A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUSLY LAUNCHED ADULTS

A Dissertation

by

DEMETREA NICOLE FARRIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2011

Major Subject: Sociology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Dudley L. Poston, Jr.
Committee Members,	Jane Sell
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ABSTRACT

A Quantitative Analysis of Previously Launched Adults. (December 2011)

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Young adults are moving back into their family homes and are now living with their parents. Common terms for the adult children include "previously launched adult" and "incompletely launched adult." I used data from Wave 3 (2001 to 2003) of the National Survey of Families and Households to analyze the relationship between different life course and family development variables and the launching status of young adults. This dissertation specifically uses the dependent variable "launching status" of either previously launched or failure to launch. I undertake two multinomial logistic regression models with the dependent variable "launching status." I then proceed to a replication of the original analysis with two other multinomial logistic regression models, using the dependent variable "launching status" and the data gathered from Wave 2 of the National Survey of Families and Households (1992 to 1994). I conclude with a descriptive analysis of the 2009 American Community Survey to describe current trends of adult child and parent coresidence.

The first analysis uses various life course variables as independent variables and then introduces control variables into the models. The second analysis uses various

family development and family structure variables and then introduces control variables into the models. After running the two models using the Wave 3 data, I determined that the life course variables had a significant relationship with launching status, and the family development variables did not prove to be very significantly related to launching status.

The replication of the Wave 3 analysis with the Wave 2 data showed similar results. Like the original analysis, the life course variables were significantly related to launching status, whereas the family development variables were not significantly related to launching status.

The descriptive results using the American Community Survey data show that a majority of young adults who are living at home are between the ages of 18 and 24, are male, are White and non-Hispanic, and have a high school education or less. The major contribution of this research is that it differentiates between those who have never left the family home and those who left and then returned. This is the first study, to my knowledge, to do so.

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Beryline Farris.

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I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Alex McIntosh, Dr. Rogelio Saenz, and especially Dr. Jane Sell, for their help and input in this dissertation and in my graduate studies. I would like to thank Jane for being there to talk to when I needed an ear and to lend sage advice about different things throughout the years. Jane is an extraordinary professor and mentor and I am so glad that I have gotten to know her throughout my time at Texas A&M. I would like to thank Dr. Carol Albrecht, my first mentor at Texas A&M University, who was a very important part of my undergraduate

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NOMENCLATURE

ACS	American Community Survey
CPS	Current Population Survey
NSFH	National Survey of Families and Households
SIPP	Survey of Income and Program Participation

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

College graduates and other young adults are moving with increased frequency back into their family homes and are living with their parents. According to data from the 2000 U.S. Census, in 1970 12.5 million 18 to 34 year olds lived at home, whereas in 2000 17.8 million 18 to 34 year olds lived at home (Furman 2005). A recent profile of the U.S. based on 2000 census data described our country as having about 67 million young adults aged 18 to 34. If 17.8 million of these young adults are living back at home, this is not an insignificant percentage. Indeed, about 26 percent, or just over one-quarter of all young adults are living at home with their parents. Attributable factors include financial problems such as credit card and student loan debt, dismal job opportunities and a tight job market, economic downturn, low salaries for entry-level jobs and high housing costs (Furman 2005). Some more traditional demographic factors include factors such as a delay in the average age of marriage for both men and women, multiculturalism, and the emphasis on intergenerational living. With multiculturalism, some traditional ethnic groups are still morally opposed to cohabitation and delayed home leaving has become increasingly common and is more likely among traditional ethnic groups due to cultural traditions (Landale and Oropesa 2007; Mitchell 2009).

This dissertation follows the style of *American Sociological Review*.

In addition to the more traditional leanings of particular ethnic groups, other groups may find that changing economic opportunities make living at home a preferred lifestyle.

In the past, during periods in the family life cycle known as the "launching" and "empty nest" periods, social norms dictated that adult children in the United States were expected to move out on their own, get married, and start a family (Clemens & Axelson 1985). Now, with such a large number of young adults still living at home, common terms have developed for these adult children such as "previously launched adult" and "incompletely launched adult" (Schnaiberg & Goldenberg 1989). A recent article in *The New York Times Magazine* discussed the issue of the "failure to launch" and "boomerang kids" (Henig 2010: 30). Television shows and other media sources are featuring grown children moving back in with their parents. For example, a cover of "The New Yorker" from last spring prominently depicted this trend. A young man hangs up his new Ph.D. in his childhood bedroom and has a cardboard box at his feet. This appears to be happening in many different kinds of families. Not only is the trend of adult children moving back home becoming more common, but young people also seem to be taking longer to reach adulthood. Whereas during the middle of the 20th century young adulthood consisted of the transitions of completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying, and having a child, these days many young adults are completing these transitions later in life or not completing them at all. Jeffrey Arnett, a psychologist from Clark University has suggested that society "views the 20s as a distinct life stage, call[ed] "emerging adulthood" (2010: 30). This stage of "emerging adulthood" contains aspects such as identity exploration, instability, and self-focus.

In most industrialized countries, the time period from the late teens through the twenties are years of profound change and importance (Arnett 2000). In the early part of their twenties, young people are obtaining the education and work training that will provide the foundation for the rest of their adult lives. Also occurring in this time are fluctuations in residence, employment and relationships. Presently, young adults seem to be caught in a sort of limbo between childhood and adulthood. For example, at age 18 people can vote and join the military, but they cannot drink until age 21. People who are full time students are considered "dependents" by the Internal Revenue Service and can continue to stay on their parents' health insurance plans until age 26. It seems that society is unable to agree upon when it is that someone is old enough to take on full adult responsibilities. Although many believe that there is a definite timeline, it does not appear to simply be a matter of age. Some scholars (see Rosenfeld 2007) have argued that the notion of a "boomerang effect" is fictional. Rosenfeld believes that young adults are living on their own and that this trend has been increasing for young adults since the 1950's. However, the large percentage of adult children moving back in with their parents is a clear indication that the phenomenon of previously launched adults is something that deserves further attention, as there are statistics to show that adult children, are in fact, moving back in with their parents. Certainly, 26 percent of a particular sub-population is not something that is merely fiction. It is a fact of the contemporary nature of the family, and both this fact and the changing nature of the family will be discussed and analyzed in more detail throughout this dissertation.

While this issue is being fiercely debated among scholars, one point is certain; the young people are taking longer to reach adulthood, as defined in terms of completing requisite life transitions and this delay can have serious implications in a variety of ways. Whereas at one point in time, boomerangers would have been forced to suffer in silence, unaware that there were others out there in similar situations, this is no longer the situation. There are increasing numbers of reports about these adult children surfacing in a variety of outlets in the popular media and academic journals. The number of adult children who are moving back in with their parents, i.e., the "boomerang generation," is growing (Mitchell 1998).

There are a few studies of adult children returning to the homes of their parents and the extent to which this affects the happiness of the parents (Clemens and Axelson 1985; Aquilino and Supple 1991; Mitchell 1998) there has been little research on the effects that such moves have on the children themselves and the kinds of factors that lead an adult child to move back in to the parental home. My dissertation will discuss the various theories and explanations set forth about this behavior and will estimate statistical models to better understand which theories are most appropriate or salient in predicting who is more likely to live back at home with their parents.

This study is sociologically significant for several reasons, namely when examining sociology of the family. As I have previously stated, the family has had many transitions during the past half-century. Family relationships and structure are important variables that affect many aspects of individuals' lives and in turn may affect society at large. Additional importance lies in the fact that moving back home with parents after

once leaving is certainly a disruption in the life course, and studies suggest that nest leaving may not be a one time only event (Goldscheider and DeVanzo 1985). The life course perspective and its implications related to this particular research are also of relevance and will be discussed in more depth later in this dissertation.

Personal Interest

The topic of this dissertation is of special interest and importance to me because I am in the age range of young adults who are at risk of moving back in with their parents. Moreover, I have seen many of my friends and peers forced to move back in with their parents with varying (some good, some deleterious) outcomes. The prospect of moving back in to the family home is something that is likely to be a worry for many people my age, given the possible reasons for this behavior that I have mentioned above, namely, student loan debt, lack of employment, and a struggling and uncertain economy. Additionally, there have recently been many stories related to my proposed research topic depicted in the media, both in newspapers and popular magazines. I have also studied this topic in my master's thesis (Farris 2008), where I undertook a qualitative analysis of previously launched adults. I will discuss this earlier project of mine later in this dissertation. I turn next to more specific discussion about the subjects of my dissertation and the theoretical bases that will underlie much of my research.

More about Boomerang Children

Mitchell (2006) has argued that "dramatic changes are taking place in the lives of young adults, whom we conceptualize as members of the 'boomerang age'" (1). This

description reflects the fact that compared to their predecessors; today's young people often experience more movement in and out of a variety of family related roles, statuses, and living arrangements. As previously stated, there are a variety of contributing factors that may lead to the fluidity of the lives of the members of the "boomerang age." These include public factors such as the economy, the education system, and the job market, as well as more private considerations such as changing family forms and structures and varying and more egalitarian gender roles, which have resulted in women giving more priority to their education and careers, which leads them to postpone marriage and divorce (Mitchell 2006).

We see that as a result of the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of family and intergenerational relationships and structures, the traditional notion of young adult transitions may become stalled and even reversed. To illustrate, we see the increase of the phenomenon of the "boomerang child," where young adults return to the parental home at least once after the initial departure. Returning to the parental home could have a variety of consequences for both the "boomerang child" and the family. Despite the fact that there have been numerous media and academic descriptions and depictions of these boomerang children, it could well be that these children feel to some extent disenfranchised, alone, and alienated from the rest of the world. Furman (2005) has argued that there are many misconceptions regarding boomerang children, such as the following: moving home means the adult child is a failure and that they are not mature adults; moving home will stunt emotional and psychological growth, and that it is stigmatic and shameful to need family support as an adult. In fact, it was these kinds of

stereotypes that led me to conduct my prior research on previously launched adults, and how moving back in with their parents would affect their identity, self-esteem, and self-concept.

Young adults who return home are often depicted as social and economic failures who are unable to fulfill parental expectations of autonomy (Mitchell 1998), which could have a deleterious effect on their identity, self-esteem, and self-concept. My prior research drew on identity theory and theories of self-esteem and self-appraisal to explore the consequences of moving back home with parents. Identity theory has a long standing history in the writings of George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley with their proposals that feedback from significant others provides the basis for individuals' self appraisals (Lundgren 2004). Self-appraisals can be understood as the "cognitive and evaluative components of self reference that are presumed to occur reflexively through a process of role taking" (2004: 269). Mead (1934) argued that we see ourselves as we think other see us, and Cooley (1902) observed that the reactions of others provide the viewpoint from which we come to define our attributes. We tend to use cues, clues, and feedback from others to construct and modify our behavior and beliefs in certain groups and situations (Hogg and Reid 2006).

The concept of identity includes not only the personal identity but also includes various group and social identities embedded in different networks (Howard 2000). Self-esteem is an important component of one's identity. Self-esteem is an individual's overall positive evaluation of self. People seek to maintain or increase their self-esteem and tend to do so by putting themselves in situations that will promote self-verification

(Cast and Burke 2002). Self-esteem can be understood as a central component of basic identity processes, and the desire for self-esteem motivates individuals to seek both verifying and enhancing social relationships (Cast and Burke 2002). Self-esteem is the function of two processes: the reflected appraisals of significant others in one's social environment in the form of social approval, and the individual's feelings of efficacy and competence derived from his or her own perceptions of the effects he or she has on his or her environment (Franks and Marolla 1976). An important issue pertinent to self-esteem is the fact that having good self esteem helps one persist in the face of failure, difficult situations, and can cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness and even healthier lifestyles (Baumeister et al. 2003; Crocker et al. 2006).

My thesis suggested that most of the respondents did not in fact suffer from poor self-esteem as a result of moving back in with their parents, based on their responses to the questions I asked them related to how they felt about themselves and moving back home. Although I had no formal self-esteem measure, it seemed to be the case that the respondents did not experience negative effects from moving back home. However, each of them seemed to offer what Goffman (1963) referred to as stigma management techniques. Stigma refers to something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The term, according to Goffman, refers to an attribute that is deeply discrediting. Respondents also seemed to offer rationalizations for the behavior. Matza and Sykes (1957) have described techniques of neutralization that individuals use to justify actions in terms of rationalizations. Rationalizations are developed subsequent to deviant behavior (in this case, moving back home with one's parents), and

rationalizations are offered to "protect the individual from self-blame and the blame of others after the act" (1957: 666).

Young and Emerging Adulthood

An event such as moving back home with parents can be more or less stigmatizing based upon the context in which it occurs. Sweeping demographic shifts have taken place over the past 50 years that have made young adulthood a distinctive period in the life course, rather than merely a period of brief transition from childhood to adulthood (Arnett 2000). The median age at first marriage has increased from the very early twenties (21 for women and 23 for men) in 1970 to a median age at first marriage of 26 for women and 28 for men in 2010 (U.S. Bureau of the Census Table of Median Age at First Marriage). When my grandmother was born in 1920, her mother and father were 18 and 22, respectively, so they were certainly even younger when they married. The trend of delayed age at first marriage is now mirrored by the age at first childbirth; moreover, the numbers of young Americans obtaining higher education after high school have risen as well (Arnett 2000). Additionally, life expectancy in the developed world has been on the rise and is mostly due to the increased prevention and control of the chronic diseases that affect adults, particularly heart disease and stroke. As of 2006, the life expectancy in the United States was about 78 years. In some other developed countries, life expectancy is as high as 81 or 82 (Poston and Bouvier 2010). Life spans are stretching longer and longer, and it may be prudent for young people in their 20s to

experiment with their lives before making permanent decisions that will affect them for the next half-century.

These aforementioned changes have profoundly altered the development during the late teens and early twenties for many young people in industrialized societies. It is no longer normative for the late teens and early twenties to be a time of entering and settling into long-term adult roles. To the contrary, this period is associated with more frequent change and the personal exploration of various life directions. Demographers have become more conscious of the complexity of human behavior. Indeed, Rindfuss (1991) has noted precisely this trend in his review of the numerous topics examined at the annual Population Association of America meetings; topics such as care giving, household division of labor, child rearing, the empty nest, retirement, and a variety of others are now common topics for discussion whereas they were not part of the program a decade or more ago. At one point, Rindfuss argued, "these would have been inconceivable population topics for an earlier generation of demographers" (1991: 493). Rindfuss' words ring true because, traditionally, demographers concentrated solely on the more straightforwardly demographic events or transitions, such as births, deaths, migrations, and marriages. These demographic transitions are important, as they are the basic building blocks of population change. Contemporary demography, however, seeks to expand the range of social behavior under examination and includes a variety of topics such as the roles and activities related to the major demographic events. A closer examination of the period of young adulthood is important demographically because this period can have major effects on the traditional demographic processes.

According to Rindfuss (1991), the sequence of roles or activities experienced by young adults can be similar or diverse, and the sequences may or may not occur in a socially mandated order. The transitions during this period can be clear-cut or ambiguous and the young adult years represent a series of multiple transitions that are "demographically dense" (Rindfuss 1991: 494). By this, he means that more demographic action occurs during these years than during any other stage in the life course. For example, two of the three major demographic events reach their peak during the young adult years (fertility and migration). Fertility rates are almost uniformly high during the twenties, as are residential mobility rates. Also, during the young adult years, divorces occur much more frequently that at older ages. During the young adult years, persons acquire more education, fill new occupations, and their actions provide multiphasic demographic responses (Davis 1963).

Also ambiguous is the time period used to refer to the "young adult years." As I have done, Rindfuss also has marked the lower age boundary at age 18, as this is an age often recognized by the law for various activities and issues. Where Rindfuss and I diverge, however, is with respect to the upper cutoff of young adulthood. I argue that 34 is an appropriate age for cutoff, mainly because previous studies and the U.S. Census Bureau use the upper limit of 34 to cap the end year of young adulthood. Rindfuss' upper extreme is 30 years old because, he has stated, "30 represents the end of the young adult years… and the 30th birthday is often a time for taking stock and is used in questions addressed to young people about their adult occupational expectations" (1991: 494). Although Rindfuss' assessment of the upper boundary of the young adult years

makes sense and is appealing from a chronological approach, I feel that my bounding the adult years at 34 is equally advantageous.

The diversity and variability in the young adult years can have a variety of consequences, both for those living in these years and those persons who are related to the young adults. Because so many people have a stake in the paths followed by young adults in the work, school and family spheres, and there are certain prescriptions regarding the sequence of these paths and the desirability of certain activities over others; these show the importance for further study of young adults and the transitions in their lives. This dissertation seeks to examine the particular transition of home leaving during the young adult years, and the factors that lead to young adults either never leaving the family home, leaving the family home but then returning, or leaving the family home and not returning.

In the next chapter of this dissertation, I review the relevant literature on this topic. I point to specific voids in the literature that I will endeavor to address in my dissertation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BASES

In this chapter I first review the relevant literature pertaining generally to the coresidence of young adults in their parental households; I then discuss in some detail the theoretical foundations for my dissertation analyses. Before presenting my review of the general literature I first discuss some general issues pertaining to the coresidence of adult children.

General Considerations about the Coresidence of Adult Children

Many studies about the coresidence of adult children, especially those dealing with the levels of parental happiness, do not differentiate between children who have returned home and children who never left (Mitchell 1998). Research shows that having an adult child return home can have a wide range of impacts on family well being as a whole. Numerous television sources and books have portrayed adult children returning home in a somewhat negative light (Mitchell 1998). The media tends to depict these adult children as being a generation that is "uniquely slow in establishing independence from parents" (White 1994: 82). This may be due in part to the fact that there is a widespread idea that leaving the parental home is one of the first major transitions in adulthood, and if this transition is delayed or disrupted, there may be some negative consequences for both the parents and the child (Billari and Liefbroer 2007).

In light of the recent economic recession, as well as factors such as high

unemployment rates and costs of living, living away from home may be more difficult for adult children these days. Additionally, parents may not only have greater acceptance toward their children moving back home, but may also anticipate "patterns of prolonged dependence" from their adult children (Mitchell and Gee 1996: 443). The return of an adult child to the family home may also have negative implications for parents' marital satisfaction, or their satisfaction in general. Parents with poor health, blended families, lower socioeconomic status and higher numbers of children already living in the parental home could well have lower levels of satisfaction (Mitchell and Gee 1996).

Coresidence is almost always more beneficial for the child than for the parent and research shows some contradictions in the general findings regarding parents' feelings on living with their adult child. For example, Mitchell and Gee (1996) found that parents had negative reactions to their adult children returning home when the children left and returned multiple times and when children left the home the first time for work or school. The return of an adult child often created a financial and psychological burden for the parents. The once "empty nest" was now a "crowded nest," and some parents felt that the return of their child represented failure of themselves as parents (Schnaiberg and Goldenberg 1989; Aquilino 1990). The parents who reported unhappiness frequently noted that there was interpersonal conflict or turmoil between themselves and the child. Parents noted that a major factor affecting their happiness was the child's main activity at the time of coresidence; children who were working or attending school were thought to be less stressful to parents than those who were unemployed (Mitchell and Gee 1996). Parents also reported having problems with lack

of privacy and independence, and the child's messiness or unwillingness to help with chores or other household tasks. Parents suggested that they sometimes felt their child was taking advantage of them in terms of financial support, which confirmed prior research that argued that adult children reaped more benefits from living at home than did parents when children were living back at home (Mitchell 1998). Previous studies also suggested that sons increased household demands while daughters may have been more likely to help around the house, and that sons provided less enjoyable interaction and companionship than daughters (Mitchell 1998).

Despite the findings, these data also described a high percentage of parents who were generally happy and experienced satisfaction despite the fact that their adult children were returning home. Parents received satisfaction as a result of the direct parent-child relationships (Aquilino and Supple 1991). In these cases, if the child helped with housework and other tasks and if the child and parents enjoyed positive interpersonal interactions, then the likelihood of parental happiness was much greater (Mitchell 1998). Mitchell also noted that parents reported a better assessment of living arrangements if the child and the parent engaged in fewer hostile arguments, if the child provided instrumental support, and if there were fewer disagreements with the "boomerang child" about getting along with other family members. Parents who experienced satisfaction with an adult child returning home also noted the enjoyment of companionship or friendship and having the family together. Even if there were some negative effects of an adult child returning home, these could frequently be lessened if the child had taken on some aspect of a traditional adult role, such as engaging in full

time employment. A poignant quote from one study regarding adult children living at home stated that "it is not whether an adult child lives at home, but which adult child lives at home" that will be the most salient in determining parental happiness with adult child coresidence (White 1994:94).

