and work transitions. Parents experience an increase in leisure time when their nest empties and they retire.

3: METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes an explanatory mixed-methodological approach, which entails the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data in two consecutive phases. Priority is given to both quantitative and qualitative data, with one building on the other; in some cases using only one data source may not provide the complete story (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The mixed methods approach first dates back to 1959 when Campbell and Fiske collected both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the validity of psychological traits (Creswell, 2003). Since then, the use of mixed methods has continued to increase in frequency and is now accepted across a wide range of disciplines (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Clark, 2011) as well as internationally (Creswell, 2010). For example, it has been used in family studies, developmental psychology, sociological, and health-focused research. In some cases mixed methods research is recognized as the “third research paradigm” or the “third methodological movement” (Ivankova & Kowamura, 2010).

While there are some “purists” who believe that the two research methods should not be mixed, others assent many advantages to combining two different methodological styles. A mixed methods approach means that the limitations of one method can be offset by the strengths of the other (Creswell & Clark, 2011). For example, when researchers study individuals quantitatively, their

understanding of individuals is diminished but the ability to see the broader picture and generalize the results to the larger group is increased. When individuals are studied qualitatively the ability to generalize is decreased, but there is a greater understanding of the context and setting and the voices of individual participants are heard (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The collection of qualitative data further informs quantitative data, providing a richer understanding of the data, individual experiences, and contextual circumstances (Creswell 2003; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Curry, Shield, & Wetle, 2006). Follow-up qualitative data can also test and confirm the insights and findings from previously collected quantitative data (Creswell, 2003; Morgan, 2006).

A mixed methods approach requires more extensive data collection, is more time consuming, and requires an understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). Divisions between quantitative and qualitative research prevent opportunities for collaboration. A mixed methods approach provides a bridge between quantitative and qualitative researchers (Creswell & Clark, 2011), and means the researcher is free to use all methods possible (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Consequently, qualitative and quantitative methods are no longer always viewed as mutually exclusive (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Curry et al., 2006). Mixed methods can link micro and macro aspects; for example, the contextual aspect of quantitative analysis can be provided through a more in-depth exploration through qualitative data.

In the present study, the addition of qualitative data allowed us to further explore transitions beyond what the quantitative data provides. For example,

interviewing parents who were beginning to prepare for retirement provided a greater understanding of the influences adult children have on the decision making process and resulting satisfaction outcomes. Overall, a mixed methods approach takes advantage of the strengths offered by both qualitative and quantitative data, balancing out the weaknesses inherent in both methods (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Morgan, 2006).

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The current study used a sequential approach (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Clark, 2011), whereby secondary data analysis was conducted, followed by the collection of primary data. Data were collected in two distinct phases and then integrated using the life course perspective as a guide. Specifically, in-depth interviews were conducted with $N = 12$ parents to elucidate the key findings from logistic regression analyses. The quantitative data had already been collected as part of a larger project conducted by Dr. Barbara Mitchell: "Mid and Later Life Parenting and the Launching of Adult Children: Cultural Dynamics, Health & Well-Being" (Mitchell, 2006-2009, SSHRC funded study). In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with a random (92% random, 8% referrals) sample comprised of 490 middle generation parents (one parent per family) (60.4% females and 39.6% males) living in Metro Vancouver with at least one living child between the ages of 18 and 35. In families with more than one child, a focal child (ranging in age from 18-35) was randomly selected and questions were answered based on that child. All respondents were also administered a

background questionnaire. For the purpose of this study, only data from married participants was analyzed ($n = 391$) to control for other factors that may be at play in situations such as divorce and widowhood.

Due to the quota sampling method used, there was an equal distribution of participants across four ethnic groups: British (24.6%) consisting of individuals who identify as English, Scottish, Irish, and/or Welsh; Chinese (24.0%) including persons originating from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Mainland China; South European (26.9%) consisting of mainly Italian individuals but also some Greek, Spanish, or Portuguese; and Indo/East Indian (24.6%) with individuals from India, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka. There were three versions of the questionnaire modified to fit different living arrangements; the sample was fairly equally distributed among full nests (all children currently reside in the respondent's home – 37.6%), emptying nests (at least one child has left home for four or more months and is not living at home – 28.4%), and empty nests (all children have left home for at least four or more months and none currently live at home - 34%).

The quantitative sample shows that 34.8% of the respondents were working full-time, 23.8% of the respondents were retired, and 41.4% fell into the 'other' category. However, no data was collected on whether any of the parents were in the pre-retirement stage. Therefore, the collection of additional qualitative data allowed us to further explore the actual transition into retirement and how this is affected by concurrent family transitions. A key question was: How are the early stages of the retirement transition being made in different family situations or contexts? Qualitative interviews also allowed further exploration of each of the

four satisfaction/happiness domains, beyond the self-report measures used in the quantitative portion.

For comparison purposes, four groups of parents were interviewed: 1) pre-retirement with children at home 2) pre-retirement with no children at home 3) post-retirement with children at home 4) post-retirement with no children at home. Together, the collection of qualitative and quantitative data provided us with a greater understanding of how family and work transitions influence satisfaction.

The focus of the current study is on participants who are currently married, since research has shown that satisfaction and adjustment in retirement is influenced by marital status, and the quality of this relationship (Carter & Cook, 1995; Kim & Moen, 2002; Moen et al., 2001; Raymo & Sweeney, 2006; Reitzes et al., 1998). Therefore, a subset of the larger dataset ($n = 391$) is used for the present study, including only those participants who were married at the time of the survey. For the qualitative portion of this study, recruitment was also targeted towards married individuals. However, one single individual was interviewed to provide another perspective of entering retirement as a single parent.

3.3 Qualitative Recruitment

Recruitment of participants occurred from January to July 2010. Specific efforts were made to recruit a cross-cultural sample by contacting program managers and advertising the study at community and cultural centers in Metro

Vancouver. However, the resulting sample was entirely Caucasian. Other attempts at recruiting participants included attending pre-retirement planning workshops, contacting family and community organizations, and displaying posters at community centres, cultural centers, churches, and shopping centers. An advertisement for the study was included in newsletters for cultural centres, churches, teacher association members, and SFU retirees. A couple of participants were successfully recruited from church and community centre advertisements as well the SFU retirees group; the snowball technique was used to recruit additional individuals. As an incentive to participate, at the completion of the interviews participants were entered into a draw and randomly selected to win one of two \$25 cash prizes. Please refer to Appendices A through G for the recruitment poster, informed consent form, interview guides, and socio-demographic questions.

Recruitment efforts resulted in interviews with 12 parents. For the most part either the mother or father was interviewed, but in some cases both parents were interviewed because the couple was going through two different transitions at the same time. One of the parents interviewed was a single mother who was able to offer a different perspective; she had previous research experience on retirement transitions and was able to offer valuable insights. Questions were guided by key quantitative findings, further exploring how family transitions affect plans to retire, and the impact concurrent family and work transitions have on satisfaction and happiness. All qualitative interviews were completed by August 2010.

3.4 Measurement

3.4.1 Quantitative

Table 3.1 provides an overview of respondent socio-demographics for the quantitative dataset.

Table 3.1. Frequency Distribution for Independent Variables used in Logistic Regression

Variables	Category / Range	M	SD	Range	N	%
Age of parent		55.33	7.49	39 – 77		
Total number of kids		2.51	1.05	1 – 8		
Age of study child	17 - 24				168	43.0
	25 - 35				223	57.0
Gender of parent	Male				155	39.6
	Female				236	60.4
Gender of study child	Male				203	51.9
	Female				188	48.1
Ethnic identity	British				96	24.6
	Chinese				94	24.0
	South European				105	26.9
	Indo / East Indian				96	24.6
Education	No post-secondary				155	39.6
	Post-secondary				236	60.4
Total household income	< \$50,000				139	35.5
	> \$50,000				252	64.5
Family Transitions	Full nest				147	37.6
	Emptying nest				111	28.4
	Empty nest				133	34.0
Work Transitions	Full-time				136	34.8
	Other				162	41.4
	Retired				93	23.8

Table 3.1. (Continued)

Variables	Category / Range	M	SD	Range	N	%
Financial assistance provided to child	Not at all to once per year				191	48.8
	Several times per day to daily				200	51.2
Financial assistance received from child	Not at all to once per year				343	87.7
	Several times per day to daily				48	12.3
Closeness of parent / child relationship	Not extremely close				196	50.1
	Extremely close				195	49.9
Conflict between parent & child	No conflict				174	44.5
	Conflict				217	55.5
Emotional difficulty to see child leave	Extremely difficult				66	16.9
	Somewhat difficult				144	36.8
	Not difficult at all				181	46.3

The independent variables for the quantitative analysis of family transitions and work transitions include age of parent and study child, total number of children, gender of parent and child (male or female), ethnicity (British, Chinese, Southern European, Indo/East Indian), education (less than high school, high school graduate, some college / university, college diploma / other, university degree) recoded into no post-secondary and post-secondary, and total household income (< \$20,000, \$20,000 to \$50,000, \$50,001 to \$75,000, \$75,001 to \$100,000, \$100,001 to \$125,000, \$125,001 to \$150,000, > \$150,000) recoded into less than \$50,000 and greater than \$50,000.

To represent living arrangements, a family transitions variable was created with 1 being “full nest”, 2 being “emptying nest”, and 3 being “empty nest”. Work transitions were assessed by the variable that asked respondents “what is your main activity?” Respondents were asked to choose between “working at a paid job full-time”, “working at a paid job part-time”, “homemaker”, “student”, “retired”, “disabled”, and “other”. This variable was recoded into three categories “Full-time”, “Other”, and “Retired”, which resulted in a more equal distribution of participants in each category.

Other independent variables include emotional difficulty to see child leave (extremely difficult, somewhat difficult, not difficult at all), financial assistance provided to/from child (daily, at least once/week, monthly, several times/year, once/year, rarely, not at all) recoded into not at all to once/year or several times/year to daily, closeness of parent/child relationship (rate on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “Not at all close” to 5 being “Extremely close”) recoded into not

extremely close and extremely close, and conflict (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “no conflict at all” to 5 being “a great deal”) recoded into no conflict and conflict. Missing values were imputed with the mode and mean based on gender and ethnic identity. For missing income values, individuals with post-secondary education were recoded as having an income of greater than \$50,000, and those without post-secondary as earning less than \$50,000.

The four dependent variables used for the quantitative analysis to capture satisfaction domains include: parental, marital, financial and leisure satisfaction. Parental happiness was assessed through a question that asked respondents “taking everything into consideration, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “not at all happy” and 5 being “extremely happy”, how would you say things are for you today as a parent?” Marital happiness was assessed through a question that asked respondents, “With respect to your spouse, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “not at all happy” and 5 “extremely happy”, how happy are you with this relationship?” Financial satisfaction was assessed through a question that asked respondents, “On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “not at all satisfied” and 5 being “extremely satisfied”, how satisfied are you with your financial situation at the present time? Leisure satisfaction was assessed through a question that asked respondents, “generally speaking, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not at all satisfied” and 5 being “extremely satisfied”, how satisfied are you with the amount of leisure time or time that you have for yourself to do the things you want to do these days?” The satisfaction domain variables were highly skewed towards being extremely satisfied. Several combinations were examined in terms

of percentage distributions and meaningful comparisons. It was decided to dichotomize all four dependent variables into ‘extremely satisfied/happy’ and ‘not extremely satisfied/happy’ as seen in Table 3.2. This coding method is commonly used for highly skewed ordinal variables.

Table 3.2. Frequency Distribution for Parental Ratings of Satisfaction (DVs)

Satisfaction Domain	Category/ Range	N	%
Parental	Extremely happy	201	51.4
	Not extremely happy	190	48.6
Leisure	Extremely satisfied	150	38.4
	Not extremely satisfied	241	61.6
Financial	Extremely satisfied	118	30.2
	Not extremely satisfied	273	69.8
Marital	Extremely happy	187	47.8
	Not extremely happy	204	52.2

3.4.1.1 Analytic Strategies

Cross tabular analysis was used to examine associations between the dependent (satisfaction and happiness) and independent variables (family and work transitions). Logistic regression analysis was used to model associations between satisfaction and family and work transitions in mid-later life. Variables for the quantitative analysis were organized sequentially based on theory and research. Independent variables were placed into five blocks for the logistic regression: Family transitions included full nest, emptying nest, and empty nest.

Work transitions included full-time employment, other, retired. To fully test for potential interactions between the family and work transitions, a family transition by work transition interaction was entered into the model twice; before and after the covariates were added. One of the tenants of the life course perspective supports the interdependency of life course transitions, in this case, those related to family and work. This provides the theoretical rationale for including this interaction. However, the specification of the relationships among categories across family and work variables is not articulated in the theory or literature. The testing of the family-work interactions is therefore exploratory in nature.

Socio-demographic variables included ethnicity (British, Chinese, South European, Indo/East Indian), total number of children, age of parent, age of child, gender of parent (male, female), and gender of child (male, female). Socio-economic variables included household income (<\$50,000, >\$50,000), education (no post-secondary, post-secondary), financial assistance provided to study child (not at all to once/year, several times/year to daily), and financial assistance received from study child (not at all to once/year, several times/year to daily). Relational variables included closeness of parent/child relationship (not extremely close, extremely close), conflict in parent/child relationship (no conflict, conflict), and emotional difficulty to see child leave (extremely difficult, somewhat difficult, not difficult at all). Finally, the family transition by work transition interaction was added once again after the covariates.

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were cleaned with all identifying information removed. A thematic analysis of emergent themes was used to further explore the interaction of family and work transitions. Participant demographic information is summarized in Table 4.5 and 4.6.

Prior to analyzing the data, the researcher read through all of the transcripts to get a general understanding of the data (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Initial thoughts were jotted in the margins and repeating themes were highlighted. Data were examined for similarities and differences (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The qualitative themes were influenced by the hypotheses and quantitative themes. A codebook was developed and was continually developed as the analysis progressed (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Creswell & Clark, 2011). A codebook is a work in progress that is built up from the data inductively (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Relevant text was highlighted and then transferred into a separate electronic document for each participant.

In the second level of analysis, initial codes were grouped into thematic categories. Emergent ideas and phrases were identified within and across transcripts and combined into a single document comprising all participants. These ideas were grouped together and named based on the quantitative findings. These ideas became the qualitative themes. This method of coding is supported by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), Bernard and Ryan (2010), and Creswell and Clark (2011). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) also point out that the coding procedure is not linear and you often end up going back and forth

between steps. Demographic information was analyzed using descriptive and frequency statistics, and presented in aggregate form.

Some themes emerged which did not fit the main patterns or overlapped with other themes. Initially the researcher ended up with too many themes, many of which were not directly associated with the quantitative themes. This was dealt with by refocusing the themes around the satisfaction hypotheses. They also became suggested areas of research for future projects. As will be discussed later on, in some cases there were discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

4: RESULTS

The first part of this chapter presents the results from the bivariate and multivariate analyses. Prior to running the multivariate analyses, cross tabular analysis was used to test the hypotheses at the bivariate level. Logistic regression was conducted to determine the odds of parents reporting parental, marital, financial, and leisure satisfaction or happiness, while controlling for independent variables. Regression tables are provided further on. The second half of this chapter provides an overview of respondent socio-demographics as well as an overview of the thematic categories that emerged from the qualitative interview data.

4.1 Cross Tabular Analysis

4.1.1 Family Transitions

An association between family transitions and satisfaction with leisure time was supported ($\chi^2 = 15.66$, df = 2, p < .001) in the hypothesized direction; reporting being extremely satisfied with the amount of leisure time was more common in parents with an empty nest (48.9%) compared to those with an emptying (41.4%) or full (26.5%) nest. No statistically significant associations were found between family transitions and the three other domains (financial, marital, or parental).

