

So Long Little White Fence?: Young Adults Confront and Transform Notions of Home

by

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Abstract

Recently, much attention has been given to the increasingly protracted and non-linear nature of young adulthood in contemporary Western culture. This literature concentrates on home and its role in young adulthood in a narrow, normative way, by focusing on issues of *home leaving*, especially in and around post-secondary education. Few studies have explored how young adults understand and create home for *themselves* and what factors shape their opportunities for doing so. The original contribution of this thesis centers on the theme of home as 'enacted' and highlights two things: 1) the creative and skillful agency of the study participants in enacting diverse experiences of home in spite of dominant models of what they term 'real' homes; and 2) the role of gender in enabling and constraining contemporary possibilities for enacting home amongst young, middle-class Canadians. The thesis begins with an outline and critique of recent parameters surrounding the study of young people. I argue that, in terms of 'home,' youth are rarely seen as [en]actors. In turn, this obfuscates the complex and situated ways in which they understand and enact home. Chapter 2 presents an account of the unique methodological approach used, involving both guided interviews and participant-driven photography. The crux of the thesis is presented in Chapters 3,4 and 5 which discuss three, highly overlapping groupings of data. In Chapter 3, I point to the idea of 'real homes,' which participants identify as a persistent and normalizing expectation that they should understand and enact home in owner-occupied, single-family dwellings as part of nuclear family units. I show that while participants see their own homes as meaningful and legitimate, they nonetheless must negotiate this narrow post-war ideal of home in enacting home for themselves. In Chapters 4 and 5, I analyze the simultaneously distinct and interrelated *gendered* patterns in how participants understand and enact home. In these chapters, I argue that in enacting home in such ways, participants respond and contribute to contemporary transformations of adult life, gender and home.

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~ ~ ~

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

And though home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit answered to, in strongest conjuration.

– Charles Dickens, *The Life And Adventures Of Martin Chuzzlewit*

Introduction

A few years ago, friends of mine—a married couple with a two year-old son—were expecting twins. During the pregnancy, they completed some renovations to their house and went shopping for new furniture. Sarah chose a spacious, queen-sized bed, an upholstered rocking chair for the nursery, a pair of pretty lamps, fresh linens for the bathroom, framed artwork and a large mirrored armoire. As she gave me a tour of the brightly furnished spaces, I remarked at the many beautiful, new items.

“It was time,” she responded, “time to grow up. We’ve got more little ones on the way and we needed a real home, so it was time to get rid of the mismatched towels and the rickety bed. It’s a new era! It’s really a home! We’re really grown-ups now.”

This thesis begins with an anecdote about how a young woman and her husband understand and make themselves at home in a domestic space. The encounter draws attention to the common linkage between the concept of *home*

—especially in terms of domesticity and family—and *maturity* (i.e. adulthood or being 'grown up'). Certainly, my friend was concerned about the practical necessities of setting up a home that was functional and comfortable for the five people who would soon be occupying it, but she also viewed the process as symbolic. For her, it signaled a shift away from immaturity and marked the couple as fully-fledged adults.

In this particular instance, the linkage of home and maturity was fairly surprising, given the number of other so-called 'markers' of adulthood the couple had achieved together and as individuals. In the earliest years of their relationship, they completed undergraduate degrees and got married. Dave had gone on to do a Master's degree on the other side of the country and he and Sarah rented an apartment, became parents and began building their professional portfolios. Eventually, they moved back to Ontario, purchased a modest two-bedroom house and accumulated achievements in their paid work lives. All the while, they cared for and made decisions about aging and sick extended family members, developed and sustained multiple, meaningful social networks, took part in a co-operative neighborhood childcare arrangement and actively participated in community, civic and political organizations.

Still, to them, none of these so-called 'adult' activities or achievements—either individually or taken together—had been as important to becoming, or at least *feeling*, adult, than the specific, material and relational activities related to

the work of enacting a home.

I present this story because of its potential to exemplify the persistence of later twentieth century normative understandings of adulthood, amongst educated, middle-class young adults. It also brings into focus the continued salience of home as a symbol of maturity and stability amongst certain groups in contemporary Western society. Yet, literature on young adults rarely places them in any homes at all, except ones associated with their natal households—the homes and communities of their parents, stepparents and extended families. Regarding *those* homes, they are normally understood as leaving them (increasingly, but not exclusively, for post-secondary education). In recent decades, they have also come under observation for remaining in or returning to the natal home. These latter two experiences comprise trajectories which are usually seen as particularly problematic from socioeconomic and developmental standpoints. This focus—on normative home leaving processes—is productive of an understanding of young people who are, in effect, *homeless* or, at least seen as having 'no home.'¹

Thus, little research has explored how young adults see home and themselves in relation to it, what role home plays in their lives and in how they enact it for themselves (see White 2002). This is especially true for research exploring home in conjunction with the role of gender and its intersections with

1 In more general terms, Ahmed (1999) argues that narratives of home that focus on 'leaving' frequently produce subjects who are seen mostly outside of homes or as not having homes.

other structural and discursive factors that help shape young adulthood in contemporary Western life.² Moreover, research that does explore relationships between young people and home tends to implicitly ignore non-domestic or extra-residential experiences of home, limiting discussion to how home is enacted in and around houses or dwellings. Therefore, the literature tends to avoid broader and more critical discussions of home and how it is operationalized in various complex contexts.

The thesis establishes and begins to populate this substantive wilderness by drawing upon empirical data from qualitative interviews and participant-produced photographs in which a strategic sample of young adults reflect on how they see and enact home, and what expectations, obligations, opportunities and resources help shape these understandings and experiences. Their narratives show that nearly all participants see their homes as meaningful and legitimate. Yet, their efforts in enacting home also follow patterns that are stratified by citizenship/country of origin; composition, location and value systems of natal families; and their own households, commitments, desires, important relationships and resources. Moreover, this research shows that while contemporary middle-class ideas linking adulthood with a normative domestic notion of home may be pervasive, enduring and affect the ways in which participants enact home, they are nonetheless relatively well-positioned to

² This is in spite of the fact that factors such as enacting home and domestic life are almost unanimously considered socially significant for and worthy of academic inquiry on *older adults*.

reinterpret these norms and enact home in novel and meaningful ways.

To set the stage for these kinds of discussions, Chapter 1 elaborates historical, substantive and theoretical contexts of home, especially as they pertain to young people in contemporary Western societies. The chapter also traces the development of the emerging adulthood thesis and engages the idea of home as *enacted*, in order to open space for understanding young adults in and around home.

Chapter 2 details the methodological approach to generating data—a relatively innovative combination of guided interviews and participant-produced photography. The chapter concludes by suggesting that studies of home and young adults might do well to move beyond the typical starting point of home leaving. It proposes thinking of home as enacted as an alternative methodological and theoretical conceptualization.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present the results of two years worth of data collection involving in-depth photo-elicitation interviews with fifty-two young adults. Chapter 3 serves as a bridge between the theoretical/methodological discussions in Chapters 1 and 2 and the finer-grained, gender-based analyses that follow. Thus, Chapter 3 brings together women's and men's narratives to illustrate aspects of enacting home that both identify and confront. In particular, it shows that while participants see a variety of homes as legitimate and meaningful, they nonetheless hold up a particular version of home—one that is domestic, stable

and filled with so-called grown-up things—as a symbol of what they term 'real adulthood.' The linkage between this narrow version of home and the assumption of adulthood forms a valuable insight of the research. That insight centers around about the enduring weight of middle-class ideals of material consumption and domesticity and the challenges participants face in circumventing these ideas. However, as the research will make evident, they may already have few choices in the matter. Prolonged and repeated enrollment in post-secondary education, precarious employment situations, increasing mobility and the changing composition of families and households, make it necessary to reinterpret this ideal home.

Chapters 4 and 5 move into a discussion of the more specific ways participants say they experience and confront these larger discourses, and of the complex and intersecting factors that shape their efforts. Amongst participants in the sample, *gender* forms the most prominent of these contexts. Thus, Chapter 4 focuses on how a diverse sample of female participants enact home and elucidates the intersecting structural factors that influence these activities. Chapter 5 brings the perspectives of male participants into the discussion and presents some of the structural factors affecting the ways they enact home.

The concluding chapter returns to the main arguments and suggests research and policy implications.

What Is Home?

The term 'home' is ubiquitous in both literature and everyday discourse and is associated with multiple definitions and meanings (Harris and Pratt 1993; Parsell 2012). It is certainly more than a word. It is a “lexical expression” (Gurney 1999: 172) so laden with meaning (Somerville 1992) that it can be said to constitute an *idea* (Rybczynski 1986). As such, it is alternatively characterized and criticized as a haven or respite (Atkinson and Blandy 2007; Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Jones 2000; Wardaugh 1999; Saunders 1990; Somerville 1997; Young 1997), a site of oppression (Oakley 1994; Hochschild 1990 and 2003) or alternatively, one of safety and stability (Ahmed 1999; Despres 1999), a relational experience (Jones 1995; 2000), a longing for the past (Douglas 1991), a journey toward the future (Ginsberg 1999), family (Dupuis and Thorne 1996), the family house (including the birth or natal house) (Mallett 2004; Jackson 1995) and domestic dwellings more generally. These last two linkages are exceedingly common in studies of young people's transitions to adulthood. Debates around home and young adulthood often implicitly center on the idea of the domestic house and household as a uniquely important site and symbol of adult independence (Arnett 2003, 2002; Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1993; Kenyon 1999; Kilmartin 2000; Molgat 2002; Sessler, Ciambone and Benway 2008). These particularized experiences—dwellings and households—are often conflated with the broader concept of home (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Douglas 1991;

Rapport and Dawson 1998), yet it is rarely possible to locate home within a single experience or building/dwelling. Instead, scholars have called for considerations of home as multiple (Massey 1992; hooks 1990), multi-scalar (Blunt and Dowling 2006) and multi-faceted (Gorman-Murray and Dowling 2007).

In adhering to the notion that home has multiple, complex and intersecting definitions, it became nearly impossible to entirely stabilize its meaning in or for this thesis. This is especially true because a chief goal of the research is to elicit, rather than impose,³ meaning through narrative inquiry. Thus, the analysis and subsequent discussion cannot avoid some slippage between and shifting focus toward several concepts related to (and at times, standing in for) the concept of 'home,' including households, homeyness and feeling at home, as well as making, doing and enacting home. For this reason, I designed the interview guide to lead participants on a kind of reflective journey. In other words, they had opportunities to form and express their subjective perspectives on home through both photography and oral narrative. The former provided them with an unguided opportunity to think through and express their understandings of home and how they enact it. The latter centered around a series of broad, but diverse guided interview questions. These questions brought participants into contact with a variety of ideas on home, including those associated with place/space, dwellings, domesticity, mobility/migration, family, social networks, post-secondary education

3 See Creswell (2007) for a description of this approach, which he calls the investigational perspective. See Chapter 2 for a complete discussion of the grounded theory framework that underpins my focus.

and age/stage. My goal in providing to participants both guided and less structured opportunities for meaning-making was partly to provide fodder for participants' thinking on what is both an ambiguous and loaded topic. At the same time, I was careful not to lead them toward any single definition or understanding of home. With the exceptions of a handful of relatively unenthusiastic informants, most participants found their 'narrative stride' or 'niche' in either or both the photography exercise or the subsequent interviews. The methodological strategy is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

To be clear, the thesis does not seek to build an ontological explanation of home, but rather, it aims to draw upon phenomenological explanations of how participants themselves understand/engage and enact home. Worrying less about what home *is* and more about what it means and how it is done is the most recent and now common approach in critical studies of home (Parsell 2012). Further, in shifting focus away from questions of 'being' and toward ones relating to meanings and acts/actions, I follow Young (1997) who argued for home and homemaking's potential as agentive and empowering. Blunt and Dowling (2006: 5) draw on Young's focus on 'doing' to help bring into existence a broad, but useful definition of home *making* as the "cultivating, nurture and preservation of home." Enacting home is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, but, first, I present a more extended discussion of the historical underpinnings of our contemporary concept of home. This is followed by recent scholarly conversation

on so-called transitions to adulthood and the spaces that home tends to occupy in such conversations.

Historicizing Home

While the thesis seeks to build knowledge about meanings and behaviours, it is necessary to first locate the historical contexts from which they emerge. This section briefly traces the development of the concept and practice of home in Canada, the US and other Western nations over the last century or so. In particular, it will show that in bringing into conceptual range 'the home' as a target of attention, policy makers, builders and mortgage brokers capitalized on unique historical contexts and demographic forces. The result was that home was mythically and materially linked to houses, home ownership and material consumption. It will further demonstrate that focusing on home in this way also served to magnify and solidify narrow cultural norms about the meanings of both home and houses.

In Anglophone Canada and other Western nations, particularly the United States, a combination of demographic changes and social/economic policies, including tax subsidies for homeowners and changes to federal mortgage policies, have been linked to the post-World War II emphasis on home ownership, rapid suburban development and domestic material wealth (Mitchell 2007). Along with skyrocketing post-war household income, these changes contributed to deepening

separation between home life and paid work (Hardill 2002). In turn, this allowed for the rise of the single-family dwelling as a sign of status and success (Harris and Pratt 1993; Hayden 2002, 1982), wherein middle-class women no longer had to work for pay and were instead charged with domestic social reproduction (Cierraad 2010). The home came to be seen in increasingly gendered terms, as primarily a site for the development of and refuge for women and children as part of nuclear families (Gorman-Murray 2008; Hayden 2002, 1982; Wright 1981). Notably, the dominant discourse of home did not take into account subpopulations, such as urban-dwelling working poor or visible minorities, who often had limited access to home ownership and often had to maintain dual-income households (Mitchell 2007). For instance, immigrant home owners sometimes turned the home into a business by taking in boarders or running laundry businesses out of the houses, and they frequently sent women out of the home for part-time or full-time work (Lewinnek 2006). However, the middle-class transformation of home nonetheless had dramatic consequences for women. Married women, especially, were relegated to and responsible for maintaining the largely private sphere of the male-owned home-as-property (Hayden 1982). They were, as Mitchell (2007: 43) writes, “expected to make the family home an oasis of serenity and comfort for harried husbands.”⁴ As a group, they were thus disproportionately excluded from full-time paid work, financial autonomy and full

4 Mitchell cites William Henry Chafe's *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic and Political Roles, 1920-1970*, Oxford University Press: New York.

economic and civic participation during almost three quarters of the twentieth century (Cairney and Boyle 2004; Chevan 1989; Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Harris and Hamnett 1987; Wright 1981).