Additionally, research using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to analyze parent and child coresidence, focused on the perspective and experience of the parent rather than the child. Speare and Avery (1992) analyzed instances of elderly persons living with older children and looked specifically at parents' transitions to and from coresidence with their children, rather than the transition of the children to and from coresidence with their parents. They found that driving forces that compelled parents to live with their adult children tended to focus on the needs of elderly people based on their health and disability status. If for example, an elderly person needed help with daily activities, he or she would be more likely to move in with and remain living with adult children.

Likewise, Aquilino (1990) analyzed and estimated the likelihood of parent and adult child coresidence by concentrating on characteristics relating to family structure and other parental characteristics. Aquilino found that parental dependency was not the major factor that explained coresidency at any point in the life course, and this finding is similar to the findings from previous research. Parental and family structure characteristics did have effects on whether or not an adult child would move home; parents' marital dissolution and subsequent remarriage were negatively related to adult child coresidence, while parents with extended households (including the presence of

relatives or nonrelatives in the household) significantly increased the likelihood of having adult children as coresidents (Aquilino 1990). While the literature focusing on the experiences of the parents is interesting and informative, it leaves a large gap in the body of knowledge regarding previously launched adults. Additionally, a majority of these studies are somewhat outdated, published in the 1980's and early 1990's, and while these studies can inform future research, I believe that more research is needed to fully assess the phenomenon of previously launched adults. I turn next to the general literature on marriage and family structure.

Historical Background of Marriage and Family Structure in America

While the phenomenon of adult children living at home is not new to the American family, the fact that adult children are doing so during a time in which we are so highly independent and individualistic as a society is something that warrants further consideration. Census data have showed that intergenerational coresidence was maintained throughout the industrial revolution, and during this period of time, young adults almost always lived with their parents or with parental surrogates. Intergenerational coresidence began to decline after World War II and many other aspects of family life changed a great deal during the industrial revolution. For example, infant mortality declined, fertility declined, household size declined, the divorce rate increased, and millions of people moved away from farming and began to work in the factories (Rosenfeld 2007). These changes, as well as others, are largely still in effect to the present day. Other changes that occurred after World War II and have had a lasting

impact on Americans include the rise of divorce and heterosexual cohabitation, the invention of the birth control pill, the sexual revolution, the civil rights movement, the rise of feminism and women's rights, and the gay rights movement.

Rosenfeld (2007) noted that the ordinary and traditional life course transition used to consist of first living with one's parents and then living with one's spouse. Historically, one was almost always part of a family, either headed by the parents or in a marital family with children. In fact, singlehood was so abnormal, that bachelors could not legally live on their own without special permission in several American colonies. This was due in large part to the fear of the absence of social control that is to some degree always present in the family. Rosenfeld argued that in order to understand the dynamics of intergenerational relationships, it was important to understand how family structures of the past impacted the mate selection of young adults, historically speaking.

Cherlin (2009) has described the history of marriage and how marriage in the United States was so much vastly different than marriage in any of the other Westernized nations. In the United States, we have largely taken for granted that love and marriage go hand in hand. Cherlin, however, noted that this has actually not always been the case. Prior to the 20th century, love was not a precondition for marriage and was actually considered to be risky business for marriage. In the 19th century, people engaged in more utilitarian type marriages, and in order to protect their livelihood they strove to marry someone who would be able to work on the family farm or take care of the family. If someone married for love, and the person turned out to not be a good provider, then the family could be left in the wake of a serious destruction.

The idea of utilitarian marriage seemed to lose its appeal in the late 1800's and early 1900's. During this time was a shift toward a more companionate type of marriage, one that was based more on intimacy and the loving feelings of two people for one another. As we know, marrying for love and love only is not an event that really happens; parents and communities have always influenced the mate choices of young adults and these choices are constrained by various structural factors. Factors such as social, legal, and demographic forces often create a narrow pool of people from which to choose a potential mate. Social and demographic constraints exist via residential segregation, intergenerational coresidence, closed labor markets, and early age at first marriage (Rosenfeld 2007). Residential segregation ensures homogamy, or marrying or mating with individuals with similar characteristics, and this is due to the fact that residential segregation almost always is based on racial characteristics. Racial residential segregation greatly reduces interracial social exposure, thus leading to a lower likelihood of meeting and marrying. Clearly, young adults who live at home face increased inputs from their parents about their potential mates; this could potentially lead to more traditional unions.

In the mid 1900's we saw a specific type of family form arise, that of the husband headed and male breadwinner ideal. Though many people recall this time fondly, such a familial configuration was not actually the norm for American family life. During the 1800's women greatly helped out and worked to support the family, whether it was by working on the family farm or doing other tasks to help contribute to the family livelihood. During the 1950's there was some tension between the idea of

companionate marriage and the male breadwinner ideal; however divorce rates were extremely low and marriage rates were quite high. The male breadwinner ideal somewhat lost favor after the 1950's, particularly during the 1960's and 1970's with all the social and cultural changes that were occurring in the United States. These included events such as the Civil Rights Movement and the sex and gender revolutions. Additionally, this was a time when women were entering the paid labor force en masse, and their increased labor force participation also greatly changed the way we viewed marriage and family situations.

The 1980's brought the rise of individualized and expressive marriage, that is, marriage in which people thought and felt that they should be personally fulfilled in every aspect of life, including the marriage. If a marriage was somehow unfulfilling, the partners should have the right to end it. This led to the 1990's where we saw a steady high rate of divorce, and we really have not turned around from this even over 20 years later.

These ideas of marriage that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century are what in effect lead to what Cherlin has termed "the Marriage Go Round." It seems to be the case that Americans hold two very different ideals when it comes to marriage. These ideals are that most Americans, when asked, say that they believe a marriage should last forever, and also that their marriage would last forever. However and quite contrarily, the same people who expressed these assertions about marriage lasting forever also claim that they agreed with the idea that those who were unhappy in a marriage should get a divorce. America seems to be the only country that has these two conflicting ideals

occurring at once in the same person. In other countries, there may be the idea that marriage is quite important and that marriage will last forever, but it is not in tandem with the idea that an unhappy person should get divorced. Likewise, in those countries that agree with the assertion that unhappy people should get divorced, they are not in agreement that marriage is so important and that everyone should aspire to get married and be married forever.

Changing notions of marriage seem to go hand and hand with alternative and changing families and family structures as well as changes in individual ideals. Rosenfeld has argued that "from the individual perspective, the family always seems to be changing" (2007: 42). As far as family structures are concerned, we have seen an increase in every type of nontraditional union. The numbers of interracial, same sex and heterosexual cohabiting couples have been growing since 1960 (Rosenfeld 2007). The reality of the contemporary family is that the "traditional" nuclear family is but one of many variations of family structure and household structure. In addition to single parent families, interracial, same sex, and heterosexual cohabiting couples, more people are choosing to remain single. Historically, failure to marry was linked to perceptions about personal or social deficiencies. Similar to the stigmas relating to "boomerang children," these stigmas about singlehood are fast disappearing. Many young people no longer view marriage as necessarily better than remaining single and the number of single people reporting that they are "very happy" has increased steadily in the last three decades. As the current generation of never married people age, it is likely that many will remain unmarried and forego childbearing. Those who do forego childbearing are

likely to still be faced with a pro-child social message. Those who choose not to do so, especially women, continue to be denigrated or regarded as selfish or incomplete. While some single parents naturally include divorced parents, there is also an escalating subset of highly educated women who choose motherhood but not marriage.

It is important to note that the role of critical historical eras and events are very important for our being able to understand the trends associated with home leaving and returning. Historical events, such as the Industrial Revolution, World War II and the Great Depression, as well as longer term changes in the attractiveness of living with parents, family structure, the growth of second rate jobs, and other factors, have lead to a high increase in the likelihood of returning home (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). Between 1880 and 1940, the percentage of single young adults who lived with their parents increased (Rosenfeld 2007). This was likely due in part to the increasing life expectancy of older Americans. As life expectancy increased, more and more unmarried young adults lived with their parents simply because there were more parents available with whom to live. Additionally, living with parents was normative, and there were few other practical options. Conversely, researchers have argued that during the Depression there were likely unstable finances and home situations that may have resulted in a lower likelihood of adult children moving home with their parents.

In the mid-twentieth century, the long-established norm of intergenerational co-residence began to change, even as parents were living longer and longer. Despite the fact that more adult children had living parents, the percentage of adult children living with their parents began to decline. World War II had a profound impact on young

men's transitions to adulthood, and young men who reached the age of 18 between 1938 and 1944 left home for the first time to join the military service, compared with barely one in six who joined the military among those who reached the age of 18 between 1930 and 1937 (the Depression era) (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). Non-family related leaving was temporarily interrupted by the marriage component of the baby boom, but thereafter other non-family routes out of the home began to increase. Non-family reasons for leaving included attending college away from home, and leaving home solely to be independent. Those persons who came of age between 1968 and 1972 had the highest surges or non-family leaving, as well as those who came of age later in the 1970's. This trend faded somewhat in the 1980's, likely due to increases in housing costs, and this is important because it seems as though the trend of home leaving and returning has continued throughout the years until the present.

Since 1960, the independent life stage has become increasingly routine for young adults in the United States (Rosenfeld 2007). The independent life stage overturned old norms (namely, the norm of adult children living with parents), and now both parents and children expect to achieve some measure of independence. Contemporarily, a major contributor to the increase in rates of returning home may be the changes related to the nest leaving process itself (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). Research has shown that returning home was more likely among those who left at a young age or those who left home for reasons other than marriage. Reasons other than marriage include leaving home simply to be independent, getting a degree, or taking a job. The decline in age at leaving home is important to examine as well because young adults usually leave the

family home during late adolescence or young adulthood. As a result, they have likely not had experience in adult economic or social roles and thus may be more likely to return to the family home.

Mitchell (2009) has noted that two trends of particular importance have surfaced to create the "boomerang age." These are the greater instability and reversibility of partnership formation, and the increased likelihood that once young adults leave the family home, they are not precluded from returning. There are indeed changing notions of marriage and family and many young people are likely to question or even rebel against traditional behavior. Nevertheless, the U.S. has become increasingly multicultural and some families may even display patterns of behavior consistent with their cultural traditions. For example, some traditional ethnic groups are still morally opposed to cohabitation and delayed home leaving has become increasingly common and is more likely among traditional ethnic groups due to cultural traditions (Landale and Oropesa 2007; Mitchell 2009). In addition to the more traditional leanings of particular ethnic groups, other groups may find that changing economic opportunities make living at home a preferred lifestyle.

Billari and Liefbroer (2007) have poignantly discussed the potential influences and impacts of age norms on leaving home. As leaving the parental home is arguably one of the most important and first major transitions during young adulthood, social norms dictate that the time of leaving home should be influenced by how individuals, particularly young adults, feel about these norms. There are a variety of determinants that impact the age at which young adults leave the family home; Billari and Liefbroer

discussed three of them. The first determinant is related to the involvement in parallel events that would coincide with a young adult moving out of the home; these include getting a job, going to college, or getting married. Often involvement with one of the aforementioned events results in a decision to leave home. The second determinant deals with the opportunities and constraints that might have led to or impeded the decision to leave the parental home. These opportunities and constraints have been previously mentioned, and include housing market and economic conditions. The third determinant is related to the impact of cultural factors, attitudes, and values. The importance of social norms for decision-making during young adulthood has been stressed within the life course approach, which will be discussed in much more detail later in this dissertation.

Some researchers have argued that age norms can only be considered norms if they are backed up by sanctions. However, it was unlikely that sanctions were attached to age norm transgressions, and even if there were sanctions attached it would be hard to tell what these sanctions were. Sanctions were unlikely followed through with regard to age norms because it appeared that age norms were generally followed regardless of whether or not there were sanctions associated with age norm transgressions. Additionally, the exact timing of age norms seemed to be unclear; should the age norm occur at a precise age or within a range of certain ages? Studies (Veevers, Gee and Wister 1996; Settersten 1998) have shown that a vast majority of young adults perceived an age deadline for certain transitions, namely leaving home. Age deadlines for leaving home were substantially shared by respondents, who themselves also agreed that there were no specific consequences attached to violations of these age norms.

Sociological and demographic literature on age norms suggests that "age norms may influence the occurrence and timing of important life course decisions but are not very helpful in explaining how norms relate to other factors that may influence home leaving" (Billari and Liefbroer 2007: 183). To account for the fact that age norms might not be helpful in explaining impacts of life course decisions, Billari and Liefbroer (2007) sought to maximize their explanation by incorporating Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned behavior. Essentially, the theory of reasoned behavior states that various factors tend to influence people's intentions and their behavior. These factors include attitudes or beliefs, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors are determined by beliefs about whether or not others approved or disapproved of a particular behavior, in this case, the age at which someone left the family home. However, the social networks to which individuals belong also have an impact on societal norms. Billari and Liefbroer (2007) showed that perceived opinions of parents were associated with the actual timing of leaving the parental home and societal norms and friends' norms concerning the timing of leaving home were not. I turn next in this chapter to the theoretical foundations of my dissertation research.

Theoretical Foundations

A major conceptual approach I will use to inform the research I will undertake in this dissertation is the life course perspective. The life course perspective analyzes the relationship between norms, expectations, and the timing and sequencing of various events in and the life stages among individuals (Mitchell 1998). It directs our attention to

the powerful connection between individual lives and the historical and socioeconomic contexts in which these lives unfold (Mitchell 2006). The basic idea is that social norms exist about the appropriate timing of major events in life (Billari and Liefbroer 2007). The life course is the course of aging, but also involves many facets and implications (Clausen 1972). Common events include going to school, getting a job, starting a family, and perhaps most importantly, gaining economic independence from parents. Theoretically, age is the determining factor that specifies appropriate times for the stages and transitions. Returning home when one is supposed to be moving onto a new transition throws traditional age transitions off schedule (Settersten and Hagestad 1996; Smith 2004).

It is important to note that different variations in social contexts, including family structure, background, and different demographic variables (such as race, gender, religion, occupation, and social class) can have profound ramifications on an individual's particular pattern in the life course. People compare themselves with their peers to draw conclusions about whether or not they are "on time" with respect to important life transitions (Billari and Liefbroer 2007). However, Elder (1985) has argued that the contexts in which adults are returning to the home of their parents (economic climates, delayed transitions of marriage and family) are helping to redefine the life transition and make returning home more normative.

A major question posed by life course theory that is relevant for my dissertation research is "how do collective experiences of birth cohort members generate structural change?" (Hess 1988: 16). In particular, if the collective experience of a particular

cohort of young adults is that of moving back in with parents, this could perhaps produce a structural change in the family and how we view this institution. Elder and his colleagues have put forth an elaborated life course framework related to the individual and to family development (1998). This perspective argues that families were changed by the behavior and developmental courses of the members; subsequently it was important to pay attention to the transitions of the individuals that comprised a particular family. Additionally, important also was the notion that changing lives altered developmental trajectories (Elder 1998).

As previously mentioned, these trajectories or pathways include education, work, and family, and are followed by individuals and groups in society. Elder has argued that various historical forces "shape the social trajectories of family, education, and work, and they in turn influence behavior and particular lines of development" (1998: 2). Likewise, Mitchell (2006) has argued that an individual's own life path is embedded in and transformed by conditions and events occurring during the historical period and geographical location in which the person lives. Geopolitical events, economic cycles, and social and cultural ideologies can often shape people's perceptions and choices and alter the course of human development. I believe that the historical forces at work that need to be entertained in my research are the economic crises that have shaped the last ten or so years, most especially in the years between 2005 and 2010. Various contributing factors include the bursting of the housing bubble, sub-prime and predatory lending, and increased debt; indeed all may be active parts of history that would be historical factors that changed history in a negative way. We can see that all of these

various interrelated parts are combined in a way that led to economic downturn; this in turn has led to decreased job opportunities for young adults, high student loan debt, and lack of viable prospects for the future.

An interesting part of the life course perspective emphasizes how human lives are interdependent and connected on various levels. Elder (1998) has described a situation of "linked lives" whereby societal and individual experience are linked through the family and its network of shared relationships. Consequently, macro-level events affect individual behaviors and this micro/macro link significantly affects familial relationships in a variety of ways. Mitchell (2006) has also noted that the idea of linked lives may be seen in the way that generational relations were interconnected with experiences and transitions from earlier life. Stages and transitions in the life course were interlocked across generations and existed within the context of different relationships and historical events.

While it may be argued that regardless of historical forces and economic atmospheres, individuals have agency to shape and control their own lives, ultimately the structures that are in place have a great impact on the choices and opportunities actually available to individuals in a given place and time. People and families are subject to the constraints imposed upon them as they live in particular socio-historical locations. Being subject to various historical times and the consequences of these times could well lead to shared experiences of moving back home that could potentially have lasting impacts on the lives of these various young adults. Early life course decisions, opportunities, and conditions can affect later life outcomes for individuals (Mitchell

2006). The past has the ability to shape the present and the future, much like a domino effect, and this can occur on a cohort/generational level and also on an individual level. The timing and circumstances under which various early life events occur can potentially set up a "chain reaction" of experiences for individuals and their families and events experienced earlier in life may continue to influence an individual's life path in the future throughout the life course (Mitchell 2006).

Unfortunately owing to a lack of longitudinal data, it will not be possible for me in this dissertation to determine such lasting effects. I need data from a longitudinal study that could follow cohorts throughout their lives to see exactly what X variables are related to moving back home. Perhaps in the future, this would be an interesting and informative extension to my dissertation. However, I am unable to perform such a study at this point in time. Despite this drawback, I will be able to examine other theoretically relevant variables relating to the life course, such as how many times the child has left and subsequently returned to the home, and how these returns affect both their and their parents' happiness.

Despite a shared experience, there is room for differences within cohorts. For example, some members of a particular cohort may experience the life course and its trajectories in a "traditional" manner. This would include moving out of the family home, getting an education, getting a job, getting married, and having a family. However, not everyone in a cohort may have a shared experience and experience the events in the same temporal order. I believe that this is why it is important to study such a group, and try to see what factors may lead to or detract from a particular life course of

events and the temporal order in which these events occur. It is my hope that these factors may be better understood in my research using the data that I propose to employ in this dissertation.

From a demographic standpoint, the life course perspective is extremely important. When traditional life course trajectories are followed, individuals will likely marry and reproduce in the "normal" fashion. We now know that some groups are delaying marriage and childbearing until later years, and this may also be the case if parts of the life course are interrupted. For example, moving back home with a parent is likely to inhibit a young adult from procreating. Depending on the length of time an individual spends living back at home; the events of marrying and childbearing may well be delayed even more than previously assumed.

Lastly, I think Mitchell made a poignant observation that with the life course approach there is "recognition of innovation and human agency in the life course. New behaviors, when routinized, can be created or alter pre-existing trends" (2006: 25). There is some speculation that behaviors such as home returning and cohabitation with parents have become and will continue to become increasingly popular, most likely due in part to the loss of social stigma that once existed when these types of behaviors were not widely practiced. It is my hope that this is the case, and that this phenomenon of adult children moving back in with their parents continues to lose social stigma, as it is in some cases an utmost necessity for young adults to move back in with their parents.

The family development framework is another theoretical perspective of relevance for my analysis. Aldous (1978) has argued that family development has

focused on the characteristics of families over the period of their existence and also on the content and timing of past events in individual histories and how these events affect present interaction patterns among the family members. Historically, families expected a certain sequencing of family related events. For example, young people typically expected to complete schooling, marry before having children, and then later become grandparents. Patterns were so predictable that scholars found the depictions of family life and the life course of the family to be relatively accurate (Mitchell 2006). This is not always the case anymore. With recent changes, the timing and sequencing of events are too varied to warrant this linear model of family development. Indeed families may be involved in multiple stages simultaneously, may reverse stages, and might not fit into a model whatsoever.

Additionally, Aquilino has noted that "in the launching stage of the family life cycle, the developmental tasks of young adulthood involved relinquishing economic and emotional dependencies on parents" (1991: 14). Aldous (1978) has also contended that during this period parents have tended to shift their focus from parenting to reestablishing the marital relationship. However, as we well know, these requisite events during the launching cycle are often likely disrupted with the return of an adult child to the home. The ability to examine the feelings of parents regarding their adult children moving home, as well as the content and timing of individual events are of particular interest for this dissertation, and with the available data I will be able to analyze this portion of the theory more closely.

Demographic theories of marriage and family are important to analyze the

context of previously launched adults. Waite (2006: 87) has noted that "the family is one of the foundational social institutions in all societies, although the definition of the family varies from place to place and from time to time." Often, people use the term family when they really mean household, namely, all those sharing a dwelling. Household members may or may not be related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Conversely, "family" can refer to a number of different social entities and a variety of living arrangements. There are a variety of dimensions by which people view families. These include procreation, sexual relations, socialization, residence, economic cooperation, and emotional ties (Mitchell 2006).