4.1.2 Work Transitions

Work transitions were associated with all four satisfaction/happiness domains. An association between work transitions and satisfaction with leisure time was supported ($\chi^2 = 38.92, df = 2, p < .001$) in the hypothesized direction; reporting being extremely satisfied with the amount of leisure time was more common in parents who were retired (59.1%) compared to those in the 'other' category (42%) or those working full-time (19.9%). An association between work transitions and financial satisfaction was also supported ($\chi^2 = 6.25, df = 2, p < .05$) in the hypothesized direction, showing that being extremely satisfied with financial situation was more common in parents who were retired (39.8%) compared to those in the 'other' category (29.6%) or working full-time (24.3%). An association between work transitions and parental happiness was also supported ($\chi^2 = 10.69, df = 2, p < .01$) in the hypothesized direction, where being extremely happy as a parent was more common in parents who were retired (64.5%) compared to those in the 'other' category (51.2%) or those working full-time (42.6%). Finally, an association between work transitions and marital happiness was supported ($\chi^2 = 6.55, df = 2, p < .05$) in the hypothesized direction, showing that being extremely happy with one's marital relationship was more common in parents who were retired (59.1%) compared to those in the 'other' category (45.7%) or those working full-time (42.6%).

4.1.3 Socio-Demographic

An association between ethnicity and financial satisfaction was supported ($\chi^2 = 13.36, df = 3, p < .01$), where being extremely satisfied financially was

greatest for parents who were Indo/East Indian (29.7%), British (28.8%), or South European (28.8%), and least likely for Chinese parents (12.7%). Ethnicity was also significantly associated with parental satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 29.80$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$). Parents of South European decent were the most likely to report being extremely satisfied as a parent (36.3%) followed by British (26.9%), Indo/East Indian (21.4%), and Chinese parents (15.4%). Marital satisfaction was significantly associated with ethnicity ($\chi^2 = 8.36$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship was about the same for South European (29.9%), Indo/East Indian (26.7), and British parents (25.7%), but lowest for Chinese parents (17.6%). Marital satisfaction was not associated with gender of parent or child. Ethnic background was not significantly associated with leisure satisfaction.

Total number of kids and gender of parent or child was not associated with financial, parental, leisure, or marital satisfaction.

Age of parent was positively correlated with leisure satisfaction ($r = .127$, $p < .05$), therefore, leisure satisfaction appears to increase with the age of the parent. Age of parent was not associated with financial, parental, or marital satisfaction.

Age of study child was significantly associated with leisure satisfaction ($tau b = .14$, $p < .01$). Parents were more likely to report being extremely satisfied with their leisure time if their children were aged 25-35 (66%) compared to those aged 17-24 (34%). Age of study child was not significantly associated with financial, parental, or marital satisfaction.

4.1.4 Socio-Economic

Total household income was positively associated with parental satisfaction (τ au $b = .13$, $p < .01$). Parents were more likely to report being extremely satisfied as a parent if their total household income was greater than \$50,000 (58.2%) compared to those with an income less than \$50,000 (41.8%). Household income was also positively associated with leisure satisfaction (τ au $b = .11$, $p < .05$); reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was greater for parents with a household income greater than \$50,000 (58%) compared to those with a household income less than \$50,000 (42%). Total household income was not associated with financial satisfaction or marital happiness.

Education, financial assistance provided to study child, and financial assistance received from study child were not associated with financial, parental, leisure, or marital happiness/satisfaction.

4.1.5 Relational

Closeness of relationship between parent and child was significantly associated with financial satisfaction (τ au $b = .12$, $p < .05$). Parents were more likely to report being extremely satisfied financially if their relationship with their child was extremely close (59.3%) compared to those who reported the relationship being not extremely close (40.7%). Relationship closeness was also associated with parental satisfaction (τ au $b = .38$, $p < .001$), where the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent was greater for parents who reported having an extremely close relationship with their child (68.2%).

compared to those reporting a not extremely close relationship (31.8%). Leisure satisfaction was associated with closeness of relationship ($\tau b = .22, p < .001$), where reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was greater for parents reporting an extremely close relationship with their child (64%) compared to those without an extremely close relationship (36%). Finally, marital satisfaction was also associated with closeness of parent/child relationship ($\tau b = .27, p < .001$); parents were more likely to report being extremely happy with their marital relationship if they were also extremely close with their child (64.2%) compared to those not extremely close with their child (35.8%).

Conflict with child was inversely associated with parental satisfaction ($\tau b = -.294, p < .001$); parents were less likely to report being extremely happy as a parent if they experienced conflict with their child (41.3%) compared to parents who reported no conflict (58.7%). Leisure satisfaction was also inversely associated with parent/child conflict ($\tau b = -.20, p < .001$), where parents reporting conflict in the relationship with their child were less likely to report being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time (42.7%) compared to those with no conflict (57.3%). Parent/child conflict was also negatively associated with marital satisfaction ($\tau b = -.19, p < .001$), parents that experienced conflict with their child (45.5%) were less likely to report being extremely satisfied with their martial relationship compared to those who experienced no conflict (54.5%). Conflict with child was not significantly associated with financial satisfaction.

Finally, emotional difficulty to see child leave was also not significantly associated with financial, parental, leisure, or marital satisfaction.

4.2 Logistic Regression Analysis

Regression model variables were organized sequentially based on the life course perspective and models from existing literature in the area (see page 6 on). Collinearity of model variables was examined and determined not to be an issue.

It should be noted that, in order to provide possible interaction effects with a greater opportunity to be revealed, they were entered into the model twice. First they were entered in block 3 without covariates and then again in block 7 with covariates. An empty nest by ‘other’ work category interaction was found when examining leisure satisfaction both before and after adding covariates. Results of the logistic regression analyses are provided in Tables 4.1 through 4.4.

4.2.1 Parental Satisfaction

A statistically significant association between family transitions and parental satisfaction was not supported (Model Chi-square = 4.02, $p = .134$).

The work transitions variable was significantly associated with parental happiness (Model Chi-square = 12.79, $p < .05$). The odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent were increased by a factor of 2.37 for retired parents compared to those working full-time ($B = .86$, $p < .01$, $OR = 2.37$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Parental happiness was not associated with family transitions or the ‘other’ work category.

A statistically significant family by work transition interaction was not supported (Model Chi-square = 13.22, $p = .105$).

There was a statistically significant association between socio-demographic variables and parental satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 50.56, $p < .001$). Once the socio-demographic variables were included in the model (controlled for), parental happiness became statistically significantly associated with the ‘other’ work category. The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent was increased by a factor of 1.74 for parents in the ‘other’ work category compared to those working full-time ($B = .55$, $p < .05$, $OR = 1.74$). Retirement remained a statistically significant predictor of parental happiness, increasing the odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of 4.19 compared to parents working full-time ($B = 1.43$, $p < .001$, $OR = 4.19$). Southern-European ethnicity was also significantly associated with parental happiness, increasing the odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of 1.99 compared to British parents ($B = .69$, $p < .05$, $OR = 1.99$). A stronger association was found between Chinese ethnicity and parental happiness, although in the opposite direction. The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent was decreased by a factor of .39 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -.93$, $p < .01$, $OR = .39$). Parental happiness was not significantly associated with Indo/East Indian ethnicity. The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent was decreased by a factor of .96 for each age increment ($B = -.04$, $p < .1$, $OR = .96$), controlling for all

other variables in the model. Parental happiness was not associated with family transitions, number of children, age of child, or gender of parent or child.

There was a statistically significant association between socio-economic variables and parental satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 64.55, $p < .001$). After the socio-economic variables were controlled for, retirement remained significantly associated with parental happiness. The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent was increased by a factor of 3.84 for retired parents compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.35$, $p < .001$, $OR = 3.84$). The 'other' work category also increased respondents reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of 1.58 compared to working full-time ($B = .46$, $p < .1$, $OR = 1.58$). Chinese ethnicity remained a significant predictor, the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent decreased by a factor of .22 compared to British parents ($B = -1.52$, $p < .001$, $OR = .22$). Similarly, Indo/East Indian ethnicity became negatively associated with parental happiness once the socio-economic variables were controlled for, decreasing the odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of .51 compared to British parents ($B = -.68$, $p < .1$, $OR = .51$). Age of parent remained statistically significant, the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent was decreased by a factor of .95 for each age increment ($B = -.05$, $p < .05$, $OR = .95$). Having a household income greater than \$50,000 decreased the odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of .36 compared to those with a household income less of than \$50,000 ($B = -1.03$, $p < .01$, $OR = .36$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Parental happiness was not associated with

family transitions, Southern-European ethnicity, number of children, child's age, gender of child or parent, education, or financial assistance to or from child.

There was a statistically significant association between relational variables and parental satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 137.47, $p < .001$). Retirement remained a significant predictor of parental happiness once the relational variables were controlled for. The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of 4.64 for retired parents compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.53$, $p < .001$, $OR = 4.64$). Chinese and Indo/East Indian ethnicity remained significantly associated with parental happiness. The odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent decreased by a factor of .25 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -1.38$, $p < .01$, $OR = .25$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as a parent decreased by a factor of .44 for Indo/East Indian parents compared to British parents ($B = -.82$, $p < .1$, $OR = .44$). Age of parent remained a significant predictor, decreasing the odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent by a factor of .94 for each age increment ($B = -.06$, $p < .05$, $OR = .94$). Household income remained significantly associated with parental happiness after controlling for the relational variables. For those with a household income greater than \$50,000, the likelihood of parents reporting being extremely happy as a parent decreased by a factor of .26 compared to parents with a household income less than \$50,000 ($B = -1.35$, $p < .001$, $OR = .26$). The odds of parents reporting being extremely happy as a parent was increased by a factor of 4.74 if they reported being extremely close to their child compared to those who reported not being

extremely close ($B = 1.56$, $p < .001$, $OR = 4.74$). If parents reported conflict with their children, the odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent decreased by a factor of .30, compared to parents who reported no conflict ($B = -1.19$, $p < .001$, $OR = .30$). Thinking that it would be (or was) emotionally difficult to see their child leave decreased the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy as parent by a factor of .48 compared to parents who said it was not or wouldn't be difficult at all ($B = -.73$, $p < .1$, $OR = .48$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Parental happiness was not associated with family transitions, the 'other' work category, Southern-European ethnicity, number of children, child's age, gender of parent or child, education, financial assistance to or from child, or reporting child leaving as emotionally 'somewhat difficult'.

Including all main effects and interactions, the family by work interaction model was statistically significant (Model Chi-square = 138.40, $p < .001$) controlling for all other variables in the model; however, the family transition by work transition interactions were not statistically significant. This is based on the total Model Chi-square which includes all IVs and interactions.

Table 4.1. Logistic Regression Analysis of Parental Happiness

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3		Block 4		Block 5		Block 6		Block 7	
	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR
Block 1: Family Transitions														
Family Transitions (ref=Full)														
Emptying Nest	.44†	1.55	.37	---	.38	---	.44	---	.46	---	.34	---	.33	---
Empty Nest	.40†	1.49	.15	---	.17	---	.36	---	.21	---	.04	---	.06	---
Block 2: Work Transitions														
Work Transitions (ref=Full-Time)														
Other (e.g., Homemaker)		.33	---		.36	---	.55*	1.74	.46†	1.58	.49	---	.44	---
Retired		.86**	2.37		.83**	2.30	1.43***	4.19	1.35***	3.84	1.53***	4.64	1.40**	4.06
Block 3: Interaction														
(Family x Work Transitions) ^a														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Block 4: Socio-Demographic														
Ethnocultural Identity (ref=British)														
Chinese														
Southern-European														
Indo / East Indian														
Number of Children														
Parent's Age														
Child's Age (ref=18-24)														
25+														
Parent's Gender (ref=Male)														
Female														
Child's Gender (ref=Male)														
Female														

Table 4.1. (continued)

	Block 1 B	OR	Block 2 B	OR	Block 3 B	OR	Block 4 B	OR	Block 5 B	OR	Block 6 B	OR	Block 7 B	OR
Block 5: Socio-Economic														
Household Income (ref=<\$50,000)														
>\$50,000									-1.03**	.36	-1.35***	.26	-1.38***	.25
Education (ref=No Post-Sec)									.14	---	.39	---	.40	---
Post-Secondary														
Financial Assist. To Child (ref=														
Not at all to once/year or rarely)														
Several times/year to daily									-.14	---	-.10	---	-.14	---
Financial Assist. From Child (ref=														
Not at all to once/year or rarely)														
Several times/year to daily									.12	---	-.16	---	-.19	---
Block 6: Relational														
Emotional Closeness to Child														
(ref=Not Extremely Close)														
Extremely Close														
Conflict with Child (ref=No Conflict)														
Conflict														
Extremely Close														
Emotional Difficulty to See Child														
Leave (ref=Not Difficult at All)														
Extremely Difficult														
Somewhat Difficult														
Block 7: Interaction ^a														
(Family x Work Transitions)														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
Constant	.08		.13		.11		2.11		3.16		3.80		3.69	
Overall Model Chi-Square	4.02		12.79*		13.22		50.56***		64.55***		137.47***		138.40***	
Df	2		4		8		12		16		20		24	

†p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

^aBeta value only given for significant interactions

4.2.2 Marital Satisfaction

A statistically significant association between family transitions and marital satisfaction was not supported, (Model Chi-square = 1.99, $p = .37$), nor between work transitions and marital satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 6.99, $p = .14$). The family by work interaction was also not statistically significant (Model Chi-square = 10.5, $p = .23$).

There was a statistically significant association between socio-demographic variables and marital satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 25.69, $p < .05$). After the socio-demographic variables were controlled for, the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship in retirement increased by a factor of 3.35 compared to those parents working full-time ($B = 1.21$, $p < .01$, $OR = 3.35$). Again, the odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship were decreased by a factor of .51 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -.68$, $p < .05$, $OR = .51$). Age of parent was also associated with marital happiness. The odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital happiness were decreased by a factor of .94 for each age increment ($B = -.06$, $p < .01$, $OR = .94$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Marital happiness was not associated with family transitions, the 'other' work category, Southern-European or Indo/East Indian ethnicity, number of children, child's age, or gender of parent or child.

There was a statistically significant association between socio-economic variables and marital satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 33.96, $p < .01$). Once the

socio-economic variables were controlled for, retirement remained significantly associated with marital happiness. The likelihood of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital happiness was increased by a factor of 3.31 for retired parents compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.20$, $p < .01$, $OR = 3.31$). Chinese ethnicity remained a significant predictor, the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship was decreased by a factor of .38 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -.98$, $p < .01$, $OR = .38$). Parent's age also remained significantly associated with marital happiness. The odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship were decreased by a factor of .93 for each age increment ($B = -.07$, $p < .05$, $OR = .93$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Marital happiness was not significantly associated with family transitions, the 'other' work category, Southern-European or Indo/East Indian ethnicity, number of children, child's age, gender of parent or child, household income, education, or financial assistance to or from child.

There was also a statistically significant association between relational variables and marital satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 67.48, $p < .001$). After the relational variables were controlled for, the likelihood of parents reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship in retirement increased by a factor of 3.45 compared to those parents working full-time ($B = 1.24$, $p < .01$, $OR = 3.45$). Ethnicity remained a significant predictor, where the likelihood of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship was decreased by a factor of .47 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -.77$, $p <$

.1, $OR = .47$). Age of parent remained significantly associated with marital happiness. Each age increment decreased the odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship by a factor of .93 ($B = -.07$, $p < .01$, $OR = .93$). When the relational variables were added to the model, household income was associated with marital happiness. The odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship were decreased by a factor of .61 for parents with a household income greater than \$50,000, compared to those with less than \$50,000 ($B = -.50$, $p < .1$, $OR = .61$). Parents were less likely to report being extremely happy with one's marital relationship by a factor of .55 if they received financial assistance from their child several times/year to daily compared to those receiving financial assistance from their child once/year to not at all ($B = -.60$, $p < .1$, $OR = .55$). The odds of parents reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship were increased by a factor of 2.78 if parents reported being extremely close to their child compared to those who reported not being extremely close ($B = 1.02$, $p < .001$, $OR = 2.78$). Conflict was also associated with marital happiness. The likelihood of parents reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship was decreased by a factor of .55 if they reported conflict with their child compared to those who reported no conflict ($B = -.60$, $p < .01$, $OR = -.55$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Marital happiness was not significantly associated with family transitions, the 'other' work category, Southern-European or Indo/East Indian ethnicity, number of children, child's age, gender of parent or child, education, financial

assistance to child, or perceived/experienced emotional difficulty to see child leave.