As the post-World War II housing universe stridently focused on the pursuit of home ownership in both Canada (Harris and Pratt 1993) and the United States (Hayden 2002), political and popular uses of the concept of home have become synonymous with historically-specific, gender-based household practices of domesticity occurring in and around owner-occupied houses (see Gurney 1999a; Harris and Pratt 1993) located largely in suburban⁵ neighbourhoods outside medium and large metropolises (Hayden 2002). This relationship, along with its apparently unavoidable extensions—the conflation of owner-occupied houses with the typically nuclear families for whom they are designed (Clark 1986) and the discursive construction of such houses as particularly safe and stable havens for those families (Harris and Pratt 1993; Hayden 2002; Rohe et al. 2002)—is so ingrained in Canada and the US that it has become virtually a cultural norm (Brueckner et al. 2011). This is especially true when home is associated more closely with owner-occupied single-family houses conforming to particular parameters concerning gender roles (Hayden 1982) and style, décor and location (Harris and Pratt 1993). The home, thus, on which families have been expected to focus has been a specifically construed one and spacious houses in residential

⁵ See Harris (2004) for a discussion of the mid-twentieth century suburbanization of Canada.

settings (particularly in suburban neighbourhoods) have come to be considered more appropriate places in which to make home and remain widely desired among both the working and middle-classes (Coontz 1992). This is despite the inappropriateness and expense of such dwellings to increasingly smaller⁶, diverse and changeable households (both in terms of adult members and offspring) (Gyourko 1998; Hayden 2002; Klinenberg 2012; Wright 1981), as well as to newly expanded and flexible gender roles at home and elsewhere (including women's full participation in the paid labour force and expectations for equal division of unpaid labour)(Hardill 2002). The demands of conventional home ownership have also become incongruent with the increasingly mobile lifestyles amongst young adults, in particular,⁷ and even when broader economic conditions are not favorable (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010; Dieleman and Pieter 1994).

In recent decades, widespread welfare state restructuring, labour market deregulation (leading to falling real wages) and rising housing costs, have led to deeper economic and cultural divisions between home owners and renters. These

6 For years, houses have been getting bigger while households have gotten smaller. For instance, US census data shows that the average house size has more than doubled since the 1950s and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation reports similar numbers in Canada. Yet, across North America, fertility is dropping, family size is shrinking and more people are choosing to live alone or with a friend or roommate for longer into adulthood and there are more older people living alone than ever before (Mitchell 2007). See Miron 1988, 1989, 1993 for analysis of shrinking household size in Canada. The 2010 report by The Vanier Institute of the Family offers detailed discussions of the relationships between the nation's changing household and family sizes, compositions and locations. At the same time, there has recently been a slight drop in housing size and baby boomers and young people are looking to live in smaller dwellings and have greater flexibility in terms of where and how to make home. See 'Dreaming Big, Living Small' for a recent news article on smaller house size: <http://rt.com/usa/news/small-tiny-house-estate-534/>.

7 Clark and Mulder (2000) and Mulder and Manting (1994) each found that renting is actually often seen as a more flexible housing choice for young adults who are mobile.

circumstances have especially moved the hope of owning a home out of reach for more households.⁸ In Canada, less than one quarter of low-income households are owned (Lefebvre 2002). Still, renting does not necessarily present a viable option for such families, since rent costs have risen over time, making it ever more difficult for renters to save money for down payments toward houses (Layton 2000). Additionally, as the housing market has focused on increased demand for owner-occupied dwellings, new construction of rental buildings has fallen (Lefebvre 2002).

Yet, the phenomenon that Clark (1986: xii) calls the “glorification of the single-family dwelling that has dominated middle-class consciousness” persists. A report by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies (2012) argues that despite the increasing trend of renting by young households and in the face of continued financial barriers, young people still aspire to home ownership. This is no wonder given the wide range of intangible benefits—status, security and community belonging—that Western societies tend to associate with home ownership and households of this kind (Balakrishnan and Wu 1992; Hiscock et al. 2001; Saunders 1990). Again, this is in spite of the diverse living arrangements and experiences of home that persist across socioeconomic, cultural and historical differences.⁹ This experience of home is valued enough to be described as an

8 See Harris and Pratt (1993) for the Canadian context. See also Chevan (1989); Dupuis and Thorns (1998); Harrison and Hamnett (1987) and Gyourko (1998).

9 See Haan (2005) for an in-depth discussion of these changes in Canada, including a comparison of their effects on Canadian-born individuals versus immigrants.

“important status good” (Mulder and Wagner 1998: 689) and a “political right” more dear than voting (Shlay 2006; 1986). The linkage between home ownership and middle America is so strong, that individuals belonging to the American middle-class from the late 1800s onward may have been accepted primarily on the basis of residential property ownership (Clark 1986; Cloke and Thrift 1990; Jackson 1985; Myers and Woo Lee 1998). Home ownership is seen as an important kind of access to Western opportunity and forms one of the most sought-after achievements of the Western¹⁰ ethos (Harris and Hamnett 1987; Rohe et al. 2002) or dream (Chevan 1989; Gyourko 1998; Kurz and Blossfeld 2004; Silva and Wright 2009; Wright 1981).

In this context, Gurney (1999b) has cultivated an understanding of what he calls normalising discourses of homeownership wherein home is attached only to single-family, owner-occupied dwellings. He has located such links in British housing policy documents, writing that they stand in and contribute to a universe of discourse on home in which:

*it becomes **normal** for home ownership to be associated more closely than any other form of housing with evocative and emotional ideas of home, it becomes **normal** for home owners to be represented as good citizens and good parents, it becomes **normal** for a preference for home ownership to be constructed as a fact of human nature” (Gurney 1999b: 179, emphasis added).*

It is true that the term home is rarely used to describe other housing/dwelling

¹⁰ Home ownership plays a very similar role across many developed countries. For instance, see Badcock and Beer (2000) and Colic-Peisker and Johnson (2010) for a discussion of the 'Australian dream.'

strategies such as rental accommodations or social housing. To the contrary, these tend to be considered abnormal (Richards 1990) and are described in what Gurney (1999b: 172) calls “more spartan language.”

Beginning in the 1920s, other types of domestic arrangements, such as rental accommodations, came to be seen as less permanent, less stable and undesirable, especially for nuclear family households consisting of married couples and their children (Bianchi et al. 1982; Hayden 2002). Renting a home or making home outside the parameters of home ownership is typically seen as an experience that one must endure (Balakrishnan and Wu 1992) and foolhardy in economic terms (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005; Richards 1990). Thus, it is undertaken on a long-term basis for what are considered only the most disorderly and deviant of households (Gurney 1999a; Wright 1981). Throughout much of the twentieth century in contemporary Western life, a house has been the largest purchase, especially in terms of investment potential, that most individuals or families make (Evans 2001). It is nearly always the largest contribution to familial wealth.¹¹ Ergo, it is not only a cultural symbol used to judge autonomy (Hays 1993), stability and success (Perin 1977; Dreier 1982), but it is also directly tied to standard of living (Kurz and Blossfeld 2004; Kain and Quigley 1972; Levy and Michael 1991).¹²

11 A 2011 Ipsos Reid poll for the Royal Bank of Canada showed that nine out of ten Canadians believe that buying a home is a good long-term investment. (<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id+5156>)

12 The bias toward home ownership, however, should not be taken to mean that all owned homes are

Over the twentieth century and beyond, the bias for making home in and around owner-occupied, single-family suburban dwellings has passed to each new cohort, as young people's housing choices have been strongly associated with the structure and norms of the natal household (Gurney 1999a; Helderman and Mulder 2007). Parental earnings and education have remained strong predictors of young people's chances at becoming home owners themselves (Boehm and Schlottmann 1999; Mulder and Wagner 1998). Housing choices may also reflect a desire to surmount the housing standards set by preceding generations, for whom contexts of race/ethnicity and class may limit desired housing conditions, including home ownership (Charles and Hurst 2002). Hayden (2002: 34) argues that, in terms of housing and consumption, each generation aspires to attain "all the things we [older generations] didn't have" (see also Mysters and Woo Lee 1998). Thus, young people tend to imagine the work (both practical/material and emotional/relational) of making home within the spaces of owned homes much more strongly than with rented dwellings (Holdsworth and Claire 2005) or non-residential experiences of homes.

Yet, some research suggests young adults also experience anxiety around this kind of consumption, especially in holding a mortgage¹³ and the lifestyle it

created equally. Mobile homes, for instance, transgress conventional, middle-class housing norms and are judged harshly against these terms. See Steven Miller and Beverly Evko's article entitled "An Ethnographic Study of the Influence of a Mobile Home Community on Suburban High School Students" in *Human Relations* 38.7 (1985). For a similar, but more recent study of mobile homes and parks, see "The Wrong Side of the Tracks: Social Inequality and Mobile Home Park Residence" by Katherine A. MacTavish in *Community Development* 38.1 (2007).

13 A 2011 Ipsos Reid poll for Royal Bank of Canada showed that half of Canadian homeowners aged 18-

demands (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010; Nettleton and Burrows 1998), a worry that is shared across cohorts in Canada (Cairney and Boyle 2004). Indeed, rising housing prices, inflated tuition costs and decreased spending on social programs, make entering the housing market increasingly out of reach for young adults in Western nations (Mitchell 2007). The UK has recently been declared a “nation of renters,” thanks to what one survey finds as the inability of young people to budget judiciously and save for down payments (Orr 2012). A major recent study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹⁴ shocked England when it predicted an imminent “home ownership lockout” amongst young, disenfranchised Brits. The study shows that routes to home ownership are most chaotic and unpredictable for homeless youth or those growing up in social housing. It also notes an overall decrease in the number of professional young adults for whom home ownership was previously possible.

Meanwhile, the United States census reflects a similar reticence among potential first-time home buyers. Even as interest rates and housing prices are falling, governments will need to scramble to further incentivize home ownership for young people facing high unemployment and growing student debt (Shemkus 2012). The serious economic recession has more young people boomeranging back home, while others attempt to alleviate household economic strain by

34 feel their mortgage is too large relative to their income and around 30% said their mortgage is larger than they expected. (<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id+5156>)

14 See Clapham et al. (2012) for reference.

sharing housing with friends or siblings (Mykyta and Macartney 2012). The Census Bureau terms such arrangements 'home-sharing' or 'doubling up' and says that young adults are the most likely group to live in such households (ibid). Further, home ownership is even more difficult for young whose pathways away from the natal home are non-linear and associated with tension or trauma (Brueckner et al. 2011; Hagan and McCarthy 2005) or who were born elsewhere (Haan 2005).

Still, the link between home ownership and stable domestic life and the implied achievement of adulthood is strongly held in contemporary Western society (Kendig 1990) and is a belief that may be especially important amongst individuals engaged in higher education in early adulthood (Goss and Dagwell 1992). Young people moving toward independent living are expected first to leave the natal household and set up their own accommodations. However, these first dwellings are typically conceptualized as either temporary/transitional (Jones 1987) or predictive (Clark and Mulder 2000), rather than as 'real homes' (Kenyon 1999). Buying a house is often seen as the culmination of the housing/home career *and* the so-called transition to adulthood (Jones 1995; Jones and Wallace 1992; Skelton 2002). These assumptions follow a gradated housing career/path where each step moves away from the natal home and toward ownership of the young person's own 'real home' (see Bruckner et al. 2011; Kenyon 1999). Thus, owning a home becomes an important sign of what Perin (1977) calls attainment

of social personhood or full adult status. Similarly, Agnew (1981) argues that home ownership is associated with adults who are seen as having more status, commitment and social integration. Making home in this way is usually seen as a prime symbol of “getting settled down” (Balakrishnan and Wu 1992: 391). A recent article in the *Globe and Mail* provided a reminder that the link between home ownership and adulthood is still not only alive, but strong, claiming that:

It's hard to think of an adult rite of passage as universally and enthusiastically supported as buying your own home (house or condo). People of all income levels and cultural backgrounds want to own a home. There is no influential anti-home ownership faction to be found anywhere (Carrick 2012).

Yet, the recent housing crisis that began in the US and threatened economies across the world, including in Canada, provides reason to pause over the strong cultural linkages between home ownership and adulthood. As Chevan has pointed out, as early as the late 1980s, the confluence of political, demographic and cultural factors leading to this understanding of home was unusual and unlikely to converge (or to remain relevant) again:

It is likely that only social or economic shocks of major proportions, certainly larger than those experienced since 1970, could alter the American dream. Nevertheless, the combination of compositional and process factors that were instrumental in fulfilling that dream is unlikely to repeat in the same way. A new combination¹⁵ will have to emerge if the dream is to continue.

