

Regrouping at the Parental Home: A Grounded Theory of Female
Adult Children's Experiences of Returning Home to Live

by

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ABSTRACT**REGROUPING AT THE PARENTAL HOME: A GROUNDED THEORY OF FEMALE
ADULT CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF RETURNING HOME TO LIVE**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to describe female adult children's experiences when they return to the parental home to live, and to develop theory to explain the processes and consequences involved in the return to the parental home. Primary data sources included 1 1/2 hour audiotaped, semi-structured interviews with 15 female adult children who had returned to the parental home to live. Other sources of data included individual and conjoint interviews with parents and daughters from a subset of four families, and field notes about the interviews.

Grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) was used. Transcribed interviews were systematically analyzed to develop a theoretical model, in which the core social and psychological process was labelled "regrouping." In response to life events and personal choices, women return to the parental home to regroup--to recuperate, reenergize, contemplate and pursue lifeplans. Their intention is to enhance personal well-being and to secure a better quality life in the future. Regrouping is embedded in the life context of female adult children's specific life-events and choices, living environments, family and social relationships, and sociocultural scripts--all conditions that can hinder or facilitate the process. Regrouping is a cyclical rather than a

linear process. Female adult children who had returned to the parental home did not experience a simple, uncomplicated linear forward movement towards attaining valued personal goals. Rather, they experienced an oscillating pattern of "faltering" and "advancing" in their efforts to realize valued goals. This experience has implications for the development of a fluctuating sense of self or self-image, the fulfilment of personal goals, the quality of the experience as positive or negative, and for family relations.

The contribution of the theoretical model to the literature is the discovery that returning home in adulthood may be a strategy for managing change and transition in one's life and for attaining certain lifespan development tasks (e.g., individuating from parents, establishing a career, and attaining financial security). Implications for counselling practice, and the self-help needs of adults who have returned home to live are noted. Suggestions for facilitating returning adult children's personal development (i.e., clarifying personal goals, weighing the pros and cons of returning and remaining at the parental home, maintaining self-esteem, seeking social support) and facilitating family relations (i.e., having realistic expectations of parents, being sensitive to mothers, negotiating privacy and boundaries, managing cross-cultural dynamics) are discussed. It is suggested that future research extend the application of the theory to men, as well as more diverse ethnic groups.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for Selecting this Research Topic

A recent social trend, the phenomenon of adult children returning to the parental home to live, has captured the attention of the popular media and social scientists. In Canada and the United States young adults are remaining at home with their parents, others postpone leaving, and many others are returning home to coreside with their parents (Aquilano, 1990; Boyd & Pryor, 1989; DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990; Forsyth & Eddington, 1989; Gee, Mitchell, & Wister, 1995; Glick & Lin, 1986; Goldscheider & DaVanzo, 1985; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994; Goldscheider & LeBourdais, 1986; Grigsby & McGowan, 1986; Heer, Hodge, & Felson, 1986; Ward & Spitze, 1996). Using Canadian census data, Boyd and Norris (1999) have documented that in 1996, 47% of unmarried women and 56% of unmarried men, ages 20 to 34, lived at home with their parents.

Despite this important demographic trend, there is a paucity of research specifically examining adult children's experience of returning home to live. The majority of the extant literature focuses on studying the impact of adult children living at home on parents. Parents' perceptions of familial relations as satisfactory or conflictual, the impact on their marriages, and the factors that influence such outcomes have been empirically documented (Aquilano, 1990,

1991; Aquilano & Supple, 1991; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Mitchell & Gee, 1996; Pillemar & Suitor, 1991; Suitor & Pillemar 1987, 1988, 1991; Umberson, 1992). The extant literature on parent-adult child coresidence has neglected to examine how returning to the parental home has impacted adult children's views of themselves, their family relations, and their futures (i.e., career development; relationships). Moreover, the extant literature seldom distinguishes between coresiding adult children who have never left home from those who have left home and then have "returned" (i.e., Boyd & Norris, 1999). Researchers have colloquially referred to the latter as "boomerang kids" (Gee, Mitchell, & Wister, 1995; Mitchell & Gee, 1996) and "renesters" (Johnson & Wilkinson, 1995). Similar to Veevers and Mitchell (1998), it is asserted that returning to the parental home represents a distinct form of coresidence that is distinguishable from late home-leaving or "delayed launching."

I chose to study the phenomenon of adult children returning to the parental home because it signifies an important area of exploration in its own right. The perceived reversal in the transition to adulthood, normatively designated by the maintenance of an independent household, may have meaningful implications for adult children's lives. Moreover, during my academic career I had been exposed to the compelling stories of friends who had returned home to live for various reasons (i.e., going back to school, divorce,

looking for work after graduate school, financial duress). I was often struck by how intense and consuming the experience seemed to be for them, and how it often left them feeling demoralized--despite their family's financial and emotional support.

It can be speculated that the experience of returning home to live can be personally difficult for adult children since it may signal a tacit admission that "not all is going well in my life". Little is known about adult children's perceptions of the returning home experience, how it fits with their life overall, and how they manage the experience. Little is known about how this experience influences adult children's perceptions of themselves--which may be exacerbated by pervasive and implicit social constructions of what is considered successful or normative in achieving adulthood in North American culture; namely, living independently of one's parents and successfully launching one's career in order to maintain this independent status. It seemed to me that counselling psychologists had something to offer; yet the actual research literature is dominated by sociologists and demographers, with sparse contribution from counselling psychologists.

I chose a qualitative line of inquiry to investigate the phenomenon of adult children returning home to live. Its reliance on interviews permits the exploration of the full experience from participants' own points of views and their

own words. Hoshmand (1994) has observed that qualitative methods are particularly suited to uncovering how people make sense of their experience. Moreover, the grounded theory approach has the potential to produce conceptual models and theories that enhance proximity to the actual lived experiences of participants; a form of internal validity that is a strength of the grounded theory method.

Purpose and Specific Aims

The purpose and specific aims of this qualitative research study were:

1. To generate a theory that explains female adult children's experiences (positive and negative) of returning to the parental home to live.
2. To describe the core social and psychological processes that female adult children experience when they return to the parental home to live.
3. To identify the factors that influence the quality of female adult children's experience when they return to the parental home to live.

These questions are relevant to issues concerning women's personal, relational, and career development in the family context. These issues are meaningful to theorists, researchers, and practitioners in counselling psychology.

Researcher's Metatheoretical Framework and Worldview

This section explicates some of the primary theoretical conceptualizations and assumptions that have guided my review

of the literature, culminating in the decision to pursue a qualitative line of inquiry. There is a movement in professional psychology that advocates that a self-reflexive stance to research and practice is invaluable in rendering tacit assumptions and beliefs visible (Hoshmand, 1994). The advantage of self-reflexivity is the enhanced capacity to reveal potential biases and ideas that can influence one's research, particularly given the post-modern assertion that a "subject-object dichotomy" in scientific inquiry does not exist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher's assumptions, experience, and theoretical conceptualizations influence the research process and outcome. Findings are quite literally "created" in interaction among researcher and respondents (Hoshmand, 1994).

Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) also assert that such assumptions can inadvertently reduce one's capacity for creativity and discovery in the research process and one must become sensitized to how, unrecognized, they can affect one's analysis of data. This implies that reflexivity plays a central role in the grounded theory approach. Indeed, unlike the phenomenologist, the grounded theory researcher is not expected to "bracket" or set aside existing theoretical frameworks and assumptions, rather the sensitizing nature of the researcher's previous education and practice "forms guidelines and reference points that the researcher uses to deductively formulate questions that may then elicit data that

leads to inductive concepts being formulated later" (Glaser, 1978, p. 39).

Constructionism

Engaging in the process of self-reflexivity has revealed several core aspects of myself...both a "metatheoretical framework" and a "world-view" that have guided the kinds of questions I ask and how I choose to address them. First, constructionism, as a metatheoretical framework subsumes various significant ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. Ontologically, "realities" are considered to be multiple, intangible mental constructions that are socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature and dependent for their form and content on the individual people or groups holding the constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Implicit is the notion that words, actions, and psychological phenomena derive meaning within a context; to analyze language or behaviour in isolation of its context is therefore meaningless. Gergen (1985) is explicit in his belief that knowledge is socially constructed, such that "the terms by which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people" (p. 267). Schwandt (1994) elaborates upon this notion, suggesting that if knowledge is one of the many coordinated activities of individuals, it is therefore subject to the same processes that characterize any human interaction (e.g., communication, negotiation, conflict, rhetoric). The focus in

social constructionism is on the collective generation of meaning as shaped by conventions of language and other social processes. Hence, the cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship is central (Gergen, 1985). This is distinct from radical constructivism that focuses on the meaning making activity of the individual mind.

The implications of such thinking are far-reaching. For instance, Hoshmand (1994) notes that the constructionist interpretation of theorizing in psychology views psychological theories as the products of constructions that are socially and culturally located. Strauss and Corbin (1994) concur that ontologically, theoretical concepts are not taken to be preexisting, natural categories. Such thinking may be considered radical because it eschews the notion of an "ultimate truth" since constructions are not considered to be more or less "true" in an absolute sense, rather they are considered to be more or less informed or sophisticated (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

Nonetheless, this does not mean that I consider myself to be an antirealist. It is reasonable to presume that concepts and ideas are invented (as opposed to discovered), yet maintain that such "inventions" are intended to correspond to something (i.e., tangible entities--events, persons, objects) in the world. Lincoln and Guba draw the distinction between experiential reality (constructions) and ontological reality (tangible entities) (Schwandt, 1994).

Epistemologically, constructionism considers the nature of the relationship between the knower and the would-be-knower to be "transactional" and "subjectivist." This means that the investigator and the object of investigation are not considered "separate" but intrinsically and interactively linked so that "findings" are quite literally created as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Who I am as a human being is significant, for what I bring to the research process in terms of my background, values, gender, and clinical training as a therapist will shape the research product...participants will respond not only to the questions I pose to them, but to me interpersonally. Thus my clinical training is explicitly acknowledged because I believe that it will have a meaningful influence on how I conduct my interviews and how I analyze my data; hopefully with more interpersonal sensitivity and skill than a researcher without such training.

In my mind this suggests that both values, ethics, and "voice" (both my own and the multiple perspectives of the participants) have a more prominent position in both the process and product of one's research endeavors. This viewpoint lends to a personal investment, even an obligation as a scientist-practitioner, to create a "moral space" for research participants to share their stories in confidence, and without apprehension of being judged. As Strauss and Corbin (1994) state..."we have obligations to the actors we

have studied to "tell their stories" to them and to others--to give them voice--albeit in the context of their own inevitable interpretations" (p. 281).

Ultimately, the social constructionist assertion that social constructions tend to be elicited and refined through human interaction lends itself to methodology that is hermeneutical and dialectical. Varying constructions are interpreted and compared and contrasted through dialogue with the purpose of arriving at more informed, sophisticated, and consensual constructions than any of the preceding constructions; including those of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In grounded theory such dialogue or conversation is centred on theoretical analysis where "concepts are formulated and analytically developed, conceptual relationships are posited--but we are emphasizing that they are inclusive of the multiple perspectives of the actors" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280).

Contextualism

Pepper (1942) has described contextualism as one of four mutually exclusive world hypotheses or theoretical frameworks (the others include organicism, mechanism, and formism). The root metaphor of contextualism is neither the machine nor the organism, it is the "historic event." In contextualism, every behaviour and incident in the world is an historic event. Therefore, change and novelty are accepted as fundamental in all levels of analysis and that such change is characterized

as "embedded" with change in other levels; changes in one promote changes in all. Therefore, phenomena are not considered static, but dynamic. Phenomena are also understood as being "in relation" or "in transaction" with their context. This interpretation of the world suggests a complexity and multiplicity of interrelationships that are irreducible. Moreover, development is conceptualized in contextual, processual, and relational terms rather than in terms of uniform linear sequences (Steenbarger, 1991). Contextualism offers a holistic view that stresses the dynamic interplay of forces that constitute a historically situated event in the context of its biosocial, cultural, and ecological environment. Within this worldview there are epistemological implications as well, knowledge is considered to be co-constituted by the act of knowing and its context. Thus, human inquiry must be sensitive to people's contexts in order to be meaningful (Hoshmand, 1994).

Researcher's Background

The researcher is an integral part of the qualitative research process, and a few biographical notes seem in order. I am a thirty-something, white female who has been born and raised in Canada. I am a clinically trained therapist who has worked primarily in university settings with adults. In fact, over the years, a number of my clients' presenting issues had to do with the complications they experienced in their lives when returning home to live with parents. Currently, I am a

private therapist who works primarily with women. I acknowledge that my ongoing involvement in Dr. Richard Young's qualitative research programme, on parent and adolescents' constructions of career development, has inspired a finer appreciation of qualitative research methodology.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a representative review of the literature, relevant to the experience of adult children returning to the parental home, that was conducted prior to entering the field of study. The utilization of the extant literature prior to beginning a grounded theory research project is sufficiently different from the use of the extant literature in the quantitative paradigm that some informative words are in order. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) acknowledge that the researcher will come to the grounded theory project with sufficient knowledge of the research literature to sensitize the researcher to core themes, categories, and ideas that recur in the literature, without stifling creativity and discovery. The intent of the grounded theory method is discovery, not to rework "received" theories or variables (categories). They caution that the researcher be wary of how unrecognized assumptions associated with the extant literature's theory and findings can influence one's analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990) write:

There is no need to review all the literature beforehand (as is frequently done by researchers trained in other approaches), because if we are to be effective in our analysis, then new categories will emerge that we, nor anyone else, had thought about previously. We do not want to be so steeped in the

literature as to be constrained and even stifled in terms of creative efforts by our knowledge of it!! Since discovery is our purpose, we do not have beforehand knowledge of all the categories relevant to our theory (p. 50).

Adhering to Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) recommendations for how to use the extant literature in a grounded theory approach, an evaluation of the conceptual frameworks and research findings that follows was intended to stimulate theoretical sensitivity by identifying potential categories and relationships around conditions that influence the returning home to live experience, for how one manages the experience, and the consequences of what the experience is like. Such information sensitized me to what seemed important about the phenomenon being explored.

Patterns of Parent-Adult Child Coresidence

The phenomenon of increased parent-adult child coresidence has been documented in Canada (Boyd & Pryor, 1989; Boyd & Norris, 1999; Gee, Mitchell, & Wister, 1995), and in the United States (DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990; Forsyth & Eddington, 1989; Glick & Lin, 1986; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994; Grigsby & McGowan, 1986). Boyd and Norris' (1999) recent analysis of Canadian census data indicate that young adults coresidence with parents has increased since 1981. In 1996, close to half (47%) of unmarried women aged 20 to 34 lived with parents, up from 44% in 1981. More than half

(56%) of unmarried men resided in the parental home, about the same as in 1981 (55%). Unfortunately Boyd and Norris' (1999) population census data was unable to identify whether these young adults have continually lived with their parents or have returned after living elsewhere for a period of time.

Boyd and Norris (1999) indicate that prolonged post-secondary education enrolments, fluctuations in the labour market, and remaining unmarried longer are at work here. Indeed, most of the increases in coresidence took place from 1981 to 1986 and 1991 to 1996, both periods of economic recession and slow recovery. Although economic downturns do not mean that young adults automatically either stay in the parental home or move back in, they suggest that coresiding is a strategic way in which young adults respond to unemployment, relatively low wages, or low incomes while attending school (Boyd & Norris, 1999).

It also should be noted that the young adults living at home are increasingly older and the majority are men. In 1981, only about a quarter of unmarried women and men living with their parents were aged 25 or over; by 1996, the percentages had risen to 33% and 40%, respectively. Interestingly, a consistent finding in many other studies in Canada and the United States is that smaller percentages of young women live at home (Boyd & Pryor, 1989; DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990; Ward & Spitze, 1992). The aforementioned researchers speculate this may be partly explained by gender roles; such that

daughters are more closely supervised at home and may feel they would have more independence living elsewhere. Since they have also been more involved in household chores they may also be better able to take care of themselves.

Reasons for Adult Children Returning Home

The characteristics and needs of children account for coresidence with both middle-aged and older parents (Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992). Returns to the parental home are more frequent among adult children with lower incomes (Boyd & Pryor, 1989). Factors such as housing costs, unemployment, and divorce are also cited (Glick & Lin, 1986; Heer et al., 1985). With respect to economic-related factors, Mitchell and Gee (1995) document 81% of their Canadian sample of 218 "boomerang kids" stated economic reasons for returning home. A break-down of these reasons demonstrated that 26.1% reported "financial problems", 19.3% indicated that they returned to "save money", and 13.3% stated that they had returned due to transitional or temporary reasons (i.e., finished travelling). Some had returned for school-related reasons (12.8%), and a smaller proportion had returned due to the ending of a relationship (5%) or because housing costs are too high (4.6%). Of the 17% of reasons falling into a non-economic category, 9.2% indicated they returned for social-psychological factors such as companionship, the comforts of home, or not being ready to live on their own; 4.15% returned because they needed help, and 3.7% stated a health problem such as illness or

disability.

Finally, Aquilano's (1991) survey data suggest the importance of "congenial" parent-child relations in predicting coresidence. Adult children will coreside in the parental home when (a) living at home does not involve living with a stepparent, (b) when relationship quality between parents and children is high, and (c) when parents hold positive attitudes toward the continued support of adult children and have offered housing to relatives or nonrelatives. Aquilano's (1991) findings are perhaps suggestive that adult children who choose to return home perceive that their parents will "always keep the door open."

Overall, adult children's reasons for returning home have been documented as significant in determining parent-adult children coresiding patterns. However, the extant literature has not explored or explained how adult children's reasons for returning home may potentially influence the experience of returning to the parental home in adulthood.

Predominant Conceptual Frameworks

This section reviews two conceptual frameworks, social exchange and life span development, that have been used in the literature to guide research questions about the benefits and problems associated with parent-adult child coresidence (Ward & Spitze, 1992).

Social Exchange

Coresident parent-adult child relationships can be

understood as a social exchange process; entailing negotiations and an exchange of helping behaviours (Ward & Spitze, 1992; White & Rogers, 1997; Veevers & Mitchell, 1998). A central tenet of the social exchange theoretical perspective is that parents and adult children evaluate the costs and benefits of coresiding, and that this appraisal affects family members' satisfaction level with coresiding. Indeed, a social exchange theoretical perspective asserts that exchanges of instrumental and emotional support between parents and their adult children are more satisfying if there is reciprocity and equity.

However, parents' and adult children's perceptions of the amount of assistance given and received during coresiding may not be the same. Indeed, coresidence typically reflects the needs of children (Aquilano, 1990; Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992), and parents are often presumed to have access to more resources (i.e., housing, food, money, car) to share with their children. Perhaps these adult children feel entitled to their parents' assistance, thereby minimizing the magnitude of parents' contributions. Rossi and Rossi's (1990) research on the patterns of helping behaviours between parents and their children over the lifespan generally indicates that "donors" of help (be it parents or children) generally claim to be giving more help than recipients acknowledge having received. In the case of the boomerang family phenomenon, it seems that the largesse of intergenerational support flows to the adult

children, with parents likely to be in the position of perceiving an "imbalance" and perhaps feeling "taken for granted." Alternatively, parents may accept this exchange imbalance as an extension of their parenting role--that entails a sense of obligation to assist children (despite a lack of mutual reciprocity) and a sense of satisfaction in continuing to care for their children. This may be particularly true of mothers, relative to fathers, who are socialized to believe that their obligations to provide domestic and emotional support to their children are practically without limits (Berman, 1987).

Utilizing a social exchange perspective to guide their research, Veevers and Mitchell (1998) document that although coresiding parents and adult children exchange several types of help, returnee children appear to receive more frequent instrumental (i.e., meal preparation, grocery shopping, transportation, laundry) and affective support from parents than parents appear to receive from children. In comparing parent and returnee children's perceptions of giving, congruence on all types of informal support was high (50% or higher), with the notable exception of emotional support. In this instance, almost 34% more families have a parent stating that they receive more emotional support from their coresiding child than s/he reports providing. Veevers and Mitchell (1998) observe that this alerts us to the possibility that exchanges are seldom quid pro quo, and that love, companionship, and

emotional/physical closeness may make up for everything that parents give to their coresiding children, thereby mitigating perceived exchange imbalances.

Their findings hint at the limitations of a straightforward application of social exchange in parent-child coresidential relations. Notions of love, appreciation, obligation, sacrifice, entitlement, and reciprocity in the future rather than the present complicate the application of strict notions of equitable exchanges in parent-child relations. Regardless, this theoretical framework sensitizes future research to the possibility that inequitable exchanges of help between parents and adult children are potentially problematic when coresiding.

Life-Span Development and Transition to Adulthood

Fassinger and Schlossberg (1992) observe that a range of terms have been used to refer to the sequence of events comprising an individual's life experience. "Life span" is often used by psychologists, and "life course" is used among sociologists; the former tend to be interested in internal, subjective events, and the latter tend to be interested in socially created, shared events (Hagestad & Neugarten, 1985). Generally, all societies divide the life course into two or more phases--often age provides the basis for assigning roles and resources (Fassinger & Schlossberg, 1992). Age stratification provides a normal, predictable life cycle within a culture (Hagestad & Neugarten, 1985).

With regard to this, adolescence initiates a critical redefinition of the parent-child relationship in which parents "disengage" (Rossi & Rossi, 1990) and children "individuate" (Erikson, 1959). Relevant to development being socially situated within the family, Carter and McGoldrick (1989, p. 15) posit a family life cycle theory with six developmental stages: (a) leaving home: single young adults, (b) the joining of families through marriage: the new couple, (c) families with young children, (d) families with adolescents, (e) launching children and moving on, and (f) families in later life.

Carter and McGoldrick (1989) suggest that at each stage certain tasks must be accomplished to allow individuals and families to proceed developmentally. The expected and normative developmental tasks for unattached young adults revolve around gaining independence from their parents (Aylmer, 1989). Carter and McGoldrick (1989) suggest that the tasks of "the leaving home/single young adult stage" entails that young adults differentiate from their families of origin, develop intimate peer relationships, and establish themselves with regard to work and financial independence. Successful resolution of these tasks occurs when young adults develop their own views and separate identities without reactively severing ties from their families (Bowen, 1978). Paralleling the developmental needs and goals of young adults, this model suggests that parents "disengage" by permitting their adult

children to develop their own lives and identities. Parents ease adult children's development at this stage in life by (a) tolerating adult children's separation and independence while remaining connected, (b) tolerating differences and ambiguity in the career identity of adult children, and (c) accepting a range of emotional attachments and lifestyles outside the immediate family (Aylmer, 1989).

Ultimately, such life span developmental models assume that "leaving home" is a part of healthy development in early adulthood. Indeed, the normative status of home leaving as an indicator of adulthood seems quite pervasive and grounded in North American contemporary society. Parsons (1949) asserted, "For young people not to break away from their parental families at the proper time is a failure to live up to expectations, an unwarranted expression of dependency" (p. 200). Interestingly, although age norms are generally weak and not often enforced, both parents and adult children seem to hold onto implicit beliefs about the desirability of independent living and the speed with which this can be accomplished (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993).

Implications for Parent-Adult Child Coresidence

Because development through the life course has been conceptualized as a sequence of age-graded role transitions characterized by norms of timing and order (Hagestad, 1990), it is often presumed that a deviation from this theorized timetable is disruptive; weakening preparation and support for

role transitions. Normative and orderly transitions into adulthood, encompassing the launching of one's career and departing from the parental household, are violated when adult children return home to live.

Life-span theorists and sociologists assert that this breaks cultural norms and attitudes and preferences of both parents and adult children (i.e., Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1989; White & Edwards, 1990). Ward and Spitze (1992, p.558) have asserted, "coresidence is itself nonnormative, and it also disproportionately involves children who have not made or have been unsuccessful in other normative transitions (e.g., marriage and employment)".

In keeping with this line of thinking, Schnaiberg and Goldenberg (1989) had formulated the model of the "returning young adult" (RYA) or "incompletely launched young adult" (ILYA) syndrome. In their conceptualization of the ILYA syndrome, young adults' unanticipated economic dependence on parents, due to failure to launch careers, violates parental expectations for successful child rearing. Parents assess their child-rearing success by adult children's independence and economic self-sufficiency. They theorize that returning home after failing to fulfil parental expectations fosters anger on the part of both child and parent and heightens parent-child conflict. Their perspective places more emphasis on the maturity than age of adult children. The critical dimension is children's autonomy versus dependency in

relationship to the parent. Given this model, implicit is a characterization of family dynamics as enmeshed and conflictual, and family members as dependent or needy.

I have several objections to Schnaiberg and Goldenberg's (1989) conceptualization, based on implicit assumptions which I will render explicit. First, such lifespan conceptualizations seem to assume that development is linear and predictable. In contrast, similar to Cohler (1982), I believe that lives change over time in ways not necessarily linear or predictable. Recent findings from longitudinal studies, and increased appreciation of the significance of larger historical factors in determining particular lives, clearly demonstrate that lives are much less ordered and predictable than formerly recognized (Gergen, 1980). An aleatoric perspective on change suggests that the study of lives should be concerned with the impact of unanticipated changes, such as adult children coresiding with parents. In particular, how persons make sense of these changes rather than searching for elusive evidence of stability across the life course should be emphasized (Brim & Riff, 1980; cited in Cohler, 1982).

Second, the predominant conceptualization of development as following socially designated normative timeframes for transitions and life-roles has lent itself to a disturbing negative bias in the literature: to pathologize what is different as "abnormal" or "deviant." Descriptors and phrases

associated with adult coresident children and their parents include: stressful, conflictual, problematic, non-normative, inadequately launched young adult syndrome, off-time, the American dream runout, crowded nest, cluttered nest, the not-so-empty-nest, enmeshed, dependent, maturational difficulty, and immature. Intimations of failure, helplessness, and despair for parents and adult children in this "unenviable" position are pervasive.

I have tried to understand how this negative bias arose since, to my chagrin, I have discovered that I am not completely free of it myself. The ubiquity of this bias may stem from our most fundamental notions of time/timing in our culture. "Time, or at least a sense of time, is indelibly etched into our social consciousness to the degree that it not only pervades even the most minute aspects of everyday life, but is a telltale sign of social and interactional competence" (Reese & Katovich, 1989, p. 161). Furthermore, Reese and Katovich (1989) advocate that time and temporal dimensions are employed by competent members of society and agents for social control to "document" and "typify" action, as either timely and therefore "perceived normal" or untimely and therefore "perceived deviant." Perhaps increased understanding of how even our most basic notions of time are implicit in social constructions of "competence" and "success" in our life-span development theories will make me wary of ignorantly evaluating the different life path as the deviant one!

Third, current conceptualizations of parent-child relationships over the lifespan implicitly suggest that young adults who are working and have set up independent households are no longer influenced by their parents. The implication is that only younger children need their parents to assist them in making sense of the world and their life experiences. Hence, adult children who do rely on their parents' resources and support are characterized as childlike, immature, and dependent.

I think this characterization is based on an unrealistic dichotomy of dependence-independence of parent-child relations over the life-span. In contrast, I am suggesting that the North American construct of "independence/autonomy" is ephemeral and elusive in real living. Parents and their children maintain their bond and influence on one another over the life course; it does not end once the children become adults (i.e., Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1992; Middleton & Loughheed, 1993; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Splete & Freeman-Howard, 1985). Macoby (1992) asserts, "at every stage of life, relationships involve coregulation and individuals never graduate to being free of the regulatory requirements of intimate others unless they become social isolates" (p. 1014). Thus, any enduring parental influence stems from the nature of the relationships that parents have coconstructed and reconstructed continually with their children.

Consequences of Parent-Adult Child Coresidence

Impact on Family Relations

Given recent attention to patterns and predictors of parent-child coresidence, there has been increased investigation of how parent and adult child coresidence impacts the quality of family relations. The predominant expectation that researchers seem to share is that coresidence in parental households will be detrimental, contributing to interpersonal conflict and reducing one's sense of well-being (Menaghan, 1991; Schnaiberg & Goldenberg, 1989).

Negative coresidential outcomes are anticipated for numerous reasons. It is asserted that parents and children would probably experience conflict over the following issues: renegotiating roles; adult children's attempts to maintain independence while living in their parents' homes; perceptions of inequity in the exchange of instrumental support between parents and children; and parent's disappointment that their children had failed to achieve economic independence or failed at marriage.

Moreover, the literature on life-style variations in marital quality has documented that the departure of children has a salutary effect on couples' relationships (e.g., White & Edwards, 1990). Given that the "empty nest" is associated with significant improvements in marital happiness for all parents, regardless of parents' or children's characteristics, it seems logical to presume that the return of these children would

negatively affect parental relationships. Indeed, Aldous (1987) reported that empty-nest stage parents enjoyed their independence from their children and would not be happy at the prospect of adult children returning home. Only about one-fourth of parents expressed unqualified approval when asked how they would feel if an adult child returned to the nest.

There is scattered evidence to support that this is the case, at least under some circumstances. Clemens and Axelson (1985), utilizing a questionnaire methodology, reported that adult children's return to their middle-aged parents' homes often placed strain on couples' marital relationships (i.e., 42% of parents had serious conflicts with at least one of their resident adult children). However, their small (39) and unrepresentative sample greatly limits the generalizability of their findings to either middle-aged or older populations of parents. Indeed, their sample was primarily composed of participants in a workshop in "parenting the young adult." Somehow it does not seem very surprising that parents attending such a workshop would be reporting that they experience problems with their resident adult children!

In spite of this flaw, which remained unacknowledged, the authors' discussion goes onto make broad speculations and generalizations about the proclivity for problems in coresidential family circumstances (e.g., young adults encouraged to act immature, dependent and parents in caretaking role; stress; guilt; enmeshment, and so on). Biased

statements such as, "it would appear, in some cases, that this family structure is inappropriate or off-balance" (p. 263), were even more surprising given that the authors' research was not guided by family theory.