Waite has also argued that the contemporary family in the United States looks different than it did in the past. Considerable diversity exists across and within families. Popular previous definitions of the family tended to emphasize that it was the basic institution of society, and that it was a social and economic unit consisting of "two adults of the opposite sex who shared economic resources, sexual intimacy, labor, accommodations, reproduction, and childrearing" (Mitchell 2006: 21). Fewer people today are living in traditionally defined families, with more living in non-family households. Most scholars recognize that previous definitions of the family were often idealized, ideologically based, and not always relevant to the realities of modern family life. This is attributable to transitions such as earlier nest leaving by young adults (as well as returning to the nest), delayed marriage, non-marriage, and marital disruption. Waite has noted that children have depended almost entirely on their families for financial, emotional, and instrumental support, but sometimes they failed to take into

account the age at which this support was supposed to end, and what ramifications could be seen if children continued to receive this support from their parents well into adulthood. Waite has also argued that with current debates about the characteristics of marriage and the family, it was necessary to continue with further research that could help contribute to understanding these changing notions and ideas.

Social capital is also important to consider when analyzing the life course. The ability to adapt to life course change can certainly vary according to the resources or support available to families or individuals. These resources can be either economic or cultural, and they are exceedingly important to consider when using a life course perspective. Originally developed by French theorist Pierre Bordieu in the 1970's, social capital is defined as "social connections among individuals" such that it "inheres in the structure of relations" (Bordieu 1986). Access to social capital can generate normative structures and resources, such as social support (Mitchell 2006). Social capital and social support can be seen in various groups that emphasize family centered norms, values, and obligations. Social capital can also be found within families and can stem from the quality of intergenerational relationships (Mitchell 2006). Young adults with weak family ties may not have the option to return home during difficult economic times, regardless of other types of capital (Mitchell 2000). This is an important and interesting way to look at capital with respect to previously launched adults, because it would likely be the case that when the issue of capital comes to mind, it is most likely economic capital. That being said, those who come from families with low economic capital may have different likelihoods of moving back in with parents, and this may also be

dependent on the social capital of the family as well. Young adults approach their lives with a given set of personal characteristics that are intertwined with individual and family resources, and then combined with various other constraints. Moving back home with parents may seem like a purely individual decision, but it should actually be viewed through the lens of a much wider social context (Mitchell 2006).

As I have previously stated, young adults are social beings who have the potential to navigate and create their own lives and even in some cases instigate social change. However, the possibilities for those who lack social and economic capital (financial power, education, social networks) are much more limited. As a result, the life course and the events that occur within each individual's life course are neither entirely free creations nor entirely pre-determined, but a complex mix of the various components of macro and micro level circumstances that are occurring at a particular time and location.

There are a variety of factors that could contribute to or detract from the likelihood that a young adult would move back in with their parents. I intend to examine several factors related to various demographic, life course, and family related issues in order to better understand the relationships between these variables and the launching status of young adults.

Conclusion

It seems evident from the literature on previously launched adults that further analyses such as those to be undertaken in this dissertation have merit and will

contribute to the literature in a variety of areas. The extensive literature just reported and reviewed on the topic of previously launched adults has served as a background for my dissertation research. While performing this literature review, I found that studies looking specifically at previously launched adults and the characteristics of these children themselves are sparse, and those that do exist typically date back many decades, with few contemporary counterparts. Therefore my research will also serve as an opportunity for reexamining the phenomenon and its relevance and applicability in more modern times. The analyses of my dissertation, hopefully, will also contribute to current literature in an important way: the launching status of adult children will differentiate between those who move out of the family home and then return and those who never move out of the family home. My hope is that the findings of my dissertation will elaborate on past findings as well as contribute to the literature with the inclusion of this innovative measure.

This current chapter was a review of literature in several areas relevant to the research questions of this dissertation. Before turning to the analyses intended to examine the research questions I will discuss in the next chapter the data and methods that will be used in the analyses. A discussion of the National Survey of Families and Households will be discussed as well as the method of multinomial logistic regression. A discussion of the data and methods will then be followed in subsequent chapters by the analyses using multinomial logistic regression to examine the existence of the relationships between a number of variables and the launching status of young adults.

CHAPTER III

MY PRIOR RESEARCH AND DATA AND METHODS FOR CURRENT RESEARCH

In this chapter I first summarize my prior research on previously launched adults. I then present an in depth description of the main datasets I use in this dissertation, namely, the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), and I will present a detailed description of the American Community Survey (ACS) in a later chapter. Additionally, I show how the dependent variables and each of the independent variables will be operationalized. I also present my reasoning for including the variables in the study and also attend to individual measurement issues. I discuss the reasons for including the variables to be used in my analyses as well as some potential issues with measurement that may arise in their use. Lastly, the statistical methods used in my analysis will be dealt with individually in considerable detail, namely statistical analysis using multinomial logistic regression.

Prior Research

In my previous research (Farris 2008) I examined the experiences of college graduates who had moved back home with their parents; I used data from 16 semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews. Respondents were currently living with their parents, or had moved back with their parents and since moved out at the time of the interview. The sample consisted of eight men and eight women who had graduated from

college and who had moved back home with their parents. Ten respondents were currently living with their parents, and six had moved back home and since moved out. After I conducted the interviews, I found out that one of the six had returned home for the second time after living independently for about a year. The age of the respondents ranged from 21 to 27 years at the time of the interviews. Twelve of the respondents were White, three were Hispanic, and one was biracial (African American and White). Thirteen of the respondents had parents who were married, two of them had divorced parents, and one respondent had a widowed parent. The respondents' parents held a variety of occupations, but all were middle class socioeconomically. Parents' occupations included engineer, hospital administrator, lawyer, architect, independent consultant, chief financial officer, accountant, surgeon, pathologist, and builder. The duration of time spent living back at home ranged from three months to two and a half years. Five of the sixteen respondents were in romantic relationships at the time of the interview, and seven of the respondents were in romantic relationships at the time they were living back at home. Thirteen of the respondents were employed while living at home.

The names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Other identifying characteristics, such as the respondents' alma mater and hometown, were also changed. Nine of the respondents graduated from a top tier university, four graduated from a second tier university, two graduated from private liberal arts colleges, and one graduated from an Ivy League university. The tier system I used in my thesis research was based on the *U.S. News and World Report*'s annual

ranking of colleges and universities. *U.S. News* publishes the numbered rankings of approximately the top 75 percent of schools in each of the categories, and these are considered to be top tier universities. The remaining schools are placed in the bottom, or Second Tier, based on their overall score in their category.

I developed my sample of respondents using a purposive strategy as well as a snowball sampling approach. I interviewed participants in the locations of their choice. The interviews were conducted at their homes, restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, and my office. Prior to conducting each interview, respondents were given a consent form they were asked to read and sign. I asked each respondent for demographic data, some of which were also gathered during the interview itself. Interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes to one hour and were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed.

The interview guide for my thesis research consisted of open ended questions and was organized into three main themes: educational background of respondent and decisions for moving back home, effects of moving back in, and stigma related to moving back home. The interview questions mainly pertained to the respondents' experiences with and feelings about moving back home, as well as the reactions of friends, family, and new acquaintances. Additionally, I explored the dynamics of the familial relationship upon moving back home, and the likes and dislikes of being back at home. To conclude the interviews, I asked each respondent to give advice to someone who was going to be moving back home after college graduation, based on the respondent's experiences of a similar situation.

I used a two-stage model of coding as described by Esterberg (2002). The initial

stage, or open coding, was done to identify themes and categories that were of interest with regard to the research topic. By carefully re-reading the interview transcripts, I was able to see emerging and recurring themes. By using focused coding, I was able to look more closely at the themes and was able to group my data into important thematic categories. Using these techniques, I was able to identify several recurring patterns among college graduates who moved back in with their parents.

My thesis was informed by theories of the life course perspective, identity and self-esteem, and self-concept as these are related to a person being a member of a stigmatized group. All of the participants in my study reported individual circumstances that led them to move back home, as well as unique experiences while living at home. While each respondent's specific experience was ultimately different, many shared similarities. Five main themes emerged from the interviews: 1) actualization and the after-effects of moving in with parents, 2) motivators and factors surrounding the move back home, 3) expectations and realities of reactions from peers and others about the move back home 4) respondents' social lives and how they are affected by moving back home, and 5) stigma management and rationalization techniques.

The first theme pertained to the actualization and after-effects of moving home. For many respondents, having to move back in with their parents after graduation consisted of negative feelings about the event. Furman (2005) has suggested that making the decision to move back home with parents is a very difficult one for most "boomerangers." In my study, many respondents "weren't looking forward to it" and realized it was "a step backwards just going from freedom and kind of being out on your

own to being back with your parents," but some did not seem to mind or think of it as a particularly major occurrence. While the responses from the participants about their feelings of moving back home varied, during the duration of the interview all respondents expressed some discontent with living back at home. Respondents were hesitant and dismayed at the prospect of moving home because of what it meant in terms of their identity. They saw themselves as going from being independent, self sufficient, successful students to living back at home with parents. Their identities were strongly correlated with their roles of students, and now they had reached a point in their lives where they had no clear-cut defined role expectations. They were in a transitional and unfamiliar territory, and moving back home with parents forced them to renegotiate their self-concepts as a result of now belonging to a different social group.

The second main theme pertained to the motivations surrounding the move home. I believe this to be the most important theme from my prior research as well as my continuing research on previously launched adults. There were multiple reasons why respondents moved back home with parents, but three main motivations emerged. One motivation was lack of employment following graduation. Another motivation for moving home was the chance to "regroup" due to a lack of other alternatives. The third motivation, financial stress, was the most common among respondents and seemed to be an underlying motivation for most of the respondents to move back home. While some respondents made no mention of money as a determining factor of why they chose to move back or stay at home so long, each of the respondents reported that the free rent, free food, and no bills were among the main reasons they enjoyed living back at home.

Once at home, the decisions to stay at home or move out of the home also varied from respondent to respondent. Financial reasons were an underlying factor for many of the respondents who chose to move back home. Experts refer to this current generation of young adults as "Generation D" (for debt) and "Generation B" (for bankrupt) (Furman 2005).

As I have previously stated, respondents moved home for a variety of reasons and continued to live at home for a number of other reasons. These reasons coincide with those put forth by Furman (2005), which include financial problems such as high credit card or student loan debt, tight job markets and the lack of employment opportunities, the prohibitive cost of housing, and in some cases, a reluctance to grow up and accept responsibilities. For many of the respondents, a lack of alternatives was another factor in their decision to move home. Today, more resources and skill accumulation are required before a successful launching to adulthood can be completed. While rational choice theory may be an over-simplistic notion of human nature, it is certainly applicable to my respondents and their decisions to move back home. Some may believe that in deciding to move back home after graduating from college, an individual will incur more costs than benefits. However it is clear that moving home provides a stable situation where the individuals have a lower likelihood of failure as opposed to moving out and venturing the world on one's own.

The third theme pertained to the reactions of my respondents' friends and peers. One of my research questions pertained to the self-esteem, self-appraisal, and identity of those who returned home. I hypothesized that returning home would have a detrimental

effect on the "boomeranger's" self-esteem, and that the individual's peers would have negative and/or judgmental reactions. As I have previously stated, symbolic interactionism was the primary paradigm utilized in this study, and the writings of George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley provided the framework around which my research project was centered. Symbolic interactionism is the idea that meanings are given to situations through interaction and interpretation. If our self evaluations are affected by the evaluations that others have of us and how we perceive those evaluations (Mead 1934) and utilize the reactions of others to provide the viewpoint from which we come to define our attributes (Cooley 1902), then negative reactions from others would in turn make our perception of ourselves to be less favorable and thus have an adverse effect on our self-esteem.

Contrary to my expectations, my respondents reported that they did not experience any negative reactions from their peers or friends. However, as I will discuss later, many of the respondents utilized stigma management and rationalization techniques and justifications when talking to me about their experiences. This led me to believe that despite the fact that they did not receive necessarily negative reactions from friends and peers, the respondents still felt that they were engaging in a behavior that was unusual or abnormal. When asked whether friends and peers had negative reactions about respondents moving home, most of the respondents reported that their friends and peers did not. Many of the respondents said that their friends were understanding of their particular situations, and thought it was the best decision for each respondent. Additionally, some of the respondents had close friends or significant others who had

also returned home, and some even reported friends who were jealous of the fact that they were living at home again. Finding out that friends and peers had generally indifferent reactions to the respondents moving home was surprising. There are likely a variety of reasons for the reactions that my respondents described. There is a likelihood that the friends and peers really did not care about the respondents returning home, or it could possibly be the case that the friends and peers were worried about being in the same situation of having to move back in with their own parents.

The fourth theme, the respondents' social lives, was disclosed in a variety of the interviews I conducted. Information about the respondents' social lives was revealed by questions such as "How did you feel about moving back home?" "Do you have any privacy issues?" and "What do you dislike the most about living back at home?" I found that the respondents' social lives were altered or hampered in some way as a direct result of living back at home. Many of my respondents discussed a change in social life and behaviors after being asked how they felt when they realized they were going to be returning home. They described the reality of the situation of living at home and how they changed some behaviors out of respect for their parents while living back at home. Similarly, the respondents noted the difficulty associated with meeting potential mates while living back at home. Respondents noted that meeting someone and bringing him/her back to the family home for sexual relations would not only be disrespectful, but also had the potential to be awkward. The awkwardness associated with negotiating sexual relationships was apparent regardless of whether the respondent was in a serious relationship or was looking to engage in a more casual sexual encounter.

For an adult child, moving back home can be an extremely life changing experience. The change from living completely on one's own to living with parents again can be challenging to one's social life. Bringing members of the opposite sex home, starting relationships, and maintaining independence proved to be rather challenging for some previously launched adults. However, trading bills and responsibilities for a few minor social setbacks seemed like a good situation for some, and my respondents tried to make the best out of their situations. Social interaction is paramount for maintaining relationships. Moving back home not only caused one's social network to change, but also to shrink in a sense. Students in college have vast amounts of peers, professors, and friends with whom to interact and build interpersonal relationships. Moving back home can decrease the size of a social network to include only family members and close friends. Comparing the present social life of someone to one's past social life or even the social lives of others can have an effect on one's satisfaction (Buunk et al. 2007). If one's needs are not met as a result of a diminished social life, as is apparent in the lives of many of the respondents in the study, happiness and satisfaction could suffer.

The last theme I found in my previous research was that of stigma management and rationalizations surrounding living back at home with parents. While the data suggested that my respondents' self-esteem and identities were not adversely affected by their moving back home, each of them offered what Goffman (1963) referred to as stigma management techniques. Stigma refers to a characteristic that is unusual and detrimental with regard to the moral status of the signifier. The term, according to

Goffman, refers to an attribute that is deeply discrediting. I was concerned with stigma with regard to one's character, and found that many respondents indirectly justified their living back at home. Respondents also offered rationalizations for the behavior. Matza and Sykes (1957) described techniques of neutralization that individuals often use to justify actions in terms of rationalizations. Rationalizations are developed subsequent to deviant behavior (in this case, moving back home with parents), and are offered to "protect the individual from self-blame and the blame of others after the act" (1957: 666). Respondents used their age and status as a college graduate as a main rationalization for living back at home. The recentness of graduating, being the youngest person at the workplace, and trying to attain goals (such as getting into graduate school or obtaining an internship) were some of the rationalizations that respondents offered to me during the interviews. Some respondents joked about their situations as ways to minimize the severity of the situations. For example, when telling people that they were living back at home, two respondents reported referring to their parents as "roommates." Joking was often the respondents' way of "exercising something other than tact" (Goffman 1963: 136) and taking the main focus off their stigmatizing attribute in uncomfortable situations. During the interviews, I asked respondents why they decided to move back home, but I never made it seem as if they needed to offer justifications for doing so. Nevertheless, many of the respondents offered different rationalizations on their own, whether or not they were aware of doing so.

My study explored the experiences of college graduates who moved back home with their parents. Respondents faced moving home with negative emotions, but many

conveyed that the end result was not as bad as they had predicted it would be. Respondents moved home for various reasons, but finances were a main motivator for a majority of respondents. Respondents did not appear to suffer from any damage to their self-esteem or self-appraisal as a result of moving back home. Friends and peers of the respondents did not have negative or judgmental reactions to the respondents moving back home. However, my respondents used rationalizations and justifications for their decisions during the interviews.

Previous research (Clemens and Axelson 1985; Goldscheider and Goldsheider 1989, 1998; Schnaiberg and Goldenberg 1989; Mitchell and Gee 1996; Mitchell 1998) has focused mainly on how parents felt and were affected by adult children returning home. Literature on self-esteem and identity can be related to my study, but the findings of various studies of marginalized groups did not correspond with my findings of this particular group. Those that go against group norms, such as moving back home when expected to move out and on with one's life, may well face prejudice or discrimination from those who do not go against the norms (Rubin and Hewstone 1998; Hogg and Reid 2006).

Some findings from previous studies differed from mine in this regard. One implication of my research relates to the factors surrounding college graduates' decisions to move back home. This study showed that finances were the main reason many of the respondents moved home. A prevalent theme in the economic climate of today is the idea that our generation is the first one that will not be able to attain an equal or better level of living than our parents, and this is certainly a disconcerting thought for many

young people. A college degree is no longer a guarantee of a good job and comfortable life. However, it is reassuring to see that while there are changes in the economy, there are also changes in parent/child relationships as well as views on the life course.

Changes in the life course are directly related to the economic situation of our times. Life course trajectory assumes that young adults are expected to transition to adulthood on a linear path of well-timed events, such as employment, marriage, and parenting (Elder 1998). However, several aspects of this trajectory vary among the youth population of today. Children are graduating from college, getting jobs or continuing schooling, but moving back home and delaying marriage and families. Parents are becoming more accommodating of this behavior, and children returning home may not be as big of an issue as it once was.

My thesis project was not intended to be generalized to all college graduates who have moved back in with their parents. Rather, its purpose was to describe the experiences and feelings of those college graduates who were interviewed. The findings were meant to serve as a starting point for further research on the topic of previously launched adults.

Obviously, lack of generalizability was one of the major weaknesses of my thesis, and, moreover, is one of the reasons why I felt it would be valuable to undertake a quantitative analysis of the previously launched adult phenomenon for my dissertation.

Data

For my dissertation research, there were a number of different data sets that could have been used. Possible data sets included the American Community Survey, the Current Population Survey, the National Survey of Families and Households, and the Survey of Income and Program Participation. I will briefly discuss each of these data sets as well as their respective benefits and drawbacks, and conclude by stating why my chosen data sets are best for this project.

The American Community Survey (ACS) employs annual estimates of the nation, regions, states, congressional districts, and many levels of geography. The collection period is every year and many of the data are released the year after the collection cycle. The ACS is conducted every year to provide up to date information about the social and economic needs of the community. The ACS is intended to show how people live; it examines education, jobs, housing, and other questions. The questionnaire items pertain to the relationship of all people to only the householder and are asked for all persons in households.

The Current Population Survey (CPS) produces national estimates and estimates of selected characteristics for regions and states, and has as its main purpose to provide data on employment and labor force participation. The data are collected every month (the survey conducted ever March would be especially appropriate for my purposes because it provides extensive demographic data) and are released after the year of the collection cycle. The questionnaire items pertain to the relationship of all people to the

householder and also ask if both parents are present and if anyone lives with anyone else as a partner/boyfriend/girlfriend.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) produces national estimates on income and poverty using longitudinal data. The questionnaire items ask about the relationship of all people to the householder in each wave, with Wave 2 asking the relationship of everyone to everyone in the household. This survey produces the most detailed estimates of complex families and living arrangements of children.

Finally, the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) was designed to provide a broad range of information on family life to serve as a resource for research across disciplinary perspectives. It is a longitudinal survey of a national sample that is representative of American households. Life history information is collected in this survey, including the following: respondent's family living arrangements in childhood, departures and returns to the family home, and histories of marriage, cohabitation, education, fertility, and employment.

The NSFH data are the ideal data to use for my dissertation research for a variety of reasons. Primarily, the survey contains questions regarding adult children leaving and returning to the family home and also includes other important topics related to my particular area of interest about parent-child relationships.

I will use the NSFH data for the bulk of my statistical analyses, but I will also employ the ACS data to describe more recent trends of adult children living with their parents.

History of the NSFH

According to Sweet and associates (1988)[1], researchers at the University of Wisconsin responded to a request for proposals (RFP) distributed in June of 1983 by the Center for Population Research and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The RFP sought research proposals studying many aspects of family life experience as both determinants and consequences of other family and life course events. The research team (Larry Bumpass, James Sweet, Maurice MacDonald, Sara McLanahan, Annemette Sorensen, and Elizabeth Thomson) represented various disciplines and perspectives including family sociology, social demography, social psychology, and family economics. The researchers were awarded the contract and then began developing the basic survey design and question sequences. The researchers obtained a $4.8 million grant from the National Institute of Health and Human Development to aid in the implementation of this research project.