15 A new combination of factors could take many forms. By way of example, the Associated Press recently reported that builders are beginning to respond to changing needs of American families whose older members are living longer, young adults are remaining at home and cultural backgrounds endorse multigenerational living. Thus, builders are now offering 'homes within homes' (dwellings including self-contained apartments) and houses sharing communal outdoor spaces. Perhaps housing will finally

(Chevan 1989: 264, emphasis added).

In the meantime, young people are pursuing and systematizing creative experiences of home. Home-sharing, for instance, may offer creative responses to difficult economic circumstances (McNamara and Connell 2007; Natalier 2003) and co-housing, co-ops, mixed-use and pocket neighbourhoods offer deliberate alternatives, at every income level, to owner-occupied, single-family dwellings located in suburban areas. So, perhaps the goal should not be to reinvent policies, programs and populations in ways that renew the conditions that make possible the so-called American dream, but rather to invent the dream itself. DePaulo (2012) calls this “a new American experiment” and argues that it offers grassroots alternatives to “the solutions unpacked from the same old boxes of the past.” Of course, such arrangements should not only be community-centered, but they must also be able to leverage targeted financial, legal and logistical support from all levels of government.

The landscape of and possibilities for home in Canada are indeed changing. The middle-class home is now being reinterpreted as an increasingly urban site of both paid labour and leisure and much social reproduction has been moved out of households and into daycare centers, restaurants and other parts of the commercial sector. As such, Gurstein (2001: 9) positions the contemporary

catch up with the new American dream(s). See <http://news.yahoo.com/home-home-families-live-together-longer-190216455.html>.

spacious, single-family dwelling as a uniquely atomized “nexus for a range of activities, making for an increasingly home-based society.” Further, there is an expectation that men will share equally in the work that remains to be done at home. At the same time, as work and social life have become more mobile, home has also become less fixed with members of the middle-class frequently migrating for work, school or pleasure, maintaining multiple households or making home distally through digital social networking and technology. Finally, the middle-class dream of affordable home ownership is no longer inevitable. This is especially true for spacious, suburban or exurban¹⁶ single-family dwellings, which while still popular, are increasingly passed over for more affordable—owned or rented—urban accommodations in multiple-family dwellings located in dense urban neighborhoods (Frey 2012a, 2012b; Ireland 2012; Meligrana and Skaburskis 2005).¹⁷

This section has briefly unpacked some of the broad historical contexts that preceded and continue to shape middle-class young people's understandings and experiences of home in twentieth and twenty-first century Canada. It has shown

16 The term exurbs refers to communities outside suburban areas. They are sometimes called 'commuter towns,' since the majority of their residents tend to be highly-educated, affluent urban professionals. See Auguste Comte Spector's 1995 book, *The Exurbanites*, for the earliest use of the term.

17 Frey's arguments draw from a recent US census release, which can be found at the following link: <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/cities/totals/2011/index.html>. Both Ireland and Meligrana and Skaburskis are specifically referring to Canada's increasing urbanization. The 2006 Canadian Census to see that some 80% of Canadian residents were living in urban areas at the time. For details, see Statistics Canada's “Census Snapshot of Canada – Urbanization”: (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2007004/10313-eng.htm>) and “Fast Facts – Population” (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/edu/edu02_0018-eng.htm).

how changing economic, structural and demographic circumstances helped establish contemporary ideas about home in public consciousness. The tremendously popular post-war idea of owner-occupied single family dwellings has persisted within the Western popular imagination into the twenty-first century and played a key role in defining home. Consequently, the continued romanticizing of this kind of home during what may be some of its final years remains pervasive. Thus, owning a spacious home has been the dominant norm for much of the last one hundred years or so, not only in terms of tenure, but also in the broader sense of where and how to enact the concept we call 'home.' Chapter 3 illustrates lingering effects of this phenomenon in a discussion of participants' narratives around the concept of 'real homes.' It also sets the stage for Chapters 4 and 5, which present in-depth discussions of highly gendered ways participants talk about responding to this concept in their own lives.

First, however, the next sections will show how the roles of young people in and around home are also in transformation. They are remaining at home longer (especially amongst immigrant, working and lower middle-class families), as well as returning more frequently and for longer periods of time. Faced with rising housing prices, increasingly greater emphasis on post-secondary education and simultaneously precarious employment prospects, young people both rely on and pool resources with natal and extended family, friends and spouses, helping to transform the very nature of home in their lives (Newman 2012). Further, home is

no longer a fixed category; young people move around for school, work and pleasure and thus enact home in geographically variable and virtual ways. Still, as Chapter 3 will discuss, amongst participants, pressures to enact home in terms of owned detached, single-family dwellings and nuclear family structures remain pervasive. All the same, they confront these pressures in creative and skillful ways that are both constrained and empowered by complex structural and subjective circumstances.

Theories of Young Adulthood

In an article published in 2000, American psychologist, Jeffery Arnett asserted that in Western societies, young adulthood, particularly from ages eighteen to twenty-five, has become a unique, mostly preparatory or developmental and largely experimental phase of life, distinct from both adolescence and adulthood. To describe the so-called new life phase, he coined the term 'emergent adulthood,' which encompasses the period in which young adults increasingly eschew so-called traditional trappings of adulthood in favour of longer enrollment in post-secondary education, single-person or non-kin households, common-law marriage, world travel and self and cultural exploration. At the time, Arnett's evidence in support of this idea of a new life stage was three-fold. First, he argued that young adults were increasingly delaying marriage and parenthood until the late twenties and beyond. His thesis was that the resulting

diversity in life paths, especially in terms of stability, throughout the twenties prevented full adulthood from being reached until later, in the later twenties or beyond. Second, he explained, young adults themselves do not always identify as 'fully adult' in their early twenties. As evidence, Arnett pointed to his own earlier research (1997, 1998), which argued that the crisis of identification arose neither from the diversity or instability of life circumstances, but rather from the absence of feeling independent and the ability to financially provide for oneself. Finally, Arnett linked the idea of a new life phase to the protracted nature of identity exploration in contemporary life. Because, as he argued, identities are now explored into adulthood, especially in the areas of love, work and world views, young adults should not be viewed as full adults and must be understood in terms of a separate, but related, life course stage. Arnett's idea of emerging adulthood quickly evolved into an alluring explanatory category for what Settersten, Furstenburg and Rumbaut (2005: 5) describe as a "more ambiguous...gradual, complex, and less uniform" transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Arnett's concept stimulated what British social scientist, John Bynner (2005: 267), identified as a "whole flurry of new thinking and research about young people in the USA." In a widely-read 2005 issue of the *Journal of Youth Studies*, Bynner criticized Arnett's proposal for neglecting to draw attention to structural changes young adults have faced since the mid-twentieth century, which have left them with increasingly diverse trajectories toward adulthood, but

fewer resources with which to exercise them. In 2008, Bynner published another critique with Canadian sociologist, James E. Côté. In it, they emphasized the role of stratification among young adults and suggesting that Arnett's arguments relate mostly to young adults who are engaged in extended post-secondary education. Leo Hendry and Marion Kloep subsequently tested the universality of emerging adulthood with a purposive sample of thirty-eight Welsh young adults. In a paper published in 2010, they report that the concept is useful to help understand and describe participants who come from middle-class families and enter post-secondary education, but that it applies little to other participants. The authors therefore argue that Arnett's theory glosses over the effects of institutional/structural, social and cultural contexts on young people's lives. A similar idea has been expressed by Canadian sociologist, Marc Molgat (2007: 496), who writes that in the emerging adulthood paradigm, "the structural dimensions of social life are downplayed (gender, ethnicity and social class), but also the structure of labour and housing markets and social policy." This perspective was most recently echoed in Newman's (2012) writing on economic and demographic drivers behind so-called delayed transitions. She maintains that young people's transitions to independence are largely shaped by historical contexts and social forces, such as housing costs, employment prospects and the presence or absence of robust social policies (e.g., subsidies for post-secondary education and unemployment insurance).

Around the time that Arnett proposed his theory, Mike Presdee (1999) observed a new interest in youth studies among British scholars, and Canadian and American scholarship on the topic also emerged. Such literature began to pay special attention to some of the same ideas that Arnett's work proposes, including the idea that the so-called transition to adulthood has become more protracted (Fussell and Furstenberg 2002; Fussell and Gauthier 2002; Furstenberg 2000), capricious (Bynner 2005; Côté 2003; Holdsworth and Morgan 2005) and non-linear (Furlong et al. 2003; Shanahan 2000) for most young people and that pathways to adulthood are becoming more heterogeneous (White and Wynn 1997). Settersten (1997, 2002) links the loosening of norms around age to growing diversity and argues that contemporary Western society allows for particularly significant flexibility in the sequence of life events for young adults. Thus, it is now generally agreed upon that young adulthood no longer adheres to what has been called the traditional model of youth transitions (Furlong et al. 2003). It is further suggested that “social timetables” from earlier epochs, such as the 1950s “no longer seem relevant” (Settersten and Ray 2010: 20).

Typically, the evidence given to reinforce this argument revolves around extended enrollment in post-secondary education (Avery, Goldscheider and Speare 1992; Goldscheider, Thornton and Young-Demarco 1993), difficulty in securing full-time, standardized employment (Settersten and Ray 2010; Côté and Bynner 2008; Bell et al. 2007; Mortimer 2003), later age at marriage and

parenthood (Bynner et al. 2002; Clark 2007) and complex patterns of home leaving (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999; Jones 1995). Contemporary transitions to adulthood are said to include a variety of shifts between secondary/post-secondary education and work, family of origin and marriage/parenthood, family home to independent household¹⁸ and finally, dependence to independence (Furstenberg et al. 2004). Moreover, increasingly ambiguous societal values are argued to allow for longer and more complex transitions to adulthood in Canada and Australia than the United States (Fussell, Gautier and Evans 2007).

However, some scholars have pointed out that such literature tends to take for granted the importance and role of traditional markers of adulthood (e.g., marriage, parenthood, home ownership, standardized employment), paying little heed to structural and cultural changes that may provide new opportunities for, constraints on and ways of understanding the processes of becoming adult (Beaujot 2004; Clark 2007; Osgoode et al. 2005; Turcotte et al. 2006). Life course studies of young adulthood taking these changes into account offer a more complex approach that both “embodies the notion of heterogeneity in life course events” (Gee, Mitchell and Wister 2003: 248-9) and contextualizes those heterogeneities in terms of history, culture and structure. As such, young people are understood as “embedded in and transformed by conditions and events that

¹⁸ Notably, there is some admission that this transition happens in a nuanced fashion. Goldscheider and Devanzo (1986, 1989), for instance, have identified 'semi-autonomous households,' as an intermediate step between the natal household and the later, so-called 'independent' one.

occur during the historical and geographic locations in which they live” (Mitchell 2007: 4). At the same time, young people and their families are seen as adaptive and agentive (ibid). This more socially-sensitive life course perspective brings greater depth to perspectives on young people's lives by focusing on simultaneous roles of meanings, context and process.

Young Adults At Home

Asking questions about educated, middle-class youth and home draws together two conventionally disparate ideas. First, there is the image of mostly mobile students, free to leave home and live in a number of different settings, traveling when possible and migrating for school and work. The second idea, the family home—a powerful cultural symbol of stability and rootedness—stands in juxtaposition to such freedom, experimentation and movement. In literature on young adults and transitions to adulthood, home is located almost exclusively in natal households. Such homes are typically imagined to be enduring and stable, and for better or worse, are often seen as a 'jumping off point' for youths' subsequently mobile lives. When young people's own experiences of enacting home are explored, they are understood as problematic or pathological, part of a phase of experimentation, or occurring mostly in preparation for or transition to so-called 'full adulthood.' In such discussions, research on young adults' experiences of home tends to emphasize a handful of contexts, all of which center

around the growing non-linearity of these experiences.

In the first of these areas of interest, scholars focus on home leaving, an event which is recognized as vital in the so-called transition to adulthood for Western youth (Jones 1995; Goldscheider 1993), including Canada (Boyd and Norris 1999). In particular, scholars have documented the importance of pathways out of the natal home in future choices about and opportunities for enacting home in young adulthood and beyond (Wardaugh 1999; Jones 1995). This idea gives rise to a growing interest in perceived changes to what Mitchell (2007) identifies as normal housing careers of young adults, especially amongst young men (Boyd and Norris 1999). Specifically, young adults who were once expected to be homed with the natal family until marriage and, afterward, within independent households, are increasingly taking part in what scholars call intergenerational or mature co-residence (Gee, Mitchell and Wister 2003). Scholars note increasing trends toward boomeranging back home (Mitchell 2007, 1998; Molgat 2002), accordion families that expand and contract (Newman 2012) and yo-yo transitions in which young people leave and return home multiple times (Biggart and Walter 2006). They are leaving home at later ages, returning more often and even sometimes arriving with spouses and children of their own (Beaupré et al. 2006a and 2006b), leading to what some scholars call crowded (Boyd and Norris 1999) or cluttered nests (Boyd and Pryor 1994). They are also taking part in simultaneously protracted and changeable living situations with individuals

ranging from roommates, friends and unmarried partners (Kins and Beyers 2010). Such circumstances seem to cause no end of alarm by parents, psychologists, policy-makers and the popular media. In 2011, for instance, Carl Pickhardt published *Boomerang Kids: A Revealing Look at Why So Many of Our Children Are Failing*, a guidebook for parents who might want to “understand *why* your son or daughter has returned, *what* you can do to support your child's recovery, and *how* to strengthen your child's readiness and resolve for independence again” (xiv-xv). And Statistics Canada suggests that the growing non-linearity of home leaving processes, including returning home may reflect financial dependence (Beaupré, Turcott and Milan 2005; Turcott et al. 2006).