In spite of the problems with Clemens and Axelson's (1985) study, it does suggest that some parents may experience problems when adult children return home to coreside, and others have also demonstrated negative consequences of intergenerational coresidence. For instance, Aquilano and Supple (1991) demonstrated that although parent-child relations were not dominated by conflict, that conflict remained the strongest single predictor of parents' satisfaction with having their adult children living at home. For mothers, the frequency of disagreements was less important than their intensity. Heated arguments and shouting were associated with mothers' dissatisfaction with the adult child's presence with lowered levels of shared leisure time and enjoyable time. For fathers, the occurrence of disagreements exerted a strong negative effect on satisfaction, whether or not they led to open hostilities with the adult child. Fathers experience the disagreements themselves as "sufficiently burdensome or onerous," and the researchers speculate that fathers may take a more authoritative stance than mothers towards their children and therefore are more likely to experience disagreements as an affront to their parental status. Finally, Aquilano and

Supple (1991) found that adult children's financial dependency and unemployment were associated with increased parent-child conflict. The return home of divorced or separated children and the presence of grandchildren in the home also decreased parents' satisfaction with the coresident living arrangement.

More recently, the results of Umberson's (1992) study indicated that coresident parents reported more strained relations, with 54% reporting that their children were not at all critical but 37% indicating that their children were somewhat or a little critical of them. When asked how much their coresiding children make too many demands of them, 36% said somewhat or a little. They also reported greater dissatisfaction with the parental role (i.e., based on a parental dissatisfaction index derived from these questions: "At this point in your life, how satisfied are you with being a parent?" "How often do you feel bothered or upset as a parent?" And, "how happy are you with the way your child(ren) turned out?"). Their results suggest that a strained relationship between adult children and parents and a high parental dissatisfaction index is associated with parents' elevated psychological distress.

Umberson (1992) indicates that this research redresses the criticism that the study of later life families infrequently considers potentially negative aspects of parent-child relationships. Her research demonstrates the importance of measuring negative aspects of relationships given the

finding that when intergenerational relationships are strained that this strain is the most salient feature of the relationship parents' and adult children's psychological functioning.

However, other research has indicated that coresidence with adult children does not generally appear to produce dissatisfaction or conflict. For instance, Suitor and Pillemer's (1987) analysis of 677 elderly parents' survey responses indicated, contrary to expectations, that the presence of adult children had no effect on elderly parents' marital conflict, even when age, educational attainment, health, and gender were controlled. However, further analysis of data on respondents sharing a residence with an adult child showed that marital conflict is related to the frequency of parent-child conflict.

In a similar study, Suitor and Pillemer (1988) set out to investigate intergenerational conflict when parents share their home with an adult child. A stratified random sample of 372 elderly parents reported "surprisingly" low levels of conflict with their resident adult children. Multiple regression analysis provided support for two of three hypotheses regarding the effects of social structural factors on intergenerational conflict: conflict was lower in dyads in which the resident child was older, and in which the parent and child occupied the same or similar marital status. Contrary to expectations, the analysis did not support

hypotheses with respect to exchange relations: conflict was not related to the parent's health or dependency upon the adult child.

Overall, these latter findings are promising in the sense that they represent a trend in the literature; coresidency does not necessarily imply a direct, causal relationship with conflict in familial relations (in spite of the fact that researchers still expect to find this), even with correlational statistics! Unfortunately, many studies do not adequately describe the coresident adult children (i.e., Suitor & Pillemer, 1987, 1988; 1991). Parent-respondents were not asked why their children were living at home or whether they have always been there or whether they recently returned. This is an oversight given the fact that not knowing why the children are there may make a difference in understanding the results. Conflictual relations may also be impacted by whether a coresident adult child is continuous versus returned. The latter case may reflect temporary transitional returns (i.e., students), and adult children who have failed in marriage or employment. This may yield dissatisfaction on the behalf of both adult children (who resent not being independent) and parents (who worry about their adult children's problems). Thus return coresidence seems potentially problematic.

In response to this issue, Ward and Spitze (1996) attempted to determine how continuing and returning coresident adult children differ. Their sample was drawn from the

National Survey of Families and Households and consisted of 716 adult children (58% continuing; 42% returning), 60% of whom were sons and 71% of non-Hispanic White background.

First, it was found that adult children and parents generally expressed satisfaction with coresidence. Adult children had a mean rating of 5.6 (out of 7), with 34% at 7, however the continuing adult children had a somewhat higher mean satisfaction rating (5.8) than the returning adult children (5.3). In contrast, parent mean rating was higher (6.1) than adult children, with 58% at 7. Interestingly, adult child and parent satisfaction were only modestly correlated (.34). This suggests that parents and adult children were responding to different factors in appraising the coresidence experience. Although return coresidents and their parents were older than continuing coresidents, 73% had made their most recent return before the age of 25; only 12% returned at 30 or older and 3% at 40 or older. Three-quarter had left the parental home and had returned only once, such that returning to the parental home does not typically appear to be a "revolving door." Moreover, about two-thirds of adult children reported definite plans to leave. Most expected to stay a year or less (though their parents appear to be sceptical of this). Indeed, length of current coresidence was generally short for returnees (53% for a year or less vs. 32% more than 2 years). Relevant to this, school (29%) and financial reasons (26%) were common cited in returning home, especially amongst younger adults.

Divorce and relationship disruptions (17%) were also cited as reasons for returning home, which increases with age as a reason for returns. Perhaps relevant to this is a significant interaction between gender and age among return coresidents, in which older daughters report longer expected stays. This seems to reflect financial difficulties and other assistance needs, because after age 30 most of these daughters were divorced, and some had children of their own.

Ward and Spitze (1996) conclude that returning to the parental home is a more temporary or transitional situation that may be characterized by more tension because return coresidents expressed less satisfaction with coresiding and planned to leave in the near future. In contrast, adult children who had never left home seem to be stable, long-term coresidents.

Another one of the few studies to document adult children's perspectives compared resident and nonresident adult children (Flanagan, Schulenberg, & Fuigni, 1993). Using reports from 404 undergraduates (approximately half of whom were living with their parents), they compared resident and nonresident young adults on six dimensions of parent-child relationships (mutual respect, decision-making autonomy, perceived affection and support, acceptance of parents as role models, ability to resolve conflicts, and feeling appreciated and understood). Net of control variables (including age), they found significant negative effects of coresidence on each

item taken separately and on the entire set. The researchers concluded that "the redefinition of relationships with parents may be more problematic when parents and their late-adolescent children are living under the same roof" (p. 183).

In another study interested in the psychological impact of parent-child relations, Umberson (1992) examined the psychological consequences of relationships between coresiding adult children and their parents. Using measures of the frequency of social contact, social support (i.e., degree of feeling loved and cared for; degree of other being willing to listen to my worries), and relationship strain (i.e., how critical a person is of you or what you do; degree other makes too many demands of me) it was found that relationships with mothers were associated with distress amongst coresiding adult children. More frequent contact and support from mothers was associated with less distress among adult children, while strained relationships are associated with more distress. Indeed, 43% of adult children reported that their mothers are somewhat or a little critical and 13% reported that their mothers are critical quite a bit or a great deal. Thirty-two percent also reported that their mothers made too many demands of them. In contrast, fathers were reported to be somewhat less critical, and less demanding (only 29% felt fathers made too many demands). Ultimately, strained relationships with fathers were associated with greater distress whereas social support and contact with fathers did not seem to have strong

effects on adult children.

In ascertaining which relationship is more important to determining respondent's psychological functioning, results show that strained relationships with both mothers and adult children are associated with elevated psychological distress. Once the relationships with mothers and adult children are taken into account, relationships with fathers do not measurably affect respondents' psychological functioning. Such results sensitize us to the differing psychological impact relations with mothers versus fathers has on coresiding adult children.

Finally, White and Rogers (1997) demonstrated that coresident young adults give, receive, and perceive more support from their parents than nonresident children, but that they also report significantly lower affective relationships with their parents. Coresident adult children report receiving significantly less respect and less fairness from their mothers, and they also express less trust in their mothers compared to nonresident adult children. Yet coresiding adult children do not differ significantly from those living independently on items that measure feeling understood by mothers, feeling loved by mothers, and feeling close to mothers. The authors surmise that the lower relationship quality may be attributed to the strains of sharing a household on a daily basis.

Ultimately, the research on the consequences of the

parent-child coresidential experience still focuses almost exclusively on the parent's perspective on their relationship with their spouse, child, or on their sense of well-being. This is an oversight since different features of relations are likely to be salient for parents and adult children, and their perceptions are likely to be determined by different factors (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Researchers should be more sensitive to eliciting the perceptions of coresiding adult children, thereby uncovering what is problematic and advantageous about coresiding.

Expected Variation in Coresidence Outcomes

Researchers have sought to explain the mixed findings that intergenerational co-residence seems to have on familial relations. Why do some coresiding parents and adult children seem to experience conflict, strained relations, and/or dissatisfaction with parental role (i.e., Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Aquilano, 1991; Aquilano & Supple, 1991; Umberson, 1992), while others do not (i.e., Suitor & Pillemar, 1987, 1988, 1991)? It has been suggested that researchers be sensitized to how the nature and outcomes of coresidence are likely to vary with parent and child characteristics that affect their relations. Ward and Spitze (1992) advocate that age, gender, and cultural differences (i.e., race/ethnicity) may have particular salience.

First, a researcher should be sensitized to how the perceived quality of parent-child relations while coresiding

may differ by gender of parents and adult children. Daughters generally have greater solidarity with their parents than sons (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Antonucci (1990) demonstrates that women are more involved in family networks and while this may lead them to experience more benefits, they also run the risk of experiencing more emotional costs. Aquilano and Supple (1991) found more enjoyable interactions with coresident daughters (particularly for mothers), and that shared activities were more important to coresidence satisfaction for mothers. Such patterns are suggestive that there are greater consequences of coresidence, both positive and negative, for mothers and daughters. Others are of the opinion that coresident adult daughters fare less well than sons because they are more highly supervised (Boyd & Pryor, 1989) and are asked to undertake a larger share of the housework; although coresident parents continue to do 74% to 79% of household tasks, daughters do twice as many tasks as sons (Ward et al., 1992). Goldscheider and Waite (1991) conclude that "staying home after age 18 seems to provide much less benefit for daughters than sons" (p. 149).

Second, age has been found consistently to be negatively related to family conflict and violence (Suitor & Pillemer, 1991), such that relationships involving younger parties would be expected to yield higher reports of conflict. Moreover, the literature on adult development and intergenerational relations suggests that middle-aged parents and their children

are more likely to experience higher levels of conflict than older parent-child dyads (Hagestad, 1987). Relevant to this, Suitor and Pillemer (1987, 1988) suggest that their findings of lack of conflict between elderly parents and their coresiding adult children reflect their age. Moreover, because the data were collected from the older parents' perspectives, it is suggested that there may be a social desirability bias--a tendency to present overly harmonious pictures of their family relationships (Suitor & Pillemer, 1991). They speculate that greater conflict may have been reported if the data had been collected from the adult children coresiding rather than their elderly parents.

Third, Ward and Spitze (1992) assert that researchers must be sensitized to how racial/ethnic differences may influence the nature and outcomes of parent-adult child coresidence. It has been suggested that the coresiding practices of families may reflect economic need. Indeed, Aquilano (1990) asserts that extended-family households among Blacks and Hispanics reflect economic needs and marital status differences. Alternatively, it may also be contended that racial differences in extended-family households reflect cultural preferences pertinent to family values and norms (Choi, 1991; Tienda & Angel, 1982). If one subscribes to this perspective, then it may follow that some cultural groups may be more receptive to coresidence and would experience it more positively, with less conflict (Ward & Spitze, 1992).

At this time, research in the United States has centred its attention on ethnic/racial differences in intergenerational coresiding amongst Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites (Ward & Spitze, 1992). However, no current research is available on how ethnic/racial differences influence Canadians' coresidential patterns and experiences--where the demographics are considerably different. For instance, Vancouver, Canada is made up of diverse ethnic groups--including groups of British, European, Chinese, and East Indian heritage. Research should be sensitive to how these different ethnic/racial groups' norms, values, and practices may influence the nature and outcomes of parent-adult children coresidential experiences.

Criticism of the Research on Parent-Adult Child Coresidence

Extant life course and exchange conceptualizations are limited and the positivist methodology used to research the phenomenon of "returning home to live" is reductionist. Indeed, the "whole" experience of adult children returning home to live is often reduced to a narrow focus on parent-child relations; whether relations are satisfactory, conflictual, or exchange is equitable. In focusing so narrowly, one has to wonder what other critical processes and dimensions inherent to the experience are being overlooked. To redress this concern, this phenomenon demands a methodological approach that is not reductionistic and is sensitive to the multiple layers of context that influence the experience of

returning home in adulthood; significantly impacting one's relationships and intentions for the future. Events as the confluence of temporal, contextual, and psychological processes must be studied in interactional terms and in naturalistic contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Research was largely neglectful of what adult children experience when they have returned home. Generally, survey studies focused on how coresiding had impacted parents' lives from parents' perspectives (i.e., Aquilano & Supple, 1991; Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Pillemar & Suito, 1991; Suito & Pillemar, 1987, 1988). It certainly would be interesting to know what adult children who have returned home experience and how they make sense of the experience. Therefore, a specific theoretical conceptualization of the adult children's experience is lacking.

What about Implications for the Adult Child's Career

Development?

Given the narrow focus of the extant literature on the impact of coresiding on parent-child relations, it is likely that all the concepts pertaining to the phenomenon of adult children returning to the nest have not been identified. At this time, there are no studies that directly investigate how adult children returning home to reside may affect their construction of career. This is astonishing given the fact that failures to adequately launch careers, poor economy, limited opportunity structure, and extended educational needs

of today's workers are cited as some of the primary reasons for adult children returning to the parental home (Boyd & Norris, 1999)!

Having said this, it is also recognized that understanding "career" in this context is not that straightforward. For instance, Hartung and Sweeney (1991) discovered that although adult children and parents attribute the poor economy as the key reason why adults are returning home, it seemed that the "meaning" of economic circumstances vary. Parents and children sometimes perceived deprivation and affluence very differently from the actual economic circumstances they described. Decreasing economic opportunities must be interpreted within the context of class-bound, economically-specific notions of entitlement, and of how being a successful adult is defined.

Some children who return home do so out of abject economic necessity; having failed by their own definition as adults due to divorce or job loss (Hartung & Sweeney, 1991). They are expected to resume the role of "child" as long as they live with their parents. And there are other children (usually middle-class) who return home because home can be a comfortable retreat from adulthood. Although parents in middle class households also indicated that the child was home for economic reasons, at "less guarded moments" the child's maturity was called into question. The issue of having failed launching a career is alluded to, although parents and adult

children defer from discussing this perceived failure. Yet one has to wonder what does this all mean? Are these boomerang children perceived by themselves and others as "losers"? Do adult children consider returning home as helpful or unhelpful to their career development?

Traditionally, research on the important issue of how the family context influences children's lives and careers over the lifespan has sought identification of environmental variables associated with the family (i.e., socioeconomic status) and relatively stable psychological variables that can be generalized to the population (Splete & Freeman-George, 1985). Implicit in this was the suggestion that children are passive recipients of such static influence variables. A disadvantage of this traditional, empirical approach to studying influence was its tendency to distort the way the dynamic process of influence actually functions in persons' daily lives. The active, volitional, and goal-directed character of influence is lost (Collin & Young, 1986).

Recent innovative research utilizes hermeneutical inquiry and narrative to redress this situation and capture the complex manner in which the family context influences career development. Young, Friesen, and Borycki's (1994) study was chosen for inclusion in this section because its findings may be suggestive that adult children who return home (and their parents) are exhibiting intentional, goal-directed activities designed to assist in the returnee's life and career

development. In a two-part semi-structured interview format, 50 young adults (22 men; 28 women) were first invited to talk about their lives; where they were in their career development, what was important to them, what their goals were, and the influence they perceived their parents had on both their lives and careers. The second part of the interview sought out specific incidents, following Flanagan's critical incident procedure, in which these young adults had perceived that their parents had influenced them. The analysis of the resultant narratives, both the large life narratives and the critical incident narratives that reflect parental influence, was based on the means-end sequences delineated by Alexander.

It was found that parental influence is an important ingredient in the goal-oriented life narratives of young adults. Based on intensive analysis of eight transcribed interviews, four narrative types were identified: progressive narratives with a dramatic turning point; progressive narratives within a positive evaluation frame; anticipated regressive narrative; and progressive narrative with negatively evaluated stages.

The authors note that the predominance of progressive narratives, with the narrator progressing toward a goal, suggest a need to present one's life as a success story. This need is intensified by socially constructed developmental tasks of young adults entering occupations, living independently of parents, and choosing life partners. Notions

associated with parental influence included success, failure, destiny, struggle, optimism, and fatalism. This methodological approach provided an alternative means of understanding how young adults construct their career and life direction, and their parents' role in this process.

The implications of this study may be significant for the following reasons: (a) current conceptualizations of adult children returning to the nest predict negative outcomes (i.e., immaturity, dependency, incompletely launched, "career-depressed"), yet given the need to present lives as "success stories", perhaps adult children explain returning home as a "positive career plan" (i.e., a responsible decision to save money for education, and so on; a desire to promote the best possible outcome for the adult child to achieve career goals); and (b) allowing research participants to respond freely, generating their own meanings to the researcher's general area of inquiry, empowers participants to "tell their own story." Discovery is promoted in the research endeavour.

What about Implications for the Adult Child's Sense of Self?

Given that North American constructions of adulthood comprise of living independently from one's parents and being financially self-sufficient, it seems surprising that there is no research describing how the phenomenon of returning home to live affects adult children's perceptions of themselves and their self-esteem. The lack of research giving voice to the adult children's perspective on returning home in adulthood

omits an understanding of their perceptions and feelings about themselves.

Concluding Comments

A representative review of the literature is intended to promote theoretical sensitivity by providing a sensitizing framework for this grounded theory study. The extant literature suggests that the researcher be particularly sensitive to certain aspects of the experience. The impact of parent-adult child coresidence on personal well-being and family relations is a recurring focus of attention. Life-span development theory and social exchange theory attempt to predict and explain how negative outcomes (i.e., parent-child conflict, dissatisfaction with situation, reduced well-being) may arise. Since actual outcomes in parent-child relations are mixed, the variability in the nature of family relations is expected to be influenced by conditions such as gender, age, and ethnicity/race.

Therefore, the researcher is sensitized to the possibility that managing one's family relations and maintaining one's well-being may be prominent features of adult children's experiences when returning to the parental home. Although the existing theoretical frameworks hint at what may be the potentially problematic aspects of the phenomenon (i.e., violated normative expectations, inequity in help exchange between parents and adult children), which may diminish personal well-being or parent-child relations, the

researcher must be open to alternative explanations.

However, parents' experiences with adult children who are coresiding (because they have delayed home-leaving or have returned home) has received more attention by social scientists. There is an assumption in the literature that coresidence will be particularly difficult for parents, who should be basking in the golden years of an empty-nest. In contrast, less is known about the actual experiences of adult children who have returned to the parental home. Perhaps this is because of an assumption that returning to the parental home to coreside is considered less detrimental for adult children who are having their needs met, relative to parents who are perceived as being unexpectedly burdened.

Making an effort to explore and explicate adult children's experiences of returning home to live seems important to redress. Discovering what is salient, core, and problematic to returning adult children is needed. What makes for a good or bad experience for adult children while coresiding with parents? The extant literature has sensitized the researcher to how returning to the parental home has implications for family relations and well-being. However it may also be the case that the literature has overlooked concepts that are also highly salient to returning adult children (i.e., career development; self and self-esteem; view of the future). Thus, the extant literature only provides a "starting point" for initial data collection. Initial

questions posed to participants could encompass how returning home to live has affected family relations, one's sense of self, and one's view of the future. Such questions should be broad and open-ended in order to ensure that the researcher discovers what is of importance to the study participants, and not reify what has already been designated as important by social scientists.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Rationale for a Grounded Theory Approach

In order to advance knowledge around the unique issue of understanding and explaining the core social and psychological experience of female adult children when returning home to coreside with parents, a qualitative research design was deemed appropriate.

The grounded theory approach was considered ideal for many reasons. First, it is "discovery-oriented" and intended to be a corrective to a state of affairs in which all the concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified, and where relationships between concepts are not adequately understood or are conceptually underdeveloped (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). I concur with Ward and Spitze's (1992) assertion that considerable gaps in our understanding the experience of returning home to live, particularly from the perspective of the adult child. Just over a decade ago, Mancini and Blieszner (1989) observed that research on parent-adult child relations is seldom guided by adequate conceptual frameworks. They observed that, although research driven by problem solving is honourable, when it is devoid of a theoretical context the understanding of the larger picture is stunted. The resultant danger is an unlinked series of descriptive studies, with little possibility of establishing causal associations among variables or predicting

future outcomes. Their appraisal of the literature then seems to still hold true of the literature today:

In our perusal of the literature cited herein, we noted very few instances where established social and behavioral science theory directed the research. And when theory was used to generate the research questions and method, it was likely to be a brand of social exchange. Although a social exchange approach is appropriate in some instances, it is shortsighted to assume that social exchange theory can sufficiently explain the multiple facets of a relationship (p. 284).

Therefore, generating grounded theory may assist in clarifying conceptual ambiguities due to its sensitivity to context, process, variation in personal and familial dynamics, and diversity of experiences. Rennie, Phillips, and Quartaro (1988) strongly endorse the power of this qualitative methodology to develop theory, suggesting that having this method in hand is like carrying a flashlight that can be beamed on any aspect of a cluttered attic.

Second, the predominance of positivistic research designs in investigating the phenomenon of returning home to live in adulthood, has meant that experience, meaning, and context have been inadequately attended to. Adults returning home to live with parents is a phenomenon that touches upon many interrelated levels of experience, and yet the

postpositivistic approach to studying this has been reductionistic rather than focusing on the whole experience. Grounded theory's appeal is its potential to concisely integrate diverse aspects of the phenomenon of adult children returning home to live with their parents.

Another problematic aspect of the modal survey methodology used to study this phenomenon, which a grounded theory approach can redress, is its tendency to obscure "process," rendering it invisible. One is given the impression that social and psychological experience is static, frozen in time. For instance, social relations are dichotomized as "satisfactory" or "non-satisfactory," "conflictual," or "non-conflictual".

Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert that grounded theory makes a concerted effort to answer questions about process, which is described as "the analyst's way of accounting for or explaining change" (p. 148). There are two main ways of conceptualizing process: progressive process is viewed as stages and phases of a passage along with an explanation of what makes the passage move forward, halt, or take a downward turn, and because not all phenomenon lend themselves to conceptualization as orderly progressive steps and phases, process can also be conceptualized as non-progressive movement where action/interaction is flexible, in flux, tending to be responsive and changeable in response to changing conditions (p. 157). Although it remains implicit in Strauss and Corbin's

(1990) two different conceptualizations of process, it seems that progressive process is associated with a linear conceptualization or explanation of change, whereas non-progressive process is associated with a non-linear conceptualization or explanation of change. Charmaz (1983) notes that when looking for processes the grounded theory researcher may also ask, "What kind of events are at issue here? How are they constructed? What do these events mean? By looking for major process, researchers delineate how events are related to each other" (p. 113).

Finally, a qualitative focus on the respondent's own words, and subjective interpretation of issues has practical implications, perhaps suggestive of what conditions influence "good" or "bad" outcomes. This information may facilitate counselling interventions. Relevant to this idealistic research aim, Glaser (1992) envisioned the grounded theory approach as a vehicle for change: "It gives a conceptual grasp by accounting for and interpreting substantive patterns of action which provide a sense of understanding and control, and an access for action and modicum changes" (p. 14).

Overview of the Grounded Theory Method

The theoretical underpinnings of grounded theory are derived from Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism. Corbin and Strauss (1990, 1998) observe that although one need not subscribe to these philosophical and sociological orientations to use the method, that two critical principles drawn from

them are built into it. First, phenomena are not conceived of as static, but as continually changing in response to evolving conditions. Thus, inclusion of change processes is integral to the method. Second, the notions of "agency" and "determinism" are introduced via the stance that people are viewed as having, though not always utilizing, the means of controlling their destinies by their responses to conditions. People are active creators in their world, with the ability to define their situations and shape their actions. There is a recognition of people's intentionality and conscious construction of meaning. Hence, grounded theory method not only seek to uncover relevant conditions, but also determine how people respond to changing conditions and the consequences of their actions.

These underlying assumptions of grounded theory method are congruent with my own contextualist worldview and constructionist assumptions that people actively construct knowledge about the world and act on this constructed knowledge. Moreover, given my counsellor training, I appreciate Wuest's (1995) contention that the symbolic interactionist underpinnings of the grounded theory approach reflect an inherent respect for people's subjective interpretations of social experience. She notes that this aspect of grounded theory is supportive of feminist epistemological underpinnings in that participants are the experts of their own experience and that subjective experience

is valid data. This is a value stance I respect, and although grounded theory was not developed simply to give research participants a voice, it is reassuring that this method provides a legitimate means for the researcher to interpret the perspectives and voices of the people studied. This makes me feel closer to the world experienced by people out there, rather than the abstract one constructed by the academic community.

The Emergent Design

Grounded theory has an "emergent" rather than fixed design that begins with a broad purpose of determining what is going on within a phenomenon of interest, in this case "adult children returning to the parental home to live" (Becker, 1993; May, 1986; Sandelowski, Davis, & Harris, 1989; Wuest, 1995). The emergent design is a key aspect of naturalist inquiry, and Sandelowski and her colleagues observe that "a crucial (if not the most crucial) aspect of any inquiry is to find the right question, and naturalist investigators look for it after they begin the study. Because naturalistic aims are initially more inclusive than they eventually will become, the researcher typically asks an initial question" (Sandelowski et al., 1989, p. 78). Thereafter, this initial question will be refined and clarified in the field.

Given the emphasis on discovery and theory development in the grounded theory method, in contrast to logical deductive reasoning relying on prior theoretical frameworks, it lends

itself to being open to the unexpected. The researcher should respond with flexibility to what is discovered as the research ensues. Strauss and Corbin (1998) assert that the "acid test of paying attention to respondent's concerns is the key to where the focus of the research project should be" (p. 38). Glaser (1992) also insists that, "The research question in a grounded theory study is not a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied. The problem emerges and questions regarding the problem emerge by which to guide theoretical sampling. Out of open coding, data collection by theoretical sampling, and analyzing by constant comparison emerge the focus for the researcher" (p. 25). He makes it clear that what you "a priori" assume may be the "problem" of interest concerning the phenomenon, when you enter the field, may not be the case... you "discover" what is actually of importance to the informants from the informants (Glaser, 1978).

My research experience corroborates the "emergent design" in grounded theory method as inherently flexible and open to revision and refinement once one enters the field. Indeed, when I initially proposed my grounded theory study, I had presumed that a family focus may be salient, and that it would be interesting to uncover adult children's perspectives, and their parent's perspectives, both individually and conjointly, on the experience of returning home to live. Interestingly, in response to my initial advertising drive, only female adult children and only one "boomerang mother" contacted me about

participating in the study. I painfully discovered that the majority of the female adult children who contacted me would not mind being interviewed in my study, but *only* on the condition that it was without their parents' participation! In writing field notes and memos, I noted that they stated that it was considered "too risky," "unworkable," "too much," and simply "inconvenient" to discuss the experience with their parents. Some stated that there was apprehension that negative things would come up in a joint interview, that they would be misconstrued, that their words would be twisted--making things worse at home. Some disclosed a fear of reprisals (being kicked out, risking financial assistance from parents, risking relations with parents). It was conveyed to me that there was a concern that a joint parent and adult child interview, and even having the parents involved separately because it implies awareness of the daughter's participation, could adversely affect the lives and relationships of these adult children. This pervasive concern was something I had not anticipated entering the field, and it was unsettling. Nothing in the literature had prepared me for the possibility that my desire to hold individual and conjoint interviews with adult children and their parents could be perceived as putting anyone at risk!

Moreover, in my field notes and memos of initial interviews and contacts, I observed the dynamic of "striving to lead independent and private lives." These female adult

children were working hard to "protect their privacy" by using time and space in the home to extend private time, and to be busy with activities away from the home and one's parents. Personal information about the details of their lives and their true opinions and motivations were considered their own business. This discovery further undermined the possibility of conducting a joint interview with parents on the experience of returning home to live. The urge for female adult children to "protect privacy" seemed sacred. Quite simply, most female adult children (with the exception of four women) did not want to share their innermost thoughts about their experience, their meaning-making, and their actions with their parents. They were secretive with their parents about what was really going on with them while they were living at home.

In order to pursue this tantalizing and guarded information, it necessitated agreeing with these female adult children's wishes to be interviewed privately, without any consultation or discussion with their parents in any form. Moreover, it was important to note that women, not men, were expressing a desire to share their stories with me. They suggested that an interview with me was an opportunity to confidentially "process" or "make sense" of their experience with a "counselling psychology professional," of wanting to learn about others in order to "normalize" their experience, and of wanting to offer something to other adult children who had returned home. It seemed that the female adult children

who had returned home to live, in particular, were experiencing personal and interpersonal dynamics sufficiently intense and significant to them that it warranted closer examination. Ultimately, the ethical obligation to not compromise the adult children's sense of safety, security, and well-being in relation to their parents also was considered paramount. Research should include willing and able participants who do not have to be coerced or cajoled into participation. Research should not put participants in a position in which they perceive any risks to themselves, whether that is physically, psychologically, emotionally, or intellectually.

As emergent design advocates, I decided to focus my research efforts on the female informants that had self-identified themselves as having crucial, private, and subjectively meaningful experiences of returning home to live. This analytic decision was consensually arrived at with the consultation of an analytic grounded theory group of colleagues, headed by the doctoral methodologist, and approved of by the doctoral committee.