The project grew out of the experiences that various researchers had with the limitations of available data on family structure, family processes and family relationships. Much of the data from other major national data sources had been collected

[1]Information in this section gathered from: Sweet, James, Larry Bumpass, and Vaughn Call. 1988. "The Design And Content of The National Survey of Families and Households." NSHF Working Paper No. 1.

for other purposes, and many of the available data sources were based on samples that did not represent the total United States population. Many of the samples were samples of convenience and probability samples of one city or state. Further, most of the other previous surveys focused on one specific family issue and facilitated a detailed understanding of a particular topic, but did not enable researchers to study the context of the larger familial relationships. Additionally, these data were often collected to speak to the concerns of one particular academic discipline or were mainly based on one theoretical perspective.

The NSFH Sample

The NSFH main sample is a national, multi-stage area probability sample containing about 17,000 housing units drawn from 100 sampling areas in the conterminous United States. A multistage probability sample is a complex random sample in which units are first randomly sampled, and then the subunits of the sampled units are randomly sampled, and so on (Treiman 2009). Examples include area probability samples in which cities and counties are randomly sampled, then blocks within areas, then households within blocks, then persons within households. The goal of the NSFH was to design a survey that 1) focused almost exclusively on family issues, 2) covered a broad range of family structures, processes and relationships, 3) was a national probability sample so that it would be possible to generalize to the United States population, 4) was a sufficiently large enough sample to permit subgroup comparisons and reliable statistical estimation, 5) spoke to issues important to a number of disciplines

and sub-disciplines and to persons working from a variety of theoretical perspectives, 6) would permit the testing of competing hypotheses concerning a variety of issues about the American family, and 7) addressed many of the most important cross sectional descriptive and analytic questions to provide respective reports of respondents' prior experience in both family and other life domains.

The researchers argued that a major goal of the NSFH was to document the nature and variability of American family life. The researchers felt there were a number of topics that were important and therefore should be covered in a comprehensive survey of family structure, process, and relationships. The researchers also felt there ought to be some measures from other previous national surveys that should be replicated. The researchers did this when the previously used questions appeared to give them adequate information, but they often opted to use the new survey as an opportunity for innovation in measurement. The NSFH interview and self-administered questionnaires were quite long. The main interview schedule included over 600 questions, many of which had several parts; the self-administered questionnaire was over 60 pages long. Many sections of the interview and self-administered questionnaire were asked only of a small portion of the total sample. The researchers attempted to design an interview with a mean length of 90 minutes or less. They performed pretests for a variety of reasons, including an attempt to obtain realistic timing estimates for various sections of the interview.

In the NSFH, individuals were the units of observation, rather than families or households. As previously discussed, the definition of household or family is quite complicated and varies over time. Using individuals as the unit of observation allowed

for a clean and clear description of the family and household history of the reference individuals, their current circumstances, relationships and attitudes; this allowed the researchers to follow their subsequent experiences. They were able to describe the circumstances of households, families, marriages, and of adults and children in these units in the United States from the perspective of the reference individual. The researchers did not attempt to sample persons living in institutions or other group quarters due in part to logistical and cost considerations. However, in the sample, they did include as members of a household all persons who were "currently away at college" or "currently away in the Armed Forces" and "who live in a dorm, sorority, or fraternity house" or "in military housing or on a ship."

There were some substantively important subgroups for which the original sample size of 10,000 respondents was inadequate. Hence, the researchers oversampled some strategic population groups, including minorities, one-parent families, families with stepchildren, cohabitors, and recently married persons. These groups were oversampled for a variety of reasons. One-parent and reconstituted families were important because from both scientific and policy perspectives, understanding how one-parent families and stepfamilies function was and continues to be very important. There was little prior cross sectional research focusing on these compositions of families. The researchers thought it essential to be able to make contrasts among one-parent families, families with two natural parents, and families with stepchildren. Cohabiting couples represented at the time one of the more important family changes in recent decades, and a better understanding of cohabitation was essential for understanding contemporary

marriage and family life; thus, cohabitors were included in the oversample. The researchers decided to oversample recently married persons in order to have a larger number of cases of groups exposed to the risk of important family transitions during the duration of the longitudinal study. Recently married persons have high rates of fertility, marital disruption, and other life cycle transitions. The oversample was accomplished by doubling the number of households selected within the 100 sampling areas.

The NSFH Sample Design

Robert Santos, a sampling statistician at the Institute for Survey Research (ISR) at Temple University, developed the sampling plan for the NSFH. The researchers utilized the ISR's 100 Primary Sampling Unit (PSU) National Sampling Frame that was based on population projections. The PSU's were established by subdividing all counties in the U.S. into two groups; self-representing areas (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas or Standard Consolidated Areas with population of two million or more) and the rest of the country. The rest of the country's PSU's were selected from 1) Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas or counties with a population of at least 150,000 and 2) combinations of adjacent counties having a population of 150,000 or more. These areas were divided into 32 strata on the basis of region and metropolitan status, and one or more of the following variables: degree of urbanization, rate of economic growth, racial composition, and proportion of the population Hispanic origin. From each stratum, two areas were selected with probabilities proportional to population size.

For the secondary units the researchers selected block groups or enumeration districts from each PSU, and the number selected depended on each PSU's population size. The number selected was an average of 17 per PSU, to create a total of 1,700 listing areas for the national sampling frame. About 20 addresses were selected from the lists of housing units in each listing area for inclusion in the sample. Half of the selected addresses within each listing area were randomly assigned to the main sample and half were assigned to the oversample. Interviewers were sent to the preselected clusters in the listing area and used detailed sketches of the listing area to enable them to verify the accuracy of the address listings in the area; they then contacted each address within the specified cluster of housing units. Interviewers used a pre-designated screening form to obtain a listing of all household members and used a random selection table to determine the respondent.

Screening and Interview for the NSFH

An introductory letter was sent to each sample address to provide the respondents with information about the survey and alerted the household that an interviewer would visit their home. The interviewer visited the home and completed a household screening form, and then conducted the screening interview with a knowledgeable adult member of the household. In the main sample, the purpose of the screening was to randomly select a respondent from among the adult members of the household. The screening interview began by asking who was living in the house at that time, with the question: "Tell me the first name of everyone who lives here now, starting with yourself. Include everyone who

stays here half the time or more." This question was followed by questions to determine whether any members of the household were away at school or in the armed forces. The age and marital status of each household member were also gathered. The screener gathered all members who were eligible for selection as the respondent, listed the members from youngest to oldest, and the respondent to be interviewed was then randomly selected by means of a pre-printed selection table.

With the oversample, the screener had the additional function of determining whether the household was eligible for the oversample. As was the case with the main sample, the oversample began with a listing of the members of the household and each person's age and marital status were ascertained. Subsequently, a series of four questions was asked to determine eligibility for the oversample. These included questions relating to race, age of children, recentness of marriage, and cohabitation status. If the household met any of the oversample selection criteria, the household was eligible for the oversample, and an adult member of the household was randomly selected as the primary respondent by the same procedure employed with the main sample.

Respondent selection was determined at the time of the completion of the screening interview. At the time of the initial contact, if possible, the interviewer began the main interview and asked the spouse or partner, if any, to complete a questionnaire. If the primary respondent was not available, an appointment was made to conduct the interview; if the spouse/partner was not available, arrangements were made to pick up the questionnaire at a specified time. Portions of the interview were self-administered;

this was done for reasons relating to sensitive information in the interview, efficiency, scales, and in order to attempt to break up the monotony of the interview.

Interviewers also sought to collect information from each main respondent's partner. Due to cost constraints, the researchers developed a self-administered questionnaire to be filled out by the primary respondent's spouse or cohabiting partner. The questionnaire contained 45 questions long and was given to the spouse or partner at the beginning of the main interview; if possible it was completed in a different room. All questions asked of the spouse/partner were duplicates of questions in the main interview, but had to be simplified and adapted to fit a self-administered format. The researchers felt it was important to gather information from the partner or spouse because they felt it essential to obtain information about the partner's experiences, characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes in order to more fully describe and explain family organization. While there are some advantages and disadvantages with using a self-administered questionnaire for interviewing the spouses/partners, it was imperative to gather information via duplicate reports. The total interview response rate was about 74 percent, which is quite high. The total number of completed interviews was over 13,000. Although the study was originally designed and budgeted to not include incentive payments, respondents were offered a payment of $10, and $15 was offered to respondents who previously refused the interview. Interviewers were also given an incentive payment of $10 for converting a refusal.

Description of the NSFH

The NSFH included information related to household composition, goings and comings of children, relationships with adult children (asked of the head of household or the spouse), and also asked questions of the adult focal children. The questions posed to the parents dealt with a variety of issues, including household composition, household tasks, health, care giving and receiving, marriage and cohabitation, fertility history, problem inventory for children (including those aged 18 to 33), relationships with young adult focal children (of particular interest for my dissertation research), residential history, education, religion, employment and income. Variables of interest relating to the focal children included household composition, separations from biological parents, leaving/returning to parent's home, marital/cohabitation history, education, dating, fertility, relationship with mother/father/stepparent, employment, income, household tasks, happiness with marital/cohabiting relationship, social integration/support, religion, sexual activity, tobacco/alcohol use, and number and relationships with siblings. The NSFH was administered in three waves; from 1987-1988 (Wave 1), 1992 -1994 (Wave 2), and 2001-2003 (Wave 3). I use data gathered in Waves 2 and 3 for this dissertation.

Waves 2 and 3

As previously stated, the first wave of the NSFH[2] was a national survey of 13, 017 persons aged 19 and over and included oversamples of minorities, single parent

[2]Information in this section gathered from: Sweet, James and Larry Bumpass. 1995. "Cohabitation, Marriage and Union Stability: Preliminary Findings from NSFH2." NSHF Working Paper No. 65" and "NSFH Wave 3 Field Report, 2003."

families, stepfamilies, recently married couples, and cohabiting couples (Sweet, Bumpass, and Call 1988). In 1992-1994, the researchers re-interviewed 10, 008 of the original respondents in face-to-face computer assisted interviews (Bumpass and Sweet 1995). Additionally, the researchers interviewed 6,416 current or former spouses or partners and also conducted telephone interviews with 1,416 children aged 10-17, 1,090 sons and daughters aged 18-24, and 3,348 parents. The response rate for the main sample was 82 percent for eligible main respondents and about 80 percent for spouses.

The University of Wisconsin Survey Center conducted the third wave of the NSFH. Due to budgetary restrictions, a subset of the NSFH Wave 1 sample was re-interviewed using CATI technology. At the time of Wave 3, 81 percent of the sample was located, and of those located, 72 percent were interviewed. Over 9 thousand (9, 230) main respondent, spouse, and focal child interviews were completed for the third wave of the NSFH. In addition, 924 proxy interviews were completed for main respondents who were deceased or too ill to complete the interview. The overall response rate was 57 percent. All interviews were conducted over the telephone using CATI technology. The CATI system used is known as CASES; in this system the text of the survey appears question by question on a computer screen for the interviewer to read to the respondent. Routing through the interview is based on skip logic pre-programmed into the computer. The system allows for pre-coded questions, open-ended questions and combinations of the two. In addition, the computer allows only valid responses; when an invalid response is entered, the computer asks the interviewer to reenter the response.

The instruments for the main respondents and their spouses were identical; focal children received a shorter interview. The content of the main respondent/spouse interview was essentially the same as the Wave 2 interview with some modifications. The focal child interview was based on the telephone interview administered to older focal children at Wave 2, but included content from the main respondent/spouse interview not included at Wave 2. Overall the main respondent/spouse interview averaged 71.66 minutes in length, although this varied considerably for different types of respondents: for main respondents with no focal child and no spouse, the average length was 43.13 minutes; for main respondents with a spouse but no focal child, the average length was 68.76 minutes; for main respondents with a spouse and focal child, the average length was 84.65 minutes. The focal child interview averaged 52. 69 minutes. In addition, proxy interviews were required for main respondents who were deceased or too ill to be interviewed during Wave 3 and who did not have a spouse/partner to be interviewed. The proxy interview consisted of questions regarding the respondent's cause of death, conditions and disabilities, last employment, and living arrangements. Proxy interviews for main respondents were not necessary if there was a spouse or partner to be interviewed.

Several items in the main respondent/spouse NSFH Wave 3 instrument required respondents to provide an accounting of their lives since the time of their last interview, i.e. marital and cohabiting history since the time of the last interview, number of children born or adopted, and an account of who had moved in and out of the household. Two pretests were conducted to test the main respondent/spouse interview. After the pretest,

debriefing sessions were held with pretest interviewers and further adjustments were made to the instrument. A pretest was conducted to test the focal child instrument and after the pretest, debriefing sessions were held with pretest interviewers and further modifications were made to the instrument.

About one year prior to the start of Wave 3, all NSFH main respondents and spouses were sent a letter letting them know that the third and final wave of the NSFH was about to begin. Reply cards were enclosed so respondents could update their phone and address information. Each NSFH respondent was sent a personalized letter in order to emphasize the importance of every family member's participation in the survey. To increase interviewer flexibility and the chances of beginning or completing an interview during the initial contact to a household, it was decided that it would not be necessary to conduct the main respondent interview prior to the spouse interview. Interviewers would ask for the main respondent when calling a household with multiple respondents, but they could conduct the interview with the spouse/partner (or focal child) if the spouse/partner answered the phone. If a case refused, the case was held for at least two weeks before attempting a conversion. If there were multiple respondents per household and one such member refused, all cases associated with that respondent would be held and all would be sent a letter encouraging the respondent to participate before they were called again for a conversion attempt. All respondents received a check for $20 in exchange for completing the interview. Respondent incentives were later increased to $40 to encourage the participation from those who had not yet responded.

Response rates were calculated for the entire NSFH sample with respondents determined to be deceased at the time of Wave 3 removed from the denominator. The response rate reflected the total number of interviews and was computed as follows: Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of completes (+ proxies completed for too ill respondents + useable partials)}}{\text{Total sample size – all deceased}}$$

As previously stated, the response rate was 57% overall.

Methods of Analysis for the Dissertation

This section of the chapter will be devoted to discussing the methods of analysis that will be used in this dissertation. I will discuss multinomial logistic regression, which will be used to evaluate the degree of association between various independent variables and the probability of moving back home.

Multinomial Logistic Regression

For this project, I estimated multinomial logistic regression equations. I did not use the more popular regression technique, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression because my dependent variable is not continuous and unbounded; my dependent variable is multi-categorical. When the dependent variable is categorical, logistic regression should be employed. This method typically uses maximum likelihood (ML) estimation, which "are the values of the parameters that have the greatest likelihood of generating

the observed sample of data if the assumptions of the model are true…the likelihood function tells us how likely it is that we would have observed the data that we did observe if these data were true population parameters" (Long and Freese 2003:68).

Since my dependent variable has more than two categories, I use a form of logistic regression that has been extended beyond the analysis of a dichotomous variable to a variable with more than two categories (Menard 2002). I use multinomial logistic regression, the most frequently used nominal regression model. It is a regression model that generalizes logistic regression by allowing more than two discrete outcomes. It is a model that is used to predict the probabilities of the different outcomes of a categorically distributed dependent variable. Multinomial logistic regression is used when the dependent variable in question is nominal and consists of more than two categories. In the multinomial logit model, logits are formed from contrasts of non-redundant category pairs of the dependent variable. Each logit is then modeled in a separate equation.

The extension of the dichotomous logistic regression model to polytomous dependent variables is straightforward. One value of the dependent variable is designated as the reference category and set to zero, ($Y = h_0$), and takes on the role of the baseline or reference category, and the probability of membership in other categories is compared to the probability of membership in the reference or baseline category (Menard 2002). The coefficients are estimated in relation to the baseline category. Long and Freese note that "if the base outcome is not specified, the most frequent outcome in the estimation sample is chosen as the base" (2003: 229). In order to ensure that the

category of comparison makes conceptual and theoretical sense in my analyses, I will set the base category in the estimated models.

Difficulty may arise from interpreting coefficients in terms of log odds, which may be easy to state but not so easily understood (Hamilton 1992). For example, if the independent variable is measuring whether or not an adult child moved back home had a coefficient of 1.00 for those adult children of a certain marital status (say, for instance, married), we could say that adult children who are married have a log odds of moving home that are 1.00 times higher as compared to those adult children who are unmarried. It is difficult to imagine what it means to have a 1.00 higher log odds. Because of the complexity associated with the interpretation of log odds, it is best to interpret the coefficients in terms of odds ratios by exponentiating the log odds. In multinomial logistic regression these exponentiated values are called relative risk ratios (rrr's). For a dummy variable the rrr is the odds of being in the dependent variable category of interest and not being in the base category, for the category of the independent dummy variable with a value of one versus the category with a value of zero. For ease of interpretation, I will calculate the rrr's for the multinomial logistic regression models that I will estimate.

Long and Freese (2003) tell us that we should be interested in looking at different combinations of the baseline to other category comparisons, beyond the category that we define as the baseline. By using the "listcoef" command, we can display all combinations of outcome categories without re-estimating the multinomial logit model in STATA. The "listcoef" command will be used in my analysis for this and other purposes.

Design Effects

Treiman (2009) tells us that the fact that national sample surveys are often based on multistage area probability samples creates a problem if the complex sampling design is not taken into consideration. The problem is that standard statistical packages (including STATA) assume that a survey was based on random sampling. If the survey was based on multistage probability sampling, the default assumption that the data are from a simple random sample tends to "understate the true extent of sampling error in the data. The reason for this is that when observations are clustered (drawn from a few selected sampling points), for many variables the within-cluster variance tends to be smaller than the variance across the population as a whole. This in turn implies that the between-cluster variance, i.e., the variance of the cluster means, which gives the standard error for clustered samples, is inflated relative to the variance of the same variable computed from a simple random sample drawn from the same population" (Treiman 2009: 207).

In many cases we see that the third stage of multistage probability samples are generally fairly homogenous with respect to various sociodemographic variables. The third and smallest stage of multistage samples normally have inhabitants with characteristics that are similar on a variety of levels such as education, age and race, and this is especially the case when comparing the third stage of multistage probability samples to the population of the entire country. As a result of this homogeneity, there is a smaller within-cluster variance among the variables, while the likelihood that the variance between clusters differs substantially. As such, we need to take into account the

"variance among individuals in a cluster as well as the variance between clusters" (Treiman 2009: 207).

This is why survey estimation procedures are useful. STATA's survey estimation procedures are capable of handling multistage designs with more than two levels. Treiman (2009) further notes that in order to obtain correct estimates of standard errors for multistage samples, we need to use estimation procedures specifically designed for such samples. STATA provides a set of survey estimation commands to estimate standard errors for many common statistics, including means, proportions, OLS regression coefficients, logistic regression coefficients, and so forth. These commands make it possible to take account of both clustering and stratification at each level of a multistage sample. According to Treiman, STATA requires that information regarding the properties of the data be set before entering the estimation commands. Once this is done, using STATA's "svyset" command, the estimation is carried out in the usual way except that the survey version of the estimation command is substituted for the non-survey version.

As Treiman has noted, few if any of the micro-level sample datasets we use in demography are simple random samples. A survey sample is almost never a true scale model of the population; if it were, this would mean that the response rates and coverage would be the same in every sub-group; the sample would thus be a "scale model" of the population. A survey sample is almost never a "scale model" as groups are often selected at different rates and often have different response rates, as is the case with the NSFH. Sampling weights adjust for different sampling rates, response rates, and coverage rates.

Such adjustments enable the investigator to develop so-called "national" estimates from the sample that are accurate. A respondent's sampling weight may be interpreted as the number of persons in the population that he or she represents. For example, if a woman's sampling weight is 8,000, then she represents 8,000 women in the population.

As previously stated, the second wave of the NSFH consists of 10,007 men and women and the third wave of the NSFH consists of 9,230 men and women, based on an original national probability sample from Wave 1 of 13,007 For the NSFH, the sampling error measures the variation caused by interviewing 10,007 men and women in the NSFH instead of the 70 million men and women aged 18 to 34 and the 63 million men and women aged 35 to 96 in the entire population. It measures the variation of the estimated statistic over repeated samples of the same size. Theoretically, the sampling variance would be zero if the full population were observed. Because of the complex sample design of the NSFH, analysts should use weights in their analyses and use software that will compute "design based" estimates of sampling errors. Failure to use these weights and accurate variance estimates could well lead to biased or inaccurate findings and conclusions.