Moreover, there is a worry that the issue is exacerbated when home leaving pathways revolve around post-secondary education, rather than employment. This may be particularly salient in countries suffering from the ongoing withdrawal of social supports, a situation in which parents may feel obligated to increase support to young adult children (Majamaa 2011). Thus, Kaplan (2008: 2) notes that “household formation is very much an economic phenomenon and reflects an important channel through which parents provide support to their children, particularly for families from low-income backgrounds.” In the UK, Patiniotis and Holdsworth (2005) showed that, for working-class youth, remaining at home during post-secondary education affords young people much-needed emotional and financial support.

Certainly, living in the natal household can offer advantages and challenges, but it is not always a primrose path and not all young people leave and live in the same ways. For instance, a study by Mitchell (1998) found that so-called boomerang adults sometimes contribute to household bills. Molgat (2002: 149) offers advice for those wishing to study this aspect of young adults' homing experiences:

Risks associated with home leaving therefore need to be set in a continuum that links events and space to the possibilities of maintaining or re-embedding biographies within social structures that bring security and support after a new living environment and home have been chosen.

In the second theme concerning young people and home, scholars show interest in young adults who are homeless, or, not 'homed' (Jones 1995), a group of young people who, Williams et al. (2001: 233) tell us, are seen as a "serious social challenge," one in which marginalized (and especially homeless) youth are viewed as needing care or simply as criminals (potential or otherwise). Presdee (1999) says that this perspective has often characterized media and government concern for youth. As a result, young people who are homeless are viewed, at best, as passive (Stephen 2000). Worse still, they are seen as "leading chaotic, risky lives, trapped in a downward spiral of drug use, mental and other health problems and long term homelessness" (Mallett et al. 2009: 1). In a widely-praised study of over four hundred Canadian youth, for instance, John Hagan and Bill McCarthy present a theory that street life imbues young adults with 'criminal capital' through a context of regular violence and continual struggles for food and

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lodging. Conversely, Hutson and Liddiard (1994) found that the widespread construction of youth homelessness as a social problem is often at odds with the way that agency workers see their clients and even with the way homeless young adults see themselves.

Moreover, the specific relationship between homelessness and meanings of practices of home, is also complex. Even the long-term homeless work to make public spaces personally and socially meaningful as home places (Sheehan 2010). Mallett et al. (2009) have shown amongst homeless youth, maintaining intimate relationships, engaging in social networks and connecting to service providers are all connected to enacting home. In another instance, Stephen's (2000) research with young women living in assisted or subsidized living in urban Scotland showed that at least half of these participants felt 'at home' in these settings and saw the hostels, which provided opportunities for independence and autonomy, feelings of stability and security, and social and support networks, as 'their own.' Yet, literature relying on risk-based models for assessing youth homelessness continues to conceive of 'home' in a narrow sense, of youth homelessness as an inherently social (and moral) problem and of normative transitions to adulthood as relatively linear and predictable (Bessant 2001).

Finally, young adults' experiences of home are sometimes approached through an interest in the growing importance of post-secondary education in the lives of young people. This research focuses first on how and when students leave

home (Ford et al. 2002; Kenyon 1999). Hinton (2011: 24) argues that the issue of leaving home for HE is not only tied up with increasing labour market expectations for higher education, but rather that “university is associated with a very specific 'experience,' for which mobility plays a central role.” For Holdsworth (2009), mobility is seen as a valuable characteristic of the post-secondary education experience, offering freedom, opportunity and personal growth in a way that living at home cannot.

Scholars argue that leaving home for post-secondary education is now more common across various social backgrounds (Hinton 2011; Gee et al. 1995; Jones 1995), but especially in middle-class families, in which leaving home for post-secondary education is fast gaining acceptance over other home leaving strategies (Patiniotis and Holdsworth 2005; Sassler, Ciambrone and Benway 2008). In Canada, relationships between home leaving and enacting and higher education are particularly important, since enrollment across socioeconomic classes, especially in the middle-class has been rising since the 1960s (Drolet 2005). By the mid-1990s, 65% of Canadian high school graduates immediately went on to pursue PSE; at the time, these numbers made Canada the most educated nation included in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Looker and Lowe 2001).

Higher enrollment and more protracted engagement in higher education means that issues surrounding how to leave and live are not straightforward.

Young adults pursuing higher education in Canada are both remaining in the household longer and returning more frequently, for longer periods of time and at more advanced ages (Boyd and Norris 1999). These findings are similar to other industrialized nations, such as Australia (Hilman and Marks 2002) and the United States (Mulder, Clark and Wagner 2002; Goldscheider, Thornton and Young-Demarco 1993) where HE is an increasingly common reason for young adults to leave home, but in ways that are non-linear and impermanent.

Demographic characteristics are thought to be of particular importance in patterns of home leaving for HE. In Canada, for instance, young people in the labour force are more likely to leave the natal household than are full-time university students.¹⁹ Young people from working-class families increasingly leave home for post-secondary education, although it represents greater financial and social risk in comparison to middle-class youth (Patinoitis and Holdsworth 2005). Other research shows that students from working-class or immigrant backgrounds remain at home during high education in order to access a sense of security during the transition to the unknown world of post-secondary education (Patinoitis and Holdsworth 2006). Leaving home for HE also has a particular significance for Canada's rural youth, who must almost always leave both the natal home and the community in which it is located to pursue post-secondary education (Corbett 2007, 2005; Jones 1999; Kirkpatrick Johnson et al. 2005).²⁰

19 See Boyd and Norris: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/1998004/article/4417-eng.pdf>.

20 Note that conventional distance and dual-mode learning (e.g. PSE institutions and programs centering

Such young people face unique barriers relating to cultural/lifestyle adjustments (Looker and Dwyer 1998). Molgat (2002) hypothesizes that the trend may be also present in parts of Quebec, a province where post-secondary institutions exist outside of major urban regions, but do not offer the kinds of specialized programs that are seeing rising enrollment in contemporary Canada.

Other studies explore where and how young people live after they leave home for HE. This perspective tends to rely on on what Holdsworth and Irazoqui Solda (2002: 5) refer to as the temptation “to regard young people’s housing as cheap, small, temporary and minimum.” Not surprisingly, this literature also often relates student housing to Western home leaving processes. In her study of home leaving processes among rural Australian women, for instance, Glenda Jones (2004) found that parental concern for safety and precarious finances leads young women to move into boarding houses or with friends or siblings when leaving home to pursue post-secondary education. Some research attempts to move beyond descriptive data by connecting students' home leaving and housing. A study by Rugg, Ford and Burrows (2004), for example, provided a glimpse into the experiential nature of students' houses in Britain. They showed that, in the sheltered environments of university dormitories and student rental properties, young people 'learn housing.' In other words, the student housing experience

around both distance and on-campus learning), as well as online learning or e-learning provide viable alternatives for individuals for whom traditional, on-campus learning is difficult (e.g., residents of rural areas) (see Bates 2005 , 2001 for a discussion on how these delivery models 'widen access' and on how Canada is one of three countries doing so via e-learning).

(either on campus or through private rentals and, ideally, in conjunction with supportive natal households) teaches valuable skills about managing personal or household budgets, dealing with landlords and living with others. At the same time, student housing pathways are not always positive and rarely so protected (Christie, Munro and Rettig 2002). For students from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds, it is fraught with serious financial risk and practical hardship (e.g., finding clean, safe housing, especially in the first years before knowledge and skills are acquired). Such studies are useful in revealing how students enact home in various settings and are a crucial reminder for parents and policy-makers about their ongoing roles in supporting young adults in the early stages after leaving home.

A few exceptional studies on student housing go beyond the moment of leaving home to explore the meanings of students' ways of enacting home. For instance, Thomsen (2007) attempts to link the physical aspects of institutional housing with students' needs and wishes for a feeling of home. Participants in her study put in considerable effort to create a sense of homeyness and feelings of being at home in spite of the temporariness of their tenure and the institutional character of the buildings and furnishings. Kenyon (1999) asked students to describe their personal meanings of home, especially in comparison to their natal and current homes.

In sum, scholars of home assert that, at least in contemporary Western

culture, home is seen as a place for middle-class, white heterosexual couples and their young children (Fortier 2003; Jones 2000, 1995; Passaro 1996; hooks 1990). This is particularly true when home is conceptualized at what Lofgren (1997: 23) calls “the scale of dwellings” wherein “the traditional perception of the family home is still alive.” Young adults, thus, especially those who are mobile, single and childless, are viewed as having no place at home (Jones 1995; Klinenberg 2012). When they do engage in home work activities, they are seen as merely experimenting with home (Jones 2000) or precariously homed and subject to particular conditions for success (Tremblay 2003; Heath and Kenyon 2001). Consequently, home leaving; homelessness; and student homes/housing are objects of interest in studies of youth and transitions to adulthood. However, such veins of thinking have rarely mined young people's narratives on meanings and practices of home, and at worst, they devolve into moral panics (Jones 1995) over contemporary issues surrounding young people and home. Far less attention has been paid to the meanings of home to young adults themselves (White 2002), the ways in which they enact home and how these meanings and activities link up to their emerging adult identities.

Home as Enacted

In 1992, Peter Somerville pointed out a growing interest in home as an object of academic study—and mounting disagreement over how home should be

defined. More recently, Shelley Mallett (2004: 62) summarized the possible definitions as “(a) place(s), (a) space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of being in the world.” Both authors point out that scant discussion of the interdisciplinary study of home has taken place, contributing not only to difficulties in definition, but also to concerns over the conflation of home with other concepts; regarding the latter, Mallett (2004: 62) lists “house, family, haven, self, gender, and journeying.” But, she is assiduous in pointing out that white Western conceptualizations of home have traditionally been narrow, focusing mostly on structures or dwellings. Douglas (1991) had warned against this earlier, cautioning against conflating home with *house* as, for her, this obfuscates the multi-dimensionality of home and obscures the role of subjective experience. Olesen (2010: 35) reinforces the point about normative conceptions of home by quoting anthropologist, David Schneider, who suggested that “the American concept of home brings the ideas of place, kinship and community together in a single unit. It is this ‘unit,’ the single-family household, which holds the imaginative attention of life course scholars of youth and young adulthood. Yet, such a focus on home as merely a residence tends toward what Young (1997: 136) calls “Heidegger’s heroic moment of place”: in other words, an overemphasis on both building and buildings and an obfuscation of the role of *active labour* in the manifestation of home in a broader sense.

Mallett (2004) suggests that a focus on the ontology of home, on what ‘is,’

rather than on what is done and what that means, is common in studies of home, but there are also legitimate attempts to move out of the realm of ontological explanations and toward more phenomenological/experiential ones. Jackson (1995), for instance, argues that there is an unavoidable relationship between *experiences of home* and *ideas* about it. Blunt and Dowling (2006: 2) echo this idea, albeit in more sophisticated terms. In their survey of the major theoretical approaches to understanding home, they claim that home is both a physical structure *and* a “spatial imaginary: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and which connect places.” For Mallett (2004), phenomenological accounts of home help bridge the lacuna between ideas about the tangible, physical aspects of home—and what she refers to as the 'imagined' ones (i.e. those that are less tangible, felt and idealized. She argues for an integrated account of home, which would hold what she calls the real and the imagined in tension with each other, rather than in opposition.

Nevertheless, the very *desire* for home, or, we might say, its imagined or intangible qualities, Blunt (2003) posits, may be only fully embodied in practice, oriented toward the future and present, and shaped by a proximate and distal sense of place and materiality. Mallett (2004: 79) points out that some literature does focus “on practice, on the diverse ways people ‘do’ and feel home.” Post-colonial studies are one example of this kind of study. Ahmed et al.'s (2004)

edited collection of stories on home, for instance, shifts attention toward home as 'enacted,' opening up a space for understanding home situations that are not always rooted in discrete domestic spaces. The collection of stories begins with an introduction by the editors that calls for studies on home that ask questions about power and processes. For example, who moves? Who stays? And who inhabits which spaces and when? What does it mean to leave and then to return? Such questions allow us to focus on what Holdsworth and Morgan (2005) see as important in studying patterns of home leaving and meanings of home among young adults. They view home as both symbolic, including imagined ideas by participants about 'ideal homes,' and practical, in terms of the spatial location of home and how participants in their study went about creating a sense of home. For their participants, the imagined or ideal aspects of home were even more important, in many cases, than the practical aspects of enacting it. However, they found that these young people still worked to create a sense of home, despite the contexts of displacement and temporariness that surrounded their ongoing processes of home leaving and making.

Scholars have long sought to elucidate the links between practices or home work activities and identities formation or the "construction and reconstruction of self" (Young 2005: 153). For Blunt and Dowling (2006: 23), home is a lived space, one that is "continually created and recreated through everyday practices," work they term "homemaking practices." They contend that "home as a place and

an imaginary constitutes identities—people’s sense of themselves are related to and produced through lived and imaginative experiences of home” (24). Likewise, Gorman-Murray and Dowling (2007) argue that the acts of making home are also central to generating a sense of self. For them, “Homemaking enables changing and cumulative identities to be materialized in and supported by the home” (6). In effect, we make *ourselves* at home while making ourselves *at home* (recognizing that home is not always associated with domestic, residential settings). They also point out that the process is ongoing, an especially salient point given that home work is itself never ending. Finally, they enumerate certain categories of homemaking practices in which “Unfolding identities are progressively embedded and reflected” in and through “everyday practices and routines...accumulating and arranging personally meaningful objects” (ibid).