Sampling

Initial Sample Selection

The use of non-probability convenience sampling procedures was initially indicated. Female adult children who had returned home to live, and if willing, their parent(s), were recruited from the Greater Vancouver area through

advertisements posted on campuses at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University and at community centres and neighbourhood locales. The best response came from continued advertisements in a university newspaper (UBC Reports), which is also distributed through a local newspaper (see Appendix A for sample of advertisements in flyers and written media). There was interest in the research study by the media, however no one responded to the appeal for participants in a Courier newspaper article (January 28, 1998) or a community-oriented newsletter produced by VanCity (October 1997). Participants could also self-select to the study if they should hear about it from a friend, family member, and so on.

Criteria for inclusion were that female adult children be (a) a minimum of 24 years old (since these individuals may have had more experience living independently of their parents than younger adults); (b) that female adult children had been living away from the parental home for more than a year before their return (so that those who were "visiting" for the summer until returning to school were not included); (c) and English-speaking (in order to facilitate the interviewing procedure).

Given the discovery-oriented nature of the grounded theory method and the concern not to impose a priori limitations on the study, one's reasons for returning home and the duration of coresidence were left open-ended. As the study evolved, daughters who were no longer coresiding at home and

had been on their own again for not more than a year were also interviewed. They often promised that I just had to hear their stories because they were so "amazing" (i.e., dramatic and difficult). Moreover, it was determined that their retrospective accounts may reveal a progression of the experience over time that daughters who were currently coresiding could not articulate because they were still engaged in the core process that was being uncovered.

It was anticipated that some difficulty would be experienced in obtaining participants, so a monetary incentive was offered in the form of a "research honorarium draw." In return for participation in the study, advertisements offered participants the opportunity to receive three \$100.00 honorariums to be drawn at the conclusion of the study.

Theoretical Sampling

In grounded theory, data collection and data analysis are simultaneously carried out and sampling is continual due to the fact that the evolving data analysis directs the need for purposive sampling to discover variations in the phenomenon under study (Glaser, 1978). This unique feature of the grounded theory method is called theoretical sampling. Strauss (1987) writes:

Theoretical sampling is a means whereby the analyst decides on analytic grounds what data to collect next and where to find them. The basic question in theoretical sampling is: What groups or subgroups of

populations, events, activities (to find varying dimensions, strategies, etc.) does one turn to **next** in data collection. And for **what** theoretical purpose? So, this process of data collection is **controlled** by the emerging theory (pp. 38-39).

Subsequently, theoretical sampling continues until saturation of all levels of codes is complete and no new conceptual information is available to indicate new codes or the possible expansion of established codes. Once saturation of each category is obtained, a conceptual framework was developed and verified by further data collection. Representativeness of concepts, not persons, is crucial because the aim of grounded theory is to generate a theoretical explanation. Theory is generated by specifying a phenomenon in terms of conditions that give rise to it, how it is expressed through action or interaction, and by the consequences that result from it. Baker, Wuest, and Stern (1992) concisely state that "the selection of participants and data sources is therefore, a function of emerging hypotheses and the sample size, a function of theoretical completeness" (p. 1358).

Description of Study Sample

In total, 15 female adult children and four sets of parents volunteered to be interviewed. Of the female adult children in this study, 13 were White (European ethnicity), one was East-Indian, and one was Filipino. The average age of

the daughters was 29.5 years, ranging from 24 to 44 years old. All daughters were single (two were divorced). While living at home, daughters' incomes ranged from living on welfare, student loans, savings to salaries of \$4,000 to \$40,000 earned as a university sessional instructor, banker, manager, biology technician, secretary/administrators, on-call healthcare supervisor, occupational therapist, and college counsellor. Five of these participants also were attending post-secondary institutions as students (see Appendix B for sample's characteristics).

On the demographic forms, reasons for returning home were frequently characterized as "financial." At one extreme, financial vulnerability was associated with disability, marital separation, underemployment or job loss, and having depleted funds after travelling. With the exception of one woman who had been injured in an automobile accident and suffered from chronic pain, thereby affecting her ability to be employed, the majority of the women were able-bodied. Indeed, at the other extreme, some daughters were doing well financially, but striving to pay off debts and student loans, and to save money for tuitions and downpayments for their own homes. Several daughters also indicated that the location of their parents' homes was convenient for their work. During the interviews, more involved and intimate reasons for returning home were elaborated upon. On the demographic forms daughters were also asked to rate from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very

satisfied) how satisfied they were with their living circumstances (while coresiding with their parents). Daughters' ratings ranged from 1 to 6, with an average rating of 4.35.

At the time of the interviews, nine of the daughters were living at their parents' home, ranging from 1 month to 3.5 years, with an average duration of 1.4 years. It should be noted that one of these coresiding daughters was on the verge of moving out of the parental home and had already made arrangements to leave. Six daughters who were no longer living at their parents' home also were interviewed. They had lived at their parents' home for 6 months to 3 1/2 years, with an average coresidence of 19.2 months. One daughter had only just moved out and had been on her own for just one day, whereas the others had been on their own for up to 12 months. Another daughter (the only single mother with 2 young children, ages 6 years and 22 months) had coresided with her parents for a total of 2 years--the first year and a half in her parents home' and in the most recent 6 months her retired parents had been coresiding with her and her children in her tiny basement suite. For the total sample of daughters, the average length of coresidency in the parental home was 1.5 years.

With the exception of one daughter whose parents were divorced and the mother remarried, and another daughter whose mother was recently widowed, all the daughters had parents with intact marriages. Parents ranged in age from 50 to 74

years old. Measures of occupation, education and income were utilized in the demographic forms to provide information regarding the parents' socioeconomic background. The parents' education level ranged from elementary school in one instance where the parents were immigrants, to high school, and to university undergraduate and graduate degrees. Parents' occupations included a range of professions. The majority of parents worked in professional occupations such as teaching, banking, accounting, nursing, engineering, consulting, pharmacy (retired), journalism, and academia. A few parents also worked in occupations such as the lumber industry, retail, sales, and cleaning. A few mothers were homemakers.

Daughters seldom knew what their parents' income was and were unable to report this information, however during the interviews, the daughters described the parental homes in which they coresided. Housing arrangements ranged from sharing a basement suite in one situation, to townhomes and houses in the suburbs, and to spacious homes in affluent neighbourhoods. Within the interviews daughters often provided information about the location and size or layout of the parental home, the amenities within the parental home, and the resources available to them (i.e., cars, computers, internet, money). Based on this information and observations (i.e., fieldnotes of interviews held in four family households), it was inferred that the majority of daughters' parents were middle-class.

Procedure

In the grounded theory method data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously. A significant implication of this iterative process is that the ongoing analysis influences and shapes the evolving data collection, such that each interview becomes a source of data for the questions to be posed in the subsequent interviews. One is constantly comparing each interview as a "case" to be compared with all other "cases."

Data Collection

Before starting an interview, consent forms describing the research focus and process were orally reviewed and participants were given an opportunity to ask any questions they had before signing the consent form (see Appendix C & Appendix D). The participants were given a copy for their own records, and the researcher's copies of the signed consents were stored in a locked filing cabinet to protect the identity of participants.

Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with a total of 15 female adult children who had returned home to live. A subset of four daughters had consented to be interviewed with their parents, and their parents also were interviewed separately. The interviews, which were 90 minutes long, were conducted in a setting that was designated by the participants for their convenience and comfort. The four conjoint and parental interviews were conducted in the home

setting, but interestingly, daughters requested that their individual interviews be held elsewhere to preserve their privacy. They strongly felt that the parental home was not their space to use freely and privately without intrusion. Field notes recorded observations of participants, setting description, and the tone of the interviews.

A questionnaire soliciting demographic information such as age, ethnicity, education, occupation, duration of adult child's coresidence, and reason for returning home were also filled out by participants (see Appendix E). The majority of the audiotaped interviews were transcribed by the researcher and interruptions, laughter, tears, sighs, tone of voice, and lengthy pauses were noted. Italics, bold-face, and exclamation points also were used to convey a participant's emphasis on certain words, as well as emotional tone. In total, including field notes and transcripts, the researcher had approximately 500 pages of original data to analyze.

Interviewing Format

Semi-structured interviews were guided by an initial set of open-ended questions that were continually expanded upon and refined as the study's data collection and analyses progressed. The wording of questions attempted to minimize any response bias in favour of constructs already in the psychological literature (i.e., the use of terms such as "handling" or "managing" the experience of being at home instead of "coping" with the experience of being at home).

Questions and probes were open-ended in order to enhance exploration and to minimize shaping the participant's responses--"I'd like you to tell me what the experience of returning home to live has been like for you" (see Appendix F). As the study evolved, and categories were beginning to emerge, more and more refined and focused questions were posed to participants (see Appendix G).

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were informed that the possibility existed that I may need to do some follow-up on another occasion by telephone. In subsequent contacts participants were usually asked more direct questions in order to explore the development of explicit categories and constructs that were emerging in the data analysis (e.g., Tell me in your own words what your definition of regrouping is? What does your regrouping process consist of)? The telephone follow-ups were useful for clarifying understanding, and posing questions that may have been overlooked previously. This process ensures that the representativeness of the data and the fit between coding categories and data were continually checked with participants throughout the life of the project, lending to the authenticity and trustworthiness of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The interactions between the researcher and the participants during this research study were mutually meaningful and compelling, both emotionally and

intellectually. Yet it also posed certain ethical considerations. Researchers conducting qualitative interviews are often perceived as therapists, the process being congruent with counselling assessment interviews. Of course this perception was heightened by the fact I actually am a trained therapist, and participants definitely knew I was from Counselling Psychology. Given this, I was prepared to manage issues and emotions that surfaced as participants told their stories to me. I offered referrals for counselling assistance on one occasion when appeals for help were made to me personally by the parents of one daughter (see Appendix H). Indeed, it was often of great interest to participants that I was from the Counselling Psychology field, and I suspected that this encouraged a willingness to disclose "issues" more readily to a perceived professional who ensured confidentiality. I suspect that my training in paraphrasing, empathy, and posing questions also enhanced rapport with the participants, such that the interview was often reported to be a positive experience that was beneficial to personal processing of emotions and insights around the experience of returning.

Data analysis

First, it should be noted that the transcripts and field notes derived from the 15 interviews with female adult children were considered the primary data source to be intensively analyzed by the researcher. The subset of four

parent and four conjoint interviews were considered collateral data sources that could clarify and extend understanding of female adult children's experience of returning home to live.

Analysis began with "open coding," the initial analytic procedure in which data were broken into discrete parts (i.e., words, phrases, and sentences from transcribed interview text) and labelled in order to identify "codes" which were used to develop categories. An effort was made to stay close to the participants' own language. Some examples of codes that emerged during the study are: "going in circles," "stumbling," "a headache/struggle," "gathering of different forces," "taking time for self," "thinking about where I'm going," "getting it together," and "following the threads of my life." Such codes were compared with one another for similarities and then were abstracted and grouped together into the following categories: "Faltering" (i.e., "going in circles"; "stumbling"; "a headache/struggle"), "Recuperating-Reenergizing" (i.e., "gathering of different forces"; "taking time for self") and "Contemplating/Pursuing Life Plans" (i.e., "thinking about where I'm going; "figuring things out"; "getting it together"; and "following the threads of my life). Summative codelists for each participant's interview were generated to enable comparisons of codes and categories across cases. Through memoing, properties (various aspects of categories), and dimensions (aspects of each property placed on a continuum) for emerging categories were identified.

As data collection and analysis progressed, my memos became more substantive as I began to see common themes or processes shared in participants' experiences of returning home to live. New categories were built by combining and recoding them as more encompassing, abstract categories. Relevant to this, something striking happened to "jumpstart" this process. While I was coding data from an interview with the sixth daughter, she mentioned the words "regroup," "regrouping," and "regrouping time" on several occasions to describe her experience of returning home in relation to "rallying the forces," "working things out," and permitting herself a "downtime." Being immersed in my data, I was struck by the compelling "grab and fit" the code "regrouping" had, and I immediately intuited the resonance it may have with other data that had been coded. I excitedly memoed--Could it be that all daughters were "regrouping" in one form or another? I memoed about the properties and dimensions of "regrouping", and posed questions to myself and the data. I was prompted to return to the nine original transcripts available to me at that time to determine how accurately and comprehensively "regrouping" fit the experiences of each participant. This culminated in combining and recoding "Contemplating" and "Pursuing" (career/future plans, family relationships, and personal wellbeing), and "Recuperating-Reenergizing" as part of the broader, more abstract category of "Regrouping." "Faltering" and then "Advancing," relative to

"Regrouping", were determined to be subprocesses or subcategories.

This information was discussed with the analytic group who posed questions to me about confirming and disconfirming incidents in my data. This "refutational work" balanced my enthusiasm for "regrouping," and searching for disconfirming or negative cases in the data permitted me to further clarify and define what "regrouping" is and is not--to clarify the parameters of "regrouping." For instance, "caring for oneself" rather than "caring for one's parents" is a dimension of regrouping. More participants were then interviewed, with additional questions posed to sample for "regrouping." I wanted to know if regrouping "fit" for them, and to learn as much as possible about "regrouping".

The process of building linkages between emerging categories and looking for causal links between concepts that emerged from the categories is referred to as "theoretical or axial coding" (Strauss, 1987, p. 34). Here one "puts data back together in new ways **by making connections between a category and its subcategories...**the focus is on specifying a category (**phenomenon**) in terms of conditions that give rise to it; the **context** (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional **strategies** by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the **consequences** of those strategies" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). At this level of coding, I focused on categories that fit well and connected in

a way that suggested a credible explanation about daughters' varying experiences of returning home to live in adulthood. At this level of coding, one is focusing on categories that seem "core" to the experience.

As advocated by Strauss (1987), the decision rules for determining core category status include: (a) a category's centrality relative to other categories; (b) a category's frequency of occurrence in the data; (c) its inclusiveness and the ease with which it can be related to other categories; (d) clarity of its implications for a more general theory; (e) its increased theoretical power as details of the category are worked out; and (f) its allowance for maximum variation in terms of properties, dimensions, conditions, consequences, and strategies.

In the analytic process, it was also important to determine whether the core category is saturated--meaning that a continued review of the data does not provide new information. When such saturation occurred, the core construct of "regrouping" was accepted as central to the emerging theory. This enabled me to integrate the interpretive work done over the course of the study in order to explicate an analytic story of female adult children's experience of returning to the parental home to live. This written account was scrutinized by the analytic group, who assisted in appraising comprehensiveness, explanatory power, and suggesting refinement.

Memoing

A unique aspect of the analytic process of grounded theory method is the writing of analytic and self-reflective memos throughout the life of the project. Memos are special written records that document the ongoing process of theory development from the inception of the project; including questions of the data, observations, moments of confusion, reactions to participant's narratives, insights, speculations, early connections, records of analytic meetings, and so on. Such written memos are considered an integral feature of the analytic process; enriching one's data corpus.

The Analytic Group

Personal accountability and striving to maintain the integrity of the analytic process and its resulting product were achieved through ongoing consultations with a group of five doctoral candidates familiar with the grounded theory method. This analytic group was headed by a knowledgeable methodologist, who is an expert of the grounded theory method, with 25 years of personal experience in conducting, publishing, and reviewing grounded theory research. The meetings were instrumental in exposing the analysis and writing to detailed scrutiny. This was an important aspect of the research process as it enabled the testing of concepts and their relationships with colleagues in an ongoing collaborative, team-work setting.

It is believed that this interactive process was

beneficial since: (a) it exposes one's analysis to others' scrutiny, guarding against potential biases and selective inattention; and (b) it can create opportunities to develop new insights and enhanced theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Leninger (1992) also supports this position. She particularly notes that collaboration with mentors is essential to a study's outcome; increasing the findings' credibility, accuracy, and general quality.

The analytic meetings were also integral to documenting an audit trail that outlines the research process and the evolution of codes, categories, and theory development. Audit trails typically include chronological narrative entries of research activities, including pre-entry conceptualizations, entry into the field, interviews, group consultations, transcriptions, initial coding efforts, analytic activities, and the evolution of theory development.

Criteria for Judging Rigor

It should be made explicit that in qualitative research the means used to ensure reliability and validity are unique and differ from those defined in quantitative methodology. Denzin (1994) observes that, "a good constructionist interpretation (text) is based on purposive (theoretical) sampling, a grounded theory, inductive data analysis, and idiographic (contextual) interpretations. The foundation for interpretation rests on triangulated empirical materials that are trustworthy" (p. 508). Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that

trustworthiness consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (these are the constructionist equivalents of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity (p. 300)).

Credibility is the confidence that individuals and the researcher have in the authenticity of the findings. Credibility of findings can be assured via (a) the "verification" process of collaboration or peer debriefing with thesis committee members and colleagues in ongoing data analysis, and (b) eliciting research participants' reactions to the ongoing data analysis and interpretations. Participants validated the evolving substantive theory as an accurate representation of their experience of returning home to live in adulthood. Transferability can be achieved by providing enough "descriptive detail" or enough "thick description" for others to ascertain whether the results of this grounded theory study "transfer" to their settings. The dependability of the findings and the confirmability of the data were reviewed by selected members of the thesis committee.

Limitations of Grounded Theory Method

In this section I discuss potential limitations associated with the grounded theory method. First, grounded theory method is a research strategy intended to generate substantive theory from interview and fieldwork data. A middle-range theory is built around the social processes that explain behavioral variation in a given context. A good

grounded theory is conceptually dense, and parsimonious in contrast to the rich, "thick description" and detail of phenomenology or hermeneutics (Becker, 1993; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). May (1986) observes that in spite of the fact that the grounded theory researcher may have a wealth of detailed descriptive data (e.g., how frequently a particular theme arose in interviews, recorded observations or behaviours that are clinically interesting but play a minor role in one's theoretical scheme), that one must resist the urge to lapse into pure description and present these data in great detail because they are "too good to throw away." Strauss and Corbin (1990) also encourage "writing on a conceptual level, with description kept secondary" (p. 229). Theory generation is the grounded theory researcher's priority, and extensive use of "thick description" should be avoided.

Second, grounded theory researchers must also be wary that if they do not follow a systematic application of grounded theory analytic methods, they can end up with "descriptive narratives" instead of abstract conceptualizations of the phenomenon being studied. Indeed, Becker (1993) has observed that many published grounded theory research studies lack conceptual depth and are, in fact, descriptive studies. One must also take care not to undermine the grounded theory method's tenet to discover and to "stay close to the data" by imposing one's own notions of what is most significant. Charmaz (1983) observes that "researchers

who pour their data into someone else's theoretical framework or substantive analysis add little innovation and also may perpetuate ideas that could be further refined, transcended or discarded" (pp. 110-111).

Third, the question of the extent to which findings from a particular study can be said to have a more general significance is important in scientific inquiry. In qualitative research where sampling decisions have not been made on statistical grounds, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have recommended that researchers speak in terms of "transferability," rather than the generalizability of findings. Transferability refers to the application of findings of a study in contexts similar to the context in which they were first derived. Clarifying this linguistic point is significant to me because it has been the experience of many researchers that a frustrating aspect of the grounded theory methodology is its continued use of terminology that is associated with the positivist tradition. This lends to a confusion with, misunderstanding, or misinterpretation of the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 1983).

It has been suggested that the issue of "transferability versus generalizability" of qualitative findings may be deeper than a matter of the grounded theory method catching up with postmodern language and sensibilities. Moving beyond linguistics, May (personal communication) deviates from Lincoln and Guba's (1985) position on the "transferability of

qualitative findings" as it applies to grounded theory. She argues that grounded theory should be distinguished from "qualitative findings" (i.e., hermeneutics, phenomenology), given the basic assumption that generalizability is considered intrinsic to theory and theory development. Theory is an inherently different product than research findings in scientific inquiry, such that grounded theory may be considered a special subset of qualitative work. Indeed, Corbin and Strauss (1990) indicate that a grounded theory is generalizable insofar as it specifies conditions that are linked through action/interaction with definite consequences. This means that there is a special onus on the researcher to describe or specify the range of situations to which the theory applies; essentially the contextual features of the study (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Generalizability is limited to the range of contexts described by the researcher. Ultimately, the more systematic and widespread the theoretical sampling, the more completely the conditions and variations will be discovered, permitting much greater representativeness of concepts, generalizability, precision, and predictive capacity (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Finally, a discussion of the limitations of the grounded theory method would be remiss without acknowledging the significance of the researcher. This observation reflects the epistemological assertion that a "subject-object" dichotomy does not exist in scientific inquiry, whereby the researcher

shapes both the research process and outcome. Corbin (1986) concedes that a grounded theory's density, complexity, scope, and the degree to which the concepts are integrated varies with the level of skill, training, experience, and self-confidence of the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the theory that was developed regarding the experiences of female adult children who have returned to the parental home to live. An overview of the theory is first presented, followed by a more detailed presentation of each component of the theory, which is embedded in the context of family relations and the family living environment. Quotes from the study participants, who are identified by pseudonyms, illustrate aspects of the theory, note variability within the theory, and communicate the participants' perceptions and concerns in their own words. Participant quotes in the text are distinguished by double quotation marks or indented. The concepts and processes from the analysis of interview data are first presented in double quotation marks and then simply incorporated in the text. Similar to the practices of other grounded theory researchers (e.g., Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Prosser, & Robinson, 1997), descriptors such as "the majority," "most," or "many" of the participants were utilized to signify the thematic response of the sample (10 or more of the participants); "some," "several," or "a number" designated responses of 4 to 9 of the participants, a "few" signifies 3 or fewer participants, and more specific wording is used on occasion (e.g., "all", "one", a "couple"). For the sake of simplicity and conciseness, the "female adult children" will primarily be

referred to as "daughters" from this point onward. Although it is recognized that these participants are women, the term daughters serves to remind one of the relational context (i.e., the parental home) in which the women are situated.

**Regrouping at the Parental Home: A Grounded Theory of Female
Adult Children's Experiences of Returning Home to Live**

In this theory, returning to the parental home represents an opportunity for daughters to "regroup at the parental home" after travelling/working abroad, and/or in response to personal setbacks/crises, and/or decisions to change an aspect of one's life (i.e., saving money, becoming educated, reappraising career pathway, resolving parent-child issues). Regrouping at home is intended to be a reenergizing and recuperative time in which one contemplates one's life and immediate plans in order to get a fresh start in some aspect of one's life and, ultimately, to move out on one's own again. The intention is to pursue, even accelerate, the realization of personal goals and plans without having the obstacle or distraction of having to spend time, energy, and worry in meeting basic survival needs (i.e., housing, food). Regrouping seems to be a highly personal and private process that is tied to individual and/or familial issues. As the core process and imperative, the focus of daughters' regrouping efforts can encompass contemplating and pursuing career-educational plans, striving to attain financial security, and individuating in the parent-child relationship. The intention is to enhance

one's personal well-being and assure the likelihood of having a quality life in the future.

Regrouping at the parental home is embedded or nested within the immediate context of a daughter's individual and family background, family relations, living environment, and the interrelated but more peripheral context of social relations and friendships, and society's sociocultural scripts (Figure 1). These contextual conditions, the nature of the life-events that precipitated regrouping, and the daughters' actions influence the tone or quality of regrouping at home--its duration, level of difficulty and emotional intensity, and complexity. Therefore, daughters' life-context mediates and influences the regrouping process in both facilitative and hindering ways.

Daughters do not experience a simple, uncomplicated linear forward movement towards attaining goals; rather they experience an oscillating pattern between "faltering" and "advancing" in their efforts to realize valued goals. The regrouping process may shift from faltering to advancing and from advancing to faltering as a result of positive and negative turning points (i.e., clarifying one's plan, making a solid decision, getting a job, having a fight with a parent). The oscillation back and forth within the regrouping process has implications for a fluctuating sense of self or self-image. Advancing with attaining personal expectations and goals is associated with moving forward and feeling confident,

optimistic, secure, and focused; whereas faltering in the regrouping process is associated with not moving forward and feeling frustration, anxiety, insecurity, and depression.

The ideal outcomes of regrouping include enhancing personal well-being (i.e., becoming stronger) and enhancing the quality of life in the future by striving for financial security, becoming educated, clarifying one's career niche, and resolving parent-child relationship issues. Ideally, when one's personal goals are well underway or attained, one leaves the parental home to live independently. Yet one may also decide to continue to regroup at the parental home by setting new personal goals to achieve after initial goals have been realized. In this sense, the regrouping process may be considered cyclical because one is beginning the regrouping process anew with another goal.

However, some daughters have negative experiences of regrouping at home because they struggle with internal (i.e., negative beliefs; anxiety; indecision) and external obstacles (i.e., parental criticism and lack of emotional support; lack of money) that exacerbate faltering and make it more difficult to attain their personal goals at the pace they would like to, possibly prolonging their stay at the parental home.

Moreover, daughters' optimal regrouping experience may be diminished by the varying levels of compromises/sacrifices and complications that may accompany returning to the parental home to regroup. Some of these compromises may be anticipated

in advance by daughters, and other compromises or complications may arise unexpectedly while one is living at the parental home. The extent and the significance of such compromises (i.e., giving up one's independence, freedom, privacy, ability to be oneself, social life and intimate relations, and persevering in an unhealthy family), and the extent to which such compromises are considered acceptable, tolerable, temporary, and worthwhile will also determine whether living at home and regrouping at home is considered satisfactory or not.

The amount and significance of the compromises made in daughters' everyday living contexts, relative to one's idealized expectations and goals, may culminate in the degree to which the regrouping process and living at the parental home is characterized as "positive" or "negative" by daughters. If daughters who make greater personal compromises/sacrifices while at home experience a high degree of faltering, then they may experience a diminished capacity to enhance their personal well-being and their quality of life in the future relative to those who had more positive experiences. In such a negative case, these daughters may leave home because remaining is considered too detrimental to their well-being. However, some daughters may remain in this negative situation as they may perceive that there are no other acceptable alternatives.

Regrouping at the Parental Home Defined

Although Webster's Dictionary defines regrouping as "becoming reorganized in order to make a fresh start," female adult children's experiences enrich and expand upon the meaning of regrouping within the specific context of returning home to live. For these daughters, "regrouping at the parental home" entails recuperating, reenergizing, contemplating, and pursuing one's lifeplans and relationships with the intention of enhancing personal well-being (i.e., becoming stronger) and securing a quality life in the future. For instance, the ideal outcome of Maria's regrouping efforts are,

that I am getting stronger, and that I can stand my ground with whatever or whomever enters my life-- and just having that capability of handling it. Being able to know that at home, or in relationships, or at work that I can stand my ground and feel whole.

It is important to recognize that "regrouping at the parental home" also implies a discrete time period, during which one intentionally takes time for oneself to gather one's energy and to take care of oneself, often in response to a crisis/personal setback (i.e., relationship breakup, unemployment) or a transitional time in one's life (i.e., post-travelling/working abroad; contemplating career change) that precipitated the return home. Farrah volunteers that she experiences returning home as "a regrouping time...like this year's going to be for myself to regroup and rally the forces and continue on." In contrast to times of overstimulation and stress in her recent life working in Japan, she observes that

one needs to enjoy a "down time" in one's life. Using an analogy, she elaborates:

My life is like an opera, and right now is the intermission, and I know I'm just working through stuff, just getting stuff piled away and sorted through, and then the next act will be interesting as well.

The ideal expectation around regrouping at home is that one is planning a "temporary stay at home," often until personal goals and plans are underway or fully realized. Female adult children, and their parents, prefer to think of the return home as a temporary situation that will be rectified as soon as daughters are back on their feet.

Caroline observes:

I think that we all knew it was temporary. And that was something- I went into it with the idea that it was temporary- they did too. I had in my mind, the idea of something like 5 to 6 months when I first moved back-- that I wouldn't be able to handle it longer than that. And now I've passed that point, and I'm quite happy there right now. And-- but I do see the end in sight, and I do think that by the time I finish, hopefully, by the time I finish school next May, then I'll probably work a couple of months and save up enough to be able to move out, and I think that's the anticipation- by next spring.

While living at home, regrouping entails contemplating the nature of one's lifeplans and relationships with the intention of enhancing personal well-being and securing a quality life in the future. For instance, after travelling, several daughters were intent on resolving how to reestablish themselves professionally and socially in Canada. In this context, Jennifer frames returning home to live as "a kind of gathering and a building of a small portion of my life." After

divorcing an emotionally abusive husband, and returning home to Wales for a year to regroup, Lorraine reflected:

It allowed me to think about what I wanted to do; where I wanted to go in my life, and how I wanted to structure my life in the future- and whether I wanted to have that structure include someone else or just me.

In the drive to take care of oneself and one's future, there is a strong sense of direction and movement implicit to regrouping. One is striving to "move ahead" with one's life-- attempting to "get back on-track," "to get on the right path," or to move in "the right direction." Maria, a college counsellor, who has been home for 4 months observes "there's a need for a direction, or else you falter... to get away from the idea of being stuck or regressing--like there's a direction and you're moving the right way." She further elaborates:

Regrouping is interesting, in terms of it does provide me with the opportunity to regroup in my own way and to move ahead, uhm, and it also allows me a reconnection with my mom that didn't happen before. And, uh, to move ahead...so it all kind of leads me, more in terms of finding a direction of whatever path I take.

Regrouping is experienced as a highly personal and private endeavour that is often engaged in through quiet, solitary introspection and contemplation. When they are ready to, daughters' regrouping can also be pursued "in conversations with others." Lorraine notes that regrouping with others is helpful "because how can you judge for certain things if no one is around to ask?"

At first glance, returning home to live may seem like a "step backwards," but upon closer examination, returning to the parental home to regroup can be seen more as a strategy "to get ahead," "to start over," or "to start fresh" in some aspect of one's life. Glenda offers the following insight:

Sometimes you've got to back-up once in a while and accept the fact that you have to put the gear in reverse in order to move forward again; just to get yourself out of that rut.