Using Sampling Weights in STATA

The 1992-1994 NSFH (Wave 2) has data items for every respondent that need to be introduced when using STATA to estimate a statistic and its standard error. These are needed because otherwise, STATA will compute the statistic and its standard error as if the data were a scale model of the population. STATA refers to the items as follows:

person weight, final person weight, and post strata weight. Unfortunately, as previously stated, due to budget constraints, the third wave of the NSFH was only a sub-sample of the first two waves. Thus, there is no weighting scheme assigned to the variables in the third wave. As a result of this, Wave 3 does not provide a nationally representative sample and there can be no inferences made when it comes to using the Wave 3 data. In order to compensate for this, I will run my original tests using the Wave 3 data, and I will then replicate these tests using the Wave 2 data. If my results from the Wave 3 data are successfully replicated using the Wave 2 data, then I will in fact be able to make inferences about the population and will feel somewhat confident making these inferences from the Wave 3 data.

Dependent Variable

In this dissertation, the dependent variable is constructed by recoding the information gathered from the following questions from the Focal Child interview on the NSFH:

1) Have you ever lived on your own, away from your parents' household, for four months or longer?

2) Did you ever move back home, other than for school vacations?

The categories of the dependent variable thus pertain to adult children who never moved out of the family home (failure to launch), moved out of the family home and then returned (previously launched), and moved out of the family home and did not return

(successfully launched). The multinomial logistic model can be thought of as simultaneously estimating binary logits for all comparisons among the alternatives. For example, let launching status be a nominal outcome with the categories failure to launch (FTL), previously launched (PL) and successfully launched (SL). This dependent variable is suitable for a multinomial logistic regression model as already discussed. The dependent variable in this analysis will be whether or not the individual has moved back in with the parents. The baseline category will be SL, or those that are successfully launched. This category includes those adult children who have moved out and lived on their own for four months or more and did not return home. This methodological approach is important for many reasons. The primary reason is that, as I have previously stated, many studies about parental happiness with the coresidence of adult children do not differentiate between children who have returned home and children who never left (Mitchell 1998). My study will be the first, to my knowledge, to differentiate between adult children who moved out of the home and then returned and adult children who never left the family home.

Independent Variables, Dependent Variables and Theoretical Approaches

The main independent variables include various standard demographic variables such as gender, education, race, socioeconomic status, and employment status. Separate regression equations will be estimated for each theoretical perspective I propose to use. Using the life course perspective, I will introduce the variables of parents' age, child's age, child's marital status, child's education level, and child's

number of children. All of these variables relate to the life course, as the life course examines the timing of various events in an individual's life. The relationship between parents' position in the life course and the adult child's position in the life course is important, as I have demonstrated that parents at certain positions in the life course may be more or less likely to have adult children move back in with them, and the same can be said about adult children. The life course perspective is particularly useful because we can see the interplay between the lives of the parents and the life of the adult child.

The variables parent's age and child's age are simple continuous variables, asked as "respondent's age at time of interview." Child's marital status was recoded; current marital status was operationalized as either married (0) or not married (1). Child's education level was recoded as well; educational attainment was operationalized as "high school graduate" (1= yes, 0 = no) and graduated from college/received a degree (1= yes, 0 = no). Child's number of children is a continuous variable, asked as "how many children do you have?"

Using the family development framework, I will examine the variables that relate to the family structure into which the adult child will be moving back. I will examine parents' marital/cohabitation status, number of siblings, parents' health and well being, and how well the adult child gets along with his/her parents (which includes questions asked of both the parents and the focal child).

Using economic theories of exchange, I will examine variables of child's income, occupation and employment status, and other economic variables. Parents' marital status was recoded into married (1) and not married (0). Number of siblings is a continuous

variable, ranging from 0 to 20 or more. Parents' health and well being is ascertained through the questions "Taking things all together, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is very unhappy and 7 is very happy, how would you say things are these days?" The next question, "Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements: On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." is the second question used to ascertain parents' health. Questions relating to how well the adult child gets along with parents were analyzed using the questions of "taking things all together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with your mother/father/step-parent?" Modeling the last equation after my prior research, I will examine both variables that I have previously discussed as well as some that will have not yet been included in the regressions. Past research has focused on variables such as age, sex, race, and socioeconomic status of the adult child individually or in conjunction with one another. These basic demographic variables deserve examination despite the fact that they do not necessarily fit in neatly with one of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks.

In order to see which theoretical approach has the best explanatory power, I will compare the pseudo R^2 values of each theoretically specified model. Like the R^2 in ordinary least squares regression which measures the overall fit of the model, the pseudo R^2 value allows us to analyze how well the model fits the data. One limitation of logistic regression is that it does not have a goodness-of-fit measure; however, several proxies for the R^2 statistic are available. Because none of the pseudo R^2s support a

straightforward explained variance interpretation, as does the true R^2, there is little agreement as to which pseudo R^2 is the best to use in analysis. However, the STATA command "fitstat" provides numerous goodness-of-fit statistics from which to choose, including McKelvey and Zavoina's R^2.

Wave 3 of the NSFH was separated into multiple datasets. I merged them into one dataset for this dissertation; the dataset of the main respondent, the dataset of the focal child, and the dataset of the main respondent roster were combined for this dissertation. This was done in order to obtain all pertinent variables relating to theoretical approaches that I want to use in my analyses. The variables in each dataset were first sorted by case identification number (caseid) and then saved. Then I merged the datasets and then identified which cases matched. Out of a total of 9,229 cases, 7,277 matched. The cases that did not match were dropped from the merged dataset.

Sample Characteristics

Focal Children

The first group of variables that I will discuss measures the characteristics of the adult children. The variable, which was created by combining two previous variables, is recoded as "LaunchNew." This variable basically measures the adult child's launching status. The first category, never moved out (failure to launch), has a frequency of 179, or almost 11 percent of the sample. The second category, moved out and returned (previously launched), has a frequency of 545 or about 33 percent of the sample. The last and baseline category, moved out and did not return (successfully launched), has a

frequency of 956 or about 57 percent of the sample. The total sample numbers 1,680 and the majority of this sample, obviously, consists of those adult children who moved out of the family home and did not return.

For the focal child's age, the range was from 18 to 34, with almost all respondents being equally distributed at each age, with about 7 percent at each age. This is true except at ages 18 and 34, which had about 1 percent at each. The education variable has three categories, completed high school, enrolled in college or university, and received degree from college or university. About 91 percent of the sample had obtained a high school degree, 66 percent had enrolled in college or university, and 33 percent had received a college degree. The annual income level was a simple continuous variable, ranging in value from zero to five hundred thousand. Those with incomes less than zero were dropped from the sample. Of the sample of focal children, 66 percent were not married and 34 percent were married. Regarding the " living with parents" variable, about 14 percent said that living with their parents was going badly, and about 86 percent said that it was going well. The question relating to the acceptability of adult children living with their parents shows that about 20 percent believed that living with parents is not acceptable, while about 80 percent agreed that it is acceptable to live with parents. The sex breakdown of the respondents was about 46 percent male and 54 percent female.

Conclusion

In this chapter I first described my prior research. I next introduced the data and methods that I will be using in the analyses of this dissertation. The nature of the question I am investigating and the data that I am using necessitate the use of a multinomial logistic regression model for the analyses, as the dependent variable- launching status- is an unordered, nominal categorical dependent variable. I discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the dataset I have chosen to use as well as the methods that will be used in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. Chapters IV and V will provide the results of the multinomial logistic regression models that I will perform.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSES AND RESULTS FROM THE NSFH WAVES 2 AND 3

In this chapter I discuss the results of the tests of my hypotheses focusing on models dealing with the life course and family development perspectives. Specifically, I discuss the results of the multinomial logistic regression analyses using the data obtained from Wave 3 and Wave 2 of the NSFH. I have estimated two models with each Wave of data, as I have already mentioned in Chapter III; one model uses variables relating to the life course, and one model uses variables relating to family structure. Also in each model I used standard demographic variables as controls. I then repeat this later in this chapter with the data from Wave 2 of the NSFH.

First I discuss some of the data considerations that arise when using the NSFH. I then discuss my hypotheses, and then begin the analysis of the NSFH data by presenting and discussing several descriptive statistics that provide some perspective and overall legitimacy for the analyses of this dissertation. I hope that the use of these figures and tables clarifies the data and the way that I use these data to study the phenomenon of previously launched adults in the United States.

Data Considerations

As discussed in Chapter III, there are various considerations that must be taken into account when analyzing the data gathered in Wave 3 of the NSFH. Only a subset of the original sample was selected for re-interview due to budgetary constraints, namely,

parents of young children and respondents in mid-to-later life. The parent sample was comprised of respondents with an eligible focal child. Focal children were eligible for a Wave 3 interview if they were at least 3 years of age at the time of Wave 1 and had been eligible for a Wave 2 interview. All focal children were 18 to 34 years of age when interviewed at Wave 3.

Clearly there are problems when using data that are a subsample, instead of a nationally representative sample, of the population. As a result of the aforementioned budgetary constraints, Wave 3 does not provide a nationally representative sample, so, thus, I am not able to make inferences to the larger population when using the Wave 3 data. In an attempt to compensate for this deficiency, I conduct my original tests using the Wave 3 data, and I then replicate these tests using the Wave 2 data. If my results using the Wave 3 data are generally replicated using the Wave 2 data, then I will indeed make inferences to the population and will feel somewhat confident about making these inferences from the Wave 3 data.

Hypotheses

Prior literature related to previously launched adults reports mixed and often conflicting results. Utilizing the life course perspective, we can see various issues that impact the prevalence of adult children moving back in with their parents. Depending on the parents' position in the life course, their adult children may be more or less likely to be living back at home with them. We see that middle-aged parents with young adult children may have young adult children living with them as a result of "the continued

dependence of children on their parents" (Aquilino 1990: 406). Conversely, parents who are elderly may coreside with older adult children owing to their dependence on them. However, we have seen that this is not as likely an occurrence as the former. Furthermore, the life course perspective offers a view that focuses on the interdependence of the lives of the adult children and their parents.

From an economic viewpoint and using an exchange theory framework, it would appear to be more likely that adult children will live with their parents as a result of economic vulnerability and other needs based considerations. We have consistently seen that living back at home tends to be more advantageous for a young adult child than for the parent with whom they are residing, and it is likely that adult children have assessed the costs and benefits of living back at home and have chosen this arrangement due to the benefits they will receive as a result.

Thus, I hypothesize that adult children with younger parents will be more likely to live at home than adult children with older parents. Likewise, I hypothesize that younger adult children will be more likely to live at home than older adult children. Additionally, it is likely that the life course trajectory of the adult child will have an impact on whether s/he moves back home. Adult children who are married are less likely to return home; however there appears to be a racial differential in these findings in that this is more evident among non-Hispanic whites (White 1994). Thus, I hypothesize that adult children who are married will be less likely to live at home, as will adult children who have children.

Some previous literature states that those with lower socioeconomic status may

be more likely to move back home. This conclusion is interesting and deserves closer scrutiny. Adult children with a low individual socioeconomic status may very well be likely to move back home. I found this result with many of the respondents in my qualitative study. Among my respondents, a majority of those interviewed reported having no job, a high student loan debt, and no other promising alternatives to moving back in with their parents. These are two of the three main contributing factors of one's socioeconomic status (income and occupation) and surely indicate a low socioeconomic status. However, these individuals all had high levels of education; all of my respondents graduated from four year accredited top tier, second tier, or Ivy League universities. Additionally, while these respondents may have had a low personal socioeconomic status, their parents had quite high socioeconomic statuses; most respondents reported that their parents were in the upper-middle to upper class. Their parents had the resources to allow their children to move back in with them, and bear the brunt of having another mouth to feed, to shelter, and to pay for in miscellaneous ways.

Likewise, Aquilino (1990) argues that the family's ability to house and support adult children may influence the timing of home leaving, and I would extend this to include home returning. Other researchers, namely, Goldscheider and DeVanzo (1985) have drawn similar conclusions regarding family income and the likelihood of coresidence. It makes sense then that those with low individual socioeconomic statuses would be likely to move back in with parents. I hold that socioeconomic status plays an important role on whether or not a child will be able to move back in with the family. Some families may simply not have enough room for an adult child to move back home,

and adult children who have children of their own will make an already crowded situation even more complicated. I hypothesize that the lower the incomes of adult children, the more likely they will be to live at home.

Additionally, based on previous research, I hypothesize that men will be more likely to be living in the family home than women. This may appear to be inconsistent with so-called common sense in that it is often thought that men are expected to acquire their independence and start a life and family of their own earlier than women. However, as I have already noted, previous research shows that men in fact are more likely to be living at home than women, and frequently to the detriment to their parents' happiness. Previous research notes that women are more likely to leave the parental home earlier than men and are also less likely to return home. White (1994) for instance has argued that this is due to women's earlier age at marriage, although this factor may not be as salient in the current time of delayed age at marriage and childbearing among young women.

Prior research has shown that males are more likely than females to believe that parents have an obligation to house their children and are less likely to feel that children should be obligated to pay back their parents in return (White 1994). Other theories of the family describe the differential in terms of the effects of daughters living back at home on the parent-child relationship. White (1994) suggests that girls who stay in or return to the family home may be more supervised than boys and will be more expected than boys to help out with more housework. This issue of housework could be analyzed in further detail utilizing the NSFH data in future research projects.

I hypothesize that the education level of the child will have a significant effect on the likelihood of living back at home. I was not able to test this hypothesis in my previous research because all my respondents came from a variety of collegiate backgrounds, but all had a college education. I hypothesize that those with a degree will be less likely to be living at home than those without a degree. For the analysis of the Wave 2 data, the number of children with a college degree was so small that I had to change this variable from a college degree to a high school degree.

Additional variables relating to family structure are also important to include in my dissertation research. Prior research shows that adult children with many siblings or whose parents are divorced, separated or remarried are less likely to return home (Aquilino 1990; White 1994; Mitchell 1998). Lack of cohesion in families may be found in stepfamilies and this may well decrease the likelihood of an adult child moving back home; thus I hypothesize that adult children with married parents will be more likely to live at home. This research also shows that families that experience conflict or adult children who do not get along with one of their parents will be unlikely to move back home; thus I hypothesize that that adult children who get along well with their parents will be more likely to move back or continue to live at home than those who do not get along well with their parents. Also, based on previous research, I hypothesize that adult children with more brothers and sisters will be less likely to live at home.

Other features of the family structure perspective are the health and well being of the parents of the adult children. As previously stated, many adult children may move back in with their parents as a result of the deteriorating health of the parents. Although I

do not hold that this will be the main motivating factor leading adult children to move back in with their parents, I do believe that parents who are in poorer health will be more likely to have adult children living at home with them. That is, parents who report that things are not "good these days" and that they are dissatisfied with themselves will be more likely to have adult children living at home.

I suspect that race/ethnicity will also be related to the risk of moving back home with parents. I hold that that certain groups may view moving back home or more specifically, delaying the transition of moving out of the parental home, as being more acceptable and normative that would be the case with other groups. Culturally, on average certain racial groups do not see living at home, or returning home after leaving, as being non-normative. A core element of deeply rooted values of Hispanic culture is familism (Landale and Oropesa 2007). Living in the family home until the time of marriage, especially for females, is very common. Familism is the idea that a collective orientation is more important than an individual orientation and implies that "family roles are highly valued and family members are oriented more toward the needs of the family unit than to their individual desires" (Landale and Oropesa 2007: 396). It seems that owing to familism, Hispanic adult children may be more likely to let their parents move in with them in later life. Following this pattern I expect to find that Hispanics will be more likely to be living with their parents than non-Hispanic whites. Other studies show that African-Americans and Asians are also less likely to be home leavers, which is also attributable to the familism theory just delineated with respect to Hispanics. Unfortunately, the Wave 2 and Wave 3 data do not provide the detailed data enabling me

to determine race/ethnic identification of the respondents. Perhaps in the future and with a more comprehensive dataset, I will be able to explore the nuances of the relationship between family co-residence and racial/ethnic identification.

Despite the fact that I will be unable to test whether there is a statistical relationship between race/ethnic identification and launching status of young adults, I will be able to use descriptive data from the American Community Survey to examine some of the characteristics of persons living and not living at home, one of which will be race/ethnic identification. These descriptive results will be presented in the next chapter.

Wave 3 Analyses

As already discussed in this chapter, the main concerns of interest in this dissertation pertain to home leaving and returning. The analyses in this chapter use a variety of independent variables of interest in my examination of home leaving and returning. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the same analyses that have been performed with a dataset collected at an earlier time. As previously stated, the data gathered for Wave 3 of the NSFH are not nationally representative as they are a subset of the original data. Due to budgetary constraints, the Wave 3 sample does not include respondents under age 45 as of January 2000 if they did not have a Wave 1 focal eligible child for interview at Wave 2. Because of the fact that this is a subsample of the original sample (which was nationally representative), there are problems with making statistical inferences based on the data from Wave 3. Accordingly, I will replicate my statistical analyses utilizing the data from Wave 2, and compare the results from the two analyses.

As previously stated, the main objective of the analyses is to determine the statistically influential factors (X variables) that lead to or detract from the likelihood of an adult child moving out of the parental home and then returning. The dependent variable is comprised of three possible outcomes, namely, never moved out of the family home, moved out and then returned to the family home, and moved out and did not return to the family home. The base category will be moved out and did not return to the family home; persons in this category will be referred to as "successfully launched adults." Before testing my hypotheses, I first describe the data that will be included in the models.

Descriptive Results

In this section of the chapter I provide descriptive results of the independent and dependent variables measured with Wave 3 data. The first point to be mentioned is that this sample was restricted to those main respondents and their corresponding focal children. Thus, the sample size was 1,382 persons. While there are a total of 7,433 cases in the entire sample, there are almost 6,000 missing values on some of the variables. In order to maintain a consistent number of cases, I have restricted my analyses in the models to those with no missing values. Since the variable measuring the launching status of the young adults is an unordered categorical variable, the minimum value is one and the maximum value is three. I next present in Table 4.1 similar descriptive statistics for the independent variables and the variables to be used as controls.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Life Course Model, Wave 3

Independent Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Life Course Variables				
Parent's Age	31	100	57.789	11.998
Child's Age	18	34	25.79	4.440
Child's Marital Status	0	1	.6598	.4738
Child's Education Level (Degree)	0	1	.3335	.4716
Child's Number of Children	0	5	.6838	1.0187
Control Variables				
Sex	0	1	.4624	.4987
Income	1	4	1.324	.57808

Since some of the variables are dummy variables, their minimum values are zero and maximum values are one. About thirty-three percent of the sample holds a degree or certificate. The mean age of the children is twenty-five and the mean age of the parents is fifty-seven. About 65 percent of the sample is not married. Number of children is a continuous variable and ranges from zero to five, with a mean of .68 children. Income has been recoded into four categories; one ($0-30,000 annual income), two ($30,001-65,000 annual income), three ($65,001- 100,000 annual income) and four ($100,001 and higher annual income).

The second model pertains to variables relating to family development and structure. Table 4.2 presents the descriptive results for this model.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Family Development Model, Wave 3

Independent Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Family Development Framework Variables				
Parent's Marital Status	0	1	.8228	.3818
Child's Number of Siblings	0	20	2.648	2.1303
Parent's Health/Well Being (1)	1	7	5.673	1.204
Parent's Health/Well Being(2)	1	5	1.954	.7598
Get Along (Mom)	0	10	8.085	1.702
Get Along (Dad)	0	10	6.699	2.716
Control Variables				
Sex	0	1	.4624	.4987
Income	1	4	1.324	.5780
Age	18	34	25.79	4.440

Table 4.2 shows that most of the parents are married and that the average number of siblings of the focal child is 2.6. Assessing how "things are these days," parents reported a mean of 5.6, indicating a fairly high level of happiness. When asked about self-satisfaction, parents reported a mean of 1.95, meaning they strongly agree that they are satisfied with themselves. On a scale of one to ten, focal children rated their relationships with their mothers very highly, with a mean of 8.1. Focal children rated their relationships with their fathers slightly lower, with a mean of 6.7.

Multinomial Logistic Regression Results

In this section I report the results of the multinomial logistic regression using the aforementioned independent variables. The results are shown in separate tables for each of four models. A second series of models have been estimated utilizing the data collected in Wave 2. These results are shown later in this chapter.