Including all main effects and interactions, the interaction model was statistically significant (Model Chi-square = 69.91, $p < .001$); however, the family transition by work transition interactions were not significant.

Table 4.2. Logistic Regression Analysis of Marital Satisfaction

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3		Block 4		Block 5		Block 6		Block 7	
	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR
Block 1: Family Transitions														
Family Transitions (ref=Full)														
Emptying Nest	.21	---	.15	---	.12	---	.11	---	-.00	---	-.12	---	.08	---
Empty Nest	.34	---	.14	---	.07	---	.38	---	.24	---	.14	---	.15	---
Block 2: Work Transitions														
Work Transitions (ref=Full-Time)														
Other (e.g., Homemaker)			.11	---	.23	---	.29	---	.27	---	.24	---	.34	---
Retired			.62*	1.86	.69*	2.0	1.21**	3.35	1.20**	3.31	1.24**	3.45	1.33**	3.79
Block 3: Interaction^a														
(Family x Work Transitions) ^a														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
Empty Nest * Other					1.10†	3.0		---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Block 4: Socio-Demographic														
Ethnocultural Identity (ref=British)														
Chinese							-.68*	.51	-.98**	.38	-.77*	.47	-.73†	.48
Southern-European							.07	---	-.09	---	-.14	---	-.19	---
Indo / East Indian							.10	---	.01	---	-.04	---	-.02	---
Number of Children							.10	---	.09	---	.06	---	.05	---
Parent's Age									-.06**	.94	-.07**	.93	-.07**	.93
Child's Age (ref=18-24)											-.07**	.93	-.07**	.93
25+							.12	---	.03	---	-.03	---	-.07	---
Parent's Gender (ref=Male)											-.25	---	-.37	---
Female													-.41	---
Child's Gender (ref=Male)													-.40	---
Female													.05	---

Table 4.2. (continued)

	Block 1 B	OR	Block 2 B	OR	Block 3 B	OR	Block 4 B	OR	Block 5 B	OR	Block 6 B	OR	Block 7 B	OR
Block 5: Socio-Economic														
Household Income (ref=<\$50,000)														
>\$50,000									-.42	---	-.50 [†]	.61	-.46	---
Education (ref=No Post-Sec)									-.17	---	-.04	---	-.06	---
Post-Secondary														
Financial Assist. To Child (ref=Not at all to once/year or rarely)									-.39	---	-.38	---	-.38	---
Several times/year to daily														
Financial Assist. From Child (ref=Not at all to once/year or rarely)									-.42	---	-.60 [†]	.55	-.58	---
Several times/year to daily														
Block 6: Relational														
Emotional Closeness to Child														
(ref=Not Extremely Close)														
Extremely Close											1.02***	2.78	1.03***	2.79
Conflict with Child (ref=No Conflict)											-.60*	.55	-.59*	.56
Conflict														
Emotional Difficulty to See Child														
Leave (ref=Not Difficult at All)											-.37	---	-.38	---
Extremely Difficult											-.33	---	-.33	---
Somewhat Difficult														
Block 7: Interaction ^a														
(Family x Work Transitions)														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
Constant	-.08		-.03		-.05		3.17		3.57		3.65		3.76	
Overall Model Chi-Square	1.99		6.99		10.5		25.69*		33.96**		67.48***		69.91***	
df	2		4		8		12		16		20		24	

[†]p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001^aBeta value only given for significant interactions

4.2.3 Financial Satisfaction

Family transitions were not significantly associated with financial satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 4.74, $p = .093$), nor were work transitions significantly associated with financial satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 9.34, $p = .053$).

The family transition by work transition interaction was statistically significant (Model Chi-square = 17.53, $p < .05$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied financially was decreased by a factor of .21 for retired parents with an empty nest compared to parents working full-time with a full nest ($B = -1.55$, $p < .05$, $OR = .21$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

There was a statistically significant association between socio-demographic variables and financial satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 27.10, $p < .01$). Once the socio-demographic variables were controlled for, the odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's financial satisfaction were increased by a factor of 3.31 for retired parents compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.20$, $p < .01$, $OR = 3.31$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied financially was decreased by a factor of .36 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -1.02$, $p < .01$, $OR = .36$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Financial satisfaction was not associated with family transitions, the 'other' work category, Southern-European or Indo/East Indian ethnicity, number of children, age of parent or child, or gender of parent or child.

There was a statistically significant association between socio-economic variables and financial satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 28, $p < .05$). After the socio-economic variables were controlled for, the likelihood of being extremely satisfied financially was increased by a factor of 3.47 for retired parents compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.24$, $p < .01$, $OR = 3.47$). Chinese ethnicity remained a statistically significant predictor of financial satisfaction, the likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied financially decreased by a factor of .40 compared to British parents ($B = -.93$, $p < .05$, $OR = .4$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Financial satisfaction was not associated with family transitions, the ‘other’ work category, Southern-European or Indo/East Indian ethnicity, number of children, age of parent or child, gender of parent or child, household income, education, or financial assistance to or from one’s child.

Relational variables were significantly associated with financial satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 35.72, $p < .05$). After controlling for relational variables, financial satisfaction was still associated with retirement; the odds of being extremely satisfied financially were increased by a factor of 3.08 compared to parents working full-time ($B = 1.12$, $p < .01$, $OR = 3.08$). Chinese ethnicity remained a predictor of financial satisfaction, where the likelihood of reporting extremely satisfied financially decreased by a factor of .44 for Chinese parents compared to British parents ($B = -.82$, $p < .10$, $OR = .44$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Financial satisfaction was not associated with family transitions, the ‘other’ work category, Southern-European or Indo/East Indian ethnicity, number of children, age of parent or child, gender of parent or child,

household income, education, financial assistance to or from child, emotional closeness to child, conflict with child, or perceived/experienced emotional difficulty to see child leave.

Including all main effects and interactions, there was a significant family transition by work transition interaction (Model Chi-square = 45.25, $p < .01$). The odds of reporting extremely satisfied financially were increased by a factor of 3.29 for parents in the 'other' work category with an emptying nest compared to parents with a full nest and working full-time ($B = 1.19$, $p < .10$, $OR = 3.29$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied financially was decreased by a factor of .17 for retired parents with an empty nest compared to parents working full-time with a full nest ($B = -1.80$, $p < .05$, $OR = .17$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

Table 4.3. Logistic Regression Analysis of Financial Satisfaction

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3		Block 4		Block 5		Block 6		Block 7	
	B	OR	B	OR										
Block 1: Family Transitions														
Family Transitions (ref=Full)														
Emptying Nest	.55*	1.73	.49‡	1.64	.20	---	.41	---	.36	---	.34	---	.02	---
Empty Nest	.46‡	1.58	.26	---	.11	---	.38	---	.38	---	.34	---	.17	---
Block 2: Work Transitions														
Work Transitions (ref=Full-Time)														
Other (e.g., Homemaker)	.25	---	.23	---	.41	---	.44	---	.42	---	.37	---		
Retired	.66*	1.94	.87**	2.38	1.20**	3.31	1.24**	3.47	1.12**	3.08	1.39**	3.99		
Block 3: Interaction														
(Family x Work Transitions) ^a														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
Empty Nest * Retired			-1.55*		.21	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Block 4: Socio-Demographic														
Ethnocultural Identity (ref=British)														
Chinese							-1.02**	.36	-.93*	.40	-.82‡	.44	-.94*	.39
Southern-European							-.12	---	-.05	---	-.03	---	-.14	---
Indo / East Indian							.23	---	.33	---	.14	---	.05	---
Number of Children							.05	---	.05	---	.06	---	.09	---
Parent's Age							-.03	---	-.02	---	-.02	---	-.02	---
Child's Age (ref=18-24)														
25+							-.26	---	-.27	---	-.29	---	-.32	---
Parent's Gender (ref=Male)														
Female							-.07	---	-.05	---	-.10	---	-.09	---
Child's Gender (ref=Male)														
Female														
							.22	---	.23	---	.19	---	.13	---

Table 4.3. (continued)

	Block 1 B	OR	Block 2 B	OR	Block 3 B	OR	Block 4 B	OR	Block 5 B	OR	Block 6 B	OR	Block 7 B	OR
Block 5: Socio-Economic														
Household Income (ref=<\$50,000)														
>\$50,000									.17	---	.11	---	.08	---
Education (ref=No Post-Sec)														
Post-Secondary									-.07	---	.00	---	-.08	---
Financial Assist. To Child (ref=														
Not at all to once/year or rarely)														
Several times/year to daily									-.04	---	.05	---	.13	---
Financial Assist. From Child (ref=														
Not at all to once/year or rarely)														
Several times/year to daily									-.28	---	-.40	---	-.44	---
Block 6: Relational														
Emotional Closeness to Child														
(ref=Not Extremely Close)														
Extremely Close														
Conflict with Child (ref=No Conflict)														
Conflict														
Emotional Difficulty to See Child														
Leave (ref=Not Difficult at All)														
Extremely Difficult														
Somewhat Difficult														
Block 7: Interaction ^a														
(Family x Work Transitions)														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
Empty Nest * Other														
Empty Nest * Retired														
Constant	-.83		-.80		-.71		.49		.28		-.18		-.16	
Overall Model Chi-Square	4.74		9.34		17.53*		27.10**		28.0*		35.72*		45.25**	
Df	2		4		8		12		16		20		24	

^ap < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001^aBeta value only given for significant interactions

4.2.4 Leisure Satisfaction

Family transitions were significantly associated with leisure satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 15.66, $p < .001$). Compared to parents with a full nest, the likelihood of being extremely satisfied with leisure time was increased by a factor of 1.96 for parents with an emptying nest ($B = .67$, $p < .05$, $OR = 1.96$) and by a factor of 2.65 for parents with an empty nest ($B = .97$, $p < .001$, $OR = 2.65$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

Work transitions were significantly associated with leisure satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 45.17, $p < .001$). Family transitions remained a significant predictor of leisure satisfaction after the work transition variables were controlled for. The likelihood of parents reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time with an empty nest increased by a factor of 1.85 compared to parents with a full nest ($B = .62$, $p < .05$, $OR = 1.85$). An emptying nest increased the odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time by a factor of 1.78 compared to parents with a full nest ($B = .57$, $p < .05$, $OR = 1.78$). Work transitions also remained significantly associated with leisure satisfaction. The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were increased by a factor of 2.85 for parents in the 'other' work category compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.05$, $p < .001$, $OR = 2.85$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time in retirement increased by a factor of 4.88 compared to parents still working full-time ($B = 1.59$, $p < .001$, $OR = 4.88$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

A family transition by work transition interaction was statistically significant (Model Chi-square = 49.68, $p < .001$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was increased by a factor of 3.57 for parents with an empty nest in the 'other' category, compared to parents working full-time with a full nest ($B = 1.27$, $p < .1$, $OR = 3.57$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

There was a statistically significant association between socio-demographic variables and leisure satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 55.02, $p < .001$). After controlling for socio-demographic variables, family and work transitions remained significant predictors of leisure satisfaction. The likelihood of parents reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time increased by a factor of 1.80 for parents with an emptying nest compared to those with a full nest ($B = .59$, $p < .1$, $OR = 1.80$). An empty nest increased the odds of being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time by a factor of 2.37 compared to parents with a full nest ($B = .86$, $p < .05$, $OR = 2.37$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was increased by a factor of 3.17 for parents in the 'other' work category compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.15$, $p < .001$, $OR = 3.17$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time in retirement increased by a factor of 7.86 ($B = 2.06$, $p < .001$, $OR = 7.86$) compared to working full-time. Age of parent was associated with leisure satisfaction. The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were decreased by a factor of .96 for each age increment ($B = -.04$, $p < .1$, $OR = .96$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

model. Leisure satisfaction was not associated with ethnicity, number of children, age of child, or gender of parent or child.

There was a statistically significant association between socio-economic variables and leisure satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 60.68, $p < .001$). An empty nest remained a significant predictor of leisure satisfaction after controlling for the socio-economic variables. Compared to parents with a full nest, the likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was increased by a factor of 2.1 for parents with an empty nest ($B = .74$, $p < .05$, $OR = 2.1$). Work transitions also remained a significant predictor of leisure satisfaction. Compared to those parents working full-time, the odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were increased by a factor of 3.15 for those in the 'other' work category ($B = 1.15$, $p < .001$, $OR = 3.15$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time in retirement increased by a factor of 7.92 compared to those working full-time ($B = 2.07$, $p < .001$, $OR = 7.92$). Parent's age remained a predictor of leisure satisfaction. The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time decreased by a factor of .96 for each age increment ($B = -.05$, $p < .1$, $OR = .96$). Financial assistance received from child was negatively associated with leisure satisfaction. The odds of parents reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was decreased by a factor of .52 if financial assistance was received from their child several times/year to daily, compared to those reporting no assistance received, once/year, or rarely from their child ($B = -.66$, $p < .1$, $OR = .52$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Leisure satisfaction was not associated with an

emptying nest, ethnicity, number of children, child's age, gender of parent or child, household income, education, or financial assistance to child.

Relational variables were significantly associated with leisure satisfaction (Model Chi-square = 97.98, $p < .001$). After the relational variables were controlled for, an empty nest remained a significant predictor of leisure satisfaction. The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was increased by a factor of 2.01 for parents with an empty nest compared to those with a full nest ($B = .70$, $p < .1$, $OR = 2.01$). Work transitions also remained significantly associated with leisure satisfaction. The likelihood of parents reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was increased by a factor of 3.2 for parents in the 'other' work category compared to those working full-time ($B = 1.16$, $p < .001$, $OR = 3.2$). Retirement increased the odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time by a factor of 8.63 compared to parents working full-time ($B = 2.16$, $p < .001$, $OR = 8.63$). Age of parent remained significantly associated with leisure satisfaction. Likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time decreased by a factor of .96 for each age increment ($B = -.05$, $p < .1$, $OR = .96$).

The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were decreased by a factor of .54 if reported household income was greater than \$50,000 compared to parents with a household income of less than \$50,000 ($B = -.62$, $p < .05$, $OR = .54$). Financial assistance from child remained significantly associated with leisure satisfaction. The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were decreased by a factor of .44 if parents

received financial assistance from their child several times/year to daily compared to parents who received financial assistance from their child once/year to not at all ($B = -.82$, $p < .05$, $OR = .44$). The likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time was increased by a factor of 2.58 if parents reported being extremely close with their child compared to those who reported being not extremely close ($B = .95$, $p < .001$, $OR = 2.58$). The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were decreased by a factor of .62 for parents reporting conflict with their child compared to those who reported no conflict ($B = -.48$, $p < .1$, $OR = .62$). If parents perceived or experienced their child leaving as being somewhat difficult, the likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time decreased by a factor of .48 compared to those who stated it was not or wouldn't be difficult at all ($B = -.73$, $p < .01$, $OR = .48$), controlling for all other variables in the model. Leisure satisfaction was not associated with an emptying nest, ethnicity, number of children, child's age, gender of parent or child, education, financial assistance to child, or experiencing/perceiving your child leaving as extremely difficult.