Regrouping's Life-Span Developmental Objectives

Regrouping at home entails recuperating, reenergizing, and contemplating and pursuing one's lifeplans and relationships with the intention of enhancing personal well-being and securing a quality life in the future. Such regrouping parallels life-span developmental tasks associated with young adulthood; striving for financial security, pursuing career-educational plans, and developing a stronger sense of self by individuating from one's parents. Hence, daughters' regrouping consists of pursuing multiple goals that overlap and are intertwined, although at particular times some goals may seem more salient than others.

Striving for Financial Security

All daughters were striving to attain or maintain financial security in a perceived context of extended educational needs, competitive job markets, and expensive housing markets. Although many female adult children reported that they had financial reasons for returning home, the degree of feeling financially vulnerable varied. Some daughters

considered themselves to be struggling with poverty, others had good jobs and salaries. Regardless of the perception of financial vulnerability, all reported that being able to live at home rent-free or relatively rent-free was advantageous, and enabled them to focus on other goals (such as pursuing an education) without worry or distraction. The varying perceptions of personal vulnerability and financial need is important in setting the "tone" of regrouping at home as one of miserable dependence or financial freedom.

Some female adult children who have less money and resources (i.e., being on welfare, having no income, having debts, parents who are retired and have limited resources), have modest financial goals--subsisting at home while attempting to figure out and put their lives back in order. These daughters are conscious of being in "a holding pattern" in which it is very difficult to enhance one's well-being and secure a quality life when one is simply striving to survive. They report that they feel like their life is "on-hold." These daughters were worried about money and preoccupied with its impact on their daily living (i.e., having strict budgets, needing to borrow money from others for coffee), as well as the negative effect it had on their interpersonal relationships (i.e., others' lack of empathy and understanding, being viewed as a "leech" to their parents, being unable to reciprocate in relationships). The emotional tone of financial regrouping at this level is that of

frustration, shame, and worry. Anne, who is on disability welfare at age 44, acknowledges that she feels enormously frustrated with being in a position of dependence:

It's humiliating! There's shame around it! There's guilt, and I just try to think how can I possibly ever change it? But I couldn't make it on the money I live on because I don't want to ask my family for anymore money, right.

In contrast, several female adult children who have more money and resources (i.e., jobs; salaries, savings, working parents with savings) can actually endeavour to advance themselves in life by paying off student loans more quickly, being able to save for tuitions and purchase their own homes in the near future. These daughters view themselves as "getting ahead" in life because they are able to accelerate the realization of valued goals, with their parents' assistance. The emotional tone of financial regrouping at this level is one of gratitude, optimism, fewer worries, and accomplishment. In speaking about the benefits of being at home, Caroline observes:

Financially, I had a large student loan, so that was paid off, and I'm now paying that back to my father... and that's something that would have been a big burden on me if I had that student loan and I was paying for rent and paying for utilities and all that sort of thing. That would have been a really large concern on my behalf that I would have spent a lot of time thinking about, but I don't have that worry now because I'm here.

Her parents corroborate that: "We're giving her an opportunity to get on with her life and to pay off the loan real quick."

Ultimately, it should be acknowledged that implicit to

most daughters' regrouping at home is the notion that parents are financially assisting their daughters, enabling them to secure better lives. As daughters regroup, they generally are the recipients of aid in the parental home--often living at home rent-free or at a reduced rent, and having immediate access to parental resources (i.e., house, car, computer, food, laundry). There seems to be a perception amongst both parents and daughters that parents are fulfilling a role to provide, within reason, whatever they can to help their daughters. This seems to be a normative expectation and a defining feature of most daughters' regrouping at home--that they are perceived to have needs that should be tended to, relative to their parents, and that they "materially" be taken care of. In contrast, a few daughters suggest that moving back into parents' homes to take care of their parents' needs (i.e., housesitting, healthcare) is not considered regrouping. Moreover, in one case (i.e., Barbara), the parents moving into the daughter's home to coreside because they needed financial assistance is also not considered regrouping from the daughter's perspective. These exceptions illustrate how the majority of daughters consider regrouping to be a self-care strategy in which their immediate financial needs, among others, are met.

Pursuing Career-Educational Plans

In the desire to promote personal well-being and a quality life in the future, many female adult children were

also intent on contemplating the nature of their career-educational pathways while they resided at home. Most daughters already had post-secondary education, had travelled, and were either working part-time or full-time in jobs or pursuing graduate degrees. Some planned to go back to university or college in their immediate futures. These daughters were intent on shaping their career pathways and pursuing them in the quickest manner possible. Some daughters were very focused and planful in this endeavour, and had the active cooperation and support of their parents. Indeed, many parents hope to be included and involved, to some extent, in their daughters' career regrouping. Generally, they feel an obligation to occupationally "launch" their daughters into the world, and to be supportive and provide guidance. Barbara's dad illustrates this sense of parental obligation:

We have to be here for her-- to release her to get on with her studies and for her to get her nursing degree. Just when she gets her nursing degree hopefully then she can carve a decent career for herself. And we're doing our bit to help her do that. So we feel obliged to do that.

Returning to the parental home may be a reflection of the desire to make a "change" in one's career pathway, and to invest more time and effort into one's future. Indeed, Caroline, who had left her partner of 5 years in Halifax, returned home to follow her own career pathway after having deferred her own career plans in favour of supporting her former partner's career initiatives:

I think another sort of impetus to return back home was

that I had been in that job for about a year and a half or two years, and I got to the point where there was not a lot more I could learn from it and it was time for a change there as well.

With regard to Caroline's career regrouping, her mother observes that she and her husband are aware of their daughter's career goals and that they intend to be as helpful as possible. She states that:

She has a career path in mind and we want to help her achieve her goals, and she's a very goal-oriented person and now that she's figured out what she wants to do, we want to help her do that. We're able to help her financially.

As a parent she takes great pride in witnessing Caroline's efforts in getting her life and career reestablished in Vancouver:

It's been interesting seeing Caroline, living with Caroline as an adult, and we were very worried about her moving back and we were worried about resentment... and you know, it hasn't been there. And just how she's handled everything, you know, I just really respected her. Uhm, she's just very very strong, and we've noticed that living with her. Uhm, and just watching her reestablish her life and trying to establish a career and also thinking in terms of going back to school.

Some daughters struggle with confusion and indecision on how to best shape their career pathways. When done from the security of the parental home-base, daughters take solace in the fact that the decision making process can be more thorough and considered. Their process is not rushed by the pressures to make any choice and "settle" in order to make a living to pay for rent, food, and utilities. Jennifer, who is struggling with "getting organized" and "getting it together" after

travelling and writing in Europe, speaks about the difficult process of resolving what career (writing vs. cooking) to settle on. She is striving to make the "right choices" rather than "urgent choices," while "staying true to myself." Being at home allows her "to stay in that place of uncertainty long enough to feel those things out"-- without running back to her old job at a telephone company, which would be the "easiest way that I could live on my own again." Rather than returning to an unsatisfying job, she chose to sacrifice her independence temporarily, and returned home to contemplate how to pursue a more satisfactory career pathway.

Several other daughters, who have worked for at least a decade in solvent but unsatisfactory occupations, speak of seeking to make an intentional change in their career pathways. This seems to be a time of reevaluation/reappraisal. Being at home allows one to take "time out" to reconsider, research, take courses, experiment with different job-related activities (e.g., volunteering) and network with others in occupational fields of interest--without apprehension of going into debt. Although, they are often cautious in settling on a new direction, because they perceive that the initial career pathway was incorrect or were "false starts," they also pressure themselves to make the decision to embark onto a new career pathway. Not making the decision prolongs one's confusion and indecision, and one may remain in a current unsatisfying career by default. Kathleen emphasizes that,

although being at home has allowed her the security to explore alternative career pathways, this is a stressful endeavour:

It's a safety net where it gives me the options to look into stuff that I wouldn't have been able to do. Like last summer I took three months off, because the rent was so low...I talked to people who had jobs that I liked, and I did some research for a friend who was writing a movie. I just--if I didn't do one thing each day then I got really stressed. So it was a re-evaluation time and then I ended up back at my job, which was also kind of hard, cause what am I doing back here? But, that was my time to refigure out what I was going to do next. And obviously I still haven't quite figured it out, but sometimes I think I push it a little bit too much--like "I've got to decide! I've got to decide! And then you end up feeling frantic and you don't end up necessarily making a decision, or letting it come naturally.

Relational-Individuation with Parents

In regrouping at home, some daughters were contemplating how to enhance their well-being and sense of self in relation to the parent-child bond. By attempting to resolve or achieve some closure or understanding of unresolved issues in the parent-child relationship, these daughters believe that they can strengthen who they are as unique persons, different and yet similar to their parents. Daughters are anxious to resolve parent-child issues that they perceive as being "blocks" to moving forward, blocks to "developing intimate relationships" with others, and blocks to "becoming closer with their parents." Maria, who grew up in a family fragmented by her deceased father's alcoholism, observes:

I feel like now would be a good time to air it out, and to figure out my role in the past and the dynamics, because it was really confusing for me, in a household like this. So it's really healing, I

think, in a lot of ways. I'm just trying to sort out the confusion.

Returning home to individuate may seem counterintuitive, but the reasoning is that in returning home to individuate from parents, one can preserve a close connection with the parents, while enabling one to become a stronger and more assertive person. In response to her friends' scepticism of the wisdom of "returning home to separate", Elaine explains:

Well none of my friends really--well there were a few who said, "I don't know. Should you really be doing this? Cause they knew, they knew, I was trying to basically separate myself from my parents--it's the word we used. They were like, is this a good thing for you to be doing if you're trying to separate? I thought, well I knew it could go either way, but I thought that probably it was a good thing. It would probably enable me to separate with their approval in a sense, which was important to me. I want their approval. I respect them. They're good.

This is tricky business, since daughters are striving to resolve sensitive issues that are often considered taboo or conflictual, and therefore not voluntarily open for discussion with parents. In order to preserve parent-child relations and reduce conflict, some daughters spoke of attempting to resolve issues on their own rather than directly with parents. Their intentions go underground, and they note that it is unlikely that their parents know what they are doing or even have any idea how important it is to them.

In contrast, a few others (Elaine, Deborah, Glenda) spoke of the necessity of resolving issues directly with parents, through confrontation or argument, since "silencing self" and "seeking approval" in the past were the core perceived

problems to be overcome in order to become a stronger person. Indeed, Deborah's parents are aware that Deborah wanted to resolve some childhood issues around feeling abandoned when her younger sister battled cancer as a toddler. Due to the early childhood experience, Deborah notes that she had always worked extra hard at being a good daughter in order to please her parents and ensure that they would approve of her. She wants to let go of this. Her mother acknowledges that they have attempted to redress this issue with their daughter, but asserts that ultimately it is up to her:

Part of coming back was to reconnect, to be reassured and to get rid of this feeling of abandonment--she was so angry. We hadn't suspected the degree to which the childhood experience impacted her. We haven't asked her if she's resolved this issue, but we can't wind the clock back. She has to resolve it in her own mind.

The Cyclical and Dynamic Regrouping Process

Ideally, regrouping at home would entail a straight forward progression in clarifying and attaining one's personal goals, thereby facilitating the attainment of personal well-being and a quality life in the future. However, the actual regrouping process is characterized by stops and starts, and "going back and forth" between getting somewhere and going nowhere that were influenced by female adult children's life context and actions. Maria observed that her regrouping was a dichotomous process that is "easy sometimes" and at other times she's "struggling against the stream." She indicates that she is "learning to be okay with going back and forth and

trying to trust that things will be okay." She summarizes her regrouping experience:

Oh sometimes it's wonderful and I get to have great conversations (i.e., interview), and sometimes it's a headache and I wish that it would all go away. Uhm, it's tiring. It's exhausting. And yet it's a birth experience.

Interestingly, she notes that things have not been so difficult recently, such that she tends to search for something to struggle with--a new challenge is sought out, so the back and forth cycle starts anew.

Moreover, daughters may be regrouping at different levels simultaneously (i.e., financial, occupational/educational, relational, emotional/psychological). Although there may be an overall felt sense that "I'm doing okay" or that "I'm not doing okay," upon closer examination, one can ascertain that in some areas one may be experiencing progress, whereas in other areas one may be faltering. This is a complex dynamic that evolves in relation to specific conditions and actions in daughters' life contexts. Moreover, the different levels of regrouping interact, such that a setback in one area can have a ripple effect in other areas of one's overall regrouping process. Irene's experience illustrates this dynamic. Irene anticipated being at home only 6 months to finish her Ph.D. dissertation, and 3 years later she remains at home anticipating the completion of her degree. While living at home with her East Indian parents, she notes that she has "sacrificed parts of herself" (i.e., her conflicting opinions,

her fun or trivial side, her love of decorating her space) that she values in order to "please her parents" and ease coresiding. Although she is pursuing her degree, and enjoys financial security at home her sacrifices seem to have impeded her progress and her desire "to become a more solid person." She experiences her struggle to enhance her well-being as "alternating between stagnation and being in a rut to periods of growth and examination." There is not a unified sense of growth in all areas of her life, such that "one part may be growing and another part may feel particularly in a rut or stagnant. So it's hard to separate the threads sometimes." Her emotional life and intimate relations have also been forsaken for the moment:

I think one of the reasons I'm fairly grateful for having some time now without relationships is that time to redefine for myself what is important--uhm, I know that I feel very shaky about my own judgement in my last relationship, and so I need a lot of time to ask myself what is it that I want? And who am I? Because unless I'm a solid person and know, I can't expect a partner or partnership that's a solid one. So, uhm, I'm trying to ask myself these questions.

Consequently, it seems that regrouping at home may not be characterized as a simple or straightforward process because many daughters do not experience completely satisfying experiences and results in all areas of their lives; rather a mixture of highs and lows seems more apt. The culmination of highs or lows may lend itself to an experience that is considered primarily positive or negative by daughters.

The Subprocesses of Faltering and Advancing

More detailed attention is now given to the subprocesses of "faltering" and "advancing," in relation to the core process of regrouping at the parental home. These concepts are helpful in understanding and explaining what distinguishes daughters' positive and negative experiences while regrouping at home. Daughters' perception of themselves as faltering versus advancing in the regrouping process stems from their internal appraisals of themselves--of how they are doing in the regrouping process. They engage in an intuitive and subjective appraisal of their regrouping process and determine whether they are faltering or advancing through attunement to their inner emotional states, and attention to other subjectively defined "signs" of progress/lack of progress, action/inaction, and planning/worrying. Regarding the latter, attention to more observable behavioral cues like "wavering/waffling" versus "making key decisions," "not doing much and feeling bored with a routine-rut" versus "being stimulated with varied and interesting activities," and "being reclusive" versus "being socially active" are also indicative of faltering versus advancing.

Faltering

Regrouping at the parental home entails recuperating, reenergizing, and contemplating and pursuing one's lifeplans and relationships with the intention of enhancing personal well-being and securing a quality life in the future. To

"falter" while regrouping is to hesitate, waver, or fail in action, intent, or perseverance. The majority of daughters consider themselves to be faltering at one time or another while living at home, experiencing themselves as "feeling lost" and "not knowing where I'm going." Jennifer describes her regrouping process of picking up and gathering the different threads of her life in order to become stronger/integrated, and offers how she perceives herself to be faltering with respect to this:

I guess the different threads I'm following is spanish, language, possibly cooking, my writing, and I guess some sort of church affiliation or something...I've gone to different churches a few times but nothings felt right..and I guess sort of the inner spirituality that I haven't got a grip on...and uh, friendships... and uhm (pause) and a relationship would be nice. It feels overwhelming at times because I don't know where I'm going- that's the thing. I feel like I'm doing a whole bunch of little bitty things but not really (mumbling much softer)...And sometimes I feel really certain about things, and then...(drifts off, silent).

Like Jennifer, when movement or attempts to move towards desired goals is unsteady then daughters "stumble" in their regrouping efforts. Daughters' metaphors of faltering include seeing themselves as "going in circles," "struggling against the stream," "sitting and spinning," or maneuvering through an "obstacle course" where there are many "stumbling blocks to overcome."

Faltering can be exacerbated by a lack of parental support and understanding. Lorraine illustrates this in her subjective appraisal of herself by seeing herself as faltering

at occupational regrouping:

I don't think I was doing a good job of it (sic: regrouping). Uhm, every time I turned around to do something that was different, uhm, I stumbled. I seemed to sort of be turning around in circles and, uhm, I would apply to jobs that I knew I was qualified for, or apply for jobs hoping that someone would notice my qualifications, uhm, I had experience in office administration. Eventually my dad turned around to me and said, "You know, you really should stick to typing". (laughs) Oh no! What is this! (laughs) And I said, "I've got all these qualifications". He just said, "You're lying."

In faltering, daughters felt that they were not moving forward, or accomplishing their goals. Oneida says things seem to be "static," and Nancy indicates that "I'm not going anywhere." Not surprisingly, daughters convey that faltering may be signalled by feelings of frustration, self-doubt, depression, and anxiety. Maria alludes to "the anxiety of not knowing" how things will turn out and "feeling lost." Nancy mentions that she knows she is faltering by her "internal stress levels." Also associated with faltering is the experience of feeling alone or isolated, compounded by the perception that many others cannot understand what one is going through.

Relevant to this, the daughters who are recovering from a crisis or setback may most strongly experience faltering in their regrouping because they seem to feel "overwhelmed" with the enormity of "starting over" or "rebuilding a portion of one's life"--paralysing them from immediately making decisions or taking actions that will change their lives.

Such negative emotions also signal the dissonance between

what one is currently doing and where one is in life with where one would like to be. This dissonance is exacerbated by one's age; the older one is, the more likely that one is unhappy about one's situation in life and to be negatively comparing oneself to peers who seem to be moving forward with life by securing good jobs, finding homes and partners, and even having children.

Embedded within the faltering experience, is an existential angst concerning the larger meaning of hardship or struggle in one's life. Nancy wonders,

Why can't it be easy? I wonder what is it in me.
It's like I point my finger at having a career. But
I think that if I were happy and if I were settled
in myself then I wouldn't be having this struggle.
So I wonder what it is in me. Like why I am the way
I am.

In response to this, some daughters become more spiritual and take a leap of faith that everything will be okay, and that one is meant to go through this hardship or struggle for some unknown but meaningful reason. In contrast, a few noted that their spirituality was "reduced" or "confined/contained" when they were at home, and a few others eschewed spirituality--the experience of faltering having challenged/tested their faith.

When one's spirituality or sense of hopefulness is diminished, an inertia or apathy can arise, stealing away the impetus to do things that one knows how to do and knows are good for oneself. One seems to be simultaneously capable yet momentarily incapable of helping oneself. Jennifer, who feels like she is "falling apart" and "fragmented," tearfully

explains:

I spend a lot of time alone. (pause) Yeah. It's been primarily solitary. And I haven't used the devices that I "quote-unquote" should have fallen back on--like my journalling, for example, or prayer, for example--which I sometimes used to do when I was away--or even meditation. I haven't used anything--I've just been kind of like flying blind.

Advancing

In contrast to faltering's quality of moving against the stream and struggling with obstacles, advancing is characterized by a sense of "going with the flow" and having obstacles and stumbling blocks removed from one's pathway. Daughters' perceive themselves to be advancing when they have clarity of purpose, thereby enabling them to move more swiftly and directly in attaining valued regrouping objectives. As Caroline says, "the end is in sight." There is a definite sense that one is moving/going forward with one's life and plans.

Advancing is manifested by intentional, volitional, and purposeful actions that are designed to get things done, and to accelerate the attainment of one's goals. Quite simply, one knows what one wants and is actively pursuing it. Daughters also describe certain "signs" that are indicative of an appraisal of oneself as advancing. With regard to Nancy's task of contemplating her impending educational plans and what her ultimate career niche will be, she elaborates that, "I don't know if processing it in your mind actually equates movement...but I maybe started moving in the sense that I've

started the Masters." Advancing may also be signalled by the recognition that one is engaged in novel behaviours, that is, behaviours that may be considered "experimental" but they are both positive and necessary in order for changes to occur. "Trying new things" or "trying new ideas and approaches" rather than being apathetic, settling for the status quo, or relying on standard but ineffective strategies can be empowering.

The perception of oneself as "advancing" towards the attainment of one's goals is also signalled by feelings of optimism, hopefulness about the future, accomplishment, and self-efficacy. Positive emotional states of satisfaction, contentment, and enjoyment are considered reflections of one "doing the right things for oneself" or "finding one's niche" in work and relationships. The positive feelings are considered a manifestation of the congruence between where one wants to be (i.e., going in the right direction) and what one's currently doing--there is a sense of "rightness" that is affirming.

The Trajectory

Entry into the parental home is precipitated by a range of life-events or life-transitions that include personal setback/loss/crisis (i.e., health/disability, unemployment, divorce, relationship breakup, geographic relocation), a personal decision to change an aspect of one's life (i.e., pursue a degree, change career, save money/payoff debts,

settle unresolved issues with parents), and/or a need for an inexpensive and convenient "home-base" after travelling and working abroad while one gets re-established. Often the clincher in the decision to return home is the extension of a "parental invitation," thereby reassuring daughters that parents do not mind assisting them when they are in positions of relative vulnerability.

The regrouping trajectory, which starts when a daughter first moves home, ends when a daughter leaves the parental home to start life on her own again (Figure 1). Many daughters engage in introspection and withdraw into themselves. They consider this a time-out for themselves to cocoon and contemplate their future. This may be experienced by some as overwhelming but necessary. Many daughters may not feel particularly happy at this point in the regrouping process, and it is here that many daughters' may frequently experience faltering, as they attempt to "rally" their spirits and energy, and adapt to life at home while contemplating what to do next and how to do it. Maria, who has been home for 4 months observes:

I think that when I first moved back, it was definitely a faltering, crazy-making in some senses--feeling like I needed to have a date when I was moving out--and all the rest of it. Now, for whatever reason, it feels a lot less urgent. I think that in some ways it just feels okay right now.

Caroline reflects on how her experience and emotional state has fundamentally shifted over time since returning home to regroup. Initially she characterized her regrouping experience

as quite negative, much different than her current state of satisfaction as she makes strides professionally, and relationally with her parents and a new boyfriend. She observes how the timing of our interview is significant in capturing a slice of her overall regrouping experience:

Like, for example, if you had spoke to me in July, I was very unhappy about where I was in my life at that point in time. I was dreading going to work each day, because I had done that job and I knew it inside out and I was miserable. It wasn't a challenge at all. I was not happy--well I appeared to be content to everyone around me, and I'd say to others "I'm fine" (falsetto, high cheery voice). But you know, that was my outward. Inwardly, I was very unhappy with the space I was in. So I think it would have been a very different interview and I probably would have still had really a lot of frustration about that and that would have come across.

So what accounts for change in the regrouping experience over time? Aside from the life-context and relations that daughters are embedded in, "turning points" in daughters' lives account for more dramatic or noticeable shifts in the quality of their regrouping process. Turning points consist of meaningful events (i.e., getting a job), actions (i.e., making a solid plan, clarifying a decision), and interactions (i.e., fight with a parent) in daughters' lives. Such turning points (both positive and negative) explain how one can shift or oscillate from faltering to advancing and from advancing to faltering.

For instance, Caroline attributes the meaningful improvement in her life to succeeding occupationally, her treasured personal goal:

I was really upset and frustrated, but then the management job came open at (my workplace), and I got that position in August, and it just completely--I think that was the start of the change to be happy in Vancouver. You know I'd been there a couple of months, I'd been very busy and I finally had a job that I was happy with. And I felt proud to be doing it and I felt; I mean it's extremely challenging, there's lots of new things that I was learning. I think that was sort of a transitional point for me.

Lorraine experienced months of tears and introspection as she struggled to heal from the aftermath of an abusive marriage, while reeling from the unsympathetic and intrusive stance of her parents, before things changed for her. In contrast to Caroline, she suggests that her turning point was an internally derived decision after months of trying to figure out what to do and how to proceed with her life:

What picked me up more than anything else, it was, I think around November-time, and I had decided on a solid foundation with where I was going to go, what I was going to do, and I had decided, really, that I was going to go back to Canada. I had made the decision to go, and then the decision to save the money. And then, all the stumbling blocks just disappeared!! It's almost as if a doorway had opened and it said I was not meant to be here, in the U.K. I was meant to be here, in Canada.

The ideal expectation is that returning home to regroup is temporary, and that one expects to leave and establish one's own independent life and residence again one day. Leaving the parental home is determined by either (a) an appraisal of having regrouping objectives well underway or reached and being in a secure enough position to make it on one's own again; or (b) an appraisal that the family home-relationship context is not conducive to regrouping and that

one must leave the parental home in order to preserve one's personal well-being.

Prolonged stays at home may be a reflection of the nature of one's personal regrouping goals, since certain goals take more time to accomplish (e.g., obtaining a post-secondary degree can take several years); or having accomplished one's initial goals and developing new goals to pursue while at home. For instance, Caroline extended her stay at home past the initial deadline that she had anticipated for herself. She initially thought that once she had recovered from her relationship break-up and had succeeded at occupationally re-establishing herself in Vancouver that she would leave her parents' home. However, when she had realized her initial goals, she reviewed her situation and decided to continue to regroup at her parents' home by pursuing new goals. She then researched a career in Human Resources and decided to pursue this long-term career choice. This entailed a plan to go back to school. She indicated that it was pragmatic and logical to pursue these new career-educational goals from the financial security of the parental home-base. Finally, prolonged stays at home may also be a reflection of one struggling badly and experiencing oneself as "being stuck" or "on hold," perhaps being unable to become independent in the near future. Anne laments,

It's (My life) been on hold for 5 years! So it's a lifestyle move. Well... sometimes I think DENIAL!!
What am I doing?! What can I do to change it?!

Like Anne, a few daughters may linger at the parental home, a material comfort zone, with no pressing impetus to leave. In fact, a few daughters may actually fear leaving the parental home, dreading an existence of financial instability, lack of emotional support, and loneliness. Being at home may be a trade-off, such that having independence and privacy, fully being oneself and developing relationships with others are sacrificed or compromised in favour of material comfort, security, and stability. It is a pragmatic choice, some daughters want the comfort and security of a roof over their head--such that some aspects of personal development and fulfilment may be compromised (i.e., pursuing intimate relationships, being myself at home and with my parents), even if their absence is keenly felt. Irene observes:

I was shocked. I shocked myself at the way that I kind of shut myself down when I came home. And at the same time I have a couple of friends in England, who uhm, who have been in the same situation as me and have said, "Well that's what happened to me too." Yeah, I've got a friend who's got a Ph.D. as well, and for awhile she had to go live with her father in Holland. And she said, "I said Yes and No, and Thank-you, and Please, and I do the work that I have to do and I don't...I'm not myself there."

In the short-term this choice can yield desired results (i.e., protecting private parts of self, protecting self from parental criticism, respecting parental expectations, avoiding confrontation/conflict with parents). However, when stretched over time, the consequence of remaining at the parental home for an extended period is the sense that one is going nowhere and that one's self and one's life is on hold. These daughters

seem to be in a holding pattern where the crucial intent of regrouping may be suspended (temporarily or indefinitely). One's goals may be put on the back-burner. There is a sense that these daughters are spent or burnt out from their regrouping efforts, or attempting to regroup in an inhospitable familial context, and that they need to withdraw into themselves in order to protect themselves. For instance, Anne who suffers from chronic pain and is on welfare-disability, wages battle with the government for medical compensation for unsuccessful back surgeries done in the United States. Although she senses she is fighting a losing battle she perseveres. Her parents, although sympathetic to her plight, really want her to leave their home. Herein lies the irony, because it has also been Anne's ardent goal to resolve many interpersonal and historical issues with her parents in order to establish closer relations with each parent and to feel more loved and understood by them. For many years she has sought out individual relationships with each parent, only to be misunderstood and rejected. She is gravely disappointed that something she has wanted so badly and worked for so persistently seems unattainable. She and her parents have reached a stalemate, and she has "given" up on regrouping with them:

Well, I've sort of given up because I don't feel that either of them individually want to know. And uhm, as a couple, uhm, I just feel that the codependency, it's really hard to talk to them about a lot of things because their viewpoints are different and it usually ends up being a fight. So I think we've all

just retreated to our corners and just to keep peace
we don't communicate!

Conditions that Influence the Regrouping Process

Context of Precipitating Life-Events

Daughters' decisions to return home to regroup were often triggered by significant circumstances, life-events, and personal choices in their lives. In this sample, the return home was precipitated by personal setbacks/crises, post-working/travelling abroad, as well as by specific choices daughters had made to refine a significant aspect of their lives. Moreover, these precipitating conditions were not mutually exclusive, because a daughter's return home to regroup may encompass one or all of these conditions.

Personal Setbacks and Crises

Several daughters chose to return home to take care of themselves and receive their parents' financial and emotional support in response to traumatic life-events or life-transitions (e.g., divorce/relationship breakups, job loss, accident/health disability, failure at university) that had undermined their sense of emotional, psychological, and financial security and stability in the world. In this instance returning home may feel involuntary, like one has no other recourse. They return home to recuperate (i.e., "resting," "seeking quiet and solitude," "meditating," "praying," "taking long walks," "indulging myself with bubblebaths," "reading and watching television," "processing and managing one's emotions," "taking a time-out for myself"),

to reenergize ("gathering energy," "rallying the forces," "taking a down-time," "recharging my battery") and to contemplate how to pick up the pieces of their lives and move onward again (i.e., "figuring out what to do next via deep introspection and conversation with friends, parents, and even counsellors"). There is a strong sense that they are attempting to rebuild their lives in order to make a fresh start. Generally parents tend to be protective of their daughters when they return home to regroup after a significant time of transition. Caroline's mother says, "We felt that we had to support her and get her strong again." Therefore, parents goals parallel daughters' regrouping intentions to become stronger and get their lives back on track.