The multinomial regression results are reported with relative risk ratios. As discussed in Chapter III, relative risk ratios (rrr's) are the exponentiated values of the multinomial logistic regression coefficients; these enable the multiplicative interpretation of the risk of being in a previously launched adult category as opposed to the reference category of "successfully launched." Although some of the variables were not associated with increasing the risk of being a "failure to launch" or a "previously launched adult," some were shown to be associated with an increased or decreased risk of being in one of these categories. I now discuss the results in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) Without Control Variables, Life Course Variables Wave 3

	Odds Ratios
Life Course Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Age	1.0267
Child's Age	.89183***
Child's Marital Status	14.0705***
Child's Education (Degree)	.58646*
Child's Number Children	.60445**
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Age	1.0074
Child's Age	1.1444***
Child's Marital Status	1.4813**
Child's Education (Degree)	.88654
Child's Number Children	.98092
N = 1382 LR Chi^2 = 302.67 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.000 Pseudo R^2 = 0.1079	
* p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01*** p > 0.001	

As shown in the above table, only one of the X variables relating to the life course was shown to not have any significant association with launching status for the first category. The age of the parent was not significantly associated with having never moved out of the family home. In the second model, we see that the age of the parent, education of the child, and number of children the child had were not significantly associated with moving out of the family home and then returning.

For the life course variables in the category "failure to launch," child's age, child's marital status, child's education, and child's number of children were significantly associated with the risk of being a "failure to launch" child. Child's age had a relative risk ratio of .8918, which may be interpreted as follows: The value of .8918 means that each change in a value on the age category of the children multiplies the risk by a factor of .8918 of being a failure to launch versus a successfully launched young adult. That is, the risk is decreased by about 10.8%. This variable is also significant in the model for previously launched adults. In the previously launched adults model, the relative risk ratio value is 1.144. This value means that each change in a value on the age category of the child multiplies the risk by a factor of 1.144 of being a previously launched. That is, the risk is increased by about 14.4%. In the failure to launch model, the relative risk ratio is significant at the $p > 0.001$ level and in the previously launched model the relative risk ratio is significant at the $p > 0.001$ level.

In the model for failure to launch, child's marital status has a relative risk ratio of 14.07. This means that compared to married individuals, unmarried adult children have a risk that is multiplied by a factor of 14 of being a failure to launch; that is, their risk is increased by 1307.1%. This relative risk ratio is significant at the $p > 0.001$ level. In the model for previously launched adults, the variable for marital status has a relative risk ratio of 1.48. This means that compared to married individuals, unmarried individuals multiply the risk by a factor of 1.48 of being a previously launched versus a successfully launched adult; that is, the risk is increased by about 48.1 %. This relative risk ratio is significant at the $p > 0.01$ level.

In the failure to launch model, the variable for education has a relative risk ratio of .586. This means that compared to those without a degree, those with a degree have a risk for being a failure to launch that is multiplied by a factor of .59; that is, the risk is decreased by 41.4%. This relative risk ratio is significant at the $p > 0.05$ level. In the previously launched model the variable for education has a relative risk ratio of .89. This means that compared to those without a degree, those with a degree have a risk of being a previously launched adult that is multiplied by a risk factor of .89; that is, the risk is decreased by 11.3%; however this relative risk ratio is not significant.

In the failure to launch model, the variable for child's number of children has a relative risk ratio of .60. This means that for every increase in the number of children an adult child has, the risk of being a failure to launch child is multiplied by a factor of .60; that is, the risk is decreased by 39.6%. This relative risk ratio is significant at the $p > 0.01$ level of significance. In the model for previously launched, the variable for child's number of children has a relative risk ratio of .98. However, this relative risk ratio is not significant.

I next now turn to a discussion of the statistical model using the family development framework and various family related variables. Table 4.4 presents these results.

Table 4.4: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) Without Control Variables, Family Development Variables Wave 3

	Odds Ratios
Family Development Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Marital	.69219
Number Siblings	1.03221
Parent's Health (1)	.86317
Parent's Health (2)	.76090*
Get Along (Mom)	.95367
Get Along (Dad)	1.05869
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Marital	.99025
Number Siblings	1.09813**
Parent's Health (1)	.89131*
Parent's Health (2)	.87263
Get Along (Mom)	.99989
Get Along (Dad)	.93508*
N = 1382 LR Chi^2 = 23.66 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.0226 Pseudo R^2 = 0.0124	
*p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01 *** p > 0.001	

As shown in the table, far fewer variables related to the child's family structure and family development are significantly associated with launching status. Parent's

marital status, number of brothers and sisters, parent's health and well being (1), how well the adult child gets along with the mother, and how well the adult child gets along with the father are not significant predictors of a child being a failure to launch. Likewise, parent's marital status, parent's health and well being (2), and how well the adult child gets along with the mother, are not significant predictors of whether the child will be previously launched.

However, in the first analysis, the variable for parent's health and well being (2) does have a significant effect on launching status. In the second analysis, number of siblings, parent's health and well being (1), and how well the adult child gets along with the father are significant predictors of launching status. The relative risk ratio for parent's health and well being (2) is .76. This means that for every unit increase in the variable (as a parent feels less satisfied with themselves), the risk of a child being a failure to launch is decreased by 13.7%. This relative risk ratio is significant at $p > 0.05$.

The variable for number of siblings has a relative risk ratio of 1.1. This means that for every increase in the number of siblings an adult child has, the risk of being a previously launched adult is increased by 9.8%, and this relative risk ratio is statistically significant. The variable for parent's health and well being (1) has a relative risk ratio of .89 meaning that for every unit increase in the variable (as a parent is more happy with things these days), the risk of being a previously launched adult is decreased by 10.9%. This relative risk ratio also is significant. The relative risk ratio for the variable of how well the adult child gets along with the father is .94. This means that for every unit

increase on the variable (as the child gets along better with the father), the risk of being a previously launched adult is decreased by 6.5%, and this effect too is significant.

I now turn to a more detailed discussion of the models by analyzing them while including the relevant control variables of sex and income. Table 4.5 shows the results of the analysis using the life course variables and the control variables.

Table 4.5: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) With Control Variables, Life Course Variables Wave 3

	Odds Ratios
Life Course Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Age	1.02866
Child's Age	.89338**
Child's Marital Status	11.1150***
Child's Education (Degree)	.79185
Child's Number Children	.67824*
Sex	1.70788**
Income	.44172**
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Age	1.0082
Child's Age	1.1467***
Child's Marital Status	1.4421**
Child's Education (Degree)	.86633
Child's Number Children	.96639
Sex	.73763**
Income	1.0052
N = 1382 LR Chi^2 = 282.85 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.000 Pseudo R^2 = 0.1114	
* p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01 *** p > 0.001	

The model focusing on life course variables plus the controls with regard to failure to launch shows that child's age, child's marital status, child's number of children, child's sex, and income were all significantly associated with the risk of being a failure to launch child. Child's age had a relative risk ratio of .89 meaning that when the controls are introduced the risk is decreased by about 11.7%. This variable is also significant but in the opposite direction in the model for previously launched adults.

In the model for failure to launch, the variable of child's marital status has a relative risk ratio of 11.1 indicating a very strong positive effect of marital status. In the model for previously launched adults, the marital status variable is also positive but not as strong as in the previous model. In the failure to launch model, the variable for child's number of children has a relative risk ratio of .67. The greater the number of children, the less the risk.

In the failure to launch model, the child's sex has a relative risk ratio of 1.71.This means that compared to women, men have a greater risk of being a failure to launch versus being successfully launched. In the previously launched model, males are less likely than females to be previously launched. The variable for income is only significant in the model for failure to launch. The multinomial logistic regression models that analyze the relationship between the life course variables, the control variables, and launching status provide some interesting results. My hypothesis regarding parent's age was not supported. My hypothesis regarding child's age was supported and age was proven to be significantly associated with launching status in the failure to launch model.

However, in the previously launched model, contrary to my hypothesis, older adults were more likely to move back in with their parents and this finding was significant. Thus, my hypothesis was confirmed for only one group of adult children.

I hypothesized that both adult children who were married and those with children would be less likely to live at home. My hypothesis for marital status was supported and significant in both models; however my hypothesis for number of children was only significant in the model for failure to launch.

My hypothesis for education was also supported; however the results were not significant. My hypothesis regarding sex was interesting in that males were shown to be more likely to be living at home than females, but this was only the case for those who were failures to launch. My hypothesis that adult children with higher incomes would be less likely to move back home was supported for failure to launch adults, but not supported for previously launched adults. However, with the failure to launch model this variable was significant and in the previously launched model it was not significant.

I now turn to a discussion of the results of the statistical model using the family development framework and various family related variables. Table 4.6 shows these results.

Table 4.6: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) With Control Variables, Family Development Variables Wave 3

	Odds Ratios
Family Development Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Marital	.6806737
Number Siblings	1.032243
Parent's Health (1)	.8986739
Parent's Health (2)	.799200
Get Along (Mom)	.9511848
Get Along (Dad)	1.049486
Sex	2.349628***
Income	.229070**
Age	.8309831***
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Marital	.7317886
Number Siblings	1.077751*
Parent's Health (1)	.8085982 **
Parent's Health (2)	.8503174
Get Along (Mom)	1.013673
Get Along (Dad)	.9386832*
Sex	.7414978 *
Income	.8816769
Age	1.140864***
N = 1382 LR Chi^2 = 199.13 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.000 Pseudo R^2 = 0.1151	
*p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01 *** p > 0.001	

As depicted in the table, several variables related to family development were not shown to have any significant association with launching status. In the model for failure

to launch, parent's marital status, number of siblings, parent's health, how well the child gets along with the mother, and how well the child gets along with the father were all shown to not have any significant association with launching status. However, in the model for previously launching status, only parent's marital status, the second variable relating to parent's health and well being, and how well the adult child gets along with their mother and income were not significantly associated with launching status.

For the failure to launch category, the only variables that were significantly associated with launching status were sex, income, and age, all of which were used as control variables in the models. For the previously launched category, number of siblings, parent's health, how well the adult child gets along with their father, sex, and age were significantly associated with launching status.

The relative risk ratio for number of siblings is 1.1 meaning that the greater the number of siblings, the greater the risk of being a previously launched adult. This finding is inconsistent with my hypothesis that adult children would be less likely to live at home if they had more siblings.

The relative risk ratio for parent's health is .81. The healthier the parent, the less the risk of being a previously launched adult. This finding is consistent with my hypothesis.

The relative risk ratio for how well the adult child gets along with his/her father is .94, indicating that this variable has a slightly negative risk of being a previously launched adult. This result is contrary to my hypothesis, in which I had predicted that

adult children would be more likely to live at home if they got along well with their parents.

Some of my hypotheses relating to the family development framework and family structure were supported, but others were not. However many of the variables did not turn out to be significant with the addition of the control variables. Prior to the addition of control variables in the models, parent's health and well-being was shown to be significantly associated with launching status, namely the launching status of failure to launch; however as the parent was more dissatisfied with themselves they are less likely to have an adult child living at home, which was contrary to my hypothesis. For previously launched adults, the hypothesis relating to number of siblings was significantly associated with previously launched adults launching status, which also was inconsistent with my expectations. Additionally, parent's health and well being (1) was proven to be significantly related to launching status and in the direction predicted. How well the adult child got along with the father was also significant, albeit in a direction opposite to that expected.

I found many of these findings surprising, especially the fact that a majority of the family structure and family development variables were not significantly associated with the launching status of an adult child. As shown in my review of the literature, family development has focused on the characteristics of families over the period of their existence and also on the content and timing of past events in individual histories and how these events affect present interaction patterns among family members (Aldous 1978). I began my dissertation project expecting that the different variables relating to

the life course perspective would be very important and certainly have a significant impact on launching status. However, I had also suspected that the family development framework variables would be quite significant as well. Despite the fact that with recent changes in the composition of marriage and families leading to a change in the timing and sequencing of events in the family, I had still hypothesized that variables relating to the family would significantly impact the launching status of young adults; clearly, my hypotheses were not supported with the data. In the next section I will now turn to the analysis of the regression models using data gathered in Wave 2 of the NSFH.

Wave 2 Analyses

In this section of the chapter, I will describe the results that I obtained by replicating the statistical analyses done in the first part of this chapter with the Wave 3 data. As previously stated, the sample gathered for Wave 3 was not nationally representative of the population. It was a sub-sample of the original sample, and as such was gathered using non-probability sampling techniques due to budgetary constraints in the project. Because of this, it would be impossible for me to take any conclusions from the statistical models using the Wave 3 data and generalize the information to a larger population. Because of this problem of inference, I am replicating my statistical analyses using Wave 2 data, which were gathered utilizing a probability sampling technique. Since these data are easily generalizable to the population, if there are similarities between my results for Wave 3 and Wave 2, I would feel somewhat comfortable in my

ability to use Wave 3 data to predict the situations that might lead adult children to live with their parents.

In this section of the chapter I first provide descriptive results of the independent and dependent variables of Wave 2 data. The first point to be mentioned is that this sample was restricted to those main respondents and their corresponding focal children and that at the time the data were gathered the age of the focal children was much lower than when the data were gathered in Wave 3. As such, I restricted the sample to only include adult children who would have been at risk of likely moving out and then moving back home. Thus, the sample size for these models was 820.

Since the variable measuring the launching status of the young adults is an unordered categorical variable, the minimum value is one and the maximum value is three. I show in Table 4.7 similar descriptive statistics for the independent variables and the variables used as controls.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Life Course Model, Wave 2

Independent Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Life Course Variables				
Parent's Age	30	100	49.454	15.155
Child's Age	17	26	21.119	1.996
Child's Marital Status	0	1	.8412	.3655
Child's Education Level (Degree)	0	1	.2697	.4441
Child's Number of Children	0	4	.2718	.5968
Control Variables				
Sex	0	1	.4939	.5001
Income	1	3	1.0378	.20248

In Wave 2, the age range of the parents is quite similar to Wave 3. Since some of the variables are dummy variables, their minimum values are zero and maximum values are one. About twenty-six percent of the sample holds a degree or certificate. The mean age of the sample of children is twenty-one and the mean age of the sample of parents is forty-nine. The age of the children is slightly more restricted than in Wave 3 due to the fact that many of the children were too young to be at any reasonable risk of moving out of the family home and then moving back home; thus, the ages range from 17 to 26. Child's current marital status, along with number of children, and income are included in the analyses. Marital status is a dummy variable; zero being married and one being unmarried. Number of children ranges from zero to five, with a mean of .27 children. Income has been recoded into three categories; one ($0-30,000 annual income), two ($30,001- 65,000 annual income), and three ($65,001- 100,000 annual income). In Wave

3 I had four categories for income and had intended to have four categories in this analysis as well; however none of the respondents had incomes that were higher than $100,000 annually. Thus there are only three categories for income. The second model in this analysis pertains to variables relating to family development and structure. Table 4.8 shows the descriptive results.

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics for Family Development Model, Wave 2

Independent Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Family Development Framework Variables				
Parent's Marital Status	0	1	.5744	.4944
Child's Number of Siblings	0	20	2.573	2.187
Parent's Health/Well Being (1)	1	7	5.448	1.355
Parent's Health/Well Being(2)	1	9	2.253	1.479
Get Along (Mom)	0	10	8.175	1.750
Get Along (Dad)	0	10	7.286	2.430
Control Variables				
Sex	0	1	.4939	.5001
Income	1	3	1.0378	.20248
Age	17	26	21.119	1.9968

The results show that most of the parents in this sample are married and that the average number of siblings of the focal child has is 2.5. Assessing how things are these days, parents reported a mean of 5.4, indicating a fairly high level of happiness. When asked about self-satisfaction, parents reported a mean of 2.3, meaning that they strongly agree that they are satisfied with themselves. On a scale of one to ten, focal children rated their relationships with their mothers very highly, with a mean of 8.2. Focal children rated their relationships with their fathers slightly lower, with a mean of 7.3.

Multinomial Logistic Regression Results

In this section I report the results of the multinomial logistic regression using the aforementioned independent variables. The results are shown in separate tables for each model; all the results are for four models. These results will be compared with the earlier series of models that were estimated utilizing the data collected in Wave 3 of the study, and reported earlier in this chapter. I will not review the results variable by variable, but will only focus on the results of the Wave 2 analyses that were decidedly different from those of the Wave 3 analyses. Table 4.9 details the results of the multinomial logistic regression using the life course perspective; this model was estimated without the use of control variables.

When compared to the results from the Wave 3 analysis, it is apparent that many of the independent variables work in the same direction and have roughly the same magnitude of effect on the dependent variable. Likewise, many of the same independent variables as in the model from Wave 3 show statistical relationships. The only notable

differences are that in the Wave 2 model for the failure to launch category, parent's age is significant; likewise for the previously launched category, parent's age and child's education are significant whereas they are not significant in the Wave 3 model.

Table 4.9: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) Without Control Variables, Life Course Variables Wave 2

	Odds Ratios
Life Course Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Age	.97563*
Child's Age	.69597***
Child's Marital Status	12.5072***
Child's Education (Degree)	.26741***
Child's Number Children	.63475**
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Age	.96132*
Child's Age	1.2130**
Child's Marital Status	1.5217
Child's Education (Degree)	.41797**
Child's Number Children	1.0713
N = 820 LR Chi^2 = 275.60 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.000 Pseudo R^2 = 0.1689 *p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01 *** p > 0.001	

In the Wave 2 models for failure to launch and previously launched adults, we see that the older the adult parent, the less likely the child will be a failure to launch or a previously launched adult. In the Wave 3 model, the older the parent, the more likely the child will be a failure to launch. Similarly, in the previously launched Wave 3 model the variable for number of children shows that the more children an adult child has, the less likely the focal child will be a previously launched adult. In the Wave 2 model the variable for the child's number of children depicts a relationship where the more children an adult child has, the more likely he/she will be a previously launched adult. I will now turn to a discussion of the Wave 2 analysis of the Family Development Variables, without the use of controls. Table 4.10 details these results.

Table 4.10: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) Without Control Variables, Family Development Variables Wave 2

	Odds Ratios
Family Development Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Marital	1.16516
Number Siblings	.96052
Parent's Health (1)	.96209
Parent's Health (2)	.90715
Get Along (Mom)	1.06288
Get Along (Dad)	1.01631
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Marital	.82481
Number Siblings	.97598
Parent's Health (1)	1.00093
Parent's Health (2)	1.01566
Get Along (Mom)	1.07320
Get Along (Dad)	1.01777
N = 820 LR Chi^2 = 275.60 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.000 Pseudo R^2= 0.1689 *p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01 *** p > 0.001	

There are many differences between the results of the family development analyses in Wave 3 and Wave 2. In Wave 3, more of the independent variables proved to be significant predictors of launching status, whereas in Wave 2 we see that none of the independent variables turned out to be significantly related to launching status. In addition, many of the independent variables exerted an opposite effect on the dependent variable in the Wave 2 analysis. For example, in the Wave 3 analysis adult children with married parents were less likely to be both failure to launch and previously launched adults. In the Wave 2 analysis, those with married parents were more likely to be failure

to launch adults. In the Wave 3 analysis, adult children who had more siblings were more likely to be both failure to launch and previously launched; in the Wave 2 analysis, adults with more siblings were less likely to be both failure to launch and previously launched.

In the Wave 3 analysis, an adult child was more likely to be a failure to launch adult and a previously launched adult if their parents were happy with things these days. In the Wave 3 analysis, an adult child was less likely to be a failure to launch and a previously launched adult if they got along well with their mother. In the Wave 2 analysis, an adult child was more likely to be a failure to launch and a previously launched adult if he/she got along well with the mother. Similarly, in the Wave 3 analysis, an adult child was less likely to be a previously launched adult if he/she got along well with the father; in the Wave 2 analysis, the child was more likely to be a previously launched adult if he/she got along well with the father. Intuitively, the direction of the relationships between the independent variables for how well an adult child gets along with the parents in Wave 2 seems to make sense. Unfortunately, as I have previously stated, none of these relationships proved to be significant. I will now discuss the results of the analysis of the life course model with the addition of various control variables. Table 4.11 details the results.

Table 4.11: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) With Control Variables, Life Course Variables Wave 2

	Odds Ratios
Life Course Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Age	.97238*
Child's Age	.69390***
Child's Marital Status	11.6866***
Child's Education (Degree)	.19388***
Child's Number Children	.58095**
Sex	1.1937
Income	1.1289
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Age	.96775*
Child's Age	1.2540**
Child's Marital Status	1.4075
Child's Education (Degree)	.49702
Child's Number Children	1.2244
Sex	1.2764
Income	1.0912
N = 820 LR $Chi^2 = 129.97$ Prob > $Chi^2 = 0.000$ Pseudo $R^2 = 0.1497$	
*p > 0.05 ** p > 0.01 *** p > 0.001	

There are few differences between the Wave 3 and Wave 2 analyses with the addition of the control variables. Comparable to the multinomial logistic regression results from Wave 3, many of the Wave 2 life course variables are significantly

associated with launching status, and in the direction I predicted. In contrast to the Wave 3 multinomial logistic regression life course model, the variable for parent's age in the Wave 2 model does show a confirmation of my hypothesis that older parents would be less likely to have adult children living at home; this holds true for both failure to launch children and previously launched adults. Both of these relative risk ratios were significant in each of the Wave 2 models.