Including all main effects and interactions, a statistically significant family transition by work transition was found (Model Chi-square = 96.34, $p < .001$). The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were increased by a factor of 3.78 for parents in the 'other' work category with an empty nest compared to parents with a full nest and working full-time ($B = 1.33$, $p < .1$, $OR = 3.78$), controlling for all other variables in the model.

Table 4.4. Logistic Regression Analysis of Leisure Satisfaction

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3		Block 4		Block 5		Block 6		Block 7		
	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	
Block 1: Family Transitions															
Family Transitions (ref=Full)															
Emptying Nest	.67*	1.96	.57*	1.78	.57‡	1.77	.59‡	1.80	.49	---	.51	---	.61	---	
Empty Nest	.97***	2.65	.62*	1.85	.47	---	.86*	2.37	.74*	2.1	.70‡	2.01	.67	---	
Block 2: Work Transitions															
Work Transitions (ref=Full-Time)															
Other (e.g., Homemaker)		1.05***	2.85		1.14***	3.14	1.15***	3.17	1.15***	3.15	1.16***	3.2	1.29***	3.63	
Retired		1.59***	4.88		1.75***	5.76	2.06***	7.86	2.07***	7.92	2.16***	8.63	2.43***	11.4	
Block 3: Interaction															
(Family x Work Transitions) ^a															
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)															
Empty Nest * Other					1.27‡	3.57	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Block 4: Socio-Demographic															
Ethnocultural Identity (ref=British)															
Chinese							-.32	---	-.41	---	-.21	---	-.20	---	
Southern-European							.09	---	.07	---	.05	---	.01	---	
Indo / East Indian							.42	---	.42	---	.35	---	.42	---	
Number of Children							.03	---	.05	---	.03	---	.02	---	
Parent's Age								-.04‡	.96	-.05‡	.96	-.05‡	.96	-.05‡	.95
Child's Age (ref=18-24)															
25+							.03	---	.11	---	.09	---	.03	---	
Parent's Gender (ref=Male)															
Female															
Child's Gender (ref=Male)															
Female															

Table 4.4. (continued)

	Block 1 B	OR	Block 2 B	OR	Block 3 B	OR	Block 4 B	OR	Block 5 B	OR	Block 6 B	OR	Block 7 B	OR
Block 5: Socio-Economic														
Household Income (ref=<\$50,000)														
>\$50,000									.47	---	-.62 [†]	.54	-.58 [†]	.56
Education (ref=No Post-Sec)									.26	---	.45	---	.45	---
Post-Secondary														
Financial Assist. To Child (ref=														
Not at all to once/year or rarely)														
Several times/year to daily									-.07	---	.01	---	.05	---
Financial Assist. From Child (ref=														
Not at all to once/year or rarely)														
Several times/year to daily														
Block 6: Relational														
Emotional Closeness to Child														
(ref=Not Extremely Close)														
Extremely Close														
Conflict with Child (ref=No Conflict)														
Conflict														
Emotional Difficulty to See Child														
Leave (ref=Not Difficult at All)														
Extremely Difficult														
Somewhat Difficult														
Block 7: Interaction ^a														
(Family x Work Transitions)														
(ref=Full Nest * Full-Time)														
Empty Nest * Other														
Constant	-.47		-.45		-.44		1.75		1.77		1.68		1.96	
Overall Model Chi-Square	15.66***		45.17***		49.68***		55.02***		60.68***		97.98***		96.34***	
Df	2		4		8		12		16		20		24	

[†]p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001^aBeta value only given for significant interactions

To summarize the quantitative findings, there were significant associations found for each of the four satisfaction variables. In addition, there were four significant interactions, one for leisure satisfaction and three for financial satisfaction. The odds of reporting being extremely happy as a parent were increased if parents were retired, of South-European ethnicity, or reported being extremely close to their child. The odds of reporting being extremely happy as parent were decreased if parents were Chinese, Indo/East Indian, older, had an average household income greater than \$50,000, reported conflict with their children, or found it emotionally difficult to see their child leave.

The odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship were increased if parents were retired or extremely close to their child. The odds of reporting being extremely happy with one's marital relationship were decreased if parents were Chinese, older, had a household income greater than \$50,000, received financial assistance from their child several times/year to daily, or reported conflict with their child. The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied financially were increased for parents who were retired and decreased for Chinese parents. The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were increased for parents with an empty or emptying nest, those in the 'other' work category, retired, or reported being extremely close with their child. The odds of reporting being extremely satisfied with one's leisure time were decreased for parents who were older, received financial assistance from their child several times/year or daily, had a household income greater than \$50,000,

reported conflict with child, or perceived / experienced their child leaving as being somewhat difficult.

Some variables were not significant predictors in any of the 4 regression models: number of children, child's age, gender of parent or child, education, or financial assistance to child.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis

This section provides an overview of the qualitative sample and explores the qualitative themes that emerged from the interview data.

4.3.1 Demographics

Table 4.5 and 4.6 provide an overview of respondent socio-demographics for the qualitative dataset. Pseudo-names have been assigned to each participant to protect their identity. Table 4.7 provides an overview of experiences of boomerang children in the qualitative sample.

Table 4.5. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

ID	Anne P01	Pete P02	Sheryl P03	Tom P04a	Lisa P04b	Nancy P05
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female
Age	65	69	61	59	60	60
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married	Married (to P04b)	Married (to P04a)	Married
Education Level	College diploma	University degree	University degree	University degree	High school	High school
Employment Status	Retired (1994)	Retired (2006)	Retired (2006)	Retired (2008)	Part-time (will retire in 2012)	Full-time (will retire in 2011)
Reason for Retirement	- Wanted to spend retirement years doing something more rewarding	- Age 65 - Cancer diagnosis in 2003 - Enough of work - Industry changed	- Retired 4 months after mother died - Double benefits - Sufficient income - Husband retired 1 st time after his cancer diagnosis	- Right age factor - Ready to leave - Workplace had changed	- Will retire when no longer get flexibility to travel or can't keep up with changes in technology	- Time to retire. Want to be young, able to get out and enjoy life. - Planned a big trip following retirement
Retirement Activities	Spiritual care volunteer 15-20 hrs/wk. Travel.	Research for articles. Community volunteer. Travel.	Volunteers in community	Volunteers.	Intends to continue with volunteering.	Intends to work part-time in retirement. Community volunteer.
Employment Status (spouse)	Retired (2002). Consultant.	Retired (year N/A)	Retired (1999)	Part-time (will retire in 2012)	Retired (2008)	Working full-time (will retire in 2011)
Perceived Health	Excellent. Husband: high blood pressure	Excellent. Cancer	Excellent. Husband: cancer, COPD & heart problems	Good.	Fair. Diabetes, Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, torn rotator cuff	Excellent
Total Household Income	\$50K - \$75K	\$50K - \$75K	\$50K - \$75K	\$50K - \$75K	\$125K - \$150K	
Residence (all owned)	Condo (1750 sq ft)	Condo (950 sq ft)	House (3000 sq ft)	House (1200 sq ft)	House (3000 sq ft)	

Country Born	Netherlands	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada
Nest Stage	Empty	Empty	Empty	Emptying	Empty	
# of Children	4	2	2	3	2	
# of Children at Home / Reason	0	0	0	1 (unemployed, undereducated, depression, unstable)	0	
Boomerang Children	Yes: When son moved back to Canada, daughter for 4 months & daughter with kids for 6 wks	No	No	Yes: Son between jobs	Yes: daughter for 3 months when moved back to Canada	
Age / Gender of Children	36F, 39F, 41M, 43F	28F, 30F	28M, 31M	27M, 29M, 32M	32F, 34F	
Financial Satisfaction*	5	4	5	4	4	3
Marital Happiness*	5	5	5	3	4	5
Leisure Satisfaction*	5	5	5	4	2.5	3
Parental Happiness*	5	5	5	2	4	4

* Based on a 5-point scale. 5 = extremely satisfied / happy

Table 4.6. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants (cont.)

ID	Darren P06	Erik P07	Matt P08	Kim P09	Tyler P10a	Lorrie P10b
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age	65	62	60	62	58	58
Marital Status	Married	Married (wife lives in U.S.)	Remarried in 2005	Divorced	Married (to P10b)	Married (to P10a)
Education Level	University degree	Some college / university	University degree	University degree	University degree	N/A
Employment Status	Retired (2000)	Retired (2008)	Retired (2005)	Retired (2007)	Retired (2010 – 3 weeks prior)	Home-maker
Reason for Retirement	- Retirement was best deal - Chance for part-time work in retirement - Time to move on, time for a change	- Financially irresponsible to stay - Should look after himself - Workplace had changed - Time was right	- Had enough of work, didn't need the hassle - workplace had changed - saved up enough	- Right age for pension - Tired of job	- Could not be bothered to deal with the stress - Quit right after disagreement with director - Self realization - Significant capital	N/A
Retirement Activities	Retirement planning workshops	Part-time consultant	Volunteer / travel	Counselling clients at home	Travel / outdoor activities	Volunteer / travel / outdoor activities / languages
Employment Status (spouse)	Retired (2007)	Working full-time (no plans yet to retire)	Retired (2008)	N/A	Homemaker	Retired (2010)
Perceived Health	Excellent	Excellent. High blood pressure since retiring	Good. Back & ear problems	Good. Knee problems	Excellent	Excellent
Total Household Income	\$125K - \$150K	> \$150K	\$75K - \$100K	\$75K - \$100K	> \$150K	
Residence (all owned)	House (3,200 sq ft)	House (2800 sq ft)	Condo (1170 sq ft)	House (1150 sq ft)	House (2800 sq ft)	
Country Born	Canada	Canada	Netherlands	Canada	England	N/A

Nest Stage	Full	Emptying	Empty	Empty	Empty
# of Children	2	2	2	1	2
# of Children at Home / Reason	2	1 (student). Other son moved out 2 wks ago.	0	0	0
Boomerang Children	Yes: Both son & daughter. Finished school, can't afford to rent apartment.	Yes: son left for school & work	Yes: daughter after school for a year.	No	No: Nothing over 4 months
Age / Gender of Children	23M, 24F	21M, 25M	26F, 28F	21F	23M, 26F
Financial Satisfaction*	5	3	4.5	4	5 N/A
Marital Happiness*	5	5	5	N/A	5 N/A
Leisure Satisfaction*	4	2	4	5	5 N/A
Parental Happiness*	4	4	5	5	5 N/A

* Based on a 5-point scale. 5 = extremely satisfied / happy

Table 4.7. Experience of Boomerang Children

Experienced children returning (boomerang)	<p><u>Past experience:</u></p> <p>P01: (son moved back to Canada, daughter with kids for 6 wks, daughter who was married and moved back after school for 4 months)</p> <p>P04: Son moved home b/w jobs</p> <p>P05: Daughter moved home after living abroad for 3 months to get settled</p> <p>P07: Son came back after moving away for school</p> <p>P08: Daughter moved back for a year after school.</p> <p><u>Present experience:</u></p> <p>P06: both children moved back to Vancouver, can't afford rent.</p>
Would be / are okay with children returning	<p><u>Have experienced boomerang:</u></p> <p>P01: it made sense, knew it was for a short while, lived independently</p> <p>P04: Wasn't big adjustment for one more at home, knew it was temporary</p> <p>P05: knew it was temporary</p> <p>P06: happy being together, enjoy having them around. Kids at home watching house when on trips.</p> <p>P07: son was "out of control" when away at school. Partyng and flunked out. "About bloody time" he moved back.</p> <p>P08: Wasn't much adjustment, more just who does what.</p> <p><u>No boomerang experience:</u></p> <p>P02: has an extra bedroom incase kids want to move back.</p> <p>P03: More than welcome to come back if their circumstances are such that it is best for them.</p> <p>P09: If daughter decided to move back, would be okay with that.</p> <p>P10: okay for kids to use their house as a temporary hostel when away on trips, but otherwise kids haven't been back for more than 3 months.</p>
Negative aspects of children returning	<p><u>Have experienced boomerang:</u></p> <p>P01: did mention that it was stressful in terms of crowding, expectation that you cook etc. Important to lay down rules or boundaries beforehand.</p> <p>P06: sad not venturing off into own life. Son dependent but daughter not. Wife back to being "mother", spending more time cleaning up after kids. When kids away, had opportunity to date again.</p> <p>P10: crap still in basement (even though not boomerang)</p>

4.3.2 Thematic categories

Transcript analysis resulted in themes related to family and work transitions, organized similarly to the quantitative outcomes. The qualitative interviews allowed us to further explore family and work transitions, particularly focusing on the transition to retirement. The description of each theme follows. Please refer back to tables 4.5 and 4.6 for a summary of qualitative participants characteristics.

4.3.2.1 Parental Satisfaction

“You give your children roots and wings” was an expression used by two respondents, Darren and Nancy, to describe their children’s transition to independence. This theme of “roots and wings” also came up indirectly in the other interviews, with “wings” referring to children’s success at independence, and “roots” referring to a home base where children may possibly return. Whether children chose to use their wings or return to their roots was related to parental happiness.

Family transitions. Unlike our quantitative findings where there was no association between parental satisfaction and family transitions, we found an association between the two in our qualitative sample. Parents reported greater satisfaction as a parent when their children were living independently, using their “wings”. Darren stated:

We were happy to have them leave—not happy to get rid of them, but our feeling is that you give children wings and roots. Part of being a parent is having your children leave and being able to do their own thing.

Darren wanted to see his children in a place where they were no longer dependent on him, further elaborating: “My happiness as a parent, I want them to succeed.”

The majority of parents felt that although it was a little sad to see their children move out, it was part of moving forward in life. Matt stated: “We missed them, but they were moving on.” Pete commented “You gotta push the robins out of the nest and they gotta fend for themselves.” Kim found the transition a bit sad, “I cried tears of joy,” but she was thrilled that her daughter had such a great opportunity to move away, grow up and be on her own. Anne said she didn’t really suffer from the empty nest syndrome and she thought it was fantastic when her children became independent. In our quantitative findings parents who found it extremely difficult emotionally to see their child leave were less likely to report parental happiness. Our qualitative findings seem to suggest that parental happiness is associated with children moving on with the next stage of their lives.

Other parents felt that children need time to figure themselves out – it’s not a single step to independence. Tyler stated “It [moving out] is one of the final steps of growing up, but not THE final step.” Had his children still been living at home at age 30, Tyler said he would probably have been alarmed. His wife Lorrie agreed that “It’s a step along the way but it’s not a great final turning point. I know they come in and out and come back.” She felt that there might have been some

parental dissatisfaction if the kids were still living at home when they were in their mid 20's. However, Lorrie said she would be okay with her children moving back temporarily if needed, using their house as a "temporary hostel." Lorrie further elaborated: "The nest's not really empty until they move their crap out of your basement [laughs]. And they haven't moved their crap out of the basement." In this case it was a gradual process for Tyler and Lorrie's children in transitioning to independence. However, overall Tyler and Lorrie appeared satisfied.

Nancy and Darren had no expectations for when their children should move out and Sheryl would have been happy if her children would have stayed at home forever. Other parents based their expectations on a combination of factors. For example, Lisa expected that her children would become independent once they had finished school, had careers and were financially stable, or were aged 25-30. Her husband Tom expected their children to be independent once they were in their mid-twenties or self-sufficient. In some cases, respondents children moved out before they were expecting; Pete thinks his children were conscious of his upcoming retirement and decided to move out. Parents had varying expectations for their children's independence – parents were satisfied when these expectations were met.