Research Questions

Whether staying home, moving out, but not away, or moving far away from home, what often gets left out of discussions of home and early adulthood is not how home is left, but rather, how it is enacted and what it means for young people's emerging adult identities. The thesis explores the ways in which a sample of young adults, who are in or past post-secondary education understand and enact home. Participants are various points in young adulthood when, often for the first time, young people are faced with obvious expectations and opportunities

to enact home for themselves. Moreover, it seeks to understand these meanings and activities in relation to one another and to discover what factors shape them and how. Thus, the focus of the empirical strategy revolved around the following sets of research questions:

What role, if any, do educated young people see for home in their lives? How do they understand it and what, if anything, does it mean to their own lives?;

How do such young adults enact home? How do these efforts vary under different circumstances?; and [to a much lesser degree]

How does enacting home relate to feeling adult and transitioning to adulthood?

The answers to these questions show that young adults view their experiences of home as legitimate, rather than problematic, pathological or experimental. They further demonstrate that young adulthood offers a particularly rich opportunity for enacting, especially by reinterpreting, rather than merely preparing for, home. This is particularly significant given that young adulthood is commonly constructed as a life course period heavily freighted with expectations about the development of independent households and lives. At the same time, this study shows that while participants enact home in ways that they characterize as both legitimate and meaningful, they nonetheless have difficulties seeing these homes as 'real.'

The chapter that follows discusses the methodological approach to generating and understanding the empirical data for the study. Specifically, it used

participant-generated digital photographs and photo-elicitation interviews in collecting and analyzing empirical interview data. The chapter also discusses the emerging methodological turn employed in the research, which relied largely on digital photographic technology, including smartphones, rather than film photography, and its contribution to the growing field of visual sociology. The next section rethinks the focus on home leaving in studying young adults' narratives of home and suggests that a modified approach—exploring, instead, how they *enact* home—offers methodological advantages and produces richer and more complex analytical insights.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present the results of over two years worth of data collection, which centered around in-depth photo-elicitation interviews with fifty-two participants. Chapter 3 presents a discussion of dominant ideas of home that participants identify as important in shaping how they understand and enact home. These discourses reflect middle-class ideals about home and housing that prevailed throughout the twentieth century and beyond. At the same time, as the chapter shows, participants are reinterpreting these notions in ways that both push and modernize the changing boundaries of contemporary home life.

Chapters 4 and 5 push these arguments even further, showing how participants confront these discourses differently in the context of a number of factors, primarily *gender*, and that such factors have dramatic impacts on how participants understand and enact home. Chapter 4 focuses on the narratives of

female participants, showing that although there are differences among them, most tend to face conflicting expectations about enacting home in and around the natal household and family, and about 'making something of themselves' academically, professionally and personally. As a result, young women tend to enact multiple, simultaneous experiences of home through the reinterpretation of existing gender norms in and around home. The narratives of the male participants are explored in Chapter 5. The chapter shows that with a few notable exceptions, the young men face fewer expectations to enact home in terms of the natal household and family and are thus freer to negotiate homes both away from and within domestic households.

The concluding chapter summarizes the main points of the thesis and sets out the research's main contributions. Finally, it considers implications, for both policy and research, of the main findings of the study.

Chapter 2 - Methodological Approach and Study Design

Introduction

This study uses narrative inquiry (both as the object and method of study²¹) to explore if and how a relatively diverse group of mostly middle-class, educated young adults understand and enact home, and to consider how these meanings and activities might be linked to emerging identities as young adults. Through guided photo-elicitation interviews, I explore the meaning and significance of home and home work to young adults whose early adult lives included time spent in post-secondary education.

The chapter begins with a discussion of some epistemological considerations before moving on to sections on visual sociology, photography and the specific research methods used in the research. Following after, I outline the sampling design (including strategy and a synopsis and analysis of the research setting), the pilot research and the structure of the main study. The final sections discuss data analysis strategies and posit a new way of setting up studies involving young adults and home.

In designing the research project, I paid attention to questions that scholars of qualitative research methodology categorize as epistemological, including questions about what can be known, how it can be known and by whom (Guba

21 See Clandinin and Connelley (2000) for a discussion of this two-fold understanding of narrative inquiry.

and Lincoln 1998). Feminist epistemologies assume that such questions matter, not only to conducting ethical social science research, but also to the *kind* of knowledge that gets produced by it. Building insights about social worlds is a tricky business and Butler and Scott (1992) caution that it can be risky to rely solely on the notion of experience in qualitative research. Similarly, scholars of narrative inquiry argue that we cannot possibly know informants' experiences; rather, we can only know narratives—the stories they tell to themselves and to others (Doucet 2006; Cohen and Rapport 1995). All the same, as Richardson (1998: 348) reminds us, “having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing.” For feminist empiricists, multiple perspectives and attention to the socially located nature of knowledge, can lead to more objective research (Olson and Hirsch 1995). Such a belief explicitly problematizes the ideal of value-free research, assuming, instead, that the social contexts of the researched, the researcher, and the research contribute to both the research process and to the products that eventually emerge from it.

In thinking about the limits of using verbal accounts of personal experience as the central focus of analysis in empirical research, I held on to Reissman's (1993:5) claim that narratives are “constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive.” The idea informed my approaches both to interviewing and to analysis. When it was possible, I took into account the wider historical, social and discursive contexts that appeared to be central to

participants' lives. In doing so, I also took a cue from Lahelma and Gordon's research on home leaving among Finnish youth. They aimed to understand “not only the narratives through which people interpret their experiences, but also in the cultural, social and material conditions and positions in which they are living their lives and plan for their futures” (2003: 378).

I also reflected on my role and limitations as a researcher, the constraints of the study, and my personal and professional biases.²²Undoubtedly, my involvement was shaped both by my age²³ and my experiences (albeit new) as an educated, middle-class Canadian. I shared those circumstances in common with many participants. Was this a methodological advantage or a detriment? Probably a little of both if we take seriously Hodkinson's (2005: 133) claim that

youth cultural groupings must be regarded as diverse, ephemeral and loosely bounded, something that would make the proximity or distance of social researchers variable and hard to predict.

In some sense, sharing characteristics and contexts in common with participants probably lent me credibility. In other words, I could be what social scientists have long described as an insider (Brannick and Coughlan 2007), or in more nuanced terms, a member of the research landscape (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). Such a position is often viewed as a reflexive resource by imbuing researchers with

22 This follows Doucet and Mauthner's (2003) claim that issues of reflexivity include all these factors and more.

23 My relatively young age (I was twenty-seven) likely distinguished me from most other researchers studying youth. Most researchers relate to a similarity with young participants because they remember what it was like when they were young. However, they are limited by generational differences (Knopp Biklen 2007).

personal and cultural (or subcultural) perspectives that allow for critical engagement with both participant narratives and existing scholarship (Hodkinson 2005).

On the other hand, proximity can also mean that a researcher risks making assumptions about participants' lives. I approached the contradiction by considering a set of questions posed by Zeni (2001) around ethical decision-making for 'insider research.' She suggests researchers consider 1) who the research will touch; 2) the power relations between participants and the researcher; 3) shared understandings between the two; 4) differences in social/cultural experiences; 5) including participants in research design; 6) risks to participants; and 7) uncovering sensitive information. These questions helped guide the interviews and provided 'food for thought' between interviews, as I reflected on which kinds of discussions were both informing the empirical puzzles and remaining sensitive to Zeni's considerations. At the end of some interviews, I even asked participants to reflect on the interview itself, soliciting their feedback on how they felt during the interview and what they liked more and less about the experience. In turn, their reports helped guide subsequent interviews. This back-and-forth process of reflection and revision exemplifies what Curry (2005: 79) calls "reciprocal reflexivity" and allowed me to do what Fine (1994) calls working the hyphens. That is to say that I tried to think about and do the research somewhat outside of the stringent dichotomy of researcher/participant.

Yet, the ambiguous nature of the meanings of home and the material character of enacting it, meant that the typical raft of guided interviews or collection of focus groups employed in qualitative studies might not elicit the multiplicity and layered nature of participants' narratives. While the one-off, one-on-one method of interviewing research participants is appealing in comparison to traditional survey methods of data collection, it can also reinforce, rather than refute, assumptions of positivist research design. This is related to limitations on participants' abilities to know and tell their own stories, the listening and communication skills of researchers, the value-free nature of data collection and analysis, the importance of generalizability in making claims about the social world, and the usefulness of words/text in social inquiry. I aimed to cover a range of participant experiences to capture variable aspects of individual's lives and the subjects under study (Stake 1998). Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that this kind of sample selection can provide both depth (a fundamental strength of the case study method) *and* breadth. Indeed, it allowed me to develop stronger arguments about the sample in question, but, to some degree, it also limited claims of generalizability. Further research would need to be done in order to make broader claims about larger groups of young people. All the same, the insights offered from the data are likely to be generalizable to other young, middle-class adults in Canada. Given how the results compare to those from similar research projects in similar countries (i.e. the United States, England, Scotland, Australia, New

Zealand and parts of Scandinavia), I also suggest that the views on home articulated by the respondents are likely to be somewhat generalizable to middle-class young people in other Western countries. These similarities will be particularly strong in countries possessing similar historical legacies of the dream of home ownership and concomitant changes in making this dream a reality, along with changing opportunities for and constraints on young people, especially in terms of gender, home and family.

Finally, limitations of oral interviews persist in spite of strategic interview selection. For this reason, participant-produced photographs were used *in combination* with interviews. Justification and explanation of this decision is discussed in the following section.

Visual Sociology, Photography and Photovoice

Throughout its history, sociology has been, more or less, a textual enterprise (Richardson 1991, 1994) or what Pink (2001: 10) calls a “word-based discipline.” Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly difficult (and detrimental) to ignore the pervasiveness of images in our everyday lives and, thus, their potential for informing scholarly insights (Pink 2001). Parr (2001) laments the limitations of text-only data, calling researchers to also use information-rich visual cues to help capture complex social issues. This remains a challenging task for most social scientists, and although visual methods—and especially photographic methods—

are marginalized and underused in the social sciences (Harper 2002; Mitchell 2011). They have nonetheless played successful roles in social analysis and critique for a number of decades (cf. Collier 1957; Wagner 1978) and have been recognized as valuable for at least thirty years (Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar 2012). Scholars employing photographic research methods argue that photographic research methods provide a rare ability to capture additional, contextualized glimpses into social worlds that other qualitative research methods (i.e. traditional guided interviewing or focus groups) may not (Guillemin and Drew 2010; Moore et al. 2008; Southard 1997). Secondulfo (1997: 34) writes that the use of photographs in the social sciences, “though difficult on a methodological level, is irreplaceable in its ability to record the reality and evidence of the significant item in their mutual arrangement.” In particular, several researchers have found that photographic research methods can be useful in producing data on the daily lives of young people (Blinn and Harrist 1991; Chen et al. 2012; Clark 1999; Dodman 2003; Markwell 2000; Young and Barrett 2001). They are especially useful to “foster a sense of participation” amongst young people (Guillemin and Drew 2010: 177).

Ethnographers have examined and analyzed existing photographs as cultural artifacts and material objects for decades. But more recently, scholars have lauded participant-driven photography for its ability to provide insight into social worlds. Participant-driven photography sometimes involves research

participants providing researchers with access to photographs. More commonly, the methodology involves having participants take photographs according to specific or general thematic parameters to “create an image-based account of their experiences and/or those things that are important to them in a particular context” (Guillemin and Drew 2010: 176).

The latter process comprises the core of a photographic research method called photovoice, which was conceived of by Carolyn Wang in the mid and late 1990s. Wang's aim was to allow for greater participant involvement in defining and understanding the issues that affect them in everyday life (Wang 1999; Wang and Burris 1994, 1997; Wang et al. 1996, 1998). Photovoice has been subsequently praised for its potential to disrupt the researcher/participant hierarchy and to empower and promote autonomy among participants (Moore et al. 2008; Wang, Burris and Ping 1996). Photovoice projects share the assumption that participant-produced photos provide participants with an additional (and, in some cases, better) way to tell their stories (see Clark-Ibanez 2007; Guillemin and Drew 2010; Secondulfo 1997). For Wang (1997), this is key since participants are unevenly equipped (or inclined) to construct oral narratives. Zenkov and Harmon (2009), for instance, used photovoice to document urban youths' ideas on obstacles to academic success. Participants in their study had differing (and often low) levels of literacy, but the authors found that photographs were useful in helping them express complex ideas. Wang (1997) heralds photovoice for its

ability to offer participants opportunities to actively participate in the creation and expression of meaning.

Photovoice is typically carried out by providing disposable cameras to participants and asking them to take several frames. In a few cases, such as Green and Kloos' (2009) study with Ugandan youth, digital photography has been used in place of disposable cameras. Digital photography can be useful when computers are more available than film and film-development technology. Yet, Green and Kloos also argue that can be beneficial in broader contexts, especially with younger participants who may be more familiar with digital than film photography. In this study, digital technology is more appropriate for that very reason. Participants infinitely more familiar with digital photography than with film. Nearly all report taking photographs on a nearly daily basis with smartphones and sharing photographs online, through Flickr, Facebook or personal blogs. Additionally, several participants indicated they already had digital photographs that represented home to them and that they wished to submit these photographs rather than take new ones specifically for the study. This is evidence of the ubiquity of digital photography and photos in their lives.

Photo-Elicitation

Photovoice (and other ways of using participant-generated photographs) is being used successfully in many research studies, participatory art projects, and

political movements involving marginalized populations, such as children or adults with mental disabilities. Most researchers, however, recommend using photographic methods in conjunction with more conventional qualitative research methods, such as interviewing or entering the field and taking notes (Bolton, Pole and Mizen 2001; Moore et al. 2008; Pink 2001; Rieger 1998). These additional methods are not recommended in order to triangulate results, but rather to help to elicit the narratives participants intend to capture or convey in their visual creations (Mitchell 2011).