As in Wave 3, my hypothesis regarding child's age is supported in the failure to launch model. Older adult children are less likely to be failure to launch children, but are more likely to live at home for the previously launched model. Additionally, my hypotheses were supported regarding marital status and number of children; unmarried adult children are more likely to live at home, and the more children an adult child has, the less likely the child will live at home as a failure to launch, but more likely as a previously launched adult. However, this relationship is not significant for the previously launched model.

The education hypothesis was supported in both models as well though it was only statistically significant in the failure to launch model. In contrast to the Wave 3 models, the control variables of sex and income did not prove to be significant in either the failure to launch model or the previously launched model. I will now turn to a discussion of the results of the multinomial logistic regression models using the family development and family structure variables, which are depicted in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) With Control Variables, Family Development Variables Wave 2

	Odds Ratios
Family Development Variables	
Group 1 (Failure to Launch)	
Parent's Marital	1.00841
Number Siblings	.95600
Parent's Health (1)	.97559
Parent's Health (2)	.84093
Get Along (Mom)	1.1544*
Get Along (Dad)	1.0348
Sex	1.5878*
Income	1.6874
Age	.58416***
Group 2 (Previously Launched)	
Parent's Marital	.72440
Number Siblings	.96630
Parent's Health (1)	.97561
Parents' Health (2)	1.0031
Get Along (Mom)	.99099
Get Along (Dad)	1.0150
Sex	1.6805*
Income	.72957
Age	1.2662***
N = 820 LR Chi^2 = 232.80 Prob > Chi^2 = 0.000 Pseudo R^2 = 0.1826	
*p >0.05 ** p> 0.01 *** p> 0.001	

Much like the analyses from the multinomial logistic regression models using family development and family structure variables from Wave 3, many of the variables in Wave 2 did not significantly impact launching status of adult children. There are

however some differences between the models analyzed in Wave 3 and Wave 2. In the Wave 2 analysis, parents who are married are more likely to have a failure to launch child, whereas in the Wave 3 analysis the opposite is true. In the Wave 2 analysis, those adult children who have more siblings will be less likely to be failure to launch adults, and in Wave 3 the analysis showed that the opposite was true as well. In Wave 2, we see that adult children are more likely to be failure to launch if they get along well with their mother, and if they have more income they will be more likely to be failure to launch. We also see that they will be less likely to be previously launched if they have more siblings, and that men will be more likely to be previously launched. While many of the variables worked in the predicted direction, the outcomes were not significant and not only that, they were not close to having any statistical significance whatsoever. Thus, it is difficult to make generalizations based on the family development framework variables as they relate to the launching status of the adult child.

Conclusions

In Chapter IV I have displayed and discussed the results of the series of models examining various predictors of the launching status of adults. The analyses were conducted with two separate models; one that focused on life course variables and one that focused on family development and family structure variables. In this chapter I also replicated my analyses using data from an earlier wave (Wave 2) of the NSFH. These replications were necessary because the data gathered in Wave 3 were not nationally representative and were not gathered using a probability sampling technique. Rather,

they were a subset of the original data, and using these data to make inferences would just not be statistically possible. To account for this, I replicated the results using the data from Wave 2 that were generalizable and I was able to use the similarities between the results of the two waves to make inferences about the statistical analyses conducted with Wave 3 data.

As previously stated, I replicated the multinomial logistic regression analyses that were first estimated with the Wave 3 data with the Wave 2 data in order to ascertain whether I could be confident in making statistical inferences with the results from the Wave 3 data. With few exceptions, the relationships between the variables as predictors of launching status behaved in the same way when data were drawn from the Wave 3 and Wave 2 samples. Additionally the significance levels of the variables are similar between each Wave, with far more variables in the life course model being significant as compared to the family development and family structure model.

However, some of my hypotheses were not confirmed, most especially those related to the various family development and family structure variables. I was surprised that the results indicated that very few of the family related variables were significant predictors of launching status because I had anticipated that the family structure variables would in fact be very significant predictors. I think that this finding is very interesting and deserves more attention in future research relating to adults who move back in with their parents. Unfortunately, the only dataset that specifically addresses the questions of adult children moving back in with their parents is the one I used in this dissertation. Despite the fact that this dataset is rich with information relating to family

home leaving and returning, a major drawback is the lack of representativeness that can be obtained by using the most recent Wave of data. Despite this drawback I feel that I have compensated by replicating the results with a Wave of data that was gathered using a probability sampling technique.

Chapter V will describe the data from the American Community Survey and will focus in particular on some of the descriptive statistics of families and living arrangements in the more recent year of 2009. This dataset does not contain detailed enough data to permit me to retest the hypotheses I just tested with the Wave 2 and 3 data. But there are sufficient enough data in the ACS to enable me to describe some of the characteristics of families and family relationships that will help provide more information about the young adults who are the subject of this dissertation.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS:

DESCRIPTIVE DATA ABOUT FAMILIES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FROM THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

As already noted the only data set available to me with the requisite data and information about previously launched adults was the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH). Unfortunately, the NSFH Wave 2 and Wave 3 data were gathered in the 1990s. Thus to a significant degree the results and analyses reported in the previous chapter are dated by one or more decades. There is another data set, the American Community Survey (ACS), which is contemporary and contains some but not all the data I need to analyze previously launched adults. I am able to provide from the ACS good descriptions of families and their living arrangements, but the ACS does not have the detailed information needed to test and evaluate my hypotheses. But its data are valuable for providing descriptive information.

Therefore in this chapter I first describe in some detail the ACS, its rationale and its content. Then I turn to a fuller discussion regarding the reasoning for including the descriptive statistics obtained from the ACS. I conclude with a presentation of the descriptive data from the ACS about families and living arrangements.

The American Community Survey

Introduction

According to the United States Census Bureau[3], the ACS is an ongoing survey that provides data and is the "cornerstone of the U.S. Census Bureau's effort to keep pace with the nation's ever increasing demands for timely and relevant data about population and housing characteristics" (ACS Design Methodology Foreword: 1). The ACS was introduced to take the place of the long form questionnaire of the decennial census, which provided detailed data about the American population once every ten years. Since the ACS is an annual survey, detailed data are now provided annually, not decennially.

The ACS details topics such as age, sex, race, family and relationships, income and benefits, health insurance, education, veteran status, disabilities, work and journey to work, and expenses related to housing and housing occupancy. The ACS utilizes a series of monthly samples to produce annually updated data for the areas formerly sampled only in the decennial census long-form sample; the ACS is vital to economic development and is an improvement over the long form questionnaire of the decennial census because it provides small-area information annually instead of only once a decade. Officials argue that the data obtained from the ACS are utilized to administer federal and state programs and note that the ACS has long lasting value for policy and decision making across all levels of government and private sectors.

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[3] All information in this section obtained from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/

Methodology

The traditional cross sectional model of the decennial U.S. Census involved observations of a population made at home at one point in time. In contrast to the cross sectional method of obtaining information about the populations, the longitudinal and continuous measurement of the detailed information on the characteristics of population and housing is available via the ACS. In the early 1990s, data users demanded current and nationally consistent data, leading the federal government policymakers to consider the feasibility of implementing a survey like the ACS. Rather than collecting data about a subset of the population once every ten years via the long form instrument of the decennial census, the ACS would allow researchers to gather information on social, economic, and housing data continuously throughout the decade. The benefits of such a survey were many; the Census Bureau would be able to provide current data as well as the anticipated decennial census benefits in cost savings, planning, improved census coverage and more efficient operations. This information led the Census Bureau to plan the implementation of the ACS.

The designers of the ACS decided that data would be "collected continuously via the use of independent monthly samples…[and] three modes of data collection would be used: a primary mail survey to ensure cost efficiency, as well as telephone and personal visit non-response follow-up methods" (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 2).

In 2000, the Census Bureau gave a demonstration in order to "assure Congress and other data users that the ACS was in fact capable of producing the demographic,

social, economic, and housing data previously obtained from the decennial census long-form sample" (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 2). Reports issued during the demonstration phase analyzed numerous aspects of the program and also examined methodology and data quality. Reports found that the data collected met basic Census Bureau standards and provided a reasonable alternative to the decennial census long-form sample. Other reports confirmed the usability and reliability of the ACS estimates and found that the Census long-form estimates and the ACS estimates were comparable.

In 2003, the ACS was ready to be fully implemented; however, budget restrictions delayed the full implementation of the ACS to January 2005 for housing units. With full implementation, the ACS included all 3,141 counties in the 50 states and the District of Columbia and the sample was about 3 million (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 2). Full implementation began in 2005 and population and housing profiles became available in the summer of 2006 and have been available every year subsequently for specific geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more. Three-year period estimates reflect the combined data from the 2005 to 2007 ACS and were available in late 2008. Five-year period estimates were available in 2010. Beginning in 2010 and every year thereafter, the nation now has a 5-year period estimate available as an alternative to the decennial census long form sample; this serves as a community information resource that shows change over time.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame used for the ACS is an extract from the national Master Address File (MAF), which is maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 3). The MAF is the source of addresses for the ACS, the decennial census, and other Census Bureau Surveys. It is the official inventory of known living quarters (housing units) and group quarters and contains mailing and location address information. The MAF is linked to a database that contains a digital representation of all census required map features and related attributes. The initial MAF was created for Census 2000 and utilize multiple sources; these sources include the 1990 Address Control File, the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File, field-listing operations, and addresses supplied by local governments through partnership operations. The MAF was used as the initial frame for the ACS and is continually updated by the Census Bureau in conjunction with various other field operatives. I will now proceed to a discussion on the development of the ACS content, concepts and definitions.

Content, Concepts and Definitions

As previously stated, the ACS was designed to replace the long form questionnaire of the decennial census. The long form instrument collected detailed population and housing characteristics one time per decade through questions asked of a sample of the population (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 5). The ACS consists of 25 housing and 42 population questions. Table 5.1 lists the topics in the ACS. The ACS questionnaires for housing units are divided into four sections. The first verifies basic

address information and determines the occupancy status of the housing unit. The second section collects basic demographic data. The third collects housing information and the fourth section collects population data. The questionnaires for group quarters include all of the information included on housing unit questionnaire, except for relationship.

Table 5.1: ACS Topics Listed by Type of Characteristic and Question Number

Housing	Population
Household size	**Name**
H1 Units in Structure	P1 Sex
H2 Year Structure Built	P2 Age and Date of Birth
H3 Year Householder Moved Into Unit	P3 Relationship to Householder
H4 Acreage	P4 Marital Status
H5 Agricultural Sales	P5 Hispanic Origin
H6 Business on Property	P6 Race
H7 Rooms	P7 Place of Birth
H8 Bedrooms	P8 Citizenship
H9 Plumbing Facilities	P9 Year of Entry
H10 Kitchen Facilities	P10 Type of School and School Enrollment
H11 Telephone Service Available	P11 Educational Attainment
H12 Vehicles Available	P12 Ancestry
H13 House Heating Fuel	P13 Language Spoken at Home, Ability to Speak English
H14 Cost of Utilities	P14 Residence 1 Year Ago (Migration)
H15 Food Stamp Benefit	P15 Disability: Sensory, Physical
H16 Condominium Status and Fee	P16 Disability: Mental, Self-care
H17 Tenure	P17 Disability: Going out Alone, Ability to Work
H18 Monthly Rent	P18 Fertility
H19 Value of Property	P19 Grandparents as Caregivers
H20 Real Estate Taxes	P20 Veteran Status
H21 Insurance for Fire, Hazard, and Flood	P21 Period of Military Service
H22 Mortgage Status, Payment, Real Estate Taxes	P22 Years of Military Service
	P23 Worked Last Week
H23 Second or Junior Mortgage Payment or Home Equity Loan	P24 Place of Work
	P25 Means of Transportation
H24 Mobile Home Costs	P26 Private Vehicle Occupancy
H25 Seasonal Residence	P27 Time Leaving Home to Go to Work
	P28 Travel Time to Work
	P29 Layoff, Temporarily Absent, Informed of Recall or Return Date
	P30 Looking for Work
	P31 Available to Work
	P32 When Last Worked
	P33 Weeks Worked
	P34 Usual Hours Worked Per Week
	P35 Class of Worker
	P36 Employer
	P37 Type or Kind of Business
	P38 Industry
	P39 Occupation
	P40 Primary Job Activity
	P41 Income in the Past 12 Months (by type of income)
	P42 Total Income

In order to develop and produce detailed demographic, housing, social and economic data every year, the ACS attempts to minimize content changes in order to ensure reliability. According to the ACS Design Methodology, "the Census Bureau classifies all living quarters as either housing units or group quarters facilities. A housing unit is a house, apartment, and group of rooms or a single room. Group quarters facilities are living quarters owned and managed by an entity or organization that provides housing or services for the residents" (Chapter 6:1). Rules regarding who is eligible to be interviewed are defined in relation to residency status. Current residents are eligible to be interviewed and individuals are considered to be current residents if they are living in a residence at the time of the interview. This excludes those who are only staying there for a short period of time (less than two consecutive months). Residency for the group quarters facilities is determined by a de factor rule- all people staying in the group quarters facility when the roster of residents is made and sampled are eligible to be interviewed, regardless of the length of stay (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 6).

Data Collection, Coding, and Dissemination

The ACS achieves a high total response rate each year, which is due in part to the three pronged data collection design (ACS Design Methodology Chapter 7). The mail phase of questionnaire dissemination is the least expensive method and the protocol for disseminating the questionnaire consists of mailing three to four mailings to each sample address. The respondent first receives a pre-notice letter, then an initial mail package that contains a cover letter, the questionnaire, an instructional guide, a brochure, and a return

envelope. The third mailing is a reminder postcard and reminds the respondents to return their questionnaires. The fourth mailing is only sent to sample addresses from which the initial questionnaire has not been returned, and that is a replacement mail package.

The second data collection phase is the telephone phase, which utilizes an automated data collection instrument. To be eligible, a housing unit that did not respond via mail must have a working address and telephone number. The last phase is a personal visit phase and is only used when mail and computer assisted operations have been completed.

Processing of the data does not begin until all responses records are edited and imputed in the data preparation and processing phases, the final weights are determined, and disclosure avoidance techniques are applied. After the estimates are produced and verified, they are then released to the public. Single year period estimates of ACS data are published annually for areas with populations of 65,000 or more. Three-year period estimates are published for areas of 20,000 or more. The ACS data and products are released in several series and at several locations such as the American Factfinder website and the ACS Website. Another site that contains the ACS data is the website for the Minnesota Population Center, which is the home of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) and other data projects.

I obtained the data that I will utilize for descriptive analysis from IPUMS-USA. IPUMS-USA contains harmonized data on people in the United States Census and the ACS from 1850 to present. I requested access to the 2009 ACS sample survey and included the variables for household and person records. These variables are state,

person number, relationship to household head, age, sex, marital status, race and educational attainment.

Rationale for Using the ACS

There are a variety of reasons why I used ACS for supplemental data analysis in my dissertation. The ACS data are obtained and released every year. Hence utilizing the ACS for descriptive purposes allows me to analyze more recent and current trends of adult child and parent coresidence situations. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, a major drawback with the NSFH data was the time of data collection; the most recent Wave was collected in 2001- 2003, which makes even the most recent NSFH data fairly dated. Moreover, as already noted, the Wave 3 data alone were not sufficient to use for a reliable analysis; thus I had to include data from Wave 2 of the NSFH, which were gathered in 1992- 1994. While it would be impossible to analyze the nuanced nature of adult child/parent relationships and feelings about coresidence while using the ACS data, I am able nevertheless to use the data to describe more recent trends of adult children living with their parents.

Descriptive Statistics from the ACS on Families and Living Arrangements

I now present some descriptive statistics that detail the current situation of adult child/parent coresidence in the United States. As previously stated, these are data collected from the most recent ACS, which was in 2009. The sample I obtained has about 3 million observations. However, after restricting the sample to only the 18-34 year old children of the heads of the household, I was left with a sample of slightly more than 182,000. Table 5.2 is a frequency tabulation of the children by age.

Table 5.2: Living Arrangements by Age 18-34, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	Child of Household Head
18	30,167
19	23,270
20	19,933
21	17,002
22	14,974
23	13,480
24	11,138
25	9,197
26	7,895
27	6,830
28	5,873
29	5,063
30	4,546
31	3,730
32	3,534
33	3,014
34	2,886
TOTAL	**182,486**

As depicted by the descriptive statistics, the majority of the young adults who are living at home are in the 18 to 24 age range. This is somewhat similar to the descriptive statistics obtained using the NSFH data; the average age for the children in those data was about 25. With a total of 182,486 young adults living at home who are between the ages of 18 to 34, this equates to slightly more than fifteen percent of the entire sample obtained from the ACS. After age 24, the number of young adults living with their parents drops off slightly and continues to decline up until age 34. Obviously the largest number of young adults living at home are those who are 18 years old; this may well be because they have just turned 18 but have not yet graduated from high school. Next, I present the results of the breakdown of young adults living at home by sex and age (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Living Arrangements by Age and Sex, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	Male	Female
18	16,079	14,088
19	12,534	10,736
20	10,688	9,245
21	9,388	7,614
22	8,074	6,900
23	7,380	6,100
24	6,176	4,962
25	5,061	4,136
26	4,503	3,356
27	3,838	2,992
28	3,341	2,532
29	2,871	2,192
30	2,560	1,986
31	2,081	1,649
32	2,032	1,492
33	1,705	1,309
34	1,656	1,230
TOTAL	**99,967**	**82,519**

As depicted in Table 5.3, at all ages males outnumber females among those who live at home. This is s what I had hypothesized would be the case in my original analysis of the NSFH data. Similar to the original breakdown by age, a majority of young adults who are living at home are between the ages of 18 and 20. The numbers of young adults living at home continue to decline for both sexes as the young adults get older. Next, I analyze the racial identification of young adults who live at home (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Living Arrangements by Age and Racial Identification, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	White	Black	Asian	Other
18	22,512	3,428	1,242	2,985
19	17,072	2,767	1,045	2,386
20	14,547	2,445	964	1,977
21	12,420	2,024	912	1,646
22	10,963	1,659	856	1,496
23	9,911	1,545	813	1,211
24	7,953	1,296	780	1,109
25	6,371	1,213	708	905
26	5,423	1,037	602	797
27	4,721	917	510	682
28	3,991	835	434	613
29	3,414	739	388	522
30	3,024	723	347	452
31	2,567	538	261	364
32	2,399	510	253	362
33	2,083	477	191	261
34	1,962	562	186	276
TOTAL	**131,333**	**22,615**	**10,492**	**18,046**

Interestingly, the majority of the sample of young adults living at home is comprised of young adults who identify as white. This is likely because in the original sample, people who identified as white made up almost eighty percent of the sample. The next largest group is comprised of those who identify as black. The third largest

group is comprised of those who identify as other, which is a category that I created to include American Indian or Alaska Natives, other race, two major races and three or more major races. Lastly, those who identify as Asian make up the smallest portion of the sample, which includes those who identify as Chinese, Japanese, or Other Asian or Pacific Islanders.

Another way to analyze the racial data is to examine the racial distribution by age; does the racial distribution vary by age? These results are shown in Table 5.5.

As depicted in Table 5.5, it appears that there does not seem to be a very significant difference in the percentage of each race at each age. The percentage of those who are White and living at home ranges from about sixty-nine to seventy-four percent of the population. This pattern appears to be similar for the other races; for those who identified as Black the range at each age is about eleven percent to sixteen percent. For Asians, the range is from a low of four percent to a high of almost eight percent and for those who identify as Other, the range is just below nine percent to ten percent.

Table 5.5: Percent by Age and Race, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	%White	%Black	%Asian	%Other
18	74.62	11.36	4.12	9.89
19	73.36	11.89	4.49	10.25
20	72.98	12.27	4.84	9.92
21	73.05	11.90	5.36	9.68
22	73.21	11.08	5.72	9.99
23	73.52	11.46	6.03	8.98
24	71.40	11.64	7.00	9.96
25	69.27	13.19	7.70	9.84
26	69.00	13.20	7.66	10.14
27	69.12	13.43	7.47	9.99
28	67.96	14.22	7.39	10.44
29	67.43	14.60	7.66	10.31
30	66.52	15.90	7.63	9.94
31	68.82	14.47	7.18	10.27
32	69.11	15.83	6.34	8.73
33	67.98	16.01	6.44	9.56
34	71.97	12.39	5.75	9.89

The largest range is for those who identify as either White or Black but clearly the difference between the percentages at each age is fairly negligible. We see that at each age, the distribution by race is roughly the same. Next I will examine data on

Hispanic and non-Hispanic identification by the age of young adults living at home.