Parents are happy to see their children on a path to independence and success, however, sometimes children return home before giving independence another try. Over half ($n = 6$) of the participants interviewed for this study experienced one or more of their children returning home. All parents interviewed for this study, whether they had experienced boomerang children or not, stated

that they were (or would be) okay with having their children return home. For example Pete and his wife downsized to a condo and mentioned that if one of their daughters decided to move back, there are two bedrooms. Pete felt confident that his children were capable of making the right decisions but he would be okay with them moving back if they so decided. Sheryl felt that if her children's circumstances were "such that it is best for them and they choose to come back home, they are more than welcome." However, as will be discussed further on, having children living back at home wasn't always smooth sailing. Parents identified both positive and negative aspects of boomerang children. However, overall the return of a child was not found to have much impact on satisfaction levels.

Although all parents were welcoming of their children deciding to move back home, not all viewed it the same way. Some felt it was a step backwards whereas others felt relieved and saw it as well needed for their children's sake. For example, Erik's son moved away for school, but after a year of partying and subsequently flunking out he moved back home. Erik felt that his son was in the "student in and out days", not quite the adult stage yet. So it was "about bloody time [he moved back], he was out of control out there [laughs]." Erik felt that this son was in a transition period, and hopefully transitioning into a responsible adult. Pete and Sheryl both felt that when children stay at home too long they are not in full control of their life. Sheryl commented, "I think sometimes when people grow up more and stay at home, it is hard to separate that independence. You can't get onto the next steps as easy." At the time of the interview both of Darren's

children had moved back home, making him both happy and sad – an ambivalent state of parental satisfaction. He clarified that the sadness was more for his son who, since moving home, wasn't advancing as well as his daughter: "They are not venturing off into their own life."

Generally, having a child move back home was not seen as terribly disruptive, since it was often anticipated to be temporary and for a good reason. For example, when Nancy's daughter returned home for 3 months after being abroad or Tom and Lisa's son moved home in between jobs, they knew "it was temporary" so it wasn't a big adjustment. When Matt's daughter moved back for a year after school he said that it wasn't much of an adjustment other than figuring out who does what. Anne also experienced the return of some of her children after they finished school or travelling abroad. None of her children remained for too long and it "made sense." Anne commented that her family is very independent with everyone doing their own thing. This likely made the temporary return of her children easier to cope with. Overall, the transition of adult children in and out of the nest did not have a major influence on parental satisfaction, especially when it was seen as a temporary situation that made sense. The circumstances of the child's move back home was more important than the move itself in relation to parental satisfaction.

Work transitions. Boomers entering retirement are a unique group; they are more likely than any other generation to experience adult children living at home when they retire. In some cases we found that children living at home may have an influence on parent's decision to retire but little influence on parental

satisfaction. However, in cases where respondents children were not living with them, they commented that retirement would provide them with more opportunity to spend time together, however, this wouldn't have much impact on parental satisfaction. This is unlike our quantitative findings where retirement was a significant predictor of parental satisfaction.

Some of the respondents who had not experienced the return of a child reflected on how it may have impacted their transition into retirement. Both Matt and Tyler felt that if their children had still been at home when they were deciding to retire, they may have delayed retired. For Matt it would have been dependent on whether or not his children were still dependent on him, whereas Tyler felt that he had to set an example for his children. Tyler stated:

We live in a work ethic puritanical society and so I would find it difficult to retire before the kids are either well immersed into university or working because I feel I'm setting an example.

Relational factors. Generally the parent-child relationship seemed to remain fairly stable if not improve across family (children moving out) and work (retirement) transitions. When her children moved out Lorrie had a few pangs of missing them, but she said it was good for the mother/son relationship; if her son chooses to leave junk on his floor it doesn't matter as she doesn't see it. Lisa also felt that her relationship with her children improved once the first two moved out – she felt the house was too small for five adults to have their own space, especially with everyone on different schedules. She also found that her relationship with them changed and she was able to speak to them as adults.

Some parents found this transition harder than others. For example, Sheryl found it a huge adjustment after her first son moved out, especially for holidays like Mother's Day. Tom also found it hard – he described his sons as hermits, and even more so when they moved out. "It is different with them gone, we don't see them as much". Tom wished that his sons would involve him in their lives more. Matt also felt that he was not in his children's life as much as he used to be – "I have to go on their Facebook once in a while to find out what's going on". Erik had a similar sentiment saying that he doesn't hear from his son who recently moved out often enough. "They're going to have to make their way you know and I'm going to have to stay out of their way."

In some cases the return of a child was seen to have a positive influence on the parent-child relationship. Having the family living under the same roof again was a positive outcome identified by Darren. However, in other cases the return of a child was a bit of a stress on the relationship. For example, Anne experienced the short-term return of more than one of her children. One of her daughters returned for 6 weeks during the summer with her children, which Anne found stressful: "She was not financially dependent, but it's just crowding in on your life. And I hate cooking [laughs]." In the end, Anne commented that it all worked out fine with her daughter as well as with her other children that returned home. Anne felt that it is important for parents and children to sit down and lay out the rules and boundaries. If ground rules are established prior to children moving back home, then role expectations are already in place and possible tensions will be reduced.

The quality of the parent-child relationship had an influence on parental satisfaction. Some parents found that their relationship with their child improved once that child moved out, increasing parental satisfaction. However, other parents reported decreased parental satisfaction following their children moving out as it meant less frequent contact. These findings partially support our quantitative finding that relational quality was significantly associated with parental satisfaction; being extremely close emotionally to one's child was associated with parental satisfaction.

4.3.2.2 Marital Satisfaction

Similar to our quantitative findings, marital satisfaction was not associated with family transitions.

Work transitions. The transition to retirement results in one's marital relationship being redefined as couples have more time to invest in the relationship. Kim made the point that couples in retirement are no longer raising children or working full-time, so they need to figure out what their marriage is about in retirement.

What I think for married people there's a whole renegotiation of their marriage at retirement, and they need to figure out how they can support each other and love each other in new ways.

In this sense, one's marital relationship is a potential source of stress in retirement. Kim further commented that "Some marriages actually fall apart at this age, some marriages do not survive." Overall, marital satisfaction remained

high in retirement as couples learned how to negotiate and redefine their marriage as needed, including planning for joint activities in retirement. This supports our quantitative findings where retirement was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction.

Prior to retirement some respondents reported feeling a bit unsure as to how retirement would affect their day-to-day living. For example, Anne's feelings were:

I thought he's too young, what am I going to do, I have to cater to him all day! [laughs]. I was afraid that all the sudden it's 10 o' clock and he needs a cup of coffee, he needs this, he needs that.

Lorrie had similar sentiments: "For better or worse, but not for lunch." Lorrie felt that the division of household tasks with her husband wasn't completely equal, but they were learning to share it a bit more:

All of the stuff that would've been more what I would have referred to as the shit work of life has become more enjoyable because he tends to be either around or we do it together... it's very pleasant.

The reality for most couples was that they learned to negotiate; each was free to do as they please without feeling like they were "stepping on the toes" of the other. Pete stated: "I get out of the house long enough, that allows her to do her thing." Lisa decided to go back to work when her husband retired – "Since I had a chance to be at home, I wanted to give [husband] his space to get adjusted to retirement."

Relational factors. One's marital relationship provides support in adjusting to retirement as well as someone with which to experience the joys of retirement. As seen in Table 4.5 and 4.6, scores for marital happiness were consistently high with an average score of 4.7 out of 5, with 5 being extremely happy. Pete was very happy with his relationship in retirement: "We spend more time together than we ever did, and it's even better you know. We're holding hands it seems all the time." Darren commented that once his children moved out, it gave his wife and him an opportunity to date again. Erik's situation was unique in that his wife has been working (and living) in the U.S. for the past 10 years:

It's great, she comes home on the weekends and it's just like having your girlfriend come home – I don't have to sweat any of those things anymore, all those dumb little things that eventually become big. So the relationship is fabulous, better than it's ever been.

Once Erik's wife retires down the road they will likely go through a renegotiation stage as they adjust to living under the same roof. He anticipates some changes to his leisure activities stating, "I'll probably use my boat a lot less" to accommodate his wife's leisure interests as well. Overall, respondents reported greater marital satisfaction in retirement owing to more quality time together and less stress from work.

4.3.2.3 Financial Satisfaction

Family transitions. Financial satisfaction of respondents was associated with the ability to help their children out; parents reported less financial

satisfaction if they were unable to help their children out to a greater extent financially. This does not support our quantitative findings where financial satisfaction was not associated with family transitions. Darren, reflecting on the retirement workshops he gives, found that many individuals in his workshops talk about their fear of helping their children. Unfortunately most people don't start saving early enough. Darren stated that it's quite common for parents to continue working just to help their kids through university – many parents feel it is their obligation to help their children with such expenses. Nancy rated her financial satisfaction as lower because neither of her children had a house:

That's a source of unhappiness for us. If we had the years we would work as long as we could to help with the down payment for them.

Unfortunately, to sell our house and for us to buy something small is still not enough difference to help the kids buy a house

Erik had similar sentiments stating "I hope I have enough money that I can leave the house to them – it will give them a leg up". Erik chose to delay withdrawing his pension until his kids were older. Along the same lines, Matt said that if his children had been home he probably wouldn't have retired – "Make sure they you know, everybody gets through."

Downsizing is commonly associated with retirement; It reduces expenses, increases funds, and simplifies life. In the present study, those respondents who chose to downsize their house did so after they were retired and their children were independent. Anne and her husband decided to get a smaller place after he retired – they thought it would less of a financial burden since they would have a

reduced income and wouldn't need so much space since all their children had moved out. Pete felt that had his daughters stayed at home longer, he might not have sold their house as their daughters were very attached to the house. In the process of downsizing to a condo Matt had wanted to get rid of some of his furniture, but his daughters found it too hard to let go of some pieces as they had sentimental value (their mother had died recently). Lisa felt that if none of her children were still at home they might have considered downsizing the house by now. Adult children had some influence on their parents financial decisions, although overall financial satisfaction did not seem to vary much based on family transitions.

Work transitions. Many respondents stated that they had always lived within their means, so retirement wasn't a huge adjustment financially. Furthermore, the majority of respondents did not retire until they were satisfied with their financial situation – therefore, retirement did not have much impact on respondents financial satisfaction. This contrasts with our quantitative findings where retirement was a strong predictor of financial satisfaction.

Just over half of the participants mentioned that they made sure their finances were in order, ensuring enough income in retirement. Erik got to a point where it would have been “financially irresponsible” for him to have kept working. Others such as Tom and Kim waited until they reached the right combination of age and years working where they were eligible for their pension. In some cases the timing of one’s retirement was influenced by their spouse. To avoid having both individuals adjusting to a huge transition at the same time, some couples

staggered the timing of their retirement in relation to their spouse's retirement.

Darren made the point that retiring while your spouse is still working provides some stability, allowing you to adjust to living on a reduced income. Or in some cases, role reversal provides additional stability. When her husband retired due to health reasons, Sheryl went back to full-time work.

Some respondents found retirement workshops helpful in planning for retirement, although the focus of most workshops was on the financial aspect of pension options rather than the social/economic aspects of retirement. Darren felt that generally "people will not look at the psychological aspects of retirement until they know they're going to be alright financially. And so there's this process they have to go through." Most respondents planned ahead for retirement and how they would finance it. In a couple of cases respondents made larger purchases such as music, bikes, etc., before retiring as they knew they would be more reluctant to buy these items once they had less pocket money to play with in retirement.

Socio-economic factors. Financial satisfaction was not negatively impacted as a result of children's dependence. Rather, respondents had expectations as to when their children would become self-sufficient for their own sake.

Respondents varied in their expectations regarding their children's independence. Most parents thought it was acceptable to support their children throughout their undergraduate degree. However, parents such as Anne and Matt felt that, once their children started a Master's degree, this was the "kick out

time.” In some cases parents were charging their children rent not because they needed the money, but for their children’s sake – Darren and his wife were charging their children \$400/month rent to force some reality. Darren felt that at some point they will have to increase the rent to “tighten the screws” on their son and eventually force both children to leave. Darren’s son was dependent on him and his wife, but their daughter was not. Erik saw himself as a backstop for his older son; he was hoping his son would soon figure out the next stage of his life such as putting a roof over his head. He said he will give his son a gentle nudge, but if he has to come back and take another run at it that’s fine.

4.3.2.4 Leisure Satisfaction

Family transitions. For the most part respondents did not report much of a change in leisure satisfaction when their children left or returned to live at home. In a few cases parent’s noticed an increase or decrease in chores when their children moved back in or out, but overall it didn’t have much impact. This is a contrast to our quantitative findings, where leisure satisfaction was significantly associated with an empty and emptying nest.

When Tom and Lisa’s son moved back home while searching for another job, they felt it was “not so much extra work for one more” as they still had to cook and do laundry anyways – their other son was still living at home. However, not all parents felt this way – now that the kids were back living at home, Darren felt that his wife was spending more time than she should be cleaning up after the kids – “she’s back to being a mother again.” However, Darren did appreciate having his children at home to watch the house when they went away on trips.

This was also expressed by Tyler and Lorrie who were happy to have their children use their house as a “temporary hostel” when they were out of the country.

Kim was very satisfied with her leisure time – now that her daughter was away at school she had more time for herself since she didn’t have to worry about driving her daughter around etc. Tom felt that if all three of his sons were still living at home when he retired he would likely have still retired, but probably would have found part-time work or a volunteer position to get him out of the house. As his wife Lisa mentioned, with five adults there was not much individual space in the house.

Work transitions. The majority of respondents reported greater leisure satisfaction in retirement, although their definition of leisure time was different than what you would expect from previous cohorts. This supports quantitative findings where retirement was the strongest predictor of leisure satisfaction.

I’m a baby boomer, and we have a different mind set. We’ve been healthy and resilient and go go go all these years, so stopping doesn’t quite feel right. We still have a lot to contribute

Boomers are redefining retirement with a balance of work and leisure. Unlike their parents’ generation, boomers are less content with using their leisure time for non-productive activities. After retiring Anne looked into volunteer opportunities as she felt that “all the sudden I had nothing to do”. Three respondents mentioned that because they were still working, their spouse felt guilty about not working. For example, Tom commented that “Initially I found it

hard to read a book at 2pm because I would be thinking of other ways I could be productive.” His wife Lisa confirmed this:

I think [Tom] felt a bit lost at times. It was hard for him to adjust to having all this time on his hands, especially because I would be gone during the day. I wish he had more of a social aspect.

Nancy’s husband also had trouble adjusting to retirement: “It was really hard on him. I think it was because I was still working, he felt really guilty.”

Over half of the respondents opted for part-time work in retirement stating that they still wanted to feel useful by contributing while earning some extra money. Kim stated “I knew that before I retired I wasn’t moving into just a life of non-work.” In most cases retirees wanted a change and chose to try a different kind of job in an area they were passionate about. Part-time work in retirement was experienced as more satisfying than work done prior to retirement. Anne made the decision to “Spend my retirement years and my later years with something that was much more rewarding.” Part-time work was chosen in an area that interested the individual and was not done solely for monetary gain. Work in retirement was differentiated from work in pre-retirement. For example, Darren felt that his work in retirement was “the best job I’ve ever had, it really makes me feel good about myself. I really feel like I’m improving people’s lives.”

Some respondents felt that in an ideal situation they would continue on with their job, but reduce their hours to part-time. This would allow the individual to remain connected to the workplace community while transitioning into retirement. However, not all employers are willing to offer their employees part-

time positions and other part-time job opportunities may be hard to come by in today's economic situation. Nancy remarked "People might look at us and say come on you guys, you know, you've already had your jobs." Kim made the point that "if all the retired people are taking the jobs then the young people don't get the jobs." However, part-time work was not for all retirees. For example, Tyler's workplace had programs where employees could work three days a week. However Tyler felt there was no in-between. "For me it's a switch – you're either working or you're not. If I work I really work, or I'm not going to work." For those retirees who choose not to work part-time it's important that they focus on interests and social contacts outside of work.