It seems that regrouping in response to setbacks, losses, or crises is much more emotional and labour-intensive because these daughters feel wounded and need to regain their energy, their courage, and their confidence before they can endeavour to move onto more pragmatic things like finding work or going to school again. Psychological and emotional healing happens at its own pace and it cannot be rushed. After her divorce from a spouse who stalked her, Lorraine shares that "I cried for months when I got back." For many months one may feel incapable of doing anything, beyond withdrawing into oneself and working through emotions of sadness, anger, and disbelief. For instance, after being asked to leave her university programme, Glenda returned home to "wallow in self-pity" and

"maintain a catatonic state for 4 months" before she was able to pull herself out of it to make some "tough decisions" about her academic future. During those 4 months she played video games the entire day and describes herself as being very "inwardly focused" and engaged in "navel-gazing," where "I never ever really thought about anyone else but me at that time."

In recovering and recuperating from setbacks, some of these daughters seek assistance outside the family, engaging in professional counselling in order to process their emotions (anger, confusion, anxiety, depression) and to figure out how to get over what has happened and how to proceed with life. They also describe using (black) humour or developing spirituality to deal with their situations. Once emotional and psychological issues have been dealt with, then these daughters usually gravitate towards contemplating what they want to do next-- whether that entails finding work so they can get back out on their own again, or going back to school again in order to further career and monetary aspirations. Lorraine illustrates this:

So eventually what had happened was after about 4 or 5 months, I had received some really good counselling from some people who were obviously able to help me, and I recovered enough. And then I said, "Okay, I'm going to go off and find myself a job."

Travel and Work Abroad

Some daughters acknowledged that they considered their parents' house to be a convenient "home-base" to return to

after extensive travelling and/or working abroad in order to reorient themselves to "reality" and "living" and to re-establish themselves in the world. They often observed that returning to Canada after travelling or working abroad felt like a real "let-down" because the adventure, freedom to test out new behaviours, and stimulation of being exposed to new people and ideas were suddenly lost. This transition was experienced as unexpectedly disorienting, and they mention feeling "culture-shock" or "re-entry shock." Returning to the parental home was often considered a "time-out" or "down-time" in which one can replenish one's depleted funds, readjust to Canadian culture, process and digest all the experiences that one had been exposed to while travelling and/or working abroad, and live while reestablishing oneself in Canada (by looking for work and/or going back to school). Often such travel and work experiences were considered deeply meaningful and integral to shaping new ideas about what one wanted to do with one's life and how one wants to live it. There is the perception that one has fundamentally "grown and changed" from such travel and work experiences abroad. Indeed, the very juxtaposition of the "ordinary home-life" with the "extraordinary/special travel/work experience" may serve as a "catalyst" in the regrouping process of reexamining and redefining what one wants from work, relationships, and lifestyle. This could be experienced as both exciting and distressing. The majority of these daughters noted that it was

ideal to contemplate the implications of such meaningful changes in oneself with respect to future work, relationship, and lifestyle choices from the comfort and security of the parental home-base, where one could consult with one's parents and friends for advice, encouragement, and support.

In contrast to the daughters who have experienced setbacks/crises/losses and seem to be operating from "rock bottom," the daughters who are regrouping after travel/work abroad (which is uncomplicated by any difficulties/misfortunes) may be starting out from a stronger position. Although they may keenly miss their lifestyle abroad and may be frustrated that not everyone recognizes how they have grown and changed, they have accessed positive experiences that have altered their values and aspirations in a potentially transformative rather than debilitating manner. Their dilemma lies in attempting to realize these altered views and contemplating how to translate them into realizable goals and actions.

Decision to Change Aspects of One's Life

Some daughters voluntarily return home in order to intentionally change/refine and improve some aspect of one's life, be it financial, occupational, educational, or relational in nature. This is a 'proactive stance' in the quest to become stronger and to improve the quality of one's life and relationships. The sooner one clarifies one's plans, the sooner one is enabled to be more focused in taking action,

whether that entails saving a certain amount of money for tuition or for a downpayment on a condo, or to pursue a degree that will move one closer to achieving an occupational dream, or to resolve issues with a parent.

It seems that the few daughters who have clear goals and plans made *prior* to returning home, given optimal or supportive conditions, may accomplish their objectives more quickly than those daughters who do not have any definite goals and plans when they initially return home. In the latter case these daughters may be "going in blind" and they need more time to contemplate what they want and clarify their goals and plans before they can actively pursue any action. For instance, in hindsight Lorraine offers that she wishes she could have been more planful about her return home, although she confesses she didn't have "the ways, or the means, or the understanding to do that" at the time when she was especially vulnerable and still feeling traumatized from the abuse she suffered from her ex-husband. She indicates:

I'd be inclined to say that if I was to go back to where I was before, to have a list of questions--and just say, "Why is it that I'm going to be doing this? What else can I do? And what purpose do I have in being at home? Is this for myself or for my parents, or is this for both? And not go in 'blind', like I did before.

Context of Individual and Family Background

Daughters' personal expectations and attitudes can strongly influence the nature of one's regrouping experience when one coresides at the parental home. First of all, many

daughters believed that returning home was an admission of failure, exacerbating the experience of faltering by perceiving oneself as "being behind" or "going backwards" in one's life. Moreover this negative belief was frequently associated with being older, such that being close to 30 years old or older made it less acceptable to be living at home. Both parents and daughters saw the 20s as a time of exploration and less maturity and experience, and returning home was considered more acceptable and normative because these daughters were still perceived to need their parents and were not expected to be established. Yet, many daughters seemed to think that there was something momentous about turning age 30, such that they "should" no longer need their parents and that they should be established. The self-reproach seems to be, "if you haven't made it on your own by age 30, you're a loser."

The negative belief that returning home is a sign of failure often resulted in feelings of embarrassment and shame about one's current situation. Kathleen characterizes this as feeling "loserish." In turn, this often resulted in daughters not being open with others about their situation, and socially avoiding others in order to protect themselves from anticipated negative judgements, thereby reducing the nature and amount of social support or friendships available to them during this significant time period when one feels especially vulnerable. Thus, whether the return home is framed as a

"failure" versus an "opportunity" is significant to shaping the emotional tone and quality of one's experience at home. The belief that returning home is a sign of personal failure seems to be quite debilitating to one's self-esteem. In contrast, a few of the daughters who believed the return home was not a sign of failure, but an opportunity to advance themselves and enjoy their parents and the comforts of home seemed more resilient and open about their circumstances with others; thereby maintaining and expanding upon their social support network. Moreover, in sharing their circumstances more openly with others they often learned that many others were returning home and that they were not alone or abnormal, thereby normalizing their experience of returning to the parental home.

Second, a key expectation daughters and parents hold is that the return home to regroup will be "temporary." Some daughters indicated that they had specific timeframes for how long they expected to be home and a deadline for leaving, usually pertaining to something concrete like finishing a degree. Others indicated that their deadline for leaving would be determined by the achievement of a specific goal (i.e., resolving issues with parent(s), saving a certain amount of money, finding career niche), which could not be determined in advance. Regardless, the notion that "this is only temporary" bolstered many daughters' self-esteem, somehow making the return home more acceptable to themselves and to others.

Moreover, as long as daughters believed that their stay at home was temporary, they could manage the experience of coresiding with their parents more effectively. In repeatedly telling themselves "this is only temporary," they could "put up with" or "tolerate" any negative conditions in the living environment, conflictual parent-child relations, or the impositions on friendships and one's social life.

As some daughters' stays at home became more prolonged, the refrain, "this is only temporary," wears thin--such that daughters may experience increased dissatisfaction with their current circumstances, and become more prone to question themselves about the wisdom of what they are doing at home and their ability. Finally, when things take longer than expected, some daughters can psychologically beat themselves up; berating themselves for not accomplishing more, or for not making decisions. They blame themselves for anything that they perceive as delaying action and prolonging the duration of regrouping at home.

Interestingly, the cultural or ethnic background of daughters and their parents seemed more relevant to "expectations about home-leaving" as opposed to ideas about returning home to live. For instance, Western values lend themselves to expectations of independence--such that leaving home to live independently is considered normative and desirable. In this case, White (European ethnicity), predominantly middle-class parents and daughters were both

prepared for daughters to leave again after temporarily living at home to regroup. In contrast, while daughters from Portuguese, East-Indian, and Filipino backgrounds saw their return home as temporary they noted that their more traditional parents seemed to hope that it was a permanent arrangement. These parents and daughters experienced a conflict between the daughters' desire to leave home again and the parents' traditional cultural expectation that they stay at home until they marry, or possibly embark upon further specialized education necessitating going to universities away from home. These daughters, more than the White daughters in the sample, may experience subtle pressure by their parents to not leave home again. This can produce an internal struggle between the desire the daughter has to be a "good daughter" and remain at home to satisfy her parents' wishes, and the personal desire to spread her wings and discover the world on her own, away from the caring but prying eyes of parents. Under this condition, a daughter may end up staying at home longer than she wishes to. Irene illustrates this dynamic: "Many times in the past when I've tried to move out my mom's, but she says we need you. Emotionally we need you. And so, I've really felt I can't."

Context of Family Relationships

Daughters described how their family relationships with their parents and their siblings personally affected them and the actions they took, in ways that could both facilitate or

hinder their regrouping process, thereby creating a satisfying and positive experience or an unsatisfying and negative experience while living at home.

First, the extent to which one feels welcomed, loved, and supported by one's parents in returning home to live is important in setting the tone and quality of one's coresiding and regrouping experience. When some parents had also "invited" their daughters to come and live with them to ride out "rough times," daughters felt relieved that their parents did not consider them unwelcome and intrusive burdens in their own lives. This was especially important because several daughters acknowledged they felt guilty about imposing on their parents' retirement--time that should be just for them. These daughters felt flattered to be valued and cared for by their parents, and said that they hoped they could do the same for their own children one day.

Many daughters spoke about how they treasured the companionship and support they experienced with their parents; culminating in the gratifying realization that they are not alone in the world. In turn, daughters reciprocated their parents' caring and generosity by attempting to maintain and nurture the relationship with their parents, voluntarily assisting with household chores and errands, sharing meals together, respecting parental privacy, being courteous, negotiating and problem-solving around any issues that arise as soon as possible, and loving their parents.

Within this type of supportive and encouraging parent-child bond, a few daughters considered their parents to be valuable models, mentors, and advisors to their regrouping efforts. They saw their parents as having specialized knowledge in certain matters, usually professionally, or to be models for "living a balanced lifestyle" and having one's "priorities in line"--meaning work, family, and friends are all balanced. Within the context of a close and caring bond, Caroline exemplifies how she feels able to seek out her father's knowledge of finances in order to learn more about financially establishing herself in the future:

And I think, as an adult, there are a lot of things that I can learn from my parents right now...I'm in a transitional period so there's a lot of things that I can learn from them that I think that they know. And from dad I've been learning a lot...Dad has a very good financial mind and given my scientific background that's something that I don't have very much knowledge of and I think it's important to learn about. So I've been really trying to learn what I can about that world, just because I have a personal interest in it and I want to be able to keep myself supported financially in the future. So it's sort of learning about all the different things about investing and about you know, different ways of doing business and different ways of approaching things. He has a huge amount of years of experience to draw on from there.

The caveat is that daughters' must feel that they are seeking out their parents' input, rather than being the recipients of the parents' unsolicited advice. This boundary must be carefully preserved, such that daughters feel like they are in control and that they are treated like adults and not like children. Many daughters spoke of attempting to "set

boundaries" around privacy, advice-giving, and criticism that they considered to be respectful and appropriate relative to their status as an adult in the shared household. When daughters perceive that their parents are making a special effort to not treat them as children but as responsible adults, daughters do not feel undermined in their efforts to grow and be different.

This is in contrast with the well-meaning parent who cannot help but treat the daughter as a child--by giving unsolicited advice and feedback, by telling her what to do, by insisting on curfews or knowing where she is when she's out, by intruding on her space and privacy, and by controlling household use and standards. Several daughters conveyed how such parental behaviours were unhelpful and frustrating to them, especially if they were striving to become more grounded in their own unique voice and perspectives. To deal with this dynamic, Kathleen acknowledged that she had sought out professional counselling to learn how to "negotiate and establish boundaries with her parents," as well as to "empathize with their perspective."

With respect to family relations, one might think that daughters who came from families who have a history of unresolved issues or unhealthy behaviours (i.e., alcoholism, abuse, conflict, depression, consistent lack of communication or misunderstanding) would be less likely to return home to live than those daughters who come from families who do not,

however this was not always the case in this sample. Some daughters will return home, even to "conflictual" or "unhealthy" families, because they are still considered a material resource in a time of need. They perceive that parents have to take them in. The attitude here seems to be, "I'll do what I have to do and then get out!" Such daughters often deal with this type of family by having resolved to accept the family the way it is and to persevere within it rather than to make futile attempts to change the family system. They also attempt to minimize their exposure to unhealthy patterns of interaction by "being busy away from the parents' home" with social activities or with educational pursuits, or by isolating themselves in their bedrooms. This can be a cause of strain for the daughter because she may be identified as "different" and perhaps uncooperative in the family system, such that the family can feel affronted by the daughters' lack of participation and interest in them.

Daughters within this type of family context will seldom turn to their parents for advice because they do not consider them to be a credible or reliable source of emotional, psychological, or intellectual support. Moreover, they do not do so in order to avoid any kind of criticism, disparagement, or questioning of their own values, ideas, plans, and actions. They do not feel understood by their parents and do not wish to risk a potential confrontation. Such an inhospitable dynamic is seldom conducive to a daughter's sense of well-

being, and as a result, one may plan to leave home as soon as possible to reduce one's exposure. Interestingly, however, a few daughters dealt with their parents' lack of support and belief in their plans and their direct or implied criticisms as an impetus to try even harder to succeed at their goals. They became more determined to prove their parents' lack of faith wrong, and more determined to be different from their parents by succeeding at having happy and satisfying lives, unlike their parents.

A couple of daughters noted that the decision to return home to resolve interpersonal issues with a parent (usually the mother), occurred only when it was determined that a sibling would be absent. A sibling's presence was considered an obstacle to attempts to work through issues and have one-on-one discussions, even confrontations, with a parent. Hence, their absence assured, in the daughter's mind, that resolving issues with one's parent could occur without interference. Elaine frames her sister's absence in the home as an opportunity:

I saw it as a chance where I could deal with the stuff with my mom because my sister's very protective of my mom. So with her out of the house I felt like I had the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do...which is work through it, cause my mom is very important to me.

Indeed, several daughters' negative experiences with their coresiding siblings confirms that the presence of siblings could undermine one's efforts, or make one feel unwelcome and unsupported in the parental home. One has to

persist in one's regrouping in the face of hostility or interference. For instance, Glenda's coresiding brother "shunned" her for the 3 years she lived at home. He did not speak to her or explain what was wrong the entire time, and this was a chronic source of stress that hurt and confused her.

Finally, cultural or ethnic background was influential to parent-child relations, daughters' lifestyle choices, and everyday living. All the daughters considered themselves to be quite Western and liberal-minded in their social, sexual, and work values--including the East Indian, Portuguese, and Filipino daughters who considered themselves to be quite acculturated to Western values and expectations relative to their parents. Generally, most daughters experienced their parents as being more conservative with respect to sexual attitudes, such that several daughters minimized or concealed dating activity from their parents while they were living at home. They indicated that they wanted to protect this aspect of their private lives from their parents, and that they wished to avoid any potential judgements and uncomfortable tension. In addition to this reason, Irene also volunteered that she minimized dating because she also wanted to focus exclusively on finishing her graduate thesis--dating would be a distraction she would feel guilty about. The consequence of these choices was that several daughters were postponing the development of intimate relationships, thereby putting an

important aspect of their lives on hold.

In contrast to the European daughters, the East Indian, and Filipino daughter observed that their family relations tended to be more formal, adhering to a hierarchy in which the parents are considered the heads of the family, to be respected and listened to, such that daughters may be considered their parents' children for life, regardless of their age, education level, or marital status. One could respond to this cultural dynamic by "swallowing one's true opinions" and going along with parents' expectations as Irene did, or by "challenging and questioning the status quo" as Glenda did. Each action has implications--in the former case, one sacrifices "being myself" with my parents for interpersonal harmony, in the latter case, one has the satisfaction of being true to oneself but at a cost to smooth interpersonal relations.

Context of the Living-Environment

Many daughters spoke about the importance of "having one's own space" (physically and temporally), having enough space, and being able to display and use their own personal belongings in the parental home. They considered these aspects of their living-environment to be crucial to creating privacy for oneself and being able to express oneself through the use of one's time, space, and decor. Moreover, savouring the solitude of one's own room allows one to be oneself, in a protective space--it is a buffer from the outside world and

external stressors. Being able to "cocoon" in one's room is an ideal form of recuperating and reenergizing as well. Jennifer, who spends a lot of time in her bedroom, observes that "it's my little haven, my little escape. I mostly do my homework, I watch t.v., and I read." She believes that her room is the "safest place for me to be" and that "a person's space is part of that identity." With respect to this, being able to bring things out of storage and place them around oneself creates a sense of belonging, and it is the act of making a space "my own" and more "homelike." It seemed important to daughters to create a safe, comfortable, and private environment in order to facilitate the serious work of building or rebuilding a portion of one's life.

The notable absence of this type of self-expression within the living-environment can be a source of frustration with larger implications for hindering the development of private parts of self, often considered important to feeling whole, and the ability to engage in the actions required to realize goals relevant to personal well-being and having a quality life. Irene observes that "I have to shut away a whole part of myself to work in this dynamic," thereby undermining her efforts to finish her Ph.D. thesis and feel whole. She compromises her needs, by "shutting away," in order to accomodate to her parents expectations and schedules. She elaborates that:

shutting away means that I can't express myself in my own environment--that means I can't organize my

space the way I'd like to. Uhm, and I'm just one of those people that desperately needs to decorate, you know, imprint myself on my space. So, uhm, that's one thing I can't do. I can't organize my time the way I'd like to. So, I guess I feel all the time that I have to organize my life in snippets, around everyone else's schedules.

Not being allowed to have one's own things allocated throughout the living-environment, but limited to one's bedroom, is also significant because these things can represent or symbolize who one is. Personal objects serve as reminders of who I am and the "idealized" prior life that one had on one's own. Not having one's own personal belongings in the living-environment, because they are in storage, in boxes, sold-off, or because there is no room for them in the parents' home, can be a source of loss and sadness. Most importantly, it is a subtle acknowledgement that the living-environment is not really your space, ultimately it is the parent's space.

Anne explains:

I've got a few of my own objects upstairs, you know, of my former life and who I think I am, so... which rapidly changes (laughs). And that's the whole thing too, you know. I never bring my friends here because it's their place and none of their things really represents who I am, and uh, you know, because this is their place! And there's a certain loneliness because of that.

Although it seems obvious, it should also be acknowledged that the size and quality of the daughter's living-environment is a reflection of the parent's socioeconomic status. More affluent parents have larger homes and more resources, and parents with smaller or fixed incomes (i.e., retirement) tended to have smaller homes and less resources. With regard

to the latter, there were more "complaints" of "not having enough space," "feeling crowded," or "being in too close proximity with others;" thereby "reducing privacy" in the living-environment and "increasing tension"--especially if there is competition for the use of space and resources (i.e., t.v., computer, kitchen, bathroom). These aspects make living at home less enjoyable, and setup a condition where daughters are likely to expend extra time and energy dealing with these less desirable aspects of daily living. This can draw time and attention away from the important business of regrouping.

Finally, a few daughters specifically mentioned how they feel "deflated" or "down" when they have to go home after being at work or engaging in leisure activities outside the home. When they are pressed to explain why this is the case, they mention that the "atmosphere" of the parental home can be influential. It is offered that one can feel deflated and down when the atmosphere at home is "stifling" or "unhealthy." This type of atmosphere is generally attributable to unhappy or tense relationships within the family (i.e., parents have an unhappy marriage, parent-depression, parent-alcoholism, parent-daughter fighting). In describing the "home atmosphere," Oneida used the analogy of the "hospital atmosphere" to convey the distasteful sense of smell and sickness that can permeate a hospital, eliciting feelings of discomfort. This type of home atmosphere discourages a daughter's creativity and ability to contemplate her lifeplans

with enthusiasm. A few daughters noted that it's as if the home environment "contaminates" daughters by passing on feelings and attitudes of negativity and discouragement, which hinders their efforts to strive for higher goals to enhance their lives. Such an atmosphere does not sustain or encourage growth, rather stagnation.

Context of Social Relations and Friendships

The majority of the daughters acknowledged that the advice, encouragement, and emotional support that their friends provided them with was significant to managing their regrouping process. In fact, in addition to parents and frequently in preference over parents, friends were nominated as the ones that daughters were most likely to turn to--to contemplate one's lifeplans with, to process their emotions, to request feedback, and to receive encouragement when their own enthusiasm or confidence waned. Friends were considered a "resource"--"sounding boards" to contemplate ideas, plans, and strategies with, often without apprehension of judgement. Friends were often considered "safer" to confide in since there is a perception that they are less invested and personally involved, relative to parents, and therefore less inclined to be critical, dominating, or controlling. In fact, in striving to enhance their well-being and their ability to achieve their goals, some daughters spoke of strategically surrounding themselves with bright, positive, and educated friends and acquaintances--"go-getters" who can inspire them,

network with them, brainstorm with them, motivate them, and spur them into action.

Given the importance of friends as a support system, one has to wonder what happens to daughters and their regrouping process if this support system is somehow compromised or absent. Relevant to this, it seems that living with one's parents can compromise access to and affect the nature of one's social support system. The majority of the daughters spoke about how living in their parents' homes was "hard on friendships." The lack of personal privacy, and the desire to respect one's parents' privacy, meant that most daughters felt unwilling to entertain their friends or dates at home. They did not want their parents to know about this portion of their lives. The inability to conveniently have friends over meant that one could potentially become socially isolated, especially if one did not compensate by "going out" more frequently. Moreover, many daughters noted that not having the private space to entertain in their parents' homes hindered the development and maintenance of intimate relationships with others, especially potential partners.

Several others acknowledged that they subjectively experience a "social stigma" (often projections of their own embarrassment) associated with being an adult and living at home. Oneida illustrates this:

It's embarrassing. Like for myself that's number one. I'm not proud of it. I'm embarrassed of it. No one's ever responded, but you're still... 'Cause I, that's how I guess I would think that of somebody: "You're

still living at home". But then I probably wouldn't because I am. So. It's just the way our society is. It's just not done. You leave.

They felt like "failures" or "losers" for being at home, and they deal with these negative perceptions by not inviting others over, and by avoiding putting themselves in social situations where others will know they live at home. Although this action protects them in the short-term, over the long term it erodes their social support system and exacerbates feelings of loneliness, being misunderstood and being different.

Societal Context

I was immersed in studying the phenomenon of adult children returning home to live with their parents, and I began to notice newspaper articles, books (i.e., "The Family Squeeze"), movies (i.e., "Mother"), and t.v. shows (i.e., "Seinfeld"; "Empty Nest"; "Maggie Winters"; "Providence") that dealt with the topic. Television and movie depictions of boomerang kids often poked fun at the ostensible immaturity of such adult children and the dysfunction of their families. I had wondered if daughters, like myself, began to notice such media treatments and were influenced in some manner. However none of the daughters volunteered any awareness of or interest in media portrayals of "boomerang kids."

Rather, daughters' ideas, expectations, and attitudes about returning home to live were shaped by their "immediate social milieu" of parents, relatives, close friends,

acquaintances, and colleagues. It is within this context that daughters indicated that they had learned about North American/Western society's "sociocultural scripts" for defining adulthood--emphasizing that one should be living independently of one's parents, and be somewhat financially and occupationally established by the time one reaches 30 years old.

Many daughters suggested that today's sociocultural scripts seem to place less emphasis on being in a stable intimate partnership, or marriage, and having children--until one is older and established. Today's scripts, which encompass current expectations and social timetables for lifetasks like leaving home, establishing a career and getting married, should be distinguished from yesterday's scripts or one's parents' scripts. In yesterday's-parent's scripts the timeframe for accomplishing milestones was tighter or more rigid--living independently, getting established, and forming one's own family were expected to occur in one's early twenties. The "shifting" quality of the scripts can be confusing for both daughters and parents, and neither adequately deal with the meaning of adult children returning home to live.

Given the ubiquity of such sociocultural scripts, many daughters were exposed, directly or indirectly, to the judgement and censure of others who held low opinions of adults returning home to live. This social judgement can be

experienced as quite harsh and damaging to some daughters. Awareness of departing from the script, especially pertaining to living independently of one's parents, could create dissonance and be frightening for those who accept the validity of the script on the one hand, and liberating for those who questioned the hegemony and validity of the script on the other hand. Those daughters who accepted the scripts tended to harshly judge themselves as "losers" and "failures," and those who did not, considered themselves too smart to buy into traditional ideas and embraced being non-conformist and different. The former had a harder time reconciling their actual situation, and grappled with feeling sorry for themselves at times.

Departure from the sociocultural script calls for meaning-making and adaptation. Although many daughters and parents initially felt distraught about daughters returning home, because it violated what had been expected and attainable for the parents when they were younger, they volunteered that "talking to others" made them realize that many other adult children were returning home--thereby "normalizing the experience." In the process of normalizing the return home, it seems that daughters and their parents were acknowledging that the sociocultural script of independent living that parents grew up with may be outdated and that a revised, more "fluid" script, is more appropriate in today's context of extended educational needs, expensive

housing, and prolonged singlehood. Some parents and daughters acknowledged that moving back to one's parents' home does not necessarily make one less of an adult, "being responsible" in one's life emerged as a more important feature. Ultimately, there is a recognition that "the world is different today." The adaptation of more "fluid" scripts can be more forgiving to daughters' self-image and self-esteem.

Consequences of Regrouping at the Parental Home

The consequences of regrouping at the parental home may be understood in terms of (a) the status of daughters' attaining their regrouping objectives and what happens when one's regrouping objectives are met, are underway, or are not going well, (b) the quality of the regrouping process as positive or negative relative to the compromises one makes and the complications that arise while coresiding in the parental home, (c) the impact on daughters' sense of self or self-image, and (d) the impact on daughters' relationships with parents.

With regard to this, the reader is reminded that a subset of six daughters, (Barbara, Elaine, Glenda, Hannah, Lorraine, Nancy) who had already left the parental home and one daughter (Deborah) who was in the process of leaving, provided the clearest appreciation of "outcomes" in the sense that they had ostensibly regrouped and had left the parental home to live independently. This is in contrast to several daughters (Anne, Caroline, Farrah, Irene, Jennifer, Kathleen, Maria, Oneida)

who were in the process of regrouping at the parental home.

The Status of Attaining Regrouping Objectives

Daughters' regrouping objectives included enhancing personal well-being and quality of life in the future by striving for financial security, pursuing career and educational plans, and individuating by resolving parent-child relational issues. With respect to this, the interesting question is: "Do daughters actually attain their regrouping objectives at the parental home"? The answer seems to be, with rare exception, yes. Some daughters are satisfied that they have adequately reached their goals and have left home (Barbara, Elaine, Glenda, Nancy) or leaving is imminent (Deborah). Usually daughters decide to leave the parental home as soon as they have attained their regrouping objectives and consider themselves financially capable of living independently of their parents. A few daughters believe that they are heading in the right direction and the end is in sight with respect to educational-career objectives (Caroline, Irene). Others were still in the process and suggest that it is too soon to say how everything will turn out (Farrah, Maria, Oneida, Kathleen, Jennifer). One daughter was really struggling to "survive" and her stay at home seems prolonged indefinitely (Anne), and another daughter had to leave the parental home because it was such an emotionally abusive situation for her (Hannah).

Attaining Financial Security

In returning to the parental home to regroup, daughters were striving for more financial security in their lives. As a result of regrouping at the parental home, an enormous benefit that all daughters enjoyed was relief from material worries. Having less material worries is relevant to the notions of "ease of living," "easing pressures" on daughters shoulders, and having more "financial stability" because one's immediate material needs for a place to live and access to resources (i.e., food, laundry, car, computer) are taken care of by one's parents. Having less material worries meant that a daughter had none to minimal rent or food expenditures, which enabled some daughters to save money for the future, to pay of debts/loans, and to have more expendable or discretionary income. In turn, many daughters experienced less worry about the future because they perceived that they were in a less vulnerable financial position. For instance, Jennifer says that regrouping at her parent's home "opens" up the future, "because you're not limited to making a rent cheque." Generally speaking, daughters did not abuse this privilege and as soon as they determined that they could be financially independent they sought to leave the parental home.

Pursuing Career and Educational Plans

Many daughters' regrouping efforts encompassed the need to assure a quality life in the future by becoming more educated and clarifying one's career niche, thereby assuring

financial security. In doing so, daughters hope to increase their potential salaries and professional aspirations, as well as to discover one's career niche--whose defining features encompass doing "fulfilling" and "rewarding" work that one feels "passionate" about. For many daughters, being able to clarify one's career niche meant that one was moving forward in the quest to "be happy," "feel complete," and "be liberated" from the "unsatisfying 9 to 5 grind" that one is currently in, or the routine-rut that one had seen one's parents plod through in unrewarding but "secure" work lives.

Being actively engaged in this process was empowering because one was not resigning oneself to an unhappy fate, but moving towards shaping one's own occupational destiny. The departure from routine, unimaginative jobs was experienced as both risky and exciting. It does not necessarily matter that one's actual success cannot be prognosticated or guaranteed. As Deborah, who has left her secure financial advisor job in favour of exploring a career in writing, says:

It seems more exciting and interesting to go: Okay, this will be hard for awhile, but then you're going to have this huge potential success! And success not just monetarily, but success in that I'm living all the elements of life that I need--being passionate and creative about things. So that seems far more exciting than doing the same old, same old.

In this sense, many daughters believe that regrouping at the parental home has been instrumental to them both educationally and occupationally. They may feel closer to clarifying that career niche, or least that they are moving in

the right direction. For instance, Glenda's dream to become a nurse may not have been realized without having lived at her parents home for 3 1/2 years while she went to college. She states that her sense of self is more complete now that she has achieved her nursing degree and is gainfully employed.