Table 5.6 details the results.

Table 5.6: Living Arrangements by Age and Hispanic Identification, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	Hispanic	Not Hispanic
18	5,360	24,807
19	4,300	18,970
20	3,621	16,312
21	3,099	13,903
22	2,724	12,250
23	2,359	11,121
24	2,017	9,067
25	1,659	7,538
26	1,456	6,403
27	1,329	5,501
28	1,163	4,710
29	950	4,113
30	845	3,701
31	694	3,036
32	686	2,828
33	542	2,472
34	457	2,429
TOTAL	**33,315**	**149,171**

The majority of the young adults who live at home do not identify as Hispanic. As depicted by the table, substantially less young adults who live at home identify as Hispanic at all ages. This is perhaps the case because in the original full ACS sample, a large percentage of respondents identified as non-Hispanic (about eighty-six percent). A much smaller percentage of the original sample identified as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Other. The percentage that identified as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other was about fourteen percent. I will now analyze in a different way the data on Hispanic identification, this time examining the tabulation by age. These results are shown in Table 5.7.

Much like the table depicting the percentage racial breakdown by age, the percentage Hispanic identification by age varies a very small amount. In this case, the amount of variation is even less than the range for the racial breakdown.

Table 5.7: Percent by Age and Hispanic Identification, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	%Hispanic	%Not Hispanic
18	17.77	82.23
19	18.48	81.52
20	18.17	81.83
21	18.23	81.77
22	18.19	81.81
23	17.50	82.50
24	18.59	81.41
25	18.04	81.96
26	18.53	81.47
27	19.46	80.54
28	19.80	80.20
29	18.76	81.24
30	18.59	81.41
31	18.61	81.39
32	19.47	80.53
33	17.98	82.02
34	15.84	81.74

In the table above, the percentage of those who identified as Hispanic ranges from about sixteen percent to nineteen percent. For those who identify as non-Hispanic, the percentage ranges from about eighty percent to eighty-two percent. Unfortunately, due to data constrictions, I cannot make any comparisons between these descriptive results regarding race and Hispanic identification and the descriptive results from the NSFH because I was unable to analyze race and Hispanic identification using those data.

However, I have a strong feeling that if I had been able to obtain descriptive statistics regarding racial and Hispanic identification using the NSFH data, the breakdown by race would produce similar results. Lastly, I analyze the education levels of young adults living at home by age. Table 5.8 details these results.

Table 5.8 Living Arrangements by Age and Education, 2009 American Community Survey

Age	< High School	High School	Some College	College	> College
18	11,889	16,712	1,566	0	0
19	2,782	13,268	7,184	36	0
20	1,651	9,220	8,936	118	8
21	1,269	7,289	7,835	591	18
22	1,003	5,749	5,774	2,381	67
23	926	4,845	4,458	3,077	174
24	816	4,064	3,288	2,691	279
25	719	3,418	2,668	2,050	342
26	674	3,036	2,168	1,631	350
27	644	2,751	1,699	1,401	335
28	592	2,443	1,453	1,093	292
29	540	2,120	1,297	834	272
30	490	2,011	1,109	685	251
31	419	1,599	913	609	190
32	411	1,581	813	533	186
33	360	1,356	723	434	141
34	334	1,342	689	381	140
TOTAL:	**25,519**	**82,804**	**52,573**	**18,545**	**3,045**

A majority of the respondents have a high school degree level of education. The next highest number of respondents have some college, followed by less than a high school degree, then a college degree, and then greater than a college degree. This is similar to the breakdown of education in the full sample, where a majority of the respondents have a highest educational attainment of a high school diploma. Similarly, the respondents in the restricted sample are clustered around the level of a high school diploma. This is interesting because it depicts a relationship much like the one I hypothesized in Chapter IV; namely, that those with more education would be less likely to be living at home. Those with a college degree and those with more than a college degree have the least amount of people in their categories of those who are living at home.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to use the ACS to obtain descriptive statistics in an attempt to describe more recent trends of adults living at home. My intended outcome was to supplement the multivariate statistical analyses in Chapter IV. While the timeliness of the data is a major strength of using these data, unfortunately I was not able to analyze the intricacies of various family development variables using these data. For instance, I was unable to estimate logistic regression equations predicting the log odds of being an adult living at home because the ACS did not provide me with data about adults not living at home, that is, the successfully launched adults. Beyond descriptive

statistics, these data would not have been ideal to use in a major analysis for the purposes of my study.

Nevertheless, I feel that using the data to supplement my findings is quite important and enlightening. For example, the NSFH data did not permit me to analyze race/ethnic identification nor did they allow me to analyze Hispanic identification. I feel that including these variables is in fact quite important, as there is certainly a chance that the risk of living at home would vary by race/ethnicity and Hispanic identification.

By using the more current ACS data, I was able to look at the trend of adults living with their parents in a more contemporary light. The addition of these descriptive statistics tell us something about the contemporary situation of adult children living with their parents; they describe well this trend in terms of various demographic variables such as sex, race/ethnicity, Hispanic identification and educational attainment. The real strength of this chapter is the ability to see recent trends of a very important phenomenon. Chapter VI will conclude this dissertation with a summary of findings and a discussion of future research.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND DISCUSSION OF FUTURE RESEARCH

My dissertation had three main objectives: the first was to examine the relationship between different life course variables and launching status; the second was to examine the relationship between family development and family structure variables and launching status; and the last objective was to use descriptive statistics to simply describe more current trends of young adult and parent coresidence. In this chapter I will discuss the hypotheses of the models tested in this dissertation, summarize my main research and findings, and address the potential for future research in the area of previously launched adults. I will first discuss some of the principal results from Chapter IV, which reported the results of the multinomial logistic regression models using launching status as the dependent variable.

Summary of Results

Life Course Development Framework, Wave 3

Chapter IV first used the dependent variable launching status to examine the relationship between various life course variables and the launching status of a young adult. The analyses of this chapter tested various hypotheses related to different life course variables and found that many of the life course variables were significantly associated with launching status, even with the addition of control variables. Child's age,

child's marital status, child's number of children, child's sex and child's income were all significantly associated with the risk of being a failure to launch adult. Additionally, I found that child's age, child's marital status, and sex were significantly associated with a child being a previously launched adult. As expected, most of the life course variables were significantly related to launching status. Many of my hypotheses proved correct in the analysis of the life course variables. In the model for failure to launch, the variable of child's marital status has a relative risk ratio of 11.1 indicating a very strong positive effect of marital status. In the model for previously launched adults, the marital status variable is also positive but not as strong as in the previous model. In the failure to launch model, the variable for child's number of children has a relative risk ratio of .67.The greater the number of children, the less the risk.

Despite many significant and correct hypotheses, my hypothesis regarding parent's age was not supported. My hypothesis regarding child's age was supported and age was proven to be significantly associated with launching status in the failure to launch model. However, in the previously launched model, contrary to my hypothesis, older adults were more likely to move back in with their parents and this finding was significant. Thus, my hypothesis was confirmed for only one group of adult children.

I hypothesized that both adult children who were married and those with children would be less likely to live at home. My hypothesis for marital status was supported and significant in both models; however my hypothesis for number of children was only significant in the model for failure to launch.

My hypothesis for education was also supported; however the results were not significant. My hypothesis regarding sex was interesting in that males were shown to be more likely to be living at home than females, but this was only the case for those who were failures to launch. My hypothesis that adult children with higher incomes would be less likely to move back home was supported for failure to launch adults, but not supported for previously launched adults. However, with the failure to launch model this variable was significant and in the previously launched model it was not significant. I will now turn to a discussion of the family development framework analysis for the data from Wave 3.

Family Development Framework, Wave 3

As discussed in Chapter IV, several variables related to family development were not shown to have any significant association with launching status. In the model for failure to launch, parent's marital status, number of siblings, parent's health, how well the child gets along with the mother, and how well the child gets along with the father were all shown to not have any significant association with launching status. However, in the model for previously launching status, only parent's marital status, the second variable relating to parent's health and well being, and how well the adult child gets along with their mother and income were not significantly associated with launching status.

For the failure to launch category, the only variables that were significantly associated with launching status were sex, income, and age, all of which were used as

control variables in the models. For the previously launched category, number of siblings, parent's health, how well the adult child gets along with their father, sex, and age were significantly associated with launching status.

As I stated, support for my hypotheses in the family development model had varying degrees of success. This finding regarding number of siblings was inconsistent with my hypothesis that adult children would be less likely to live at home if they had more siblings. Regarding parent's health, I found that healthier the parent, the less the risk of being a previously launched adult. This finding is consistent with my hypothesis. Contrary to my hypothesis, in which I had predicted that adult children would be more likely to live at home if they got along well with their parents, I found that this variable worked in the opposite direction.

Some of my hypotheses relating to the family development framework and family structure were supported, but others were not. However many of the variables did not turn out to be significant with the addition of the control variables. Prior to the addition of control variables in the models, parent's health and well-being was shown to be significantly associated with launching status, namely the launching status of failure to launch; however as the parent was more dissatisfied with themselves they are less likely to have an adult child living at home, which was contrary to my hypothesis. For previously launched adults, the hypothesis relating to number of siblings was significantly associated with previously launched adults launching status, which also was inconsistent with my expectations. Additionally, parent's health and well being (1) was proven to be significantly related to launching status and in the direction predicted. How

well the adult child got along with the father was also significant, albeit in a direction opposite to that expected. I had hypothesized that variables relating to the family would significantly impact the launching status of young adults; clearly, my hypotheses were not supported with the data. In the next section I will now turn to the summary of the regression models using data gathered in Wave 2 of the NSFH.

Life Course Perspective Framework, Wave 2

Due to the fact that the third Wave of the NSFH was not a nationally representative sample, I replicated the statistical analyses performed with Wave 3 with data gathered during Wave 2. I did this because if I had only used the analysis from Wave 3, I would in no way be able to generalize the results to a larger population; such generalization is simply impossible with a non-representative sample. Thus, replication of the analyses with data that are nationally representative would allow me to make inferences based on Wave 3 data that had similar outcomes with the Wave 2 data.

There were few differences between the Wave 3 and Wave 2. Comparable to the multinomial logistic regression results from Wave 3, many of the Wave 2 life course variables were significantly associated with launching status, and in the direction I predicted. In contrast to the Wave 3 multinomial logistic regression life course model, the variable for parent's age in the Wave 2 model does show a confirmation of my hypothesis that older parents would be less likely to have adult children living at home; this holds true for both failure to launch children and previously launched adults. Both of these relative risk ratios were significant in each of the Wave 2 models.

As in Wave 3, my hypothesis regarding child's age is supported in the failure to launch model. Older adult children are less likely to be failure to launch children, but are more likely to live at home for the previously launched model. Additionally, my hypotheses were supported regarding marital status and number of children; unmarried adult children are more likely to live at home, and the more children an adult child has makes them less likely to live at home as a failure to launch, but more likely as a previously launched adult. However, this relationship is not significant for the previously launched model.

The education hypothesis was supported for this analysis in both models as well though it was only significant in the failure to launch model. In contrast to the Wave 3 models, the control variables of sex and income did not prove to be significant in either the failure to launch model or the previously launched model. I will now turn to a summary discussion of the results of the multinomial logistic regression models using the family development and family structure variables.

Family Development Framework, Wave 2

Much like the analyses from the multinomial logistic regression models using family development and family structure variables from Wave 3, many of the variables in Wave 2 did not significantly impact launching status of adult children. There are however some differences between the models analyzed in Wave 3 and Wave 2. In the Wave 2 analysis, parents who are married are more likely to have a child that is a failure to launch, whereas in the Wave 3 analysis the opposite is true. In the Wave 2 analysis,

those adult children who have more siblings will be less likely to be a failure to launch adult, and in Wave 3 the analysis showed that the opposite was true as well. In Wave 2, we see that adult children are more likely to be failure to launch if they get along well with their mother, and if they have more income they will be more likely to be failure to launch. We also see that they will be less likely to be previously launched if they have more siblings, and that men will be more likely to be previously launched. While many of the variables worked in the predicted direction, the outcomes were not significant and not only that, but they were not close to having any statistical significance whatsoever. Thus, there was no way to make any generalizations based on the family development framework variables as they relate to the launching status of the adult child.

Overall, I believe that the findings of the multinomial logistic regression analyses in Chapter IV show support for the idea that there is a legitimate connection between life course variables and launching status of adult children. Contrarily, I also think that the findings of the analyses show support for the idea that the family development and family structure variables do not have a very legitimate connection to launching status of adult children.

I feel that the support of the life course framework theory in this dissertation is very important. We can see that per the results of my analysis, there are some very strong and significant relationships between various events or statuses in the life course and the launching status of the adult child. In terms of different stages of the life course and their relationship to launching status, we see that the variables had, in some cases, different effects depending on which launching status was being analyzed. I feel like the

strong support for the hypotheses related to the life course perspective are important for a variety of reasons. I feel that these results lend credence to the notion that there is a powerful connection between individual lives and the historical and socioeconomic contexts in which these lives unfold (Mitchell 2006). It is important to note that different variations in social contexts, including family structure, background, and different demographic variables (such as race, gender, religion, occupation, and social class) can have profound ramifications on an individual's particular pattern in the life course and I feel that these different variables were shown to be significant in this analysis.

Elder has argued that various historical forces "shape the social trajectories of family, education, and work, and they in turn influence behavior and particular lines of development" (1998: 2). Likewise, Mitchell (2006) has argued that an individual's own life path is embedded in and transformed by conditions and events occurring during the historical period and geographical location in which the person lives. Geopolitical events, economic cycles, and social and cultural ideologies can often shape people's perceptions and choices and alter the course of human development. I believe that the historical forces at work that need to be entertained in my research are the economic crises that have shaped the last ten or so years, most especially in the years between 2005 and 2010. Various contributing factors include the bursting of the housing bubble, sub-prime and predatory lending, and increased debt; indeed all may be active parts of history that would be historical factors that changed history in a negative way. We can see that all of these various interrelated parts are combined in a way that led to economic downturn; this in turn has led to decreased job opportunities for young adults, high

student loan debt, and lack of viable prospects for the future. Next I will turn to a summary and discussion of the descriptive results I obtained by analyzing the 2009 American Community Survey.

Descriptive Results, 2009 American Community Survey

In Chapter V I employed the use of a supplemental analysis of ACS data because I felt it was important to be able to look at more recent trends of adult child and parent coresidence. I analyzed at various demographic characteristics of young adults that lived at home. A majority of the young adults were between the ages of 18 and 24. Additionally, a majority of the young adults were white, non-Hispanic, male, and had a high school diploma or less educational attainment.

Because of the recent release of the data, I was able describe some of the more up to date trends of young adults living with their parents. Unfortunately, the ACS data do not differentiate between adult children who have never moved out of the family home and those who have moved out and then returned; rather, they just describe the current living situation of the head of the household and others in the household. For the purposes of merely describing the trends of young adults living with their parents, this lack of distinction between the two groups appears to be satisfactory. However, if I had intended to do any more sophisticated statistical analysis on the subject, I do not think the ACS data would have been adequate to use for analysis. I will now turn to a final discussion of this project and I will also discuss some potential future research in the area of adult child and parent coresidence.

Discussion and Future Research

When thinking about this dissertation now that it is completed, there are several things that would I would have done if better data had been available. First, it would have been preferable to have data that were nationally representative for Wave 3 from the NSFH, instead of just a subsample of the original respondents. This proved to be the main potential problem in the analysis of the data for this dissertation. I could have just utilized the data from Wave 2 for a sole analysis; however the main problem with doing this is that the data gathered are simply too old to analyze with any promise of publication. Although I did attempt to remedy the problem of the data gathered in Wave 3 being unrepresentative of the entire population, obviously I would have greatly preferred data that were gathered using a probability sampling technique. Despite this limitation, I feel that my decision to use the NSFH data was the right one. With this data I was able to analyze a variety of relevant variables that were not available in other datasets that I had at my disposal to use for this project.

Another area in which better data would have enhanced my models would be with regard to the inclusion of both racial/ethnic identification and geographical location variables in the dataset. If the geographic data had been available to me, I could have performed a variety of additional statistical analyses that would add to the richness of the analysis of previously launched adults. For example, if I had been able to have access to geographic location information, I could have used multilevel modeling to analyze the relationship between the different variables and launching status with the context, i.e.,

level-two variables measuring geographic location. Additionally, I could have been able to use maps to visually display the relationship between the different independent variables and launching status while incorporating various contextual geographic variables.

I hope that my future research in the area of previously launched adults will expand and extend the analyses of both this dissertation and my prior research in several ways. I am already in the process of continuing the qualitative interviews that I started conducting in 2007 and 2008. I plan to expand the qualitative interviews that I conducted for my thesis in order to obtain a larger sample from which to analyze the personal experiences of adults who move back in with their parents. In my previous research (Farris 2008) I examined the experiences of college graduates who had moved back in with their parents with data from 16 semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews. The interview guide for this particular project consisted of open ended questions and was organized into three main themes: educational background of respondent and decisions for moving back home, effects of moving back in, and stigma related to moving back home. The interview questions mainly pertained to the respondents' experiences with and feelings about moving back home, as well as the reactions of friends, family, and new acquaintances. Additionally, I explored the dynamics of the familial relationship upon moving back home, and the likes and dislikes of being back at home. To conclude the interviews, I asked each respondent to give advice to someone who was going to be moving back home after college graduation, based on the respondent's experiences of a similar situation. I plan to use a similar interview guide with my proposed research in

order to examine the motivating factors and subsequent effects of moving back home with parents.

At present, I have 15 potential respondents, which will bring the sample of my qualitative interviews to over thirty. After I conduct these interviews, I am excited at the prospect of combining my existing qualitative data with my new interview results and also incorporating some of the statistics I have analyzed in this dissertation project. I think that the timeliness of this issue cannot be overstated; I frequently see popular news sources reporting on this phenomenon and I think that my research will add the academic component that is necessary when really trying to assess and describe a social situation such as this one. A future study could also benefit from concurrently interviewing the parents of my original respondents, to see how their ideas and experience differ. Many of my original respondents suggested I interview their parents, and doing so could provide information about the experiences from a different perspective. I have conducted some interviews with the original respondents' parents, but adding to this sample would greatly improve many aspects of the study.

In addition to my aforementioned plan of continuing qualitative interviews, I would like to develop a proposal to try to obtain funding to do my own large scale, nationally representative sample survey of the population that would be similar in content to the NSFH. If I were to be able to succeed in doing this, I would make sure to include all the necessary relevant variables for analysis that were not available for me to use in the NSFH. I feel that the general interview guide of the NSFH is something that is ideal for a project of the type that I am currently interested in; however, if I were able to

make the data more up to date and nationally representative I think it would give me a great advantage.

Future research could address the long-term implications of moving back in with parents. A longitudinal study would be an interesting way to follow respondents to see how this break in the life course effects other transitions in the life. Examining the differences in those who move back home as related to temporal length of stay, number of returns, and feelings about the situation as related to the individual's age could provide more insight about previously launched adults.

Conclusion

Adult children living with their parents is and will continue to be an important area of research in sociological and demographic studies, particularly in light of a poor economic situation, rising costs of living, poor job opportunities and high debt. Not only is adult child and parent coresidence an especially relevant issue, it can have an effect on a variety of demographic outcomes as well. The largest implication of this research relates to the life course variables and how these influence the launching status of adult children. Obviously, the changes in the life course are directly related to the economic situation of our times. Life course trajectory assumed that young adults were expected to transition to adulthood on a linear path of well-timed events, such as employment, marriage, and parenting (Elder 1998). However, several aspects of this trajectory are variable among the youth population of today. Children are graduating from high school or college, getting jobs or continuing schooling, but moving back home and delaying

marriage and families. Parents are becoming more accommodating of this, and children returning home may not be as big of an issue as it once was.

One of the major strengths of this study is the relevancy of the issue to the current events in our nation. The phenomenon of adult children moving back home is becoming more prevalent than ever, and the existence and continually growing number of this group is merit enough for research. There is certainly potential for the emergence of more adult children moving back home. The nature of this research allowed me to investigate various contributing factors and independent variables that lead adult children to either never move out of the family home or to move out and subsequently return.

In addition to the prior research I conducted, which investigated the experiences and emotions of individuals who had moved back in with their parents, the quantitative aspect of my dissertation is the perfect complement to combine the qualitative experiences and quantitative large-scale analysis of the phenomenon. By looking at the association of launching status and various life course and family development variables, I was able to see what people were more likely to be failure to launch or previously launched adults. I find this particular area of study to be not only relevant but also quite interesting, and it is my feeling that sociologists, economists, and non-academics would find further analysis of this topic to be both enlightening and important.

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