Elicitation techniques can include photo-elicitation interviews (PEIs), in which photographs help participants communicate their ideas and provide researchers the opportunity to ask questions about participants' photographs (Harper 2002; Hurworth 2003). They also help to contextualize participants' personal realms in a way that words may not (Clark-Ibanez 2004). In this way, the photograph acts as both a foil for discussion, what Collier and Collier (1986) refer to as the can-opener effect, and a visual depiction of complex ideas that may be difficult to communicate only through words. An additional elicitation technique called photofeedback has been employed far less broadly; it has been used most systematically in 2001 by Alice Sampson-Cordle, a PhD student at the University of Georgia. Instead of conducting full, in-person interviews, photofeedback solicits written descriptions of photos from participants, which “can reduce feelings of vulnerability or anxiousness caused by talking directly to a researcher” (Sampson-

Cordle 2001: 44). At first, I hoped to use online photofeedback with nearly all participants as the sole technique of elicitation. However, the pilot research made it clear that using PEIs to elicit narratives would contribute to more substantial and protracted opportunities for participants to tell their stories, the potential to develop rapport with participants, and a greater quality and depth of data.

Why Use Photos?

Participants took one (or more, if needed) photo of what home was to them or how they made themselves at home. The photographs were then discussed in photo-elicitation interviews (which also included many questions that were unrelated to the photos). The use of photographs had both methodological and analytical benefits. First, the exercise of taking a photograph of home seemed to help some participants reflexively prepare for our conversations. Similarly, Harper (1994, 1998) argues that the act of taking photos initiates in participants the reflexive process. This became clear when I asked participants to describe the photograph for me. Many began their descriptions by saying, “thinking about what to take a picture of really made me think about home.” Others reported that “it wasn’t easy to take this picture because I hadn’t really thought about home like this before.” Participants often said they had spent a lot of time thinking about what to photograph and some had gone through several ideas before they landed on one that really resonated with them. Others reported that they had been

prompted to wonder if I expected their photos of home to conform to fairly conventional or normative notions of home. Each of these 'reflexive moments' linked directly to the kinds of questions I covered in the interviews. Thus, participants often arrived primed with the readiness to construct and share rich, reflective narratives.

The second benefit of the photos emerged in engaging with them as objects and data during the interviews. In these cases, the photographs acted as foils for discussion, just as Bourdieu (1990) suggests that sharing photographs aids communication about past events. They were especially enabling²⁴ for participants who were not overly verbose. Engaging visual material in conversations with participants can help them communicate their ideas when words do not tell the whole story (Harper 2002; Hurworth 2003). Gauntlett and Holzworth (2007) call it “a different way in.”²⁵ Liebenberg (2009) maintains that it facilitates participants' abilities to articulate stories about their lives and Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar (2012: 60) reinforce this point in arguing that “the subjectivity of viewing necessitates and promotes a dialogical process around the image.”

Third, they offered participants a novel way of 'speaking' (hence the intent of conventional photovoice studies), providing what is probably a relatively rare

24 Gauntlett and Holzworth (2006: 86) argue that visual methodologies are 'enabling.' See also Guillemin and Drew (2010: 179).

25 Gauntlett and Holzworth's terminology is noted by Guillemin and Drew (2010: 178) and particularly praised for its usefulness in research with young people who may not be used to reflecting on and articulating their personal realms.

opportunity to reflect on, express and have validated their deeper meanings of home. This final benefit should not be underestimated; Miles (2000: 2) argues that young people must be given opportunities to speak in order to understand how they “interact with and negotiate the social worlds in which they construct their everyday lives.” The payoff for the research centers around participants' increased sense of ownership over the research and greater collaboration between participants and researchers (Felstead, Jewson and Waters 2004).

The photographs also had promising analytical payoffs. First, they helped to contextualize and confirm participants' oral narratives in a way that can be a useful strategy for glimpsing personal realms (Clark-Ibanez 2004). Second, they provided complementary perspectives/data. They also provided inspiration for higher level analytical insights. For instance, the incredible diversity of photographs provided evidence for the insight that whatever participants share in common, home remains a subjective concept and context-dependent experience. The number of photographs provided by individual participants also provided insight into how participants enact home. For instance, as Chapter 4 shows, female participants sometimes felt the need to provide two or more photographs in order to represent home. This was only the case for one or two male participants, an insight that contributes to one of the main analytical findings of the thesis. Namely, young women feel expected to enact multiple, simultaneous homes, while young men foster fewer connections between homes and feel freer

to enact one home at a time. Finally, the photographs were useful in an analytic sense for what they did *not* depict. To wit, nearly no one took a photograph of what they termed a 'real home,' even though most they said that they felt expected to enact home on these terms.

Invisible Photos

Studies involving participant-produced photography must not only negotiate photos taken, but also those that are *not* taken. Feltstead, Jewson and Waters (2004) call these invisible photos and propose that accounts of such photos reveal just as much as actual ones. Several participants did not provide *any* photographs. A few claimed that they simply had not had time,²⁶ although further discussion often provided additional reasons and sometimes they eventually provided photographs. Very little is written about invisible photos and at first, I worried they they indicated a failure or inappropriateness of the methodology. However, Hodgetts, Chamberlain and Radley (2007: 267) lay this fear to rest, arguing that in qualitative research involving participant-driven photography, “contemplation of what could have been shown can enhance a participant’s ability to raise and reflect upon broader issues and experiences.”

Participants' narratives on their invisible photos were rich and reveal as much as actual photos about how they understand and enact home.

26 See Klitzing (2004) for a discussion of how limitations on time and resources can affect participants' picture-taking.

First, participants worried that the photograph they wanted to take would be embarrassing. One participant, Heather, wished to photograph her cat, but saying that the cat was 'home' to her. She explained that when she was growing up, her natal family had always kept cats. When she moved into her own apartment and decided to get a cat, she felt she had come 'full circle,' since now, she was responsible for a cat's care and it, in turn, provided her with comfort, companionship and amusement. But, as she confesses:

But I couldn't take it [the photo]. I was too embarrassed. Home is supposed to be your family or your spouse or whatever. Maybe your house or where you live or whatever. But not your cat. It's not like I think he's my kid or something.

While I assured Heather that she should feel comfortable in photographing what she sees as home, she still chose not to produce the photo. As Chapter 3 will discuss, Heather's censorship of her representation of home links up to normative ideas about home as rooted in normative, nuclear family structures and domestic residences (a house; an apartment; etc.). Ironically, if she had actually produced the photograph, she may not have revealed the same information. Ruth, too, vocalizes what might be identified as embarrassment over the photograph she wished to take (and ended up doing so once we discussed her concerns).

I wanted to show my messy room. I'm living in London²⁷ for the summer, doing an internship and we're living at the dorms. My room is basically a complete mess and I love it. At my parents' home, it's not like my space, I can't be as messy as I want. But I can't take a picture of it. That's not something you really show other people. It's your own, private mess.

27 Not the real city.

Other participants also associate 'messiness' with independence, but also feel ashamed of it, since normative notions of home (e.g., orderly, clean) construct material chaos as a transgression. This fact was emphasized as Ruth continued, stating:

Your house is supposed to be nice and clean. If it isn't, it's like nobody lives there, nobody's proud of it. But I like it, it's my mess. No matter where I live, that's the way it ends up!

For Ruth, photographing her disorderly room turned out to be liberating.



Ruth's Photograph of Home: Her dorm room and personal belongings

Others worried that the thing they wished to photograph would be too banal. Kate was one such participant.

I was going to send you a photograph of my backyard with my whole family. We were just hanging out and barbecuing. That's home to me. We love being outside all together. But it's not very creative. Pretty much anybody would think of that as home if you asked them. So, I just thought I'd tell you about it because it's not that good. I haven't really traveled yet or done anything very glamorous yet, so that's it. Just me and my family outside, so I'm not going to take a picture of that because you don't want to see that and like I don't want to admit that that's all there is, you know what I mean? [Laughs.] If I take a picture, it's frozen there in time and that's what I'll remember. No...I would rather wait until I go somewhere and do something and then see what the picture would be. And if I take a picture, maybe that would never happen.

For Kate, refusing to photograph an experience of home ultimately characterized by ordinariness is a way of ensuring that her *future* experiences of home might include greater heterogeneity than her past and current ones. She eventually sent the photograph with a note saying

Well, you might as well see it for the way it is today. It's comfortable and I love it. It's home to me, so why should I apologize? I'm lucky to have it.



Kate's photograph of home: Backyard and pool behind her natal home (where she lives)

Some participants feel that home was too ephemeral to capture on film.

Sophia, asks rhetorically, for instance:

How can you take a picture of home? For me, it's just a feeling and it's complex. There's a lot tied up in it, how I feel at home.

Annie, a French-Canadian who grew up in a military family, is even more specific.

We moved around a lot. A lot! And every time we moved, we had to get rid of so many possessions, so I can't really tell you what home is, not in a picture. Certain times, it felt nice wherever we lived, you know, we had made friends, we had pets, I always had my own room, but then we moved. We always moved right at that point, so I don't really identify with any one place or person. My sister has a photo of our first house and she loves that photo because we were about six and four then, but to me, it was just the first of many.

Although not common, a couple of participants, such as Sophia, also cite personal trauma and emotional strife as reasons for not taking a photograph of home.²⁸

You know what? There's no way you want me to take a photo of home, especially because home isn't always a nice feeling. How do you take a photo of growing up as the only brown kid in your neighbourhood? My family stuck out like you wouldn't believe. But how do you take a photo of that? How do you, you know, take a picture of parents who fight all time and move you back to India, then back again, then somewhere else entirely? It's not a good situation, home. Even the condo where they live now, I live in another condo in the building, so I'm still tied to all that. I wouldn't really take a picture of that because there's so much tied up in it. There's a lot of pain there. Yeah, it's my space. It's where I live and it's my haven from work. But it's not really mine, you know? I don't really think I can capture all that in a picture.

Photography was also limited by participants' own concerns over privacy or anonymity. Krista, for instance, wanted to provide a photograph of her young daughter riding a bike. The photograph partly showed her daughter's face, however, and given that she had already posted the photograph to her own Facebook page, it might have compromised the participant's and her daughter's anonymity. She did not feel that it would pose a safety concern for her daughter, but she felt that she should protect her daughter's right to privacy. The age of the subject in the photo made this decision prudent. Eventually, Krista decided to take a photo of the back of her daughter, so that her face was not visible.

Invisible photos do not reflect methodological failure, nor should they be

²⁸ Even so, such participants said they found it helpful, rather than harmful, to reflect on home for the purpose of the study.

viewed as participant non-compliance. Rather, they should be mined for what they can reveal about participants' lives. Hodgetts, Chamberlain and Radley (2007: 271) call such efforts “narrative picturing” and suggest that they represent an important kind of dialogue between researchers and participants in studies involving participant-driven photography.

Sampling Strategy

The sample was made up of fifty-two, urban-dwelling young adults ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-nine.²⁹ At the time of the interviews, all participants were living either in one medium-sized Canadian city or in surrounding areas (what Census Canada calls the fringes of an urban core).³⁰ I have named the city 'Foyerville' to help conceal the identities of participants. In terms of Canadian metropolises, Foyerville experiences relatively high degrees of both immigration and in-migration and the population is amongst the most educated in the country. It has a relatively good economic growth rate compared to the national average. The main five to ten industries revolve around white-collar work. Finally, it has a handful of private and public universities and colleges, making it an ideal setting for a study that explores experiences of home

29 The age range that was chosen partly to capture the group of people that Arnett (2000) first called 'emerging adults.' Keeping in mind the reservations raised earlier about 'emerging adulthood,' I felt the range was appropriate for two reasons. First, it allows the results to be easily compared to other research on young adults that uses same or similar ranges, and secondly, it captures the protracted nature of home leaving and enacting that occurs in and around experiences of post-secondary education, an experience that is increasingly lengthy, as shown in the previous chapter, but which is also seen as an increasingly common home-leaving strategy.

30 http://geodepot.statcan.ca/Diss/Reference/COGG/short_UC_UF_RF_e.cfm

for educated, mostly middle-class young men and women.

In recognition of the increasing emphasis on post-secondary education amongst diverse groups of young Canadians and on higher education as a common home leaving strategy among middle-class youth, the study design included a strong emphasis on recruiting urban-dwelling participants whose early adult lives included some post-secondary education. Over half the participants were post-secondary students at the time of the interviews; most others had graduated from either a Bachelor's or Master's degree program. Two had dropped out of post-secondary programs. However, the study was not designed to capture student experiences per se or to explore enacting home explicitly against the backdrop of higher education.

In some respects, the sample is relatively narrow, since it only includes individuals who have spent at least part of their young adulthood pursuing higher education. Some participants had already graduated at the time of the interviews, while others had gone on to graduate school. In several cases, participants both worked for pay or as volunteers and attended school. Two participants had dropped out of university programs (one eventually returned and graduated). Yet, the sample also included a great deal of diversity.³¹ The sample purposefully included relatively even numbers of men and women (to reflect the similarly equal numbers of young women and men enrolling in post-secondary education

³¹ Appendix B contains a table listing all participants in the study.

across Canada). In terms of socio-economic class, the majority—but not all—identified themselves as part of the middle-class. Several had moved from small or medium-sized cities where educational and employment opportunities were limited. At least two had moved to the city from rural areas. Most grew up in intact nuclear families. Four who had lost a parent to death as a child or adolescent. A few others had divorced parents and one identified her immediate family as “dysfunctional” and her parents as “unhappy together.” The ethnic and religious composition of the group was also diverse with one non-practicing Hindu who identified herself both as South Asian and Asian Canadian; two Chinese Canadians (one a practicing Catholic), one Czech-Canadian, one Ukrainian-Canadian, three French Canadians (all non-practicing Catholics), an Italian-Canadian, a practicing Jew, one participant who described herself as 'half Turkish,' and several participants who identified themselves simply as 'Canadian' (one of whom grew up in and was still living with her highly devout Baptist family). A handful of participants were themselves immigrants to Canada, while several others were second generation immigrants.