Individuating in Parent-Child Relationship

For some daughters, developing a stronger sense of self meant "becoming more grounded or centred in myself," "finding my voice/being assertive," "needing parents approval less," and "feeling more solid/integrated" relative to one's parents. In their quest to become stronger and to have more satisfying parent-child relations, Elaine and Deborah believed that they had satisfactorily reconciled interpersonal issues with their parents. Elaine moved out as soon as she felt that she had accomplished her agenda. Deborah chose to stay on as long as she could because she was also engaged in making a career transition and had left her place of employment in order to write a book.

Neither daughter seemed to have made any significant compromises in order to achieve their agendas. In this regard, they may have appeared rigid or inflexible to their parents, but to themselves it was enormously satisfying to withstand any parental objections to the changes they were making in their lives. Deborah was satisfied that she had attained personal "closure" in this regard. Elaine noted how resolving some issues with her mother was instrumental to her beginning

to feel like she had a "stronger identity"--like her own person and not just her parents' daughter, and to feel more "adult." She reports that she is nearly 100% satisfied with having resolved her issues with her mother, and concludes that it has allowed her to be able to do what she wants without worrying about what her parents think. Most notably, she is beginning to accept the person she is becoming in relation to her mother:

I need to be able to accept that her opinion will be different than mine sometimes, and that's okay, and that's part of being an adult. You know that I am different than my mother. I should be different than her because I'm not the same as her; we weren't raised the same way. I think that was a big part of it, that separation of me from my parent's daughter--who I am.

Quality of the Regrouping at Home Experience

Although the daughters indicated that they had attained their regrouping objectives, or were in the process of approximating their regrouping objectives, this does not necessarily imply that realizing one's expectations was easy or straightforward. Indeed, some daughters have negative experiences of regrouping at home because they struggle with internal obstacles (i.e., negative beliefs, anxiety, indecision) and external obstacles (i.e., parental criticism and lack of emotional support, lack of money) that make it more difficult to attain their personal goals at the pace they would like to. In such cases, daughters seem to be faltering and may remain living at home longer than they initially anticipated, they may characterize the experience of living at

home as "hard," less satisfying, and they may feel their self-esteem has been somewhat diminished as a result. In an extreme case, Hannah left home when the arguing between her and father culminated in her being "kicked out." Although she saved money for travel and a condo, she states that she was unable to grow in other aspects of her life (i.e., professionally, intellectually, emotionally).

Suffice it to say that returning to the parental home to regroup may not be a straightforward positive or negative experience from daughters' perspectives because there are varying levels of compromises and sacrifices that may accompany returning home to regroup. Some compromises are known and anticipated in returning home, however other compromises and complications may be unexpected and arise while one is coresiding with one's parents. The extent and the significance of such personal compromises (i.e., of one's independence, freedom, privacy, ability to be oneself, persevering in an unhealthy family dynamic, quality of social life and intimate relations, risking others' judgement), and the extent to which they are considered acceptable, tolerable, temporary, and worthwhile will also determine whether regrouping at home is considered satisfactory or not. In considering whether or not it is good or bad for her to be at home at this time, Jennifer responds with ambivalence:

Well, practically it should be good, but in some ways I think it's not....(pause). I don't know. I guess... (pause) I don't know. I haven't quite figured that one out.

Ultimately, daughters who make greater personal compromises and sacrifices to be at home, and also experience a greater degree of faltering, may experience diminished potential to enhance personal well-being and quality of life in the future relative to other daughters who do not.

The number and significance of compromises and complications that arise in daughters' life contexts, in turn, culminate in the degree to which the daughters' consider their experiences of regrouping as positive or negative. For instance, Farrah's compromise entails her decision to persevere in an unhealthy family atmosphere so that she can pursue her graduate degree plans--at risk to her mental and emotional well-being. She finds it quite devastating to witness her family's unhealthy dynamic and her mother's alcoholism unchanged. Moreover, their disparagement of her interests and lifestyle hurt her deeply. Pursuing her passion and career pathway in music is a constant battle because she feels that her family "sabotages" her efforts to practice her music. Given this, she rates her level of emotional satisfaction with living at home as quite low (i.e., 1 to 3 out of 7). She will accomplish her goals, but not without significant emotional cost to herself, such that the experience of living and regrouping at home may be considered a highly negative experience.

Farrah acknowledges that regrouping at the parental home is not completely the best place for her to be. However, she

clings to the hope that it will be worth it in the long run. She weighs the pros and cons in the present against the potential returns she foresees in the future.

Thus the notion that returning to the parental home to regroup is "easy" is dismissed as untrue for many daughters. Instead it is explicitly acknowledged that regrouping at the parental home often entails "giving up something to get something." Returning home to regroup seems to entail a willingness to make compromises that others' may not recognize or gloss over as insignificant. Jennifer observes:

But you get comments from people you know. People think that it's a real "swan" that you're doing nothing and not paying, maybe 'cause they're envious. But, I think people, if they've had to make the choice, they don't choose to live at home. They choose to work full time and claim that they don't have the luxury of going to school and then have their own place. So it's a compromise and people don't necessarily see that.

Therefore, the ability to enhance personal well-being and quality of life in the future may be diminished by significant compromises or unanticipated complications in daughters' life contexts. This, in turn, affects the overall quality of the experience and decisions to leave or to remain at the parental home. It's as if a ratio of subjectively weighted factors--such as the nature and quality of regrouping process (faltering versus advancing) and its outcomes relative to the nature and amount of compromises and other "negatives" associated with living at the parental home culminate in a net result--the extent to which the overall experience is

considered negative or positive. Daughters (and their parents) frequently described a negative experience as being "hard," "difficult," and "unsatisfying," whereas a positive experience was characterized as "easy," "comfortable," and "satisfying."

Thus, even when regrouping objectives are met or well underway, a daughter may still consider her experience to be somewhat negative if some important aspect of herself (i.e., expression of self, self-esteem) or her relationships (i.e., sex-life on-hold, falling out with parents) has been diminished. In the daughter's mind this may seem like an acceptable "trade-off," temporarily sacrificing or compromising aspects of herself and her life in order to achieve a larger goal. Having said this, it does not mean that this is an easy road to travel. Indeed, as Hannah who "has been to hell and back" implies, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

In this sense, there may be ambivalence about the wisdom of returning home to regroup in the sense that accomplishing personal goals may be done at the expense of the daughter's emotional well-being or family relations. Some daughters may ask themselves, "Does the end justify the means?" Hannah may offer some insight into this dilemma. After leaving/being kicked out by her father during a heated fight, she can now see that she had compromised herself and her integrity by valuing money or materialism over being true to herself and her own values concerning freedom, education, and

spirituality. In retrospect she sees how being at home was damaging to these "finer" ideals she aspired to, and as a result "my self-esteem really sunk while I was there." She observes that "I was willing to suffer to save money before, whereas I'm not willing to do that now." She elaborates that,

When I was in Europe I had all these free ideas about money and how money is not important and I had this philosophy, but then I went back home and moved back with them after I came back and I started to forget what I had learned. And when I left again, I remembered it all again. And it's like, "What was I thinking?" It's almost like it was all repressed for all that time and then it came out again and I remembered who I was again!

There is a danger, perhaps a cautionary note, that one take care not to jeopardize one's emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being in favour of gratifying material needs.

Impact on Sense of Self

In regrouping at the parental home many daughters strive towards developing a stronger sense of self, which consists of "feeling whole," "grounded," "centred," "assertive," and "confident." For many daughters, becoming stronger also centred around "overcoming vulnerability" (i.e., financial, emotional, psychological) by recuperating and reenergizing after a significant setback or time of transition in one's life. For Maria she asserts that regrouping at her mother's home means that, "I think for me, it's coming back to my centre of power and my rebalancing in my own life I think. And kind of taking what I need from the past and leaving the rest behind."

Ultimately, several daughters noted that overcoming vulnerability and becoming stronger in the face of difficulties in their lives created a stronger sense of their inner resilience and capacity to handle "life's curve-balls." Of the daughters who were striving to become stronger after a setback or during a transitional time, they were attempting to "ground" or "centre" themselves in the face of feeling vulnerability, fragmentation, and confusion. Relevant to this, Maria says returning home to regroup facilitated her ability to become a stronger person in relation to understanding and "letting go of the past" (i.e., childhood issues with parents) so that she can move forward with her life and hopefully establish a healthy intimate relationship with a man. She observes that,

I am getting stronger and that I can stand my ground with whatever or whomever enters my life--and just have the capability of handling it. Being able to know that at home, or in relationships, or at work that I can stand my ground and feel whole.

Unfortunately, striving to develop a stronger sense of self in the face of a significant life-transition (chosen or not) can be undermined by exposure to others' judgements that returning to the parental home is inappropriate. Many daughters' sense of self was negatively impacted by this. They spoke of the embarrassment and shame that they felt about returning to the parental home. They often said that they felt like "losers" or "failures" in their own eyes, as well as in the eyes of others. Jennifer says that striving to maintain

her sense of self is a core issue that she contends with since her return to her mother and stepfather's home:

Maintaining who you are in spite of the way society views moving home--sort of maintaining a sense of who I am, and my pride in who I am despite how people may view what I do, what I'm doing. That's sort of how I see it. It's a big joke, isn't it, people who still live with their parents?

She elaborates that the process of maintaining a sense of "who I am" has also been unwittingly undermined by the presence of her parents. Since she is feeling so fragile and fragmented these days, as she struggles to get her life together, she confesses that she feels "inadequate" in comparison to her parents who are "saints" and so "together." Others may compare themselves unfavourably to their peers who seem to be moving forward with their lives professionally and relationally. They see themselves as "falling behind" because they have returned to their parents' home.

Another repercussion of returning home to some daughters' sense of self was the concern that they had compromised their "independence." They feared that they may become dependent on their parents. "Becoming dependent" signalled, for a few, an incalculable loss in which the freedom to be oneself and the sheer appreciation of one's capacity to live independently and make it on one's own is compromised. In turn, they often felt that they had traded their "adult status" for a "child status" because they were dependent--such that they sometimes felt less responsible and competent relative to their peers, and were often treated like children by their parents. A few

daughters joked about the terrifying prospect of still living at home 10 years in the future--how horrible and demeaning this would be! Yet the ambivalence about "giving up one's independence for comfort" hints at the seductive temptation of staying at the parental home beyond one's own subjective determination of what is necessary and reasonable.

Impact on Relationships with Parents

Regrouping is often characterized as a self-involved and personal process, where one is primarily concentrating one's time, attention, and efforts on oneself. Although this regrouping process transpires within the interpersonal context of the family, some daughters describe their families as being quite peripheral to their plans and activities. Their personal goals and activities figure prominently in the foreground of their lives, whereas their relationships with parents and siblings are relegated to the background. Given this predisposition during the regrouping process, an inadvertent consequence is that the family members living within the parental household function quite independently of each other. Jennifer uses the metaphor of "ships passing in the night" to convey this "independent" quality of interpersonal relations:

I guess that the metaphor for that would be ships, and that's going to sound cliché, ships passing in the night or whatever. But I feel we're each very industrious in our own ways, and we're very much independent. But we cross paths and we communicate. But we're definitely, very definitely our own units, kind of thing. Yeah. It's kind of like that I guess. We kind of cruise around each other! (laughing)

In choosing to live fairly independently of one's

parents' and siblings' daily activities, in favour of pursuing one's own activities, some daughters seem to consider the parental home as a practical and free place to be without necessarily making a substantial commitment to spending time with other family members. Yet this does not mean that a number of these daughters do not worry about the consequences of this action on their parents. The individual and private nature of regrouping that may entail "shutting parents out" raises daughters' concerns (and possibly guilt) about inadvertently hurting parents' feelings and making them feel unimportant. Jennifer illustrates this concern:

But you see I worry because you see I'm so into myself. I do--I wash up and I do the meals and things like that, so we do kind of bond over those things, but I'm really into myself. Like I spend all my time in my room, and I worry about them. Like I don't want them to feel that I'm shutting them out, but I do shut them out to a point. So, yes, it is positive in certain ways, but I worry that I'm not giving them exactly what they would hope for.

Ultimately, one's parents (and siblings) cannot be entirely ignored, like background noise, as the likelihood of tension or conflict arising may be higher under these conditions. When daughters' do not communicate with or spend time with their parents, parents may object to being treated as an inconvenience or an obligation that must be tolerated. They indicate that they deserve to be respected and make pointed remarks about these daughters needing to be more considerate and courteous of parents' needs, wishes, space, and belongings. Anne's parents say:

We have arguments with her, you know, and we just feel that there's no way out for us and it's so hard. Anne likes her own way and expects us to go along with her and that's no good because she should consider us more than she does because we have our life to live.

Thus, in choosing to regroup at the parental home, daughters must deal with their parents in addition to dealing with one's own concerns. For some daughters, "dealing with parents" means responding to their concerns, complaints, criticisms, requests, and advice. This is part of the price of returning to the parental home to regroup. Some days this may feel onerous because one of the benefits of having lived independently for years was that one did not have to deal with one's parents on a consistent basis, especially from such close proximity.

Although daughter's often benefit from parents' financial support as they seek to achieve their regrouping objectives, a source of "tension" exists between parents and daughters concerning how much assistance is considered appropriate by daughters. Daughters are very sensitive and protective of their independence. Therefore, parents who are too intrusive in attempting to assist their daughters may risk their ire. Caroline's mother observes that there is some trepidation about helping their daughter without being too intrusive or heavyhanded:

Caroline came back fragile and we wanted to help build her confidence all the time, and so we didn't want to say a lot. So it's been hard sometimes and things got better by the fall. We wanted her to be a part of our life, but we didn't want to interfere with

her life and we didn't know how much she was willing to share--which she didn't share a lot in the beginning. She didn't want us to have anything to do with the fellow she left. Uhm, and as she started to make a life for herself in Vancouver things became much easier.

In contrast, other parents 'dive in' and become more heavily involved in helping their daughters, as Barbara's parents did by "closing ranks" and "circling the wagons" around their daughter when her husband abandoned her. Barbara's mother hints at her concern that their impulse to protect their daughter may have overwhelmed her and been overly intrusive, robbing her of the freedom to exercise her own will. Barbara agrees that she is extremely frustrated with how her parents tend to make decisions for her or act precipitously without consulting her.

Although parents are aware that their daughters are now adults, they admit that they can inadvertently overstep their daughters' boundaries. "Crossing this line" is tantamount to treating daughters like children. Barbara's mom notes that,

It's **very hard** because Barbara really never has never really been out on her own, so it's very hard to remember that she's a 30-year old woman with two children, and not just Barbara, my little girl.

This may create tension in the parent-child relationship because daughters' consider regrouping to be their personal business. Parents have been sensitized to their daughter's need for boundaries. Caroline's dad notes that "we're ultrasensitive to not putting forth our views to her-- tiptoeing around her." In contrast, Barbara's dad cannot

resist speaking his mind:

Sometimes I'm inclined not to offer advice, but to **TELL** them. And then I'm told to "Get lost! To go and feed your cats." I'm inclined to forget that and overstep a bit...You know you have to walk a fine line. Sometimes I go over the line and I'm pushed back.

Interestingly, the amount of tension experienced between a daughter and her mother and a daughter and her father was frequently not considered the same by daughters and their parents. Barbara's mother offers that for her "the hardest part of living together is two women in one house." She elaborates:

Yeah, I think it's very much easier for my husband, because the father-daughter relationship isn't nearly as complex as a mother-daughter relationship.

Generally, "mother-daughter tension" was mentioned more frequently than father-daughter tension in parent-child relations. This was considered a reflection of (a) father's generally having been more peripheral in daughters' upbringing and activities; (b) mothers having been more involved in their daughter's upbringing, activities, and sharing a more intense emotional bond; (c) daughters generally felt that their personalities or styles of communication were more similar to their fathers (i.e., more laid-back, more direct, more analytical, more humorous) than their mothers; and (d) daughters generally considered their mothers to be much more sensitive to any perceived criticism or slights in comparison to their fathers. Relevant to this mother-daughter tension, Deborah notes that her mother is more "stressed out by my

presence than dad since she doesn't want to play mother anymore" (e.g., drudge work of cooking, grocery shopping, cleaning for a family again). Her mother concedes that, "Once you're a mother, you're always a mother. But I'm trying to let go of that role and not slip up."

Not surprisingly, a core issue in parent-child relationships has to do with establishing adequate boundaries. Invariably, daughters indicate that dealing with parents means constantly "negotiating boundaries"--which takes considerable energy, persistence, and know-how. In a few cases, daughters lacked the necessary knowledge of how to adequately deal with parents and sought out professional counselling. Certainly, a higher degree of parental involvement may be appreciated by some daughters as supportive and helpful, but a few daughters experienced this as "parental interference"--unwelcome, intrusive, and unhelpful. For instance, Lorraine observes that her parents badgered her with questions about why she had returned home, hindering her capacity to heal from an abusive marriage that she wished to conceal from her parents, and she concludes that they "wouldn't allow me to do what I needed to do in order to move on." In this regard she stated that she believed that regrouping at the parental home was unhelpful. She observes:

I thought it to be very unhelpful. Uhm, I had cousins who were more understanding of my situation than my parents were. And, it turned out that, uhm, when I talked with my cousins it was more to talk about what I actually wanted to do, where I was going to go, and how I was going to deal with the future--

rather than actually dealing with the past, which was being left behind, and not one that needs to be dredged up. And so that's what I felt at that time, and being at home and trying to do that regrouping was very difficult because there was always, "Oh well, what would so and so think of this?" It's like, "I don't know what he thinks!"

Although Lorraine eventually figured out what she wanted to do with her life and became strong enough to venture out on her own again, she considered her overall experience at her parents' home to be quite negative because she found it personally difficult to deal with her parents' questions and reactions to her being at home. In turn, this adversely affected her relationship with her parents. She concludes that returning home to regroup created hostility and miscommunication with her parents, a dynamic they had not previously experienced together, resulting in a lasting "rift" that she still struggles to come to grips with today. She comments on her relationship with them:

I don't know you guys, and you don't know me. And that was very interesting. I think it devastated all three of us because we thought it was a relationship, that we thought we got along well, but we didn't. We're all three very strong personalities.

In contrast to Lorraine, some daughters acknowledged that their relationships with their parents had improved (if strained), while others said that their relationships remained largely unchanged as a result of returning home to live. When relations were quite satisfying, daughters generally reported that they felt quite lucky with their current circumstances and suggested that the positive relations enhanced their

regrouping and coresiding experience. For instance, Caroline is gratified that she has received the emotional and financial help and support she needed from her parents. Seeing Caroline and her parents together, one could also not help but be struck by the mutual caring and respect with which they regarded one another. Unfortunately for some daughters, returning home to regroup may unexpectedly diminish the quality of parent-child relations. This is a risk some daughters unknowingly make when they return to the parental home to regroup, as illustrated by Lorraine's or Anne's more extreme negative experiences with their parents.

Summary of Study Findings

In this theory, daughters return home to live with their parents in order to regroup after travelling/working abroad, and/or in response to personal setbacks/crises, and/or decisions to change an aspect of one's life (i.e., saving money, becoming educated, reappraising/shifting career pathway, resolving parent-child issues). Regrouping at the parental home involves taking some time to reenergize, to recuperate, and to contemplate one's life and immediate plans in order to get a fresh start in some aspect of one's life and, ultimately, to move out on one's own again. The intention is to pursue, even accelerate, the realization of personal goals and plans without having the obstacle or distraction of having to spend time, energy, and worry in meeting basic survival needs (i.e., housing, food). Regrouping seems to be a

highly personal and private process that can encompass individual and/or familial issues. As the core process and imperative, the focus of daughters' regrouping efforts can encompass contemplating and pursuing career or educational plans, striving to attain financial security, and individuating in the parent-child relationship. The intention is to enhance one's personal well-being and assure the likelihood of having a quality life in the future.

Regrouping at the parental home is embedded or nested within the immediate context of a daughter's individual and family background, family relations, living environment, and the interrelated but more peripheral context of social relations and friendships, and society's sociocultural scripts (Figure 1). These contextual conditions, the nature of the life-events that precipitated regrouping and daughters' actions, influence the tone or quality of regrouping at home--its duration, level of difficulty, and emotional intensity, and complexity. Therefore, daughters' life-context mediates and influences the regrouping process in both facilitative and hindering ways.

Daughters do not experience a simple, uncomplicated linear forward movement towards attaining goals; rather they experience an oscillating pattern between "faltering" and "advancing" in their efforts to realize valued goals. The regrouping process may shift from faltering to advancing and from advancing to faltering as a result of positive and

negative turning points (i.e., clarifying one's plan, making a solid decision, getting a job, having a big fight with a parent) in daughters' lives. The oscillation back and forth within the regrouping process has implications for a fluctuating sense of self or self-image. Advancing with attaining personal expectations and goals is associated with moving forward and feeling confident, optimistic, secure, and focused; whereas faltering in the regrouping process is associated not moving forward and with feeling frustration, anxiety, insecurity, and depression.

The ideal outcomes of regrouping include enhancing personal well-being (i.e., becoming stronger) and enhancing the quality of life in the future by striving for financial security, becoming educated, clarifying one's career niche, and resolving parent-child relationship issues. Ideally, when one's personal goals are well underway or attained, one leaves the parental home to live independently. Yet one may also decide to continue to regroup at the parental home by setting new personal goals to achieve after initial goals have been realized. In this sense, the regrouping process may be considered cyclical because one is beginning the regrouping process anew with another goal.

However, some daughters have negative experiences of regrouping at home because they struggle with internal (i.e., negative beliefs, anxiety, indecision) and external obstacles (i.e., parental criticism and lack of emotional support, lack

of money)), which exacerbate faltering and makes it more difficult to attain their personal goals at the pace they would like to, possibly prolonging their stay at the parental home.

Moreover, daughters' optimal regrouping experience may be diminished by the varying levels of compromises/sacrifices and complications that may accompany returning to the parental home to regroup. Some of these compromises may be anticipated in advance by daughters, and other compromises or complications may arise unexpectedly while one is living at the parental home. The extent and the significance of such compromises (i.e., giving up one's independence, freedom, privacy, ability to be oneself, social life and intimate relations, and persevering in an unhealthy family), and the extent to which such compromises are considered acceptable, tolerable, temporary, and worthwhile will also determine whether living at home and regrouping at home is considered satisfactory or not.

The amount and significance of the compromises made in daughters' everyday living contexts, relative to one's idealized expectations and goals, may culminate in the degree to which the regrouping process and living at the parental home is characterized as "positive" or "negative" by daughters. If daughters who make greater personal compromises/sacrifices while at home experience a high degree of faltering, then they may experience a diminished capacity

to enhance their personal well-being and their quality of life in the future relative to those who had more positive experiences. In such a negative case, these daughters may leave home because remaining is considered too detrimental to their well-being. However, some daughters may remain in this negative situation as they may perceive that there are no other acceptable alternatives.

These findings have implications for theory and counselling practice, and these will be elaborated upon in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this final chapter, I begin by comparing relevant literature with the study findings in order to demonstrate the contribution of this project with regard to the existing knowledge about the experience of adult children who have returned to the parental home. Certainly, the final task in generating a grounded theory is to determine its relevance (Glaser, 1999). The significance of this theory is demonstrated in part by highlighting its similarities and discrepancies with other work. Literature that addresses the core aspects of this theory (i.e., reasons for returning home to coreside with parents, life-span development, adaptation and change, parent-child relations) has been considered. The extant literature previously reviewed in Chapter II is reinterpreted in light of this study's findings. A discussion of the limitations of the study is included, followed by implications for counselling adult children who return home to live, and recommendations for future research and policy.

Contribution to the Extant Literature

This study sought to explore the core social and psychological processes that female adult children experience when they return to the parental home to live. "Regrouping" is the core concept within the theoretical model constructed. The women in this study engaged in regrouping--a multifaceted process that encompasses taking time to recuperate,

reenergize, and to contemplate and pursue one's life plans in response to salient life-events and choices. The intention is to pursue, even accelerate, the realization of personal goals and plans without having the obstacle or distraction of having to spend time, energy, and worry in meeting basic survival needs (i.e., housing, food). The focus of women's regrouping efforts in this study encompassed career-educational plans, striving to attain financial security, and individuating in the parent-child relationship. The extent to which women "falter" or "advance" in their regrouping efforts is affected by the contextual conditions of individual and family background, family relations, the living environment, friendships and social relations, and society's sociocultural scripts. The life-events and choices precipitating a return home, and the actions women engage in also influence the regrouping process and its outcomes.

About the Female Adult Children in the Study

The growing trend of parent-adult child coresidence has been documented in Canada (Boyd & Pryor, 1989; Boyd & Norris, 1999), and the United States (Glick & Lin, 1986; Grigsby & McGowan, 1986; DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990). Boyd and Norris' (1999) Canadian census data indicate that in 1996, 47% of unmarried women aged 20-34 and 56% of unmarried men aged 20-34 coreside with their parents. Coresiding with parents is not exclusively done by younger adults either. More and more "older" adults are coresiding at home. As of 1996, 33% of

unmarried women aged 25 and over and 40% of unmarried men coreside with their parents.

This study focused on women's experiences of returning to the parental home in adulthood. Similar to Boyd and Norris' (1999) census data, the women in this study were single and somewhat older--ranging in age from 24 to 44 years, with an average age of 29.5 years. Despite the fact that there are more men living at home with their parents, it was women who came forward to volunteer for this study. They were interested in describing their experiences in a face-to-face research interview. In terms of gender roles, it has been speculated that smaller percentages of adult women live at home because they prefer living independently over being closely supervised at home and that they are more capable of household maintenance relative to men (Boyd & Pryor, 1989; DaVanzo & Goldscheider, 1990; Ward & Spitze, 1992). The implication is that coresidence may be less desirable for women than for men.

It may be speculated that the women in this study were experiencing coresiding difficulties and/or were more willing to discuss this in order to alleviate or resolve difficulties. Some women suggested that the research interview was an opportunity to "vent and process" difficult coresiding experiences. One woman specifically mentioned that it provided "closure" regarding parent-child issues. A few women also confided that they had pursued professional counselling in order to learn how to better manage their parents and to

figure out how to move on with their lives personally and professionally. Certainly the women's satisfaction ratings with coresiding were fairly low, ranging from 1 to 6, with a mean rating of 4.35 (out of 7). This is lower than Ward and Spitze's (1996) prior findings that return coresidents (60% sons) were fairly satisfied with coresiding, with a mean rating of 5.3 (out of 7).

Daughters often resented their lack of independence and privacy while coresiding with parents, and suggested that it was a challenge to maintain their boundaries. Having to deal with their parents' unwanted attention, advice, or intervention while pursuing their valued life goals was a common theme. The desire to protect their independence as well as conceal their private dreams, goals, and concerns was so strong that the majority of the women in this study did not wish to share their perceptions and experiences with their parents in a shared interview format. This seems to speak to the defensiveness and protectiveness women feel about preserving their status as an autonomous adult with rights to privacy, independence, and the capacity to do things (i.e., make career choices, seek out intimate relationships, save money) in their own way. The intensity of this desire is something that prior findings in the literature have not documented.

Revisiting Reasons for Adult Children Returning Home

The reasons cited for adult children returning home

include: lower incomes (Boyd & Pryor, 1989), housing costs, unemployment, and divorce (Glick & Lin, 1986; Heer et al., 1985), prolonged post-secondary education enrolments, fluctuations in the labour market, and remaining unmarried longer (Boyd & Norris, 1999). With respect to economic-related factors, Mitchell and Gee (1995) document 81% of their Canadian sample of 218 "boomerang kids" stated economic reasons for returning home. A break-down of these reasons revealed that 26.1% reported "financial problems," 19.3% indicated that they returned to "save money," and 13.3% stated that they had returned due to transitional or temporary reasons (i.e., finished travelling). Some had returned for school-related reasons (12.8%), and a smaller proportion had returned due to the ending of a relationship (5%) or because housing costs are too high (4.6%). Of the 17% of reasons falling into a non-economic category, 9.2% indicated they returned for social-psychological factors such as companionship, the comforts of home, or not being ready to live on their own; 4.2% returned because they needed help, and 3.7% stated a health problem such as illness or disability.

Ultimately the extant literature offers a descriptive list of the reasons for adult children returning home as if this adequately explains the complete picture of why adult children are returning home. Moreover, the literature (with the notable exception of Gee et al., 1995) generally gives the overly simplistic impression that adult children are moving

home out of economic need. The suggestion is that reneating is a direct result of expensive housing and diminished job opportunities in a competitive economic climate. This study's substantive theory refines this perspective by alternatively explaining that returning home is about "regrouping"--the strategic utilization of the parental home-base and resources to get ahead financially, occupationally, and emotionally in one's life. This study's theory further illuminates women's social, emotional, and psychological reasons for returning home by personalizing their regrouping process and giving voice to their concerns about themselves, their futures, and their relationships with their parents and others. Although the majority of women indicate that "finances" are an important reason for returning to the parental home, when pressed to go deeper women indicate private and psychological goals to resolve parent-child issues and renew relations with parents as an adult, to secure an idealized occupational identity, and to become a stronger individual both intrapersonally and interpersonally.

This study's theory suggests that adult children's stated reasons (i.e., disability/welfare, relationship breakup, going to school, post-travel/work abroad, saving money for tuition, travel, condo; anticipating career change) for returning home are just the tip of the iceberg and gloss over the more dynamic process and experience of coresiding at the parental home. The theory that regrouping is the core social and

psychological process that adult children are engaging in while coresiding offers a more complete and meaningful explanation and understanding of the reneating phenomenon, at least from daughters' perspectives. The theoretical model, with regrouping as the core social and psychological process, also provides coherence by linking together seemingly disparate reasons for returning home. This theoretical model speaks to the active, dynamic, and volitional actions that women engage in to improve their lives.