In some cases, retirees are not satisfied in retirement for a variety of reasons and decide to go back to work. Nancy's husband found it difficult being at home while his wife was at work. He also felt that he hadn't prepared enough for retirement so he went back to work within four months of retiring. If retirees have prepared sufficiently and have interests and social contacts outside of retirement, the transition and adjustment to retirement will be easier. Lisa went back to work once Tom retired, but she wishes he had more of a social aspect in retirement. Tom's response to this was:

I'm content. I mean, sometimes I feel that [Lisa] is home too much, so go to work already! [laughs]. And then other times I wish she was home more... someone to talk to.

As mentioned earlier, Nancy's husband had tried to retire previously but ended up going back to work 4 months later: "It was really hard on him, I think it was because I was still working, he felt really guilty."

One respondent, Erik, noticed a change in his social network post-retirement:

My security clearance I don't have anymore, so I can no longer walk back and just talk to the people I used to work with. So I don't like going up there. I still keep in touch with a few, but not as much as I would like to.

Overall Erik's retirement experience appeared to be positive and he had many interests outside of work. In fact he was busier in retirement than he was in his working years. Having social networks outside of work is important as people tend to lose contact with their work mates in retirement. This is especially important for single individuals who do not have the additional support of a spouse.

There were others for whom retirement couldn't come fast enough. The majority of respondents stated that they had worked long enough and were ready for retirement. Many of these respondents had plans to travel or volunteer abroad following retirement. Darren felt privileged in retirement and described it in the following way "One of the sad things about retirement is that you lose your weekends." He emphasized that attitude is so important. Your outlook on life will influence your retirement experience. Some respondents mentioned that retirement would allow for more time to spend with children and grandchildren.

5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this mixed methods sequential study was to examine family and work transitions and their impact on parental, marital, financial, and leisure satisfaction among aging middle generation parents. Qualitative interviews allowed us to further explore family and work transitions beyond the quantitative findings, particularly focusing on the transition to retirement. In some cases there were slight differences in our quantitative and qualitative findings, however, this is to be expected as both data types provide us with a different insight into the overall story (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

5.1 Study Findings and Previous Research

Overall in terms of our quantitative findings for work transitions, retirement remained a strong predictor of satisfaction/happiness across all four regression models; the strongest association was with leisure satisfaction followed by parental happiness. Qualitatively, work transitions (retirement) was most strongly associated with marital and leisure satisfaction. In terms of our quantitative findings for family transitions, an empty nest was only associated with leisure satisfaction. Qualitatively, family transitions (an empty nest) were most strongly associated with parental satisfaction.

5.1.1 Parental Satisfaction

1a) Parents will report greater satisfaction as a parent if their nest is empty compared to parents with an emptying or full nest.

Our qualitative findings revealed an association between parental satisfaction and family transitions. However, the results are mixed and support both versions of this hypothesis (1a & 1b). Quantitatively, there was no significant association between parental satisfaction and family transitions.

Our qualitative findings revealed that parents were more likely to report being satisfied as a parent when their children were moving on with their lives and becoming independent. This is consistent with previous research, which found that parental happiness was positively associated with the developmental “success” of adult children (Mitchell, 2010a; Umberson & Gove, 1989). In the present study the parent-child relationship appeared to remain fairly stable if not improve across family transitions. Parents commented that once their children moved out they could relate to them as adults rather than as parents.

Respondents were also satisfied when their children met their expectations for independence, such as becoming independent after finishing school or starting a job. These findings are consistent with previous research that found when transitions are “delayed”, parents reported greater unhappiness as parents (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell, 2010a). These results provide support for hypothesis 1a.

Our qualitative findings are consistent with the ‘Timing of Lives’ tenet of the life course perspective. Parents expect their children to progress through a

series of stages “on time” (Elder, 1998; Hagestad, 1990). This is consistent with out qualitative findings where some of the respondents had specific expectations as for when their children would become independent (i.e., after finishing school or starting a job). When these expectations were met, parents were satisfied. In some cases when children returned home, this was seen as a step backwards – parents felt their children weren’t progressing with their lives. However, a child’s return home may be due to external factors such as losing a job due to an economic downturn. It is important to examine such transitions in a socio-historical context, as is emphasized by the life course principle ‘Historical Time and Place’.

1b) Parents will report lower parental satisfaction if their nest is empty, compared to parents with an emptying or full nest.

Qualitatively, other respondents found it a big adjustment when their children moved out. Some wished their children would involve them in their lives more, but at the same time they realized this was part of their children getting on with their own lives. Moving out was not seen as the final step to independence – in some cases children returned home. This was not seen as terribly disrupting, although some parents felt that the return of their child was a step backwards. In some cases it meant an increase in cooking, crowding, etc. Some respondents were happy to have the whole family back to living under the same roof again. It also meant their children could watch the house while their parents are away.

These qualitative findings are consistent with the ‘Heterogeneity and Diversity’ and ‘Human Agency’ tenets of the life course perspective. Transitional stages are not always planned and predictable, and the order of these stages

can vary across families and individuals. However, despite these alterations, our qualitative findings revealed that families are often able to work out successful adaptations. These findings are also consistent with research conducted by Mitchell (1998), who found that for the majority of parents who experienced the return of a child, their arrangement was working out very well.

Our qualitative findings support both of these hypotheses in the predicted directions. It appears that parental satisfaction was not as much influenced by the in and out movement of adult children, but by the circumstances surrounding the move. For example, whether the move back home was temporary or made sense.

1c) Parents will report greater parental satisfaction if they are retired compared to parents who are not retired

Quantitatively, retirement was significantly associated with increased parental satisfaction. Our qualitative research found that retirement did not have much impact on parental satisfaction, unlike previous research which found that retired parents are more likely to report being extremely happy as a parent (Mitchell, 2010a). However, parents did mention that retirement provided them with more time to spend with children and grandchildren. This hypothesis is only partially supported.

1d) Parents will report greater parental satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.

Quantitatively, there was no significant interaction between family and work transitions in relation to parental satisfaction. Qualitatively, there appears to be some interplay of work and family transitions. For example, some respondents

anticipated that had their children remained at home longer, this would have delayed their decision to retire, especially if their children were financially dependent on them. This is supported by prior research which found that retirement plans may be delayed if children are still living at home or if parents are providing financial support to dependent children (Henkens, 1999; Mitchell, 2010a; Pienta, 2003; Raymo & Sweeney, 2006; Reitzes et al., 1998; Szinovacz et al., 2001). However, in the present study there was little impact on parental satisfaction, therefore, this hypothesis was not supported.

However, the finding that children may have had an influence on their parent's decision to retire is consistent with the life course principle of 'Linked Lives,' where individual actions can have an impact on other family members (Elder, 1995). Family and work histories are interdependent and cannot be examined in isolation (O'Rand et al., 1992; Szinovacz et al., 1992). The life course principle 'Future Shaped by Past' is also relevant as earlier experiences, such as the delayed home leaving of children, has the potential to influence later decisions such as the decision to retire. Retirement is not an isolated event; it can be influenced by the timing of family transitions (Szinovacz et al., 1992).

5.1.2 Marital Satisfaction

2a) Parents will report greater marital satisfaction if their nest is empty compared to parents with emptying or full nests.

Marital satisfaction was not associated with family transitions in either our quantitative or qualitative analyses. Marital satisfaction was not associated with whether adult children were still living at home. Therefore, this hypothesis was

not supported. This is in contrast to our review of the literature, which demonstrated a strong link between marital satisfaction and family transitions.

2b) Parents will report greater marital satisfaction if they are retired compared to parents who are not retired.

Quantitatively, retirement was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction once socio-demographic variables were controlled for. This was also supported by our qualitative findings. Prior to retirement, some spouses were a bit anxious as to how retirement would impact day-to-day living. For example, some respondents were worried that they would end up catering to their husbands – needing to have lunch ready, etc. However, marital satisfaction remained high in retirement as couples learned to negotiate and redefine their marriage. In addition to planning joint activities, each was free to pursue different interests and activities. In retirement respondents found they had more time to invest in their relationship. This finding is consistent with previous research that reported greater relationship quality in retirement (Atchley, 1992; Chalmers & Milan, 2005) owing to less stress and more time spent together (Anderson, 1992). This hypothesis was supported by our quantitative and qualitative findings, which are also consistent with the life course tenets of ‘Linked Lives’ and ‘Human Agency’ in that family and work transitions are interdependent and cannot be examined in isolation. Respondents from our qualitative interviews demonstrated human agency in their ability to redefine their marriage in retirement.

2c) Parents will report greater marital satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.

Quantitatively, there was no significant interaction between family and work transitions in relation to marital satisfaction. The qualitative findings revealed that in retirement, respondents had time to date again and refocus on their marriage – they no longer had the stress of work and in most cases their children were independent. One respondent stated that their marital relationship was “better than ever”. The life course tenet ‘Linked Lives’ plays into supporting this hypothesis, as many of the respondents timed their retirement to be “in sync” to match the retirement of their spouse so that they could experience retirement together. The timing of an event can be more important than its occurrence (Elder, 1995; 1998).

5.1.3 Financial Satisfaction

3a) Parents will report greater financial satisfaction if their nest is empty, compared to parents with full or emptying nests.

Quantitatively, no association was found between financial satisfaction and family transitions. The qualitative findings revealed that some respondents were charging their children rent. However, this was to force some responsibility and reality on their children, not because parents needed financial assistance.

Qualitatively, financial satisfaction was not associated with whether or not the nest was empty, but with the ability to help one’s child out. Parents reported less financial satisfaction when they were unable to help their children out; many parents feel it is their obligation as a parent to help their children with expenses such as paying for school or buying a house. These qualitative findings partially support the hypothesis in that there was an association between financial satisfaction and family transitions, but not in the predicted direction. This

supports the life course tenet of ‘Linked Lives’, in that parents’ financial satisfaction is influenced by the ability to help their children out. Lives are interdependent and influenced by one another (Elder, 1995; 1998).

3b) Parents will report greater financial satisfaction if they are retired, compared to parents who are not retired.

Quantitatively, retirement was a strong predictor of financial satisfaction (once the socio-demographic variables controlled for). Qualitatively, retirement wasn’t a huge financial adjustment for the majority of respondents as they had lived within their means up until retirement and continued to do so after. Approximately half of the respondents we interviewed made sure their finances were in order prior to retiring. Therefore, retirement was not a huge shock. Previous research found that adequate resources and financial security allow for a smoother transition into retirement (Atchley, 1976; Hopkins et al., 2006). In the present study, some respondents retired before their spouse, which provided an opportunity to adjust to living on a reduced income prior to both retiring. Overall, financial satisfaction did not change much in retirement for our qualitative sample. Therefore, this hypothesis is partially supported by our quantitative data. This is consistent with the ‘Future Shaped by Past’ tenet of the life course perspective. Early decisions can exert long-term influences on transitions down the road. In this case, early financial planning for retirement resulted in less stress when it came time to retire.

3c) Parents will report greater financial satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.

Quantitatively, there were three interactions associated with financial satisfaction. Before the covariates were added to the model, there was an empty nest by retirement interaction where the odds of reporting being extremely satisfied financially were decreased for retired parents with an empty nest compared to those working full-time with a full nest. After the covariates were added to the model, there was an empty nest by 'other' work category interaction; the likelihood of parents reporting being extremely satisfied financially was increased for those with an empty nest in the 'other' work category compared to those with a full nest and working full-time. There was also an empty nest by retirement interaction where the likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied financially was decreased for retired parents with an empty nest compared to those with a full nest and working full-time. Interestingly, a previous study by Aquilino (1991) found that financial satisfaction was increased for parents with co-resident older children (compared to those with children aged 19-21). Perhaps older children are more likely to contribute financially. However, this is not in the predicted direction of our hypothesis.

In our qualitative findings, downsizing one's house to a condo or townhouse was common as it reduced expenses and simplified life. This usually occurred after all children had moved out and both parents were retired. Some respondents mentioned that had their children remained at home longer, they would have delayed downsizing. Adult children did have some influence on the financial decisions of their parents, however, overall financial satisfaction was more related to ability to help their children out.

This hypothesis is partially supported by our quantitative findings – the empty nest by ‘other’ work interaction. This hypothesis is consistent with the ‘Timing of Lives’ life course tenet – if family and work transitions occur as predicted and “on time”, then the nest should be empty when parents retire. However, as the literature and our research findings show, this is not always the case.

5.1.4 Leisure Satisfaction

4a) Parents will report greater leisure satisfaction if they have an empty nest compared to parents with an emptying or full nest.

Of all four dependent variables, only leisure satisfaction was significantly associated with family transitions based on our quantitative findings. Parents with empty nests were the most likely to report being extremely satisfied with the amount of leisure time they have compared to those with full nests. In terms of our qualitative findings, respondents did not experience much fluctuation in leisure satisfaction when their children left or returned to live at home. In some cases parents did comment that the return of a child meant increased chores such as cooking and cleaning and they were back to “being a mother again”. This is supported by previous research which also reported that parents experience additional time demands from children who live at home, reducing the amount of leisure time parents have (Mitchell, 2010a; 2010b; Statistics Canada, 2006b; Szinovacz, 1992). However, overall the return of an adult child did not have a major impact, especially when there were still other children living at home – laundry and cooking had to be done anyways so it was not seen as so much

extra work. Respondents also identified benefits of having their children back at home. For example, it was nice to have the whole family under the same roof again or to have their children living in their house when they went away on trips.

Overall, both of our quantitative and qualitative findings support this hypothesis, although the findings are slightly mixed. This is also consistent with the life course tenet ‘Timing of Lives’. If children delay leaving home, or return home, this could influence parent’s perception of their leisure time.

4b) Parents will report greater leisure satisfaction if they are retired compared to parents who are not retired.

Quantitatively, retirement was a strong predictor of leisure satisfaction. The ‘other’ work category was also strongly associated with leisure satisfaction. Qualitatively, the majority of respondents reported greater leisure satisfaction in retirement, although their definition of leisure was slightly different in that they didn’t envision a retirement of non-work. The majority chose to pursue their interests in retirement via volunteering or part-time work. In fact, many respondents felt guilty spending their retirement being idle by reading a book or watching TV. Retirees still wanted to contribute and feel useful.

Some respondents noticed a change in their social connections following retirement. For example, some retirees missed the connections they had at work or the company of their spouse (if they were still working). It is important for individuals to have connections outside of work prior to retirement. Overall, participants were very happy with their leisure time in retirement as they were free to pursue their interests and activities any day of the week. For example, skiing was much cheaper and less crowded on a weekday. This hypothesis is

supported by both our quantitative and qualitative data. These findings are also consistent with previous research that demonstrated an increase in leisure satisfaction in retirement (Pinquart & Schindler, 2009). These findings reveal a difference in the baby boomer generation in that their preference is for an active retirement. This is consistent with the ‘Historical Time & Place’ tenet of the life course perspective, in that this is reflective of changing contexts.

4c) Parents will report greater leisure satisfaction if their nest is empty when they retire, compared to parents who retire with an emptying or full nest.

Our quantitative findings revealed that the likelihood of reporting being extremely satisfied with one’s leisure time was greater for parents with an empty nest in the ‘other’ work category compared to those working full-time with a full nest. Qualitatively, retirement was strongly associated with leisure satisfaction. Although parents mentioned that when children are living at home there is a bit more cooking, cleaning, laundry etc., they did not feel that their children, living at home or not, had much influence on their leisure satisfaction. Therefore, this hypothesis is partially supported. This hypothesis is consistent with a life course tenet ‘Timing of Lives’, as having an empty nest in retirement is dependent on children transitioning through life stages in order and in time. There is an increasing trend that parents are retiring with children still at home.