Many participants were in committed heterosexual relationships and others defined themselves as single. No participants explicitly identified themselves as gay or lesbian. One participant was a single mother and another participant was a married mother with a child. Some lived with their natal families, others had roommates and still others lived alone or with partners. Nearly half a dozen were

homeowners and others rented rooms, apartments or condominiums, stayed in dormitory housing, also known as semiautonomous living (Goldschedier and Devanzo 1986, 1989).

At the time of the interviews, about half the participants were undergraduate students. The others had either graduated (two participants actually dropped out before graduating) or were enrolled in graduate school or a second degree (e.g., law school). Among those who had graduated, most were employed. Many of these were employed full-time in white collar positions in the knowledge industry. Others worked in various jobs. One was running her family's business, one was self-employed in the high tech industry and another one was a school teacher. A couple were unemployed, however, and one split her time between providing childcare for her daughter and a reduced workweek.

Such structural/demographic characteristics, while important to note for their contribution to a diverse sample, did not comprise the chief rationale for the sampling strategy. Instead, participants were first sought who had moved out of the natal home and community to pursue higher education. However, after I performed some initial analysis on data from these first participants, it became clear that a more diverse sample was needed to capture a wider range of young, middle-class adults. Thus, I interviewed another group of participants whose natal households were located in Foyerville. Of this group, roughly half the participants lived in the natal household during part or all of their post-secondary education,

while the others had moved out of the natal household, but remained in Foyerville.

This kind of staged sampling strategy, commonly known as theoretical sampling, has been highlighted as the most appropriate approach for sample design for projects that are exploratory or unfamiliar. In such studies, Glaser and Strauss (1967: 105-106) argue that “data collection is controlled by the emerging theory.” In other words, initial and ongoing analysis of data helps the researcher decide “what groups or subgroups does one turn to next? And for what theoretical purpose?” It became evident that while a diverse sampling of characteristics (e.g., gender, SES, ethnic background/citizenship of origin) would likely be captured by the initial sample, the context of home leaving itself, in terms of geographic location and distance traveled, as well as relative independence within or outside of the natal household, formed an unanticipated variable. Thus, the approach was iterative in that it built on theoretical interpretations of emerging data. It is also relevant, diverse and large enough to produce saturation, while remaining manageable enough to facilitate thorough analysis.³² The design was extremely useful as a research strategy because it provided a way of connecting with the target populations in an effective way. However, its relevance to the themes emergent in the data itself was less compelling. This is discussed in detail in a following section.

³² See Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) for a complete discussion of this kind of sample design.

The sample was also equally divided between male and female participants. The decision revolved around the fact that while roughly equal numbers of young men and women now attend university in Canada, young men are disproportionately represented among young adults living in natal households and they return to the natal household more often and for longer periods. The division proved to be much more relevant to the analytical insights, including strongly gendered findings, in terms of the multiple complex and intersecting differences among male and female participants from varying ethnic backgrounds/citizenships of origin, natal families and household compositions and socioeconomic statuses.

Pilot Research and Main Study

For both the pilot research and the main study, I recruited participants through a combination of announcements posted on Facebook, email blasts, and posters in coffee shops, natural food stores and pubs and on university campuses. The use of multiple recruiting methods ensured a wide range of participants. Two participants were involved in the pilot research only and four additional pilot participants eventually became part of the main study. The six Pilot Participants or 'PPs' came from varying socioeconomic, ethnic/religious, familial and geographic backgrounds. There were both male and female PPs and their ages spanned a range that was reflective of the larger study. Their families of origin and fields of

study/occupations were similarly diverse.

In the pilot research, PPs were asked to take a photograph or photographs of something that represented 'home' to them or that showed how they make themselves 'at home.' A portion of the text in the informational letter is below:

You are being asked to take a photograph or photographs of something that represents 'home' to you or that shows how you 'make yourself at home.' For the purposes of this study, you can interpret home however you like. It can be a building or a group of buildings, a person or people, animal or objects. You could also think of home as a feeling and try to convey that in the photo.

Please do not take photographs of any details (like faces, house numbers, or license plates) that could be used to identify you or anyone else in the photograph. If it is not possible to exclude these details, they will be modified to prevent identification any time they are printed for public use.

Note that the final instruction to participants hinted at the ethical considerations that I took into account when designing and carrying out the study. Southard (1997) expresses ethical concerns about the potential intrusiveness of using photography as a research method. These potentialities were partly assuaged by asking participants to act as photographers, rather than taking photographs myself. In addition, participants were asked to avoid taking clear, direct photographs of human faces. I also encouraged them to avoid depicting other identifying details, such as easily recognizable buildings, personal vehicles or house numbers. Many PPs ignored or felt unable to comply with the guidelines and provided photographs showing the fronts of houses or close-ups of people's faces.

The challenge of anonymity in another doctoral study involving photovoice prompted the researcher to develop a technique called 'photo erased' in which an empty text box is shown in place of a particularly identifiable photograph (e.g., clearly showing a face), as a sort of placeholder. The empty box stands as a kind of symbol of the importance of the photograph to the study without revealing visual details that could be used to identify the photographer/participant (Sampson-Cordle 2001). According to Sampson-Cordle, photo erased works because the results of photo-elicitation techniques, such as interviewing, are usually more central to analyses than the photos themselves. However, as Pink (2001) cautions, images are loaded with information that can be difficult to capture in words.³³ Thus, 'erasing' photos can have negative consequences for analyses. For this study, public presentation of at least *some* photographs was crucial to sharing the kind of powerful visual context to which I was privy. Therefore, whenever necessary, I first attempt to digitally alter photographs depicting identifying details. When this is not possible or effective, I use similar stock photographs or ones licensed through Creative Commons.³⁴ Such photographs are chosen for their similarity to easily observable features (e.g., an

33 Note that Pink does not believe that images should 'stand on their own' in social scientific studies and suggests that researchers always analyze them in conjunction with other kinds of data for what they can reveal about the objects of inquiry.

34 Creative Commons (CC) is a non-profit organization holding various copyright licenses that allow content creators to control rights to their works, including the right to redistribute ('share') work for non-commercial purposes both with and without modification. While the benefits of CC are hotly debated, I chose to use photographs covered under these licenses as a supplement to stock photography (either on a royalty-free or a rights-managed license), which is expensive.

aging, heterosexual Chinese couple is replaced with a photograph of two individuals sharing these characteristics) and for their closeness to participants' creative/affective intentions (e.g., the joy and informality of the participant's typically reserved parents). This strategy addresses the challenges of anonymity, while still providing readers the richness of visual imagery.

Once participants had their pictures, they sent them to me electronically at a dedicated email address for which only I had the password. The password was chosen according to common password guidelines and tested against Password Meter's Password Strength Checker.³⁵ All photos, transcript data and consent forms, were stored on a password-protected hard drive computer account with backups stored on a private, password-protected DropBox account.

I then instructed participants to access a private version of a fillable Google Document, which allowed me to quickly elicit information that helped to contextualize their pictures. The document contained several questions that participants were asked to answer. The questions were developed using Sampson-Cordle's (2001) photofeedback questions and the Photo Analysis Guide presented at the NDL Educators Institute in 1997.³⁶ The latter, developed for use by researchers, was useful in accounting for both the immediately observable and more interpretive qualities of a photograph. I initially asked participants to

35 The Password Meter's Password Strength Checker is available to use free of charge at: <http://www.passwordmeter.com/>.

36 The photo analysis guide is available at: <http://www.cyberbee.com/quicklessons/photo.html>.

answer the following six questions:

- 1. Describe this picture. What is in it? Who is in it?*
- 2. Tell me about the setting. Where and when was it shot?*
- 3. Tell me what's going on in the picture. What's it about?*
- 4. Why is this picture 'home' to you?*
- 5. Tell me how this picture is related to how you make yourself at home.*
- 6. Anything else you'd like to add?*

Piloting the photofeedback method was done to test its effectiveness for collecting a large amount of data in a short amount of time. Photofeedback is also appealing because it is inherently participant-driven, since participants describe and analyze their own photographs with written comments (Sampson-Cordle 2001). However, this characteristic became a hindrance, as participants were unsure as to how much to write, and many commented that they would have written more, but they were not sure what was and was not 'relevant' to the study. Additionally, participants did not always answer each of the questions, choosing to answer in a more free-form style by writing a slightly longer response to one or two questions only. The more interpretive style of answering the questions made it clear that participants would appreciate and respond well to semi-structured interviews. The expectation was that this would provide opportunities to elaborate on the photographs and on how they were related to how they understood and enacted home.

As a result, I next conducted photo-elicitation interviews with four pilot

participants, who eventually became participants in the main study. The pilot research relied on a set of open-ended interview questions, on which I solicited participant feedback to help refine the list of questions to be used in the main study. I also used these pilot interviews to make my own observations about the structure and the content of the interview guide. For instance, in the pilot research, after we had discussed the participant's photograph, I asked how long the participant had been living in Foyerville and how s/he ended up there. I found that switching between discussion of the photograph (as a representation of home) and the questions about individual homing history was too fragmented. Consequently, in the main study, I followed the discussion of the photograph with questions about the meaning of home and about whether or not participants considered Foyerville home and why. In some cases, participants brought up their homing histories in response to these questions, and when they did so, the topic fit into our dialogue in a more organic way. The pilot research was therefore especially useful in helping re-frame the ways, and order in which, I asked questions of participants.³⁷

Thus, the interviews explored questions on a carefully selected range of topics. Interviews began with concrete discussions of participants' views of home in relation to their material dwellings, geographic location, mobility and migration, post-secondary education, working and making future plans. The next

³⁷ This is precisely why pilot testing interview guides is useful; it helps discover limitations and provides opportunities to revise the guide in order to minimize weaknesses (Kvale 2007).

set of questions were slightly more esoteric, although still grounded in lived experience. For instance, I asked “What does it mean to make yourself at home” and “Tell me a little bit about any ways you make yourself at home that aren't related to where you live. You could talk about being at home at work, school or even in your own body.” Such topics were interesting, both for participants and myself, but they also tended to be mentally draining. The next grouping of questions took participants back into more practical terrain, asking them to expand on their home leaving experiences and their opportunities and pressures to both move around and stay put. The final cluster of questions again drew participants into more reflective topics, asking them to think about links between home and adult identity and encouraging them to share their own definitions of adulthood.³⁸

Data Analysis and Reporting

Geertz (2001: 694) suggests that qualitative researchers perform a kind of methodological bricolage, knitting together seemingly disparate modes of collecting, constructing and understanding data. Thinking of the role of the researcher, as such, allows for a more organic, emergent kind of data analysis (Weinstein and Weinstein 1991), one that relies on the contexts of the study itself and on the limitations and resources of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln 2003).

³⁸ The full interview guide is included in Appendix A.

Unfortunately, few guidelines exist for qualitative researchers using both visual and textual data (Guillemin and Drew 2010; Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar 2012; Pink 2001). The process I used aligns closely with Libenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar (2012)'s data-centered grounded theory approach to understanding youth and resilience. In their analysis, they coded data and constructed analytic insights by reading transcripts and viewing photographs multiple times and allowing codes and concepts to emerge iteratively.

I also incorporated the participant-centered guidelines Wang and Burris (1997) suggest for practitioners of traditional photovoice studies. They maintain that participants ideally will play key roles in the selecting, contextualizing, and codifying of photographs' meanings.³⁹ In this project, participant involvement was important to the methodological philosophy and practice.⁴⁰ The selection of photographs, for instance, was done by participants in taking and sharing the single photo or photos they wished to include in the study. What was selected for capture became the subject of each participant's photograph. This step was considered the first stage of photographic analysis.

Photographs were then contextualized more overtly through the photo-elicitation interviews and sometimes through additional follow-up over email. Contextualization occurred not merely through participants' descriptions of their

39 See also Gauntlett and Holzworth (2006).

40 Guillemin and Drew (2010) suggest that 'during research' is a particularly important stage for meaning-making in projects involving visual images. Mitchell (2011) also draws attention to the stage of photographic research projects in which the photos are 'taken' and talked about.

photos, but also through sophisticated reflection, which itself, shaped the shape and content of interview discussions. Marquis and Manceau (2007: 314) say that participants engaging in photos in a way that generates additional relevant topics for discussion are “reacting to their own context.” This process deeply illustrates the value of participant-produced photographs in eliciting analytical insights that were not considered ahead of time. Finally, I explicitly coded interview transcripts and photos by cross-tabulating first according to general themes (e.g., people, buildings, belongings) and, later, into more focused (Charmaz 2006), often overlapping themes (e.g., family; friends; pets; childhood houses; participants' own houses; dormitories; bedrooms; kitchens; personal belongings; messy spaces; tidy spaces). As the data collection period progressed, I selectively brought participants into this final stage of analysis. This occurred near the end of interviews when I occasionally asked them to comment about and expand on themes and issues that emerged in both earlier interviews and in the initial stages of data analysis (while taking care not to lead them in any particular direction). However, participants' abilities to engage at these levels of discussions varied greatly between individual participants.