Regrouping at the Parental Home and Life-Span Development

According to the life-span development perspective, leaving the parental home is associated with the significant life tasks of adult children differentiating from their families of origin, developing intimate peer relationships, and establishing themselves with regard to work and financial independence (Aylmer, 1989; Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). It has been implied that returning to the parental home places these important developmental tasks in peril (Johnson & Wilkinson, 1995). There seems to be a ubiquitous and unquestioned understanding within Western societies that adult children need to have physical distance from one's parents, by living independently, to optimally achieve these tasks.

Generally, returning to the parental home is also considered discordant with normative expectations in the transition to adulthood (i.e., Elder, 1985; Hagestad, 1990). Parents and adult children maintain normative time tables

about acceptable timing and sequence of significant life events, such as leaving and returning home (Veevers, Gee, & Wister, 1996). The failure to maintain an independent living arrangement outside the parental home may violate cultural norms and preferences held by parents and adult children (Ward & Spitze, 1992). It is suggested that the return home of adult children is prolonging dependence on parents--leading to the notions of such adult children being "late bloomers" (Lipsky & Abrams, 1994) or a "generation on hold" (Cote & Allahar, 1994). Therefore, the life-span development perspective suggests that it is considered maladaptive to violate normative expectations and timetables--creating difficulties for transitions in adulthood and family relations.

What relevance does this study's findings have to the life-span development perspective? First, despite the tremendous concerns of the lifespan developmental perspective about returning to the parental home in adulthood as being negative, a notion reflected in mainstream sociocultural scripts, women still pursued the non-normative action of returning to the parental home. They returned to the parental home, knowingly risking others' social judgement and possibly creating tension within parent-child relations. It seems that the risk of violating social norms was outweighed by the perceived advantages of regrouping at home in order to get ahead. Daughters convey a pragmatic stance; you do what you have to in order to get ahead in life. Sacrificing one's

independence, privacy, and social life temporarily is considered difficult but necessary in order to ensure one's future quality of life.

Second, the theory of women's regrouping at the parental home suggests that the physical distance associated with independent living is not a necessary condition for attaining the life-span development tasks of adulthood. To facilitate regrouping efforts, women replaced physical distance with psychological distance while coresiding with parents. Women who coreside with their parents seemed intent on regulating the amount of closeness and distance within their families. In family systems theory, "differentiation" refers to the patterns of distance regulation within a family, as well as the family's tolerance for both individuality and intimacy (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990; Bowen, 1978). It seemed that the majority of the women in the sample sought out higher levels of differentiation within the family-- meaning a reduced need for family members to continually seek love, approval, or affection from one another, and to blame others for not fulfilling these needs. It has been asserted that a higher level of differentiation within the family enables one to engage in adaptive, age-appropriate, goal-directed tasks (Bowen, 1978).

Relevant to this, women's occupational, educational, emotional, and relational regrouping was facilitated by the action strategy of creating "personal space" for oneself.

Personal space affords oneself the ability to be oneself and to pursue valued activities without distraction or interruption. The women created personal space by establishing personal territory (i.e., bedroom), personal boundaries (i.e., limit-setting on parental behaviours like advice-giving), and striving to establish personal time alone (i.e., sidestepping parents' schedules) and away from the parental home. They did so in order to attain independence and privacy, to protect oneself (i.e., minimizing parent-child tension), and to follow one's own activities (i.e., education, career, social) and lifestyle (i.e., friendships and dating), without observation or intervention.

Interestingly, women's use of social space within the parental home seems reminiscent of Berardo's (1998) writings on privacy within the family. It is suggested that family members attempt to establish "zones of safety" to demarcate their interior and exterior spaces. Kantor and Lehr (1975) note that "the purpose of these safety zones is usually the protection of property, privacy, and the relationships among family members, rather than guarding of physical safety" (p. 42). This was echoed by the women in the study, although in a few extreme cases, "psychological distancing" gone unchecked can invoke resentment in parents and other family members.

Third, developmentally, it seemed rather striking that some women would want to return to the parental home to individuate with their parents. Psychoanalytic

conceptualizations view individuation primarily as an intrapsychic process in which one comes to see oneself as separate and distinct relative to others within one's relational context (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990). Individuation is a lifelong process through which an individual builds knowledge about the self in relation to others. Anderson and Sabatelli (1990) observe that:

Individuation involves continuous, ongoing demands to regulate the tension between personal autonomy (self as individual) and connectedness to significant others (self as related to other), which must be continually negotiated and renegotiated. It begins with the infant's first recognition of separateness from mother, continues through the adolescent's initial definition of identity in relation to parents (and peers), and through every major and minor adult experience requiring a reassessment of self in relation to a significant other (pp. 33-34).

Erikson (1959) suggests that the process of individuation is accompanied by the resolution of identity tasks or crises (i.e., ego identity versus role confusion). Between the ages of 16 and 20 or so a person struggles to define the "real me". The signs of successful resolution of the identity crisis include acceptance of oneself and one's actions, whereas incomplete resolution may result in feelings of confusion

about oneself and about what wants, values, and likes in relation to others (parents and peers).

In returning to the parental home to resolve issues with their parents, several women suggested that they could become stronger--meaning that they could be more assertive and firm in their own values, needs, and lifestyles without needing parental approval. In line with Erikson's (1959) work, one may speculate that the women who had returned to the parental home to do this work had not adequately resolved the task of defining who they were prior to home-leaving. He would assert that they need to return home to resolve their identity before they can move forward to develop intimate relationships.

Alternatively, self-in-relation models that characterize women's individuation process as constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in relation to others (especially mothers) suggests that returning home to resolve the individuation process through connection and dialogue makes sense (Enns, 1991). The female challenge is becoming different while maintaining connections with others. Moreover, it also may be the case that these women are interested in renegotiating the parent-child relationship in adulthood, such that the recognition of oneself as an adult and not just a child to a parent is validated. This is considered an age-appropriate developmental progression that is signalled by a movement from asymmetrical, dependent relationships with parents towards more symmetrical, interdependent, and mutual relationships

with parents during adulthood (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990). Unfortunately, conditions of parental overinvolvement (i.e., intrusiveness) or parental invalidation (i.e., rejection, demands for conformity at the expense of individuality) hindered some daughters' efforts in this regard.

Fourth, although some prior research has demonstrated that returning adult children are generally satisfied with coresiding (Ward & Spitze, 1996), other research has also indicated that coresiding adult children experience more negative aspects of parent-child relations in terms of mutual respect, decision-making autonomy, perceived affection and support, acceptance of parents as role models, ability to resolve conflicts, and feeling appreciated and understood (Flanagan et al., 1993). White and Rogers (1997) research showed that coresident adult children report significantly lower affective relationships with their parents. It was noted that less respect, trust, and fairness was experienced in relation to coresident mothers. In a similar vein, Umberson's (1992) research on the impact of coresiding on adult children's relations and well-being has demonstrated that relationships with mothers are more strongly associated with adult children's well-being (i.e., perceptions of support, criticism, demands) than with fathers.

The coresident women in this study also indicated that relations with their parents, frequently their mothers, were salient to their well-being. The value of this theory is in

demonstrating how such parent-child relations mediate women's regrouping process. Negative parent-child relations contribute to diminished well-being (i.e., feeling weaker, less competent, doubting self, becoming negative), which in turn hinders the daughter's capacity to effectively advance towards the attainment of personal goals. It was as if negative parent-child relations have a dampening effect on regrouping.

Parent-child relational conditions associated with heightened dissatisfaction with coresiding included: parental intrusion on personal boundaries (i.e., unsolicited advice, criticism), being treated like a child by parents (i.e., giving direction on choices, lifestyle), the perception of a lack of support or criticism of one's goals and plans, the existence of parents' unresolved problems (i.e., alcoholism, abuse, depression, unhappy marriage) such that parents were perceived as poor models and sources of support, and a negative home environment. Such negative relational conditions had to be dealt with (i.e., by avoiding parents, negotiating boundaries with parents, arguing with parents, receiving counselling), thereby taking time and mental energy away from positive regrouping goals, which could increase the likelihood of an unexpectedly prolonged stay at home. Ultimately, this could result in one feeling stuck and not moving forward. Although parent-child relations affected the regrouping process, generally the daughters did not exhibit a blaming attitude toward their mothers (Caplan, 1989) or fathers.

In addition to negative family relational conditions, individual factors (i.e., beliefs about self as a loser, being older), a diminished social support network, and a subscription to traditional sociocultural scripts could contribute to the experience of faltering in getting started, gaining momentum, or moving forward with the attainment of personal goals.

Moving beyond extant research findings, the value of this study's theoretical model lies in its ability to explicate the relationship between parent-child relations, women's well-being, and regrouping outcomes.

Managing Transitions in Adulthood

Adulthood is increasingly recognized as a period of time characterized by significant change and development (Krupp, 1987). In fact, it has been suggested that we live in a "semipermanent condition of transitionality" (Bridges, 1980, p. 4). In her seminal contribution to the literature, Nancy Schlossberg (1984) defined a transition as "an event or nonevent that results in changes in relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles within the settings of self, work, health, and/or economics." Bridges (1980) viewed transition as a "natural process of disorientation and reorientation that marks the turning points of the path of growth" or as "key times in the natural process of self-renewal" (p. 5). Cowan (1991) describes transitions as "long term processes that result in qualitative reorganization of both inner life and

external behaviour" (p. 5). How individuals manage transitions is of great interest to counselling psychology because transitions often culminate in changes in one's ideas about self and the world, often requiring a modification in one's assumptions and actions that may culminate in growth or deterioration (Schlossberg, 1981).

Relevant to this, the theory illuminates how returning to the parental home is characterized by transition on two levels: (a) the precipitating events leading women to return to the parental home, and (b) returning to the parental home itself. First, women's returns to the parental home often were precipitated by life events such as relationship breakup, unemployment, onset of health problems, post-travel/working abroad, going to college or university, and anticipating making significant career choices or changes in one's life. Such meaningful life-events or life-changes often signalled a crucial time of transition and re-examination in women's lives. This theory explains how some women manage such transitions within the context of their lives. Regrouping at the parental home is a strategy for dealing with anticipated and unanticipated changes in one's life. In response to such events one often needs to regroup--to permit oneself some down-time to recuperate and to reenergize before one can continue onward and determine what to do next.

Schlossberg (1981) observes that social support is essential to successful adaptation, and the female adult

children who return to their parents' homes are strategically mobilizing the resources, assistance, and caring their parents offer in order to weather life's changes, and to enhance their well-being and quality of life. The parental home provides a secure base from which one can recuperate, reenergize, contemplate, and pursue one's lifeplans during times of vulnerability, instability, or uncertainty.

However, the study participants also indicated that the type of social support they received and from whom, could help or hinder their regrouping process. Relevant to this, the literature suggests that social support is a multifaceted concept. For instance, House (1981) proposed a four-component model that is frequently cited in the literature. These components are instrumental support (aid, money, labour, time, help in modifying the environment), informational support (advice, suggestion, directives, information), appraisal support (affirmation, feedback, social comparison), and emotional support (esteem, trust, concern, listening). The women in this study generally preferred to receive emotional and appraisal support from their friends, and instrumental support from their parents (e.g., money and other tangible resources). Indeed, they often valued their connections with friends over their parents when it came to the important business of contemplating one's future plans, brainstorming, having a "sounding board," researching, networking, receiving advice, processing one's emotions, and socializing. They only

considered informational or appraisal support from parents to be helpful when and if they requested it. Unsolicited appraisal or informational support from parents was perceived as intrusive, condescending, judgmental, and undermining to one's feelings of competence. This dynamic often culminated in the perception of being treated like a child, which was highly resented by the women in the sample.

Ultimately, Schlossberg (1981) suggests that the ease of adaptation to a transition will depend on one's perceived and/or actual balance of resources to deficits in terms of the transition itself, the pre-post environment, and the individual's sense of competency, well-being, and health. This project's theory echoes her assertions. For instance, "advancing" within the regrouping process was eased by not having endured a significant loss or crisis, positive parent-child relations, access to parental resources, living environments endowed with sufficient space and privacy, maintenance or expansion of one's social support network, and perceptions of oneself as capable and planful rather than a being indecisive or a loser.

Second, the return home in adulthood also may be considered a significant and non-normative transition in these women's lives as well. Unlike life transitions that present individuals with relatively clear normative demands, such as the tasks accompanying home-leaving to be independent and to carve a career, returning home is considered more nebulous.

The unexpected, unwanted, off-time, or unusual nature of returning home in adulthood implies that it is a transition with no markers that define what is to be done, how to manage, and what to expect.

The present theory fills this gap by suggesting that regrouping may entail a predictable process and trajectory that returnees engage in when they reneest. Regrouping is marked by specific life-span objectives to become financially secure, to establish a career niche, and to individuate with one's parents. It is a time-limited phenomenon, ranging from several months to years, dependent on the nature of returnees' regrouping goals. One can expect that one's ability to regroup with ease or with difficulty may be influenced by the nature of one's goals, the degree of support from friends and family, the degree to which one isolates oneself, the quality of one's immediate environment, the availability of personal and parental resources, and the extent to which one views returning home as a failure as opposed to an opportunity.

Striving for a Better Life and Future

Regrouping goals and success. The women in this study intentionally sought to shape better quality futures and enhance themselves by becoming financially, emotionally, and occupationally stronger from the parental home-base. They were committed to improving or changing their lives in meaningful ways. They contemplated the question of what they wanted in life, what would constitute a meaningful life, and what would

make them happier intrapersonally and interpersonally. The culmination of their contemplation was the establishment of meaningful goals that were actively pursued from the parental home-base. Often the goals for which they actively strived were realized and they could venture out into the world on their own again, as they had ideally envisioned.

With regard to the women's career development goals in particular, I was struck by their determination to find a career niche which would be defined by their feelings of passion for it. For these women, security became a less important factor relative to passion after having worked uninspiring and boring 9-to-5 jobs for many years or having witnessed parents doing so. They were intent on exploring alternatives, connecting with others in potential fields of interest (via networking, information interviewing, job shadowing, discussions with friends and sometimes with parents), and eventually committing to a new career (i.e., becoming a writer was of interest to several daughters who wished to leave occupations in postal, secretarial, and banking occupations; a few other daughters were intent of pursuing careers in human resources, academia, nursing, business, and international development). Moreover, they persisted in determining that their career choices were the right course of action and their persistence to pursue a desired career niche was also manifested in their willingness to pursue such actions from the parental home-base.

The home-base was not considered personally advantageous to the development of one's personal life (e.g., social relations with female and male friends), however it was considered highly advantageous educationally and occupationally given the financial savings and the ability to focus more exclusively in pursuing one's goals. It seemed that these women, in seeking successful career development, are reminiscent of Richie, Fassinger, Prosser, Linn, Johnson, and Robinson's (1997) grounded theory study on the career development process of highly achieving African American-Black and White women. Their theoretical model suggested that passion, persistence, and connection were critical to the career development of highly successful women. Their sample of 18 women were relationally oriented, persistent in the face of obstacles (i.e., sexism, racism), and passionate about their work. Regrouping at the parental home is a means of overcoming perceived obstacles (i.e., lack of money, support) in women's career development, laying the foundation for future success in fulfilling career goals.

Indeed, some women were so committed to making meaningful changes to improve their lives and their futures that they were willing to return to parental homes that they considered dysfunctional or unhealthy for them--particularly families with unresolved interpersonal conflicts, abusive dynamics, or health-related conditions such as depression or alcoholism. This finding has some bearing on Aquilano's (1991) assertions

about the coresidency selection process. He indicates that adult child coresidence is most likely when home conditions are conducive to positive parent-child relations (i.e., parents have positive attitude about return, good parent-child relations overall) and not problematic relations (i.e., parent remarriage, stepfamily). This theory suggests that the "regrouping imperative" may be a condition that overrides the positive selection bias in returning to the parental home. Determination to fulfil personal goals to improve and change one's life may be considered both pragmatic and paramount.

The women's experiences of pursuing life goals from the parental home in order to get ahead in life seems relevant to recent theoretical models of successful development and ageing over the life-span (Baltes & Carstensen, 1996; Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Schulz & Heckhausen, 1996). Baltes and Carstensen (1996) maintain a flexible definition of success, suggesting that successful development implies that individuals reach personal goals--whether these goals parallel ideal or statistical norms or are idiosyncratic. The women in the study seemed to monitor and judge how they were doing, be it faltering or advancing, in relation to how close they were to realizing their personal goals. The women reported that imminent goal attainment and goal fulfilment was associated with feelings of personal fulfilment, pride, and empowerment.

Baltes and Baltes' (1990) formulation of successful human development suggest that the fundamental requirements of

developmental regulation across the lifespan are managing diversity and selectivity and developing the capacity to compensate for failure (e.g., normative developmental failure experiences encountered when individuals attempt to enlarge their competencies, and non-normative or random negative events). Baltes and colleagues, in their theory of selective optimization with compensation have extended their theory to encompass development from infancy to old age. They have achieved this by emphasizing "how individuals and life environments can manage opportunities for, and limits on, resources at all ages" (Marsiske, Lang, Baltes, & Baltes, 1995). Implicit within this view of developmental regulation is the idea that individuals who are able to engage and impact their environments around them for the longest period of time would be judged the most successful.

Heckhausen and Schulz (1995) elaborate upon this, observing that the construct of control is a central theme for characterizing successful human development throughout the lifespan. The underlying assumption of this position is that people hope to create behaviour-event contingencies and thus exert primary control over the environment around them throughout the lifespan. The authors distinguish between primary and secondary control. Primary control targets the external world and attempts to influence the immediate environment external to the individual, whereas secondary control targets the self and attempts to achieve changes

directly within the individual. Both primary and secondary control may involve cognition and action. Optimal development arises by increasing our levels of primary and secondary control and increasing selectivity in one's life domains throughout adulthood.

However, Heckhausen and Schulz (1996, p. 711) do acknowledge an important caveat:

Although this definition implies an absolute definition of success--the more primary control the better--it is important to note that at the individual level, the potential for primary control is limited by the genetic makeup of the individual and the available sociocultural opportunities. Thus, evaluations of success must be tempered by the biological and sociocultural resources of the individual.

Regrouping, perhaps, may be reframed within a life-span model of successful development as a process of selective optimization with compensation (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). Breaking down the multifaceted regrouping process, it seems that processes of "recuperating and reenergizing" approximate Schulz and Heckhausen's (1996) notions of "compensatory primary control" and "compensatory secondary control." The former refers to the use of external resources such as "parental assistance" (i.e., housing, monetary) when the capacities of an individual are insufficient to attain a chosen goal (i.e., financial security, establishing career

niche). The latter serves to buffer the effects of failure or losses (i.e., job loss, relationship breakup). Moreover, regrouping's "contemplation of and pursuit of personal life plans and goals" seems reminiscent of Schulz and Heckhausen's (1996) "selective primary control," which refers to the focused investment of resources such as effort, time, and skills required for a chosen goal (i.e., pursuing post-secondary training for desired career niche). Selective secondary control enhances the value of a chosen goal, while devaluing nonchosen alternatives.

Reframing women's regrouping at the parental home within this life span theory of successful development creates a new perspective by widening the lens to look at the bigger picture of these women's lives. It allows one to appreciate the potential of a wider meaning for the regrouping process with regard to attaining goals and primary control within the lives of the women in this study. This study provides a slice of these women's lives, and it is speculated that their action of regrouping at the parental home during the developmentally important time of early adulthood may have lasting implications for goal attainment and future successes as their lives unfold.

Regrouping and change. Regrouping at the parental home may be considered a powerful change strategy for the women in this study. Relevant to the issue of change is the movement in counselling theory to understand the fundamental principles

and processes of change (Lyddon & Alford, 1993; Mahoney, 1991; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). Prochaska and his colleagues' research program has attempted to identify how individuals change both as a result of their own efforts and as a response to counselling and psychotherapy (McConaughy, Prochaska, & Velicer, 1983; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982, 1986). Their findings suggest that individuals employ a variety of strategies of change that can be located reliably at differing stages of the change process. In their conceptualization, these stages are not assumed to be discrete nor is movement necessarily unidirectional and successive. Prochaska and DiClemente (1986) identified four basic stages of change: (a) precontemplation (individuals are either unaware of a problem or have no desire to change), (b) contemplation (individuals are aware of a problem and begin to think about making a commitment to change), (c) action (individuals actively have begun to alter their behaviour and their environment), and (d) maintenance (individuals have made significant progress toward the desired change and are working toward continuing gains and at preventing relapse).

Prochaska and DiClemente's (1982, 1986) stages of change model suggests that change is quite dynamic, with individuals regressing at times as well as progressing at other times. Relevant to this, the regrouping process, with its oscillating pattern between "faltering" and "advancing," also demonstrates that change can be nonlinear and cyclical. There also is a

striking similarity in the elements of the two models. Like Prochaska and DiClemente's (1986) model, regrouping involves contemplation, planning, initiating action, altering one's behaviour and environment and they both involve working towards a desired change or goal.

As it was observed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1986), it seems that the importance of contemplation as significant work in the regrouping process should be emphasized so that individuals do not become discouraged because they are not yet "doing" things to fulfil their goals. Perhaps extended times of contemplation (i.e., figuring things out, introspection, planning) should be reframed as a necessary and quality step preceding and intertwined with action. As Cochran and Laub (1994) suggest:

While it is generally accurate that agents rely upon action to get things done, more precisely, they rely upon the quality of action. Planning in itself does not forward the end, but good planning does.

Deciding in itself does not forward success, but a well-deliberated decision does. Means in themselves do not forward a happy outcome, but adequate, reasonable means do (p. 169).

However, what is missing from Prochaska and DiClemente's (1982, 1986) stage model of change, when compared to the model of the regrouping process, is an appreciation of how the regrouping process is influenced by contextual conditions such

as one's background, familial relations, living-environment, friendships, and society's sociocultural scripts. This theory explicates how regrouping is not a linear process, but one that oscillates between faltering and advancing towards one's goals, as a result of contextual factors, significant events in one's life, significant actions and interactions with others.

Possible selves. Women's regrouping efforts are intended to shape a stronger self (i.e., who could be assertive, independent and not crave other's approval) and to shape an ideal future occupational self (i.e., who has success, passion, interest, and meaningful work). It was striking how preoccupied and invested women were with their futures. Their current efforts (i.e., to save money, to go to school, to change occupations, to resolve issues with parents) were intended to assure a quality life and to attain a stronger probability that one's future self would be competent, secure, and content. It seemed that when daughters were more focused on their potential idealized self (i.e., as a graduate, a nurse, a writer, a human resources manager, and so on) they felt more secure, confident, and assured of their imminent success in the near future--ultimately enabling them to be financially and emotionally independent of their parents.

In contrast, dwelling on perceptions of one's self as being vulnerable, being financially dependent, being a failure or a loser, "being a bird in a cage," or being stuck at home

were experienced as depressing images that reminded one about one's not moving forward in one's current situation--far removed from one's idealized destination. The perception of one's self as being "on-hold" or "stuck" represented daughter's fears that they would not materialize their hoped-for plans and would never culminate in them being fully independent of their parents. It seems that when daughters are faltering in their regrouping efforts to realize optimal lives and selves that negative perceptions of self are triggered, anxiety is heightened, and self-esteem and self-efficacy are diminished.

Women's future-oriented regrouping goals seem relevant to Markus and Nurius' (1986) work on "possible selves." Possible selves are the future-oriented components of the self-system involved in goal-setting and motivation. The construction of possible selves involves imaginative capacity and self-reflection on the part of the individual to create a set of hoped-for, expected, and feared future selves. A hoped-for self is an aspired self that one desires to become, but which may or may not be realistic. An expected possible self, however, is a self that one believes one can realistically become. When a hoped-for self is viewed as attainable, specific plans and action strategies become attached to that self and the hoped-for self evolves into an expected self (Markus, Cross, & Wurf, 1990). In contrast, when a hoped-for self is seen as unachievable, the plans and motivational

controls needed to attain it do not develop. A feared self is a possible self that one does not want to become, yet fears becoming. The feared self plays an important part in the self-concept by acting as a motivator so that concrete actions are taken to avoid that future possible self.

Findings in this study also corroborate that when women are advancing in their regrouping process, that task-relevant possible selves are salient and that relevant negative or feared selves will be suppressed so that they do not interfere with moving forward (Markus et al., 1990). Moreover, daughters need to be invested, even unwavering in their envisioning positive, hoped-for selves because their parents or other family members can sometimes hold negative messages about their feared selves over them (by suggesting they are unrealistic, naive, unworthy).

The Enduring Parent-Child Connection

Daughters considered their parents to be invaluable sources of assistance in their lives regardless of whether or not they characterized their relationship as "close." Many were grateful to their parents for the opportunity to improve their lives, and some believed they would have been destitute without the assistance of their parents. Although the daughters were highly invested in becoming independent of their parents, they ultimately recognized and highly valued their connection with their parents. The enduring connection with parents, in good times and bad, represents a sense of

belonging and value--that one is not completely alone in the world.

Help Exchange

The social exchange perspective suggests that equitable exchanges between coresiding parents and adult children create more positive family relations. Yet, the daughters in this study explicitly recognized that they had returned to the parental home to help themselves and to receive their parents' assistance. Beyond assisting parents with household maintenance and providing their presence or companionship, daughters focused their time and effort on pursuing their own goals. Moreover, it seemed to be understood that daughters could continue to be the recipients of parents' caring and resources--an extension of a perceived parental obligation to assist in launching daughters successfully into the world. Parents willingly provided the infrastructure for their daughters' regrouping. Daughters often recognized that they could not reciprocate in kind to their parents. Instead, daughters tried to hold up their end or reciprocate by accomplishing their goals (to get an education, start a new career, save money) as soon as possible in order to move out on their own again. Many were anxious to resume their lives on their own again, and to not be a burden or intrusion to their parents.

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations in relation to the

sample that will impact the generalizability of the theory. The majority of the participants were volunteers who self-selected after having read advertisements posted on the UBC campus, in the local community, and in the local media. Although not all of the advertisements offered money as an incentive for volunteering in the study (due to the space constraints in media advertising), some of the volunteers in this study may have been influenced by the offer of an honorarium lottery being drawn at the conclusion of the study. Ultimately, the majority of the participants did not know about the honorarium lottery until after they had already contacted the researcher and agreed to volunteer.

Relevant to the issue of self-selection, early in the recruitment process, boomerang kids frequently declined to be in the study when they learned that in addition to individual and private interviews, it entailed a shared parent-adult child interview. The participants who did not wish to engage in shared parent-adult child interviews cited the following reasons: wishing to preserve their privacy and independence, not wanting to be misunderstood by parents, not wanting to hurt or anger parents, avoiding potential conflict, not wishing to jeopardize the financial and housing assistance they were receiving from parents, and inconvenience. It is unknown how many people actually chose to not be in the study for these reasons and others. Indeed, Caroline's mother indicated that she personally knew several families with

boomerang kids and believed that it would not be a problem to get them to participate in the study. When she asked each one of them (through the mothers) if they would be in the study, she was surprised when they declined. She wondered why they were so reticent to discuss their situation. She remarked to me that it seemed strange, and that she got the distinct impression that they would not be comfortable discussing their situation. She asked, "What's going on in these families that people don't want to talk about it?"

The subset of four boomerang families that did participate in the study, individually and conjointly, are unique in the sense that they were willing to discuss their experience together with the researcher. These participants, relative to those who declined conjoint participation, did not seem to have excessive needs to avoid conflict in parent-child relations. They generally indicated that they had nothing to hide from one another and that they welcomed open discussion of their experience, even if this was potentially sensitive or conflictual. The supplemental information provided by the eight parents who were interviewed strengthened the study findings. They provided their perspective on their own and their daughter's experiences, often supporting and elaborating upon shared coresiding experiences (i.e., launching children, managing boundary dilemmas) but also very revealing in what they did not mention or were unaware of in their daughter's internal lives (i.e., the salience of regrouping, the privacy

around regrouping).

No men and only women self-selected themselves to be in the study. In being willing to explore their private experience with a stranger, it seemed that some of these women were interested in sharing their experience in order to ameliorate personal distress they were feeling, to voice any sources of unhappiness, and to process their concerns and issues with a perceived professional. They suggested that they hoped their trials and tribulations may serve to inform and improve others' experiences.

I wondered if the interest in talking to a counselling psychology researcher attracted women who needed to talk-- meaning that some of the women who self-selected were either presently experiencing some difficulties in coresiding, or had experienced some difficulties and were still trying to resolve the experience. Thus, it seems plausible that women who were having relatively positive or benign experiences of coresiding with their parents may have not selected themselves to be in the study because there was no particular need to talk to someone about the experience. Perhaps they thought they did not have anything significant to say to a counselling psychology researcher.

Another limitation of the research study concerns the generalizability of the theory proposed. More variation in subjects and greater range of interview data can provide a wider applicability of a grounded theory (Chenitz & Swanson,

1986). In this study attempts were made to test the categories, the links between categories, and the evolving interpretations by including women presumed to have different life experiences. The majority of the participants in the sample were able-bodied women from predominantly white, middle class families (as inferred from the data available to the researcher) who live in Vancouver. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain more women who came from families with more varied socioeconomic status, single-parent status, or more diverse ethnic backgrounds. The interviews with the Filipino, East Indian, and Portuguese women in this study are suggestive of the significant influence that the family ethnicity has in shaping the scripts, expectations, goals, and typical interactions of parents and returning adult women. Thus, the concept of "regrouping" may be applicable to any woman who has returned to the parental home to live but the actual experience specific to this concept will be different for women who have different backgrounds, ethnic, and cultural norms.

It should also be acknowledged that the sample is geographically skewed towards the urban, West-coast setting. With few exceptions (i.e., Montreal, Victoria, Wales) the women coresided with their parents in Vancouver. Several women noted that Vancouver is a city that is particularly expensive to live in. In contrast, cities like Winnipeg and Edmonton were considered much more affordable. Given this, would the

experience of returning to the parental home be different in a more economically viable setting? How would the experience differ if the setting was a small town versus a city?