5.1.5 Covariates

Leisure satisfaction was the only dependent variable not significantly associated with ethnicity. Chinese ethnicity was negatively associated with parental, marital, and financial satisfaction, decreasing the likelihood of parents

reporting being extremely happy/satisfied in those areas compared to British parents. Overall, ethnicity was the greatest predictor of parental happiness; in addition to Chinese ethnicity being negatively associated with parental happiness, Indo/East Indian ethnicity was also negatively associated with parental happiness (compared to British parents) after the socio-economic variables were controlled for. Southern-European ethnicity became a significant positive predictor of parental happiness compared to British parents when socio-demographic variables were controlled for, but was no longer significant once socio-economic variables were controlled for. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to recruit non-Caucasian participants for our qualitative sample, so we are unable to confirm (or not confirm) these quantitative findings.

Parent's age was negatively associated with parental, marital, and leisure satisfaction, decreasing the likelihood of reporting satisfaction/happiness in each of these areas for each age increment. Parent's age was not associated with financial satisfaction. In our qualitative interviews, age of parent did not come up in relation to any of the four types of satisfaction – it was only mentioned in relation to the timing of retirement and drawing a pension.

Household income had a fairly strong association with parental satisfaction, although not in the expected direction. The higher the household income (>\$50,000), the less likely parents were to report being extremely happy as a parent, compared to household incomes < \$50,000. Household income was also negatively associated with marital and leisure satisfaction, although very weak and only after relational variables were controlled for. In our qualitative

findings, household income was not directly associated with life satisfaction.

However, not being able to assist their children with buying a house was negatively associated with financial satisfaction.

Financial assistance received from one's child several times/year to daily was negatively (and weakly) associated with leisure satisfaction as well as marital happiness (after controlling for relational variables) compared to parent's who reported receiving financial assistance once/year to not at all. Only one of our respondents in the qualitative portion reported receiving money – rent money – from their children. However, this was not due to financial need of the parents, but to force some responsibility on their children.

The quantitative findings revealed that overall, the relational variables were significantly associated with parental, marital, and leisure satisfaction. This suggests it is the relationship quality that is key when examining family transitions. This was also supported by our qualitative analysis as well as by previous research (Mitchell, 2010a; Umberson, 1989; Ward, 2008). Some parents stated that their relationship with their children improved once they were on their own. The relationship changed to be more of friendship rather than a parent/child dynamic – you are no longer concerned about whether their room is messy etc., and you now have your own space.

Quantitatively, parents who reported being extremely emotionally close to their child were more likely to report parental, marital, and leisure satisfaction (not financial). As expected, parents who reported conflict with their child were less likely to report parental, marital, and leisure satisfaction (not financial). Parents

who found it extremely difficult emotionally to see their child leave were less likely to report parental happiness, and parents who reported it was somewhat difficult were less likely to report leisure satisfaction. Our qualitative findings did not reveal any associations between satisfaction and emotional closeness or conflict.

The use of mixed methods in the current study allowed us to identify different contextual factors at play in family and work transitions. For example, based on our quantitative findings only leisure satisfaction was significantly associated with family transitions. However, our qualitative findings revealed an association between parental satisfaction and family transitions. Mixed methods allowed us to approach our research questions from different angles. Both our quantitative and qualitative findings provided support for each of the life course perspective tenets.

6: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

The aim of this study was to examine transition behaviours in aging families, utilizing the life course perspective. Overall, the qualitative and quantitative findings revealed that in terms of work transitions, retirement was most strongly associated with marital and leisure satisfaction. In terms of family transitions, our qualitative findings revealed that an empty nest was strongly associated with parental satisfaction whereas quantitatively an empty nest was strongly associated with leisure satisfaction. Quantitative and qualitative data reveal different parts of the overall story, hence the differences in our findings.

6.1 Limitations

The present study has a few limitations that should be noted. For instance, one major methodological issue is that there was a different target population for the quantitative and qualitative portions of this study. The sample sizes were also vastly different for both samples, which further complicates the comparison of results across studies. The quantitative analysis was dependent on secondary data collected by another researcher. Therefore, the data for the first part of the study was collected with a focus different from that of the qualitative section. Additionally, the utilization of a cross-sectional design does not allow for the examination of continuity and change across family and work transitions. A

cross-sectional design also makes it difficult to ascertain whether observed differences across age groups are the result of cohort differences or age effects. However, a longitudinal follow-up study was not feasible for the scope of this master's thesis.

In terms of measurement of variables, it is possible that some of the satisfaction domains might have been better represented by different measures – especially seeing how the satisfaction variables were highly skewed towards reporting being extremely satisfied for the quantitative sample. For example, in measuring marital satisfaction, examining the number of activities couples take part in together might have been more accurate than self-reported marital satisfaction. Perhaps this is why our study did not find an association between marital satisfaction and family transitions, despite a clear link in the literature. This was also the case for one of the covariate variables, household income; higher household income ended up being negatively associated with parental, marital, and leisure satisfaction.

The satisfaction variables used in this research were based on single item responses to questions that tapped into satisfaction or happiness domains. It is possible that these variables were measuring two different constructs. There are also inconsistencies in whether the variables in the present study measured current or retrospective experiences. For example, for the quantitative sample, the dependent variables assess satisfaction as currently experienced, whereas some of the independent variables were reliant on retrospective data. However,

the collection of qualitative data in the present study allowed us to elaborate on the quantitative findings, and ask parents about currently experienced transitions.

In terms of the qualitative sample, the reliance on the snowball technique due to difficulty in recruitment means that the sample is not necessarily representative of the larger population. Those who responded may have had stronger feelings (positive or negative) towards retirement than those who chose not to respond. Having a small convenience sample may limit the generalizability of our findings. Furthermore, our qualitative sample was limited to Caucasian individuals living in one urban area, Metro Vancouver. The quantitative sample was very ethnically diverse, however, it is possible that some cultural groups may over-report positive experiences or, conversely, not express negative emotions associated with family situations (e.g. Chinese). Therefore, we need to be careful in interpreting findings such as the association between Chinese ethnicity and reduced satisfaction. Reasons for leaving home and parental expectations for independence could also vary across cultural groups. For example, in some traditional ethnic cultures it is expected that children live at home until they are married. For other ethnic cultures, having adult children move back home may cause embarrassment or shame. Therefore, individuals from certain ethnic groups may be uncomfortable discussing these circumstances and feelings with a researcher. Although the use of a mixed-methods approach complicated the ability to make comparisons and generalize the results, this approach allowed us to further explore the contextual factors surrounding family and work transitions.

6.2 Contribution to Theory and Knowledge

6.2.1 Theory

This study was approached from a life course perspective to better understand the circumstances that influence the family and work transitions of each participant. Work and family transitions are interdependent and cannot be examined in isolation. Support was found for each of the life course tenets across both our qualitative and quantitative findings, especially ‘Timing of Lives’ and ‘Linked or Independent Lives’. This further contributes to the development of the life course theoretical perspective. It is very clear that family and work trajectories are interdependent and should be examined individually and in combination. For example, retiring with an empty nest is dependent on children transitioning through life stages in order and on time. However, as research has demonstrated, this is not always the case and the trajectory to independence can be altered.

6.2.2 Knowledge

The present study may also stimulate future research on family and work transitions and how they relate to satisfaction outcomes in aging families, thus narrowing the research gap. Very few studies have examined the impact of family and work transitions on multiple satisfaction domains within the same study. Furthermore, there is a paucity of research examining parental satisfaction and adult children – the majority of research has focused on adolescent children (Downing-Matibag, 2009; Henry et al., 1997; Wickrama et al., 1995). The use of a mixed methods approach provided a richer understanding of such transitions.

The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data in the present study will also provide further support for future mixed methods research.

6.3 Practical and Applied Implications

The results of this research may assist in the development and implementation of workshops to assist families experiencing concurrent family and work transitions. Such workshops could result in improved life satisfaction and health outcomes for both parents and adult children. Programs and services could also be offered through the workplace or community to help individuals and families plan for retirement. These same parents may be part of the ‘sandwiched generation’, in that they may also be caring for elderly parents. Such individuals need to be supported in taking on these competing roles (e.g., employee, parent, caregiver). Support should also be provided to adult children who are in transition either to independence or back to the parental home. In addition to dealing with changing family dynamics, these individuals may also be dealing with the loss of a job, a failed marriage, etc.

Although some respondents were content with going directly into a full-retirement, others would have appreciated a workplace program that would have allowed them to ease into retirement. This would allow employees a chance to experience living on a reduced income and time to begin pursuing interests outside of work, getting a feel for retirement. It would also be in the employer’s best interests to focus on retaining older, skilled workers rather than recruiting

younger workers. According to the Merrill Lynch report, less than half of companies offer any flex-time or part-time work opportunities, and only one-fourth provide coaching or mentoring services to help retain older workers (Merrill Lynch Wealth Management (2006).

The retirement transition entails releasing the work role and taking on a new role of “retiree” (Hopkins et al., 2006). This transition is often initiated by programs offered through the employer or community organizations. Pre-retirement programs reduce uncertainties regarding retirement and offset negative stereotypes about retirement (Atchley, 1976). However, many of the retirement workshops currently in place focus on the financial aspects of retirement. According to one respondent, people looking to retire generally will not examine the psychological aspects of retirement until they know they are going to be alright financially. However, the contextual factors surrounding retirement, and the interdependence of family and work lives, also need to be considered when looking at satisfaction and health outcomes for both parents and adult children. The results of the current study could be used to inform the content of such programs and workshops. Finally, culturally-relevant workshops and community programs need to be developed for transitioning families. Retirement workshops should have a broader focus, offering more than solely financial advice (Sharpley & Layton, 1998). Adequate pre-retirement education and preparation is associated with better retirement adjustment (Sharpley & Layton, 1998; Statistics Canada, 2007) and well-being (Noone, Stephens, & Alpass, 2009).

6.4 Future Research

A longitudinal follow-up study was not feasible for the scope of a master's thesis, however, it would be a beneficial undertaking for future research on this topic. In some cases, our quantitative and qualitative findings were different, owing to the complexity of family and work transitions and measuring multiple satisfaction domains. The life course perspective informs us, there are many contextual factors at play, which vary across individuals, families, and generations. Future research could utilize better measures of satisfaction and happiness, or perhaps a global measure of subjective well-being would be fruitful. Based on literature reviewed by Linda George (2010), although earlier research suggested that there are conceptual differences among indicators of subjective well-being such as happiness and life satisfaction, recent research has demonstrated that they are more alike than different (George, 2010).

Further research is also needed to flesh out how varying patterns of family and work trajectories are interpreted by different immigration statuses. For example, someone who is a recent immigrant to Canada compared to someone who has lived here for 20 years, or born in Canada, would likely interpret independence quite differently. If the qualitative sample had been more culturally diverse there may have been fewer discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative data.

There were many themes that came up in the qualitative interviews, which were beyond the scope of the current project but would make for interesting research topics for future research. These include: the inner process involved in redefining self-identity in age-related transitions (e.g., retirement); gender differences in socialization aspects following retirement; the loss of work identity and psychological / emotional adjustment in retirement; and the comparison of a gradual transition to retirement to an immediate next day retirement and the impact this has on health and adjustment to retirement.

Future research should also examine ‘sandwiched generation’ parents, who may be balancing competing roles such as employee, caregiver to elderly parents, and parent (Carriere, Keefe, Legare, Lin, & Rowe, 2007; Fast et al., 2011). Gender implications should also be explored, as it is usually women who take on the caregiving role and subsequently make more employment-related accommodations to provide this care. Informal caregiving can result in negative employment consequences such as missed work days, reduced work hours, missed job opportunities, early retirement, as well as reduced economic security and lower pension benefits in the long term (Carriere et al., 2007; Fast et al., 2011). However, the rates of labour force participation have been increasing for women and are now similar to men. Therefore, women can no longer be expected to be the sole caregiver – care responsibilities need to be better balanced between men and women (Carriere et al., 2007; Statistics Canada, 2011).

The demand for informal caregivers is predicted to increase during the next twenty years, however, this will have to be supplemented with formal caregiving (Keefe, Legare, & Carriere, 2007). The availability of informal support is affected by lower fertility rates of baby boomers, increased participation of women in the labour force, and the changing family structure (e.g., divorce) (Carriere et al., 2007; Keefe et al., 2007). Future research could examine the impact this has on parental, financial, leisure, and marital satisfaction, as well as how this impacts the transition to retirement. There is also a need for more policies to support caregivers in terms of home-care, workplace, and income security (Keefe et al., 2007). Supports could include flexible work arrangements or caregiving leaves, which can reduce work-family conflict and its consequences (Fast et al., 2011).

Overall, this study has demonstrated that the association between satisfaction domains and family and work transitions is not completely clear cut. In some instances there were similarities between the quantitative and qualitative findings, and in other instances the findings were contradictory. In this study, relying on a mixed methods approach was essential in elucidating the importance of contextual factors in family and work transitions. Future research needs to extend this work by interviewing both spouses and children, examine ethnic dimensions, as well as urban/rural and other contexts of family transitions and aging.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Recruitment Poster

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

Family & Retirement Study

All participants will automatically be entered into a draw for 1 of 2 \$25 cash prizes



Are You:

- ◊ Currently married
- ◊ The parent of at least one adult child between the ages of 18 and 35
- ◊ Making plans to retire OR are already retired?

I am a graduate student in gerontology at SFU and am interested to hear about your family/retirement transitions. If you would like to participate in this exciting research project (it would entail a 1 hour interview at your convenience), please contact me at:
amanda_wilhelm@sfsu.ca

Family & Work Study amanda_wilhelm@sfsu.ca												
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Appendix B – Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT

Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.
[Application # 2010s0171]

Principle Investigator:

Amanda Wilhelm, Gerontology (MA), Simon Fraser University, amanda_wilhelm@sfu.ca

Senior Supervisor:

Dr. Barbara Mitchell, Associate Professor Sociology/Gerontology, mitchelo@sfu.ca

Title of Project:

The Effect of Family and Work Transitions on Mid-Later Life Satisfaction Domains

Purpose of the Study:

The objective of this study is to examine how work transitions are affected by concurrent family transitions. To do this, we will be conducting interviews with parents who are either pre- or post-retirement, to examine what influences adult children have on the decision making process and resulting satisfaction outcomes. These in-depth interviews will provide greater elaboration on some of the key patterns of interest found in the quantitative study.

The results of this research may assist in the development and implementation of workshops, to assist transitioning families who may be experiencing role conflicts. Such workshops could result in improved life satisfaction and health outcomes for both parents and adult children. Contextual factors surrounding retirement, and the interdependence of family and work lives need to be considered when looking at satisfaction and health outcomes for both parents and adult children.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete. You will first be asked to complete a socio-demographic / background form. This will then be followed by some questions regarding aspects of your family and work life. This interview will be recorded. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and if you feel the need to withdraw at any time you are free to do so without penalty (your name will still be entered in the draw for cash prizes if you so choose).

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide some general socio-demographic/background information about your family composition, current satisfaction levels, main activity, health concerns etc. Following the socio-demographic/ background questions we will begin the interview, which will focus

on transitions experienced in family and work domains, and how these transitions impact your satisfaction levels.

Are There Risks or Benefits If I Participate?

Risks: There are no known risks related to your participation in this study.

Benefits: Currently there is a lack of research examining satisfaction outcomes in concurrent family and work transitions. Your participation will contribute to research and knowledge in this area, through future research publications. Your participation and resulting data will also contribute to the development and implementation of workshops to assist transitioning families. Finally, you will have the chance to win one of two \$25 cash prizes.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

Interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim (into an electronic word document) in the week following the interview. Transcripts will be cleaned and all identifying information will be removed (an ID number will be assigned). The transcripts from these interviews will be stored on a USB key that will be kept in a locked cabinet along with the Interview tapes, in the Gerontology Research Centre (GRC) at SFU. Signed consent forms and draw forms will be stored separate from the actual interview data, in a locked cabinet also in the GRC. Only the researchers directly involved in this study will have access to the data – that is Amanda Wilhelm and her senior supervisor Dr. Barbara Mitchell. Data will be kept for two years, after which it will be destroyed.