Moreover, Canada is an enormous country characterized by distinct geographical and regional differences. How might the returning home experience be influenced by the lifestyle practices characteristic of distinct geographical regions (i.e., West Coast, Prairies, East-Coast)?

The study's sample included women who were currently coresiding with their parents and women who had coresided with their parents but were now living independently. For those subjects who were already living independently, concerns about retrospective accounts being muddled by the possible effects of selective attention and memory lapses were minimized by only including the women if they had coresided with parents quite recently, not more than a year ago. These women were able to provide information about the outcomes of regrouping at the parental home, answers to which currently coresiding daughters who are still in process could not respond.

Finally, it would be remiss not to mention that the study's findings can be compromised by the biases of the researcher. Although the interview format was semi-structured and used open-ended questions it is possible that not all aspects of women's experience of returning to coreside with parents had been included in the resultant theory. For instance, no explicit attempt was made to explore how the

women's sexual orientation may have influenced their coresiding experience. Perhaps in the absence of such a direct attempt, some women did not feel comfortable enough to express how their sexual orientation may have affected their experience.

Potential bias in interpreting the data was redressed by consultation with the grounded theory analytic group that was headed by the dissertation methodologist. Through the process of joint open coding on segments of transcribed text, ongoing review and discussion of the development of codes, hypotheses, and emerging analytic memos and figures the grounded theory analytic group provided essential feedback on whether or not the researcher's interpretations were sound or suspect.

Generally, sound interpretations were grounded closely in the data, and did not go far beyond the participant's words. Suspect interpretations, which were challenged, often reflected "pet ideas" from the researcher's own background, training, or experience. Of course, the participants also assisted in maintaining the integrity of the data and the ongoing interpretations. In addition, the continual refinement of the interview protocol, in response to tentative themes and patterns that were generated in the open coding process, creates an iterative process between researcher and respondents. The researcher generates codes, themes, and hunches based on the data and this shapes ongoing interactions with new participants who share their experiences.

Participants' reactions to the tentatively presented "regrouping" concept were very encouraging. The concept had high face validity that immediately resonated with participants, and it was a stimulus to further exploration of their experience. As the theory was being fleshed out during the analytic process, participants were asked increasingly refined questions to test ideas and to check whether or not the evolving theory being generated was a valid representation of their experience. Their reactions, feedback, and elaborations ensured that the theory was an accurate representation of their experience.

Implications for Counselling Practice and Self-Help

Johnson and Wilkinson (1995) observe that "although it seems clear that some families have difficulty adjusting to the re-nesting transition because of a return to old dependency and caretaking roles, extant literature reveals that about 50% of the families are comfortable with the living arrangement" (p. 128). Mitchell and Gee (1996) echo that the majority of families cope well with the parent-adult child coresidence, with 73% of coresiding parents being very satisfied with their marriages. Therefore, social scientists and counsellors have reserved their advice, solutions, and interventions for those individuals and families that have difficulties when adult children coreside.

To date, the self-help books written on how to deal with adult children returning home target parents and provide them

with tips on how to empathize, communicate, set expectations, goals, and deadlines for coresidency (Kingsmill & Schlesinger, 1998; Okimoto & Stegall, 1987; Weiner, 1997). Community workshops (e.g., UBC's Continuing Education Fall 1997: "Boomerang Kids or Revolving Door Parenting") that have sprung up also target parents' learning how to deal with parenting "boomerang kids." There is an obvious lack of counselling interventions or self-help books designated to assist those adult children who may experience difficulties when returning to the parental home. This study attempts to close this gap.

Richardson (1993) once observed that a central criterion of knowledge is its usefulness to the practitioners who work to improve lives, especially pertaining to goals related to both development and well-being. This study's findings does imply some pragmatic suggestions to counselling practitioners and to adult children who have returned to the parental home. It is also reassuring to know that several study participants already mentioned how helpful professional counselling was in easing their regrouping and coresiding experiences. The following sections on facilitating personal development and facilitating family relations are intended to offer some guidelines and potential interventions that counsellors may use to assist those adult children who have experienced some difficulties with returning to the parental home.

Facilitating Personal Development

Clarifying Personal Goals

Returning to coreside at the parental home is much more tolerable and productive for an adult child when one knows what one hopes to accomplish while living at home. Clarifying the nature of one's goals and expectations may empower a returnee, reducing one's uncertainty about the future and restoring one's sense of self-efficacy and competence-- particularly if a set-back or loss precipitated one's return home. Establishing very specific goals to save a certain amount of money, to receive a particular college degree, to develop one's career niche, or to resolve an issue with one's parent(s) also creates the sense that one has a worthwhile purpose that is accompanied by an indeterminate but temporary timeframe. Knowing that a return home is temporary reframes the return as a finite transition with an ending. This is particularly reassuring if there are any difficulties in parent-child relations.

Weighing Pros and Cons

Weighing the pros and cons of returning home and while remaining at the parental home should be encouraged. Although returning to the parental home may be financially beneficial, and/or permit one to further educational and occupational goals, it seems that certain conditions can be emotionally and spiritually diminishing for women. The following conditions seem to hinder women's regrouping efforts: unresolved differences between parents, siblings, and returning children; past and/or present emotional and/or physical abuse; parental

alcoholism and parental depression.

Maintaining One's Self-Esteem

Reframing an adult child's return home as an opportunity to regroup in order to get ahead or to get one's life on-track, rather than interpreting it as a set-back, failure, or loss can be helpful to restoring and maintaining a positive evaluation of oneself. Encouraging returnees to focus on "hoped-for selves" (i.e., as having a particular career identity, as being stronger, and so on), rather than "feared selves" (i.e., as on-hold, stuck, failed), will also assist returnees in their attempts to fulfil personal goals and feel hopeful about the future.

Seeking Social Support

The daughters who seemed to be faltering the most were the ones who had become isolated at the parental home--allowing their fears of social judgement, and concerns about parental supervision or intrusiveness to diminish their social support. Gibson and Brown (1992) observe the importance of mobilizing social support in combating the effects of stress--qualifying that different types of social support may be desired from different persons. This theory suggests that regrouping is significantly facilitated by the social and emotional support of friends. In contrast, parents' support was often limited to instrumental support (i.e., finances, housing, tangible resources), unless the parents were perceived to be a particularly credible source of support by

their daughters.

Shaping One's Environment

Schulz and Heckhausen (1996) suggest that optimal development may be facilitated through the assertion of primary control, meaning the exertion of control over our immediate, external environment. Women experienced higher satisfaction with living at the parental home, and their well-being was heightened, when they took the initiative to make a part of their parent's home their own. Creating a living space that was exclusively one's own (i.e., bedroom) permits one to spend time alone, to have privacy, to study, to socialize, and to express oneself through the environment by decorating or using one's own furniture or treasured belongings that had been acquired when while having lived independently of parents.

Facilitating Family Relations

Having Realistic Expectations of Parents

Adult children who have returned home frequently complain that their parents treat them like children. They also complain that their parents do not acknowledge how they have grown and changed (while they were living on their own)--to become their own unique self with sometimes differing ideas, values, and lifestyles. Sometimes adult returnees allow these dynamics to diminish their sense of competence, energy, and optimism. Counsellors may need to remind adult returnees to have realistic expectations about their parents' actions and

reactions to them. Returnees must be cognizant that older or elderly parents, who are especially invested in the parenting role for cultural or personal reasons, may be particularly unwilling to modify parent-child relations in a less hierarchical manner. In anticipating and accepting this in advance, adult returnees may be able to reduce or at least minimize the occurrence of power struggles in attempts to change the status quo with parents.

Being Sensitive to Mothers

In order to preserve or enhance parent-child relations while coresiding it is suggested that adult daughters may need to be particularly sensitive to their mothers (Umberson, 1992). Mothers take their roles in maintaining family relations and the family household quite seriously--often experiencing more benefits and more emotional costs as a result (Antonucci, 1990). Daughters can expect to spend more time with their mothers in shared household activities, and many mothers remain territorial about the use and maintenance of the living environment. For example, Caroline's mother had headed several family meetings to ease the transition to coresiding. Mutual expectations, household standards, and lifestyle issues (i.e., privacy, social life) were redressed in advance. In lieu of this approach, the majority of mothers and daughters preferred to deal with issues as they arose. Often mothers' complaints seemed picky or trivial to daughters who saw themselves as involved with much more important tasks

in their lives. It is recommended that they may need to actively develop empathy for their mothers' perspectives in order to prevent unnecessary conflict or misunderstanding. Ultimately the women in this study suggested that their relationships with their mothers could be more intense and "high maintenance," relative to fathers who were experienced as more peripheral, but working things out with mothers was considered important because the relationship was so highly valued.

Privacy and Boundaries

Johnson and Wilkinson (1995) observe that when adult children return home, they cannot rely on physical distance to attain their developmental goals. Close proximity within the parental home means that one must strive to create a balance between creating psychological space for oneself and seeking out connections with others. Securing optimal psychological space for oneself may be facilitated by negotiating a clear set of boundaries and expectations with one's parents so that they do not become intrusive.

Cross Cultural Dynamics

The experience of returning home to coreside with parents may be influenced by the cultural background or ethnicity of the family of origin. The white (i.e., European) experience varies from the East Indian, Filipino, or Portuguese experience. Moreover, often returning adult children have already adopted the values, beliefs, and expectations of their

Canadian cohort, which may be at odds with those of their parents--especially if parents adhere to traditional cultural norms, expectations, and beliefs about hierarchical parent-child relations, and conservative ideas about premarital intimate relations. Daughters, under these conditions, may end up accommodating their parents' standards and expectations in order to maintain smooth relations. This may potentially compromise significant aspects of self-development. Moreover, they may feel pressured to remain at the parental home longer than they would like to. Learning to manage this cross-cultural dynamic may ease daughters' regrouping process.

Implications for Social Policy

Given the increasing postponement of marriage, prolonged post-secondary school attendance, youth unemployment, and ongoing federal and provincial cut-backs, Veevers and Mitchell (1998) observe that returning to the parental home will be an increasingly popular strategy for "optimizing transitions into adulthood" (p. 106). In light of current societal and urban conditions, these authors assert that it may become a "necessity" for many young adults to return home to live with parents in order to fulfil expectations regarding travel, home ownership, and employment.

However, Mitchell and Gee (1995) also point out that not all young adults have the opportunity to coreside with their parents while attending university or attempting to save money. This creates the distinct possibility that some young

adults may face short-term and long-term disadvantages in the educational and employment markets, thereby compromising their future lives. Mitchell and Gee (1995) have asserted that the Canadian government's movement towards privatization in the welfare system and policy inattention to young adults, coupled with an assumption that families will look after their own, has planted the seeds of increasing social inequality in Canadian society. Mitchell and Gee (1995) have recommended that legislation and program development must be refined in order to meet the needs of today's young adults. They suggest short-term and long-term solutions designed to alleviate youth poverty and unemployment by recommending that the Canadian government provide work programmes, job counselling, training, and placement, sufficient minimum wage, job security and benefits, government-sponsored student loans, grants for students to live independently of parents, and affordable housing.

Unfortunately, these idealistic policy recommendations take time to implement and they also may not be financially feasible for the Canadian government to comprehensively provide. Moreover, social policy aimed at the economic level of the boomerang phenomenon do not take into account the myriad of emotional and psychological reactions that accompany returning home in adulthood. Nor does it take into account the social phenomenon of our increasingly extended life spans, in which the traditional demarcation points for adulthood seem

increasingly arbitrary. Within the individual and within the family there is an initial sense of confusion, marginalization, and isolation that is associated with an adult returning home--the expected life script has not unfolded as anticipated. Indeed, Sheehy (1995) observes that "We live in the postmodern world, where anything is possible and almost nothing is certain," and she concludes that "there is no longer a standard life cycle. People are increasingly able to customize their life cycles" (pp. 14-15). The women and their parents fared better when they appreciated this, and embraced the notion that today's sociocultural scripts are different than parent's sociocultural scripts concerning acceptable milestones in adult development. Today's developmental timetable seems to have shifted by 10 years--career establishment, marriage and childbearing are all delayed for today's adults (Sheehy, 1995). When the women and their parents began to realize that they were not alone in their situation, that many other parents and daughters were experiencing boomeranging and its associated financial and career developmental concerns, they were able to normalize the experience as well.

Socially, economically, and culturally our post-modern world in the new millennium is rapidly shifting and individuals and families need to be educated and prepared for this reality. In the past, individuals and families have had to accommodate and adjust to societal changes, and they must

be prepared to do so again. Perhaps young adults should not be in such a rush to leave the parental home to begin with. Perhaps post-secondary education should be pursued at the parental home, and only after secure employment is attained should young adults move out to live independently. In conjunction with delayed home-leaving, perhaps there also should be increased attention to developing income tax incentives or deductions for families that continue to care for children into adulthood. Certainly, it has been acknowledged that many young adults leave home before they are ready (Gee et al., 1995). Premature home-leaving may incur heightened debt on the behalf of young adults--thereby necessitating reliance on parents for financial assistance and increasing the need to return to the parental home.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some possibilities for future research based on the theory are as follows. It would be interesting to evaluate the theory with more diverse ethnic/cultural groups of women who have returned to the parental home to live. While this study dealt with a group of predominantly white, middle-class Canadians (of European ethnicity), the experiences of the East Indian, the Filipino, and the Portuguese women in the study hinted at the variations in the regrouping experience due to cultural/ethnic beliefs and practices. Examining the application of this theory to women of more diverse ethnic backgrounds (i.e., Italian, Greek, Portuguese, Chinese, East

Indian) would be of particular interest since these groups have close kinship norms and cultural practices (i.e., not leaving home until marriage, extended households, arranged marriages among traditional East Indians) that diverge from the traditions of white, middle class Canadians. Moreover, the demographic make-up of Vancouver consists of a large number of Chinese and East Indian communities that could be accessed. Being able to speak the native tongue of these populations may be a necessity for the researcher.

Investigating the applicability of the grounded theory for men who return home would be interesting. Further research could determine whether or not men differ from women's experiences of regrouping at the parental home. I am curious if men's regrouping goals are similar or different from women. I anticipate that men would also engage in regrouping at the educational/occupational level. However, I am uncertain if men would pursue the resolution of parent-child issues in order to individuate and become stronger as some women had described. Moreover, I wonder if the conditions that hinder versus help men's regrouping process would be the same as women's. Would men experience the same level of parental intrusiveness that women experienced with their parents? Do men who have returned home to coreside feel like they have to fend off parents' well-meaning advice and comments (about career choices, dating choices, lifestyle choices, and so on) to a similar degree? Would men experience the return home as "hard on friendships"

as women had, thereby diminishing their social support system? Such variation in the theory based on gender remains to be examined.

The substantive theory of women's regrouping at the parental home may also be enhanced through triangulating multiple data sources in future research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note that "the combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation (p. 2). Perhaps interviews with returning adult children and their parents could be supplemented with empirical measures on variables that seem relevant to the regrouping process (i.e., self-efficacy, self-esteem).

Concluding Remarks

Grounded theory assumes that any group shares an unarticulated social problem that is resolved through a social-psychological process (Glaser, 1978). This study's contribution is the generation of a substantive theory of women's experiences of regrouping at the parental home. Unlike the extant literature, it explains what returning women consider to be their core issue; namely regrouping in order to get ahead or to get a fresh start in life financially, educationally, occupationally, and personally. By focusing on the experiences of women who have returned to the parental home to live, insights have been attained about women's journey to become stronger successful individuals. Staying

close to the women's shared experiences revealed how their experience of faltering or advancing towards the successful resolution of personal goals was embedded in a life context in which parents, friendships, and society play an influential role.

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Appendix A

Sample Advertisements in Flyers and Media

Boomerang Family Research

The Counselling Psychology Department is looking for adults who have returned home to live. They and their parents are invited to participate in a study focusing on the experience, interpersonal relations and responses to this change in the family. Involves confidential interviews. For more information, please call Michele at 432-1915.

Research Study

WHAT:

The purpose of this research is to find out what returning home in adulthood is like.

WHO:

Adults (mid-twenties to forties) who have returned home to live with their parents, and who have currently been living with them for at least 6 months.

WHERE:

A confidential interview at UBC.

WHY:

3 Chances to WIN \$100!

Leave a message for MICHELE A. PASELUIKHO with UBC's Counselling Psychology Department at 822-5259 or 269-9986.

Female Volunteers

Daughters who have returned home to live with their parents are needed for a Ph.D. psychology study. An interview at your convenience is required. Please call Michele at 269-9986.

Appendix B

Research Sample's Demographic Characteristics

	1*	2*	3*	4*
Age	44	30	25	29
Ethnicity	British	Scottish	Brit/Scott	Scott/Fr.Can.
Education	B.A.	B.A.	B.Sc.	B.A.
Occupation	Unemployed	Student/Health Care	Manager	Banking
Income @ Parental Home	Welfare	Student Loans	\$30,000+	\$37,500+
Duration @ Parental Home	3 years	2 years	10 months	19 months
Duration Since Leaving Home	-	6 months	-	0
Number of Brothers	1	1	0	1
Age of Brother(s)	41	33	-	20
Number of Sisters	0	0	1	1
Age of Sister(s)	-	-	23	27
Number of children	0	2	0	0
Satisfaction Living @ Home	-	5	6	4
Total Number of Returns Home	2	2	1	2
Father's Age	74	59	50	60
Father's Ethnicity	British	Scottish	British	Scott/French
Father's Education	B.Sc.	High School	B.Com.	M.Sc.
Father's Occupation	Retired	Retired	Accountant	Banker
Father's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	\$100,000+
Mother's Age	73	52	50	58
Mother's Ethnicity	British	Scottish	Scott/Italian	Scottish
Mother's Education	High School	High School	B.Ed.	M.A.
Mother's Occupation	Retired	Retired	Teacher	Teacher
Mother's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.

*subset of daughters and parents interviewed separately and conjointly

N/A: not available

Research Sample's Demographic Characteristics (Continued)

	5	6	7
Age	27	24	27
Ethnicity	Irish/German	Danish	Fillipino
Education	B.A./B.Sc.	B.Mus.	B.Sc.Nurs.
Occupation	Occupational Therapist	Student	Student
Income @ Parental Home	\$40,000+	None	N/A
Duration @ Parental Home	6 months	1 month	3.5 years
Duration Since Leaving Home	1 day	-	2 months
Number of Brothers	0	0	1
Age of Brother(s)	-	-	older
Number of Sisters	1	1	1
Age of Sister(s)	24	22	older
Number of children	0	0	0
Satisfaction Living @ Home	5	1-3	4
Total Number of Returns Home	2	1	1
Father's Age	59	58	62
Father's Ethnicity	German	Danish	Fillipino
Father's Education	B.Com	High School	N/A
Father's Occupation	Accountant	Lumber	Bookkeeper/Unemployed
Father's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.
Mother's Age	55	55	57
Mother's Ethnicity	Irish	Danish	Fillipino
Mother's Education	B.Nurs.	B.Ed.	B.Nurs.
Mother's Occupation	P/T Nurse	Teacher	Nurse
Mother's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.

N/A: not available

Research Sample's Demographic Characteristics (Continued)

	8	9	10	11
Age	27	33	28	30
Ethnicity	Scottish	East Indian	European	English/Dutch
Education	B.A.	Ph.D. Cand.	Gr. 12	B.A.
Occupation	Canada Post	GTA/Student	Student	Secretary
Income @ Parental Home	\$32,000	\$4-8,000	Savings	\$30,000
Duration @ Parental Home	2 years	3 years	7 months	3.5 years
Duration Since Leaving Home	1 year	-	-	-
Number of Brothers	0	1	1	0
Age of Brother(s)	-	26	30	-
Number of Sisters	1	0	0	1
Age of Sister(s)	25	-	-	28
Number of children	0	0	0	0
Satisfaction Living @ Home	2-3	5	5	5
Total Number of Returns Home	2	1	1	1
Father's Age	53	N/A	53	59
Father's Ethnicity	Scottish	East Indian	European	Dutch
Father's Education	N/A	Ph.D.	High School	Ph.D.
Father's Occupation	Banker	Professor	Sales	Geological Consultant
Father's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.
Mother's Age	50	N/A	53	57
Mother's Ethnicity	N/A	East Indian	European	English
Mother's Education	High School	Ph.D.	G.D.A.	High School
Mother's Occupation	Retail	Professor	Not employed	Journalist
Mother's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.

N/A: not available

Research Sample's Demographic Characteristics (Continued)

	12	13	14	15
Age	34	29	25	30
Ethnicity	Welsch	Portugese	German	Ukranian
Education	Diploma	M.A.	B.Sc.	Diploma
Occupation	Secretary	Counsellor	Technician	Clerk
Income	Welfare	N/A	\$17,000	\$1,500/month
Duration @ Parental Home	1 year	4 months	1 year; 1 month	one month
Duration Since Leaving Home	1 year	-	4 months	-
Number of Brothers	2	0	2	1
Age of Brother(s)	35 & 31	-	26 & 17	33
Number of Sisters	0	1	1	2
Age of Sister(s)	-	21	21	29 & 32
Number of children	0	0	0	0
Satisfaction Living @ Home	-	6	5.5	3
Total Number of Returns Home	4	1	1	3
Father's Age	67	Deceased	65	60
Father's Ethnicity	Welsch	Portugese	German	Ukranian
Father's Education	B.A.	Elementary	B.Sc.	Engineer
Father's Occupation	Retired	N/A.	Retired	Retired
Father's Income	N/A.	N/A.	\$70,000	N/A.
Mother's Age	64	58	56	60
Mother's Ethnicity	German	Portugese	German	Canadian
Mother's Education	High School	Elementary	B.A.	High School
Mother's Occupation	Retired	Cleaning	Homemaker	Homemaker
Mother's Income	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.

N/A: not avaiable

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Research Participant's Consent Form
Family-Form

I _____ consent to participate in the research project "Explaining Parent-Child Experience when Adult-Children Return Home to Live". This research is being conducted by Michele Paseluikho, a doctoral candidate affiliated with the Counselling Psychology Department at U.B.C.

I understand that participation in this study will entail that Michele visit my home in order to talk to me about what it is like when an adult child returns home to live; from both the perspective of the parent(s) and the adult-child. The timing and length of these visits will be arranged to suit our convenience.

I understand that the conversations I have with Michele will be audiotaped and transcribed later. Michele may also write notes about her observations. I understand that I may be asked to meet with Michele on several occasions. Altogether, approximately 3 to 6 hours of observation and conversation may take place with my family over a period of two to four months.

Talking about my family's situation to a "stranger" may be somewhat uncomfortable at times. I have the personal discretion to share whatever aspects of family life I would like to. I also have the right to not answer any question at any time, without any repercussions for ourselves. Although participation in this study may involve some loss of privacy, Michele will take precautions to prevent this: (1) audiotapes and written materials will not be identified by our names, but with a number known only to Michele; (2) tapes, transcriptions, field notes, and written materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that only Michele will use; (3) only small segments of our conversations will be shared with Michele's dissertation committee, and they will not be identified directly with my family, and finally (4) all the data will be destroyed upon completion and publication of the project's results.



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Research Participant's Consent Form Individual-Form

I _____ consent to participate in the research study "Explaining Parent-Child Experience when Adult-Children Return Home to Live". This research is being conducted by Michele A. Paseluikho, M.Sc. She is a doctoral candidate affiliated with the Counselling Psychology Department at U.B.C.

I understand that participation in this study will entail a confidential interview with the researcher at U.B.C. in order to talk about what it is like when an adult-child returns home to live with his or her family.

I understand that the interview I have with the researcher will be audiotaped later for data analysis. I understand that the interview with the researcher may be approximately one to two hours long. After the interview, the researcher may follow-up with some telephone calls to clarify certain points or to ask additional questions that may have been overlooked at the interview. At any time, I have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from this study.

Talking about my personal/family situation to a "stranger" may initially feel awkward. I understand that I have the personal discretion to share whatever aspects my life that I would like to. I also have the right to not answer any question at any time, without any repercussion to myself. Although participation in this study may involve some loss of privacy, the researcher will take precautions to prevent this: (1) audiotapes and written materials will not be identified by names, but with a number known only to the researcher; (2) tapes, transcriptions, field notes, and written materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher will use; (3) segments of interviews that may be shared with the researcher's dissertation committee will not be identified directly, and finally (4) all the data will be destroyed upon completion and publication of the project's results.

Appendix E

GROUNDED THEORY RESEARCH PROJECT
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE: _____
PROJECT ID#: _____

Age: _____

Were you born in Canada: ____ Yes ____ No
If NO, when did you immigrate to Canada? _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____

Highest grade in school, college, or university completed:

Are you currently working on a post-secondary degree?
____ Yes ____ No

If yes, what degree are you now working on: _____

Are you presently employed:
Full time ____ Part-time ____ No ____

If yes, what is your present occupation: _____

What is your approximate personal income: _____

What is your current status: (Check as many as apply to you)

Single ____
Single Parent ____
Married ____
Separated ____
Divorced ____

Amount of time you and your parent(s) have lived together
since you have returned home to live:

Your reason(s) for returning home to live:

Number of times you have returned home: _____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE (Continued)

How satisfied are you with your current living circumstances:

Very Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Satisfied

Please indicate the ages of any brothers or sisters:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Are there other family members living in the home?
____ Yes ____ No

Who else lives at home with you and your parent(s)?

____ Brother(s)	____ Aunt	____ Grandmother	____ Children
____ Sister(s)	____ Uncle	____ Grandfather	____ Other

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT PARENTS

Parents' Marital Status:

☐ Still Married
☐ Separated
☐ Divorced
☐ Widowed

**Father's Age: _____

Was your father born in Canada: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, when did your father immigrate to Canada? _____

Father's Race/Ethnic Identity: _____

Father's Highest grade in school, college, or university completed:

Is your father presently employed?

Full time ☐ Part-time ☐ No ☐ Retired ☐

If yes, present occupation: _____

What is father's approximate income? _____

**Mother's Age: _____

Was your mother born in Canada: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, when did your mother immigrate to Canada? _____

Mother's Race/Ethnic Identity: _____

Mother's Highest grade in school, college or university completed:

Is your mother presently employed:

Full time ☐ Part-time ☐ No ☐ Retired ☐

If yes, what is present occupation: _____

What is mother's approximate income: _____

Appendix F

Initial Interview Guide (for the Adult-child)

1. Describe your reasons for returning home, and the circumstances around your returning home to live with your parents.
2. Tell me what the experience of returning home to live with your parent(s) has been like for you.
3. As an adult, what are the benefits of living together?
4. As an adult, what are the problems of living together?
5. How do you manage, handle, or deal with living at home?
6. How has returning home affected:
 - a) your relationships (with parents, friends, partners)
 - b) how you view yourself or your identity
 - c) how you see your future

Initial Interview Guide (for the Parent(s))

1. Tell me what the experience of "X" returning home to live has been like for you.
2. As a parent, what are the benefits of living together?
3. As a parent, what are the problems of living together?
4. How do you manage, handle, or deal with "X" living at home?
5. How has "X's" returning home affected:
 - a) your relationships (with spouse; "X"; family)?
 - b) how you view yourself?
 - c) how you view "X"?
 - d) how you see your future?

Initial Interview Guide (for Parent(s) & Adult-Child)

1. Describe the circumstances around "X" returning home to live.
2. As a family, what are the benefits of living together?
3. As a family, what are the problems of living together?
4. As a family, how have you managed, handled, or dealt with living with one another again at this point in your lives?
5. As a family, how has "X's" returning home to live affected:
 - a) your relationships with one another?
 - b) your family overall?
 - c) your life overall?

APPENDIX G

Revised Interview Guide for Daughters as the Study Progressed

To orient me to your background, I'd like you to tell me what you have been doing these days in your life... both before moving back home and currently?

What are your short-term and long-term goals/plans at this time?

How much do parental or societal expectations influence the plans you have made for your life (re: education; work; marriage; having a family)?

How does returning home fit or not fit with your plans and goals?

What are you hoping to achieve in returning home to live at this time?

Describe the circumstances around your returning home to live.

How long do you plan on being back home?

Tell me what the overall experience of returning home to live with your parent(s) has been like for you.

As an adult, what are the benefits of living together at home?

As an adult, what are the problems or most difficult things about living together at home?

How do you manage, handle, or deal with living at home?

How has returning home affected:

- a) your relationships (with parents; partners; & so on)?
- b) how you view your "self" or your "identity"?
- c) your future?

Relevant to your sense of self, how has returning home affected you:

- a) psychologically
- b) emotionally
- c) socially
- d) financially
- e) spiritually
- f) occupationally

When do you feel the best, and the worst, about yourself?

**Revised Interview Guide for Daughters as the Study Progressed
(Continued)**

Provide a metaphor/analogy/image that describes:

- a) yourself before you returned home to live and were on your own
- b) yourself while you are living at home
- c) your family experience living at home
- d) what returning home is or means to you (in the big picture)

In comparing yourself to your friends and peers, do you consider yourself to be falling behind, being on-time, or moving ahead with your life plans or "personal timetable" at an acceptable pace?

*Other daughters I have interviewed have told me that, for them, returning to live at home is about "regrouping".

(OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION IF PROMPTED)

Generally, regrouping can mean one is taking a time-out in order to reorganize and contemplate one's self and one's direction in life, and in order to become stronger. Regrouping can also be about refocusing one's time and energy to certain goals and plans so that one can move forward in life.

- Can you tell me if this ("regrouping") fits for you?
- How are you regrouping in your life/situation?
- What is the focus or priority of your regrouping?
- What is regrouping like for you?
- What conditions facilitate your regrouping efforts?
- What conditions hinder/frustrate your regrouping efforts?
- Do you prefer to regroup on your own, or with the help of others?
- Who is helpful or unhelpful to you as you regroup?
- What will be the (ideal) outcome of your regrouping efforts?

Figure 1: Theoretical Schematic Of Daughter's Regrouping At The Parental Home