Questions/Concerns

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact Hal Weinberg, Director, Office of Research Ethics at (778) 782-6593, email: hal_weinberg@sfu.ca, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada, V5A 1S6.
[Application Number 2010s0171]

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Do you wish to receive a summary of the results?

Yes No

If yes, please provide your email address, and the researcher (Amanda Wilhelm) will send them via email after the research has been completed:

Appendix C – Interview Guide (Pre-Retirement)

Interview Guide (Pre-Retirement)

- Overview of family: ages, number of children
 - o Reasons children left / still at home
 - What were/are your expectations for when your children should become independent?
 - Did your spouse share these expectations?
 - Have your children met these expectations?
 - o How they feel about (children still at home OR gone)
 - o Any boomerang children? Reason?
 - How did this make you feel? Hard to adjust? Conflict?
 - Impact on leisure, marital, financial & parental satisfaction
- Description of current work role (of you and spouse)
 - o Current position, length of employment with company. Enjoy job?
- When do they anticipate retiring
 - o What steps have you taken to prepare for retirement so far.
 - o Does workplace offer programs/classes to prepare employees?
 - o Have your plans to retire been influenced by the retirement plans of your spouse? Or influence those of your spouse?
 - o Have your children had any influence on your retirement plans?
- Have your plans to retire been altered at all, and if so why.
 - o If your nest had emptied earlier, do you think you would have made plans to retire earlier?
 - o What about if your children had delayed independence and stayed at home longer, do you think this would delay your plans to retire?
- What are you most looking forward to in retirement?
 - o How do you think your life will be different?
 - Do you think it will be a big change or adjustment?
 - Will it be a gradual ease out of the work role, or abrupt?
 - o Do you think your relationship with your children will change? How?
 - o Have you discussed with your spouse how you will deal with being retired? For example, that you will give each other space/independence.
- Do you think your overall physical health will change in retirement?
- Changes in satisfaction (leisure, financial, marital, parental).
 - o WHY you currently feel satisfied/unsatisfied (justification for scores they gave) – provide an example.
 - o For the following, if there were changes, ask for examples
 - o Leisure satisfaction

- What was your definition of leisure time now? How do you think it will change when you retire?
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Do you think retirement will have an impact?
- Financial satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Are adult children financially dependent in any way?
 - If children at home, happy with amount they help out and contribute?
 - Do you think retirement will have an impact?
- Marital satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Any disagreements over children?
 - How do you think retirement will change your relationship?
More time together?
- Parental satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Has relationship with children changed?
 - Do you think retirement will have an impact?
- In today's society there is an increasing trend of children delaying independence, marrying later, etc. This decreases the gap between having an empty nest and retirement.
 - What are your thoughts on this? Positive or negative outcomes?

Any additional comments?

Appendix D – Interview Guide (Retired)

Interview Guide (Retired)

- Overview of family: ages, number of children
 - o Reasons children left / still at home
 - What were/are your expectations for when your children should become independent?
 - Did your spouse share the same expectations?
 - Have your children met these expectations?
 - o How do you feel about (children still at home OR gone)
 - o Support given to children / from children
 - o Any boomerang children? Reason?
 - How did this make you feel? Hard to adjust? Conflict?
 - Impact on leisure, marital, financial & parental satisfaction
- Description of past work role (of you and spouse)
 - o Position held, length of employment with company, enjoyed job?
- Describe transition to retirement
 - o What steps did you take to prepare for retirement
 - o Did workplace offer programs/classes to prepare employees?
 - o Were your own plans to retire influenced by the retirement plans of your spouse? OR influence those of your spouse?
 - o Did your children have any influence on the decision to retire?
- Were plans to retire altered at all, and if so why.
 - o If your nest has emptied earlier, would you have planned to retire earlier?
 - o If your children had delayed independence and stayed home longer, would this have delayed your retirement plans?
- Before retiring, what were you most looking forward to in retirement?
 - o How did you think your life would be different?
 - How has it been different?
 - Was the transition to retirement a big change/adjustment?
 - Would a gradual ease out of the work role into retirement made it easier?
 - o Before retirement, did you discuss with your spouse how you would deal with being retired? Both being home more.
- Has retirement resulted in any changes in overall physical health?
- Changes in satisfaction (leisure, financial, marital, parental).
 - o WHY you currently feel satisfied/unsatisfied (justification for scores they gave) – provide an example.

For the following, if there were changes ask for examples

- Leisure satisfaction
 - What was your definition of leisure time before retiring? What is it now?
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Impact of retirement?
- Financial satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Are adult children financially dependent in any way?
 - If children at home, happy with amount they help out and contribute?
 - Impact of retirement?
- Marital satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Any disagreements over children?
 - Impact of retirement?
 - Has it changed your relationship? Happy with the amount of time you have together?
- Parental satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Has relationship with children changed?
 - Impact of retirement?
- In today's society there is an increasing trend of children delaying independence, marrying later, etc. This decreases the gap between having an empty nest and retirement.
 - What are your thoughts on this? Positive or negative outcomes?

Any additional comments?

Appendix E – Interview Guide (Single Parent)

Interview Guide (Retired & Single)

- Overview of family: children, marital status, etc.
 - o Reasons children left / still at home
 - What were/are your expectations for when your children should become independent? Have your daughter met these expectations?
 - Do you think your expectations for your children are different as a single individual?
 - Her father: does he have different expectations?
 - o How do you feel about (children still at home OR gone)
 - o Support given to children / from children
 - Not being married influenced this?
 - o Any boomerang children? Reason?
 - How did this make you feel? Hard to adjust? Conflict?
 - Impact on leisure, financial & parental satisfaction
 - Description of past work role (of you)
 - o Position held, length of employment with company, enjoyed job?
 - Describe transition to retirement
 - o What steps did you take to prepare for retirement
 - o Did workplace offer programs/classes to prepare employees?
 - o Did your children have any influence on the decision to retire?
 - o How do you think the transition is different for married versus single people?
 - Were plans to retire altered at all, and if so why.
 - o If your nest has emptied earlier, would you have planned to retire earlier?
 - o If your children had delayed independence and stayed home longer, would this have delayed your retirement plans?
 - Before retiring, what were you most looking forward to in retirement?
 - o How did you think your life would be different?
 - How has it been different?
 - Was the transition to retirement a big change/adjustment?
 - Would a gradual ease out of the work role into retirement made it easier?
 - Has retirement resulted in any changes in overall physical health?
 - Changes in satisfaction (leisure, financial, parental).
-

- WHY you currently feel satisfied/unsatisfied (justification for scores they gave) – provide an example.

For the following, if there were changes ask for examples

- Leisure satisfaction
 - What was your definition of leisure time before retiring? What is it now?
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Impact of retirement?
 - Being single have more of an influence on leisure sat than it would if you were married?
- Financial satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Are adult children financially dependent in any way?
 - If children at home, happy with amount they help out and contribute?
 - Impact of retirement?
 - Being single have more of an influence on leisure sat than it would if you were married?
- Parental satisfaction
 - Any change once children moved out / independent?
 - Has relationship with children changed?
 - Impact of retirement?
 - Being single have more of an influence on leisure sat than it would if you were married?
- In today's society there is an increasing trend of children delaying independence, marrying later, etc. This decreases the gap between having an empty nest and retirement.
 - What are your thoughts on this? Positive or negative outcomes?

Any additional comments?

Appendix F – Socio-Demographic Questions (Version A Married)

Date: _____

Participant ID: _____

1. What is your gender?
Male Female Other
2. What year were you born? _____
3. Ethnic background: _____
4. Were you born in Canada?
Yes No
 - a. If not, in what country were you born? _____
 - b. If not, what year did you immigrate to Canada? _____
5. What language is primarily spoken at home? _____
6. What year did you marry your current spouse? _____
 - a. Gender of spouse: Male Female Other
 - b. Year spouse was born: _____
7. Former marriages: Have you ever been married before, not counting your present marriage?
Yes No
 - a. If you have had previous marriages, what was the duration of the marriage, and reason it ended:
Year of 1st marriage: _____ Year ended: _____ Reason: _____
Year of 2nd marriage: _____ Year ended: _____ Reason: _____
Year of 3rd marriage: _____ Year ended: _____ Reason: _____
8. What is the highest level of education you have attained?
 Less than high school
 High school graduate
 Some college or university
 College diploma or other specialized non-degree training
 University degree
9. What is your main activity?

- Working at a paid job full-time
- Working at a paid job part-time
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired

When did you retire? _____

- Disabled
- Other (Specify) _____

- a. If currently working, what kind of work are you doing in your current job? (For example, manager, nurse, computer programmer)

- b. If not currently retired, when do you plan on retiring? _____

10. What is the main activity of your partner or spouse?

- Working at a paid job full-time
- Working at a paid job part-time
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired

When did they retire? _____

- Disabled
- Other (Specify) _____

- a. If currently working, what kind of work is your partner (spouse) doing in their current job? (For example, manager, nurse, computer programmer)

- b. If not currently retired, when does your partner (spouse) plan on retiring? _____

11. What was your TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME for the last year?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$75,000
- \$75,001 to \$100,000
- \$100,001 to \$125,000
- \$125,001 to \$150,000
- Over \$150,000

12. Do you live in:

- Your own house that you own

- Your own house that you rent
- An apartment or condo that you own
- An apartment or condo that you rent
- Other (specify) _____

a. Approximate square footage: _____

13. Please list all of your children:

Living with you or independent?	Age	Sex	Main Activity	Marital Status
------------------------------------	-----	-----	---------------	----------------

a) Besides your children and spouse, does anyone else live with you?

14. With respect to the children CURRENTLY living with you, what is their reason for remaining at home? _____

i. At what age and for what reason do you expect your children to leave home? _____

ii. Of those children currently living at home, how many have left home and been independent (for at least 4 months), and have since returned to live with you? _____

1. Reason for their leaving and return? _____

15. What kind of help and support do you provide to your children CURRENTLY?

(list how often)

- Household chores (e.g., doing their laundry) _____
- Transportation / shopping _____
- Information and advice _____
- Financial assistance _____
- Emotional support _____
- Discussing important life problems and decisions _____
- Help when sick _____
- Assistance with personal care _____
- Help with their children _____
- Other (specify) _____

16. Compared to people your own age, how would you rate your overall physical health at the present time?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

17. Do you suffer from any chronic conditions, serious health problems or disabilities, and if yes, for how long?

	Duration
<input type="checkbox"/> No health problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis/rheumatism	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma/respiratory problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Obesity	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Activity limitations	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other disabilities (Specify) _____	_____

18. What about your spouse/partner? Does she (he) suffer from any chronic conditions, serious health problems or disabilities, and if yes, for how long?

Duration

<input type="checkbox"/> No health problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis/rheumatism	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma/respiratory problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Obesity	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Activity limitations	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other disabilities (Specify) _____	_____

19. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not at all satisfied” and 5 being “Extremely satisfied”, how satisfied are you with your financial situation at the present time?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

20. With respect to your spouse (partner), on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “Not at all happy” and 5 being “Extremely happy”, how happy are you with this relationship?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

21. Generally speaking, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not at all satisfied” and 5 being “Extremely satisfied”, how SATISFIED are you with the amount of leisure time or time that you have for yourself to do the things that you want to do these days?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

22. Taking everything into consideration, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “Not at all happy” and 5 being “Extremely happy”, how would you say things are for you today as a parent?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

Appendix G - Socio-Demographic Questions (Version B Single)

Date: _____

Participant ID: _____

23. What is your gender?

Male Female Other

24. What year were you born? _____

25. Ethnic background: _____

26. Were you born in Canada?

Yes No

a. If not, in what country were you born? _____

b. If not, what year did you immigrate to Canada? _____

27. What language is primarily spoken at home? _____

28. What is your CURRENT marital status or living arrangement? (Check only one).

- Never Married
- Married
- Living with a partner
- Divorced/separated
- Widowed

29. FORMER MARRIAGES: Have you had any previous marriages?

Yes No (skip to Q # 8)

If yes, what was the duration of the marriage, and reason it ended:

Year of 1st marriage: _____ Year ended: _____ Reason: _____

Year of 2nd marriage: _____ Year ended: _____ Reason: _____

Year of 3rd marriage: _____ Year ended: _____ Reason: _____

30. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college or university
- College diploma or other specialized non-degree training
- University degree

31. What is your main activity?

- Working at a paid job full-time
- Working at a paid job part-time
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired

When did you retire? _____

- Disabled
- Other (Specify) _____

a. If currently working, what kind of work are you doing in your current job? (For example, manager, nurse, computer programmer)

b. If not currently retired, when do you plan on retiring? _____

32. What is the main activity of your partner or spouse? (If not applicable, skip to Q # 11)

- Working at a paid job full-time
- Working at a paid job part-time
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired

When did they retire? _____

- Disabled
- Other (Specify) _____

a. If currently working, what kind of work is your partner (spouse) doing in their current job? (For example, manager, nurse, computer programmer)

b. If not currently retired, when does your partner (spouse) plan on retiring? _____

33. What was your TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME for the last year?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$75,000
- \$75,001 to \$100,000
- \$100,001 to \$125,000
- \$125,001 to \$150,000
- Over \$150,000

34. Do you live in:

- Your own house that you own
- Your own house that you rent
- An apartment or condo that you own
- An apartment or condo that you rent
- Other (specify) _____

a. Approximate square footage: _____

35. Please list all of your children:

Living with you or independent?	Age	Sex	Main Activity	Marital Status
------------------------------------	-----	-----	---------------	----------------

b) Besides your children or spouse/partner, does anyone else live with you?

36. With respect to the children CURRENTLY living with you, what is their reason for remaining at home? _____

i. At what age and for what reason do you expect your children to leave home? _____

ii. Of those children currently living at home, how many have left home and been independent (for at least 4 months), and have since returned to live with you? _____

1. Reason for their leaving and return? _____

37. What kind of help and support do you provide to your children CURRENTLY?

(list how often)

- Household chores (e.g., doing their laundry) _____
- Transportation / shopping _____
- Information and advice _____
- Financial assistance _____
- Emotional support _____
- Discussing important life problems and decisions _____
- Help when sick _____
- Assistance with personal care _____
- Help with their children _____
- Other (specify) _____

38. Compared to people your own age, how would you rate your overall physical health at the present time?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

39. Do you suffer from any chronic conditions, serious health problems or disabilities, and if yes, for how long?

	Duration
<input type="checkbox"/> No health problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis/rheumatism	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma/respiratory problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Obesity	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Activity limitations	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other disabilities (Specify) _____	_____

40. What about your spouse/partner? Does she (he) suffer from any chronic conditions, serious health problems or disabilities, and if yes, for how long?
(If not applicable, skip to Q 19)

	Duration
<input type="checkbox"/> No health problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis/rheumatism	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma/respiratory problems	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Obesity	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Activity limitations	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other disabilities (Specify) _____	_____

41. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not at all satisfied” and 5 being “Extremely satisfied”, how satisfied are you with your financial situation at the present time?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

42. With respect to your spouse (partner), on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “Not at all happy” and 5 being “Extremely happy”, how happy are you with this relationship? (If not applicable, skip to Q21)

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

43. Generally speaking, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not at all satisfied” and 5 being “Extremely satisfied”, how SATISFIED are you with the amount of leisure time or time that you have for yourself to do the things that you want to do these days?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____

44. Taking everything into consideration, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “Not at all happy” and 5 being “Extremely happy”, how would you say things are for you today as a parent?

Record a number between 1 and 5 _____