Wang and Burris' three-stage strategy for analyzing photographic data is congruent with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) branch of grounded theory, the guiding methodological perspective for the research. For Strauss and Corbin, grounded theory refers to the practice of allowing new theoretical ideas to emerge

out of data, rather than imposing an existing theoretical perspective on a preexisting research question. Thus, interview transcripts and photographs were analyzed using the selecting, contextualizing and codifying process described above. In addition to the general and focused coding outlined below, I also attempted to consider both a priori, external kinds of themes (e.g., definition of home) and a posteriori ones, which emerged in topics discussed by participants themselves (e.g., 'real homes').⁴¹ Finally, these themes were “shaped and used...to interrogate a conceptualization” of home as enacted (Wiles 2008: 121).

Anonymity and Confidentiality

It is important to include a few notes about confidentiality and anonymity. First, all participants gave oral and written consent to participate in the study. They understood that their participation was voluntary and confidential and that all original written, visual and recorded materials relating to their participation would be presented publicly only under conditions of anonymity. As detailed above, interview transcripts and photographs are password-protected and remain accessible only to me. In this document and all other public material, any details that could be used to identify a participant have been changed.⁴² Details about

⁴¹ See Wiles (2008) for discussion of these 'types' of themes.

⁴² In keeping with common practice for qualitative studies involving human participants, participants are identified using pseudonyms and other key details are altered or omitted. Choosing pseudonyms is complex and requires thoughtfulness and sensitivity (Kvale 2007, 1996). Some researchers ask participants to choose their own pseudonyms, but I wanted to ensure that pseudonyms did not provide clues to participants' identity, so I chose them myself.

participants' lives are only ever included in written documents when they are analytically required. Further, all photographs that could be easily identified are substituted with stock photos or ones licensed through Creative Commons. However, given the richness of photographic information, it may still be impossible to guarantee anonymity for all participants, especially for those whose stories are particularly unique. Guaranteeing anonymity remains a complex issue for studies involving visual data, especially in combination with interviews.⁴³ Moreover, issues of anonymity are challenging for qualitative researchers more generally and there is increasing recognition that guaranteeing total anonymity is both impossible and not responsible (Gregory 2003).

Conclusions: Rethinking Home and Young Adulthood

As detailed in the sections above, the final sample emerged from a careful process of strategic sampling, in which, besides being divided equally between men and women, three categories of home leaving were embedded. The categories can roughly be described as participants who had moved away from home to attend higher education, those who had remained in the natal household and finally, those who moved out of the natal household, but remained close by. These divisions were noted for their potential to help explore the impacts of dominant experiences of home leaving on opportunities for enacting home

⁴³ Appendix D discusses, in greater detail, the ethical challenges of using photographs.

amongst the participants in the sample. The rationale in flagging these categories was derived partly from the pilot interviews, which suggested that only one experience of home was being captured (e.g., young adults who left home to attend university). Young adults who lived with or near natal families were being excluded. The idea was that including the latter two would provide potentially comparative and contrasting insights into how participants enact home given different circumstances of home leaving. In her research with young adults from Wales, Hinton (2011) noted similar categories, which also emerged through strategic sampling, confirming this can be a useful way of structuring samples in studies of young adults and home.

As mentioned above, the issue of home leaving has been of interest to scholars of youth and young adulthood, since at least the mid 1990s (Jones 1995; Goldscheider and Goldschieider 1999). In their book on leaving home and its relation to independence, Holdsworth and Morgan (2005) argue that this growing body of scholarship has brought forth two useful insights. First, they maintain that leaving home is worthy of study, in and of itself, not merely for its link to other life course events, such as post-secondary education or marriage. Second, they remind us that experiences of leaving home vary greatly. In studies of home leaving and making among young Dutch adults, for instance, Cierraad (2010: 87) established that “When the student-to-be leaves the parental home to go to university, he or she starts the cycle of home creations through the material aspect

of homemaking.” Setting up a new home, not merely leaving an old one, thus, is seen as an important rite-of-passage. Holdsworth and Morgan (2005: 3) make a similar claim, that leaving home “entails not simply a movement from one social space to another, but the active construction of a new space.”

Still, whether home is enacted in a natal, semi-autonomous or fully independent household, the structural advantages and constraints and developmental and social gains made by young adults through enacting home are rarely discussed. In many respects, the sample design was constructed partly by the expectation that home leaving pathways have a great deal to do with subsequently enacting home. While the two are related, the following chapters demonstrate that the wider contexts and conditions of participants' lives are much more important to how home is enacted than simply their pathways out of or back to their natal homes.

The sample design also responds to the idea of emerging adulthood (described in detail in the previous chapter). This perspective revolves around the idea that the changing nature and complexity of young adults' life experiences and choices (i.e. protracted periods of post-secondary education, non-standardized employment and diverse housing and family arrangements) is negatively correlated with maturity and independence. In other words, so-called 'full adulthood' cannot be reached until well after post-secondary education, while holding standard employment and living independently, usually with a

married partner and children. The implied notion is that young adults are prevented from enacting home for themselves and for their friends and family because of frequent and repeated reliance on natal and extended kin for place of residence and financial support and delayed marriage, childrearing and home ownership. However, the concept of 'emergence' in adulthood is based on a narrow and nearly obsolete notion of full adulthood, one that does not adequately take into account the very changes it lists as significant (Côté & Bynner 2008). As the following chapters demonstrate, it is the complex interplay of structural categories and the changes to cultural discourses on adulthood that lead to participants' choices about how to enact home in young adulthood. Moreover, most see their home work activities as legitimately tied to enacting home, rather than preparing for or experimenting with it.

Additionally, the research found that pinpointing exactly who can be called a home leaver is an ambiguous task (White 1994). It is no wonder; other research has shown that living arrangements of similar groups of young adults are quite fluid (Thornton, Young-Demarco and Goldscheider 1993). Indeed, categories of home *leaving* did not emerge as stable, but rather complex and nuanced.⁴⁴ They are neither necessarily a one-time or one-off event (Gee, Mitchell and Wister 2003; Jones 1995) or a set of unitary, uniform or cohesive ones (Lahemla and Gordon 2003; Wallace and Kovatcheva 1998). Similarly, Lofgren (1997: 20)

⁴⁴ Hinton (2011) also found that categories of home leavers and stayers are impossible to fix for the purposes of research and suggests that researchers should allow for greater fluidity in understanding the complexity of young people's living arrangements and experiences of home.

writes about home leaving “not as a sudden sharp break, but rather as a process that calls upon aspects of home in more than one scale.”

Conceptualizing home leaving and enacting as non-linear processes rings true for participants. In some cases, for instance, participants left home only to return to it later; in others, they stayed at home during the undergraduate years, but left later to pursue graduate degrees. Still others came and went for summer work, co-op jobs, internships, travel, changing schools and the relocation of natal households. Throughout young adulthood, most participants tended to move in and out of the categories of home leaving, making it nearly impossible to analyze the impact of home leaving on chances for and decisions about enacting home.

Further, home is not only a domestic space that is left, but rather as something that is *enacted* in contextualized ways, through and against structural constraints, resources and specific, but pervasive cultural ideals. Understanding these contexts and meanings is imperative to understanding the processes of leaving home itself (Lahelma and Gordon 2003). In this research, both leaving and enacting home were shown to be complex processes, rather than merely particular moments, which is what 'categories of leaving' might suggest. As Jones (2004: 210) writes, “demographic studies [showing non-linear home leaving experiences] reveal that patterns of leaving home among young people needs to be conceptualized as a process.”

Categories of leaving did prove incredibly useful in connecting with

participants who were living in and around these processes. But in moving on from these categories in the interview and data analysis stages, what became important were those structural categories and changing cultural discourses that themselves influenced ideas about enacting home. In other words, what or who someone left was less important to the analysis than how young adults were living, how they actually enacted home, given the range of structural and cultural factors that shape opportunities and constraints for young adults. In short, how do participants enact home in the various places and contexts in which they live?

For instance, some participants living in the natal household actually contribute greatly to the household income. Only a few participants living away are supported by their parents. In still other cases, young adults live with their single parents in mutually beneficial arrangements, pooling money and other resources. There are also participants who live in independent households, but are partially responsible for the financial and practical well-being of parents or siblings 'back home.' For some female participants, especially those from immigrant families, living 'away' means constantly being pressured to 'move back home.' For others (mostly male), being on one's own is seen as a necessity both by participants and their families and while there is sometimes pressure to return home for visits, there is rarely an expectation of returning permanently. Additionally, some participants—who have difficult relations with parents or stepparents or natal households that have been uprooted, moved or otherwise

reconfigured—claim that there is no home to return *to*. Some participants live near the natal household and receive help with housework, errands, decision-making, access to material resources, and social and financial capital from their immediate families. Others do not receive anything, but visit frequently for dinners and meals, sometimes bringing laundry or borrowing a family vehicle. Finally, for immigrant participants, living with the natal family until and even beyond marriage may be in keeping with, rather than a departure from, culturally-expected transitions to adulthood.

These diverse circumstances are not surprising, given the growing evidence of and interest in the non-linear housing careers of young adults. Still they highlight to the methodological usefulness of a focus on enacting, rather than on leaving, home. A singular focus on home leaving—however deeply it may aim to capture the diversity of this process—may only capture part of the story. In contrast, asking how home is enacted may help to discover what really happens next. Looking past demographic statistics, into participants' narratives, is necessary to discovering exactly how they enact home in the various places they live and what that can contribute to contemporary debates on young adulthood in contemporary Western life. A focus on how home is enacted provides an alternative lens to reveal how the 'language of leaving' operates in such a way as to solidify, rather than allow for the reinterpretation of, existing notions about young people and the so-called transitions to adulthood.

To get at the ways in which the language used to capture (or hide) how young adults leave and live, however, I do not directly examine the discourse itself. Instead, I explore young people's narratives for insights into how they understand and enact home. Moreover, their stories reveal how discursive, structural and material factors shape their understandings and actions regarding home and how they engage these factors in their everyday lives.

Chapter 3 – Real Homes, Real Adults: Confronting Dominant Ideas About Home

Introduction

The previous chapters cultivated theoretical and methodological groundwork that set the stage for this project. In the first chapter, I outlined scholarly attention to the relationships between young adults and home and highlighted gaps in the area of study. In particular, I promised that the project would establish and occupy an opening for understanding young people's own engagement with home, specifically in terms of how a sample of young adults understand and actively enact home for themselves.

Chapter 1 also presented a discussion of the broad historical frameworks in which home came to be conceived and lived throughout much of the twentieth century. I briefly touched on the effects of these contexts in establishing home around relatively narrow patterns of gender and domestic life. I then showed how this has shaped opportunities for understanding and enacting home amongst young adults in particular, including those in Canada in the twenty-first century. In this third chapter, I return again to that thread by presenting excerpts from narratives of both male and female participants. In these, they repeatedly identify and negotiate a persistent cultural leitmotif, which they term 'real homes.'⁴⁵ The chapter will show that in referencing this term, participants are referring to the

⁴⁵ The phrase 'real home' or some variation of it—e.g., 'really home,' 'really a home,' 'home home,' came up in countless interviews. This is a classic example of what Kvale (2007) calls a 'consistent phrase,' which he presents as one of the most basic units of the data analysis process.

persistent middle-class Western notion of home which is based largely around conventional domestic dwellings, nuclear family structures (i.e. married couples and their children) and pervasive, normalizing ideas about adulthood. I argue that while individual participants tend to view their experiences of home as mostly legitimate and meaningful, they nonetheless must negotiate familial obligations, changing expectations regarding gender, class and culture and deeply ingrained ideals of home. These factors, in turn, shape the ways in which they feel expected and able to see and enact home.

Real Homes, Real Adults

Austin is a law student who lives in a rented townhouse apartment with a longtime friend. Raised in a family that he describes as “well-off,” Austin spent his childhood and adolescence with his parents and siblings in a spacious, single-family home in an affluent urban neighbourhood. He subsequently lived in a rented apartment with roommates, then moved away to attend post-graduate school. A year or so before our interview, he had returned 'home' to complete an internship. He says he enjoyed living 'at home,' on his own and with roommates, and he feels at home in his natal community and in the city where he went to post-graduate school. Yet, these latter homes do not hold the special status he reserves for owner-occupied houses in which nuclear families live. These attributes, for Austin, represent an experience of home he describes as 'real.'

I guess, to some extent, my apartment is my home, but it's not a real home in the sense that, say, my parents' house is a home...it doesn't seem like a real home unless it's, you know, a house with more than like two bedrooms and you have nicer stuff, and obviously, you're married with kids.

As this chapter shows, distinctions between experienced/enacted homes and so-called 'real' ones are not new in literature on homes and households, nor is Austin the only participant who drew it. And as Chapter 1 showed, contemporary Western society in general, and the middle-class, more specifically, tend to view home in such terms—as single-family dwellings built to foster the material and social reproduction of primarily nuclear families. Other kinds of homes and alternative ways of understanding home tend to be considered less legitimate. They may be seen as threats to entrenched cultural notions of home, familial gender roles and even to economic growth. Still, participants' desires and opportunities to enact these so-called 'real homes' may be limited and are shaped by increasingly fluid norms surrounding gender, class and ethnicity. As a result, they tend to enact much broader, alternative understandings of homes, thereby gradually changing the nature of home itself.

Understanding the 'emergence' or 'assumption' of adulthood is complex and at times confounding. In formal terms, it refers to particular statuses—both biological and legal (neither of which typically coincide). But attained roles (e.g., becoming a spouse or parent) no longer have the importance they once did

(Furstenberg et al. 2004) and conventional rites-of-passage, such as starting a job or buying the first house—are no longer givens in young adulthood. Consequently, recent research on the so-called transition to adulthood has brought into focus young people's own psychological states—i.e. what cause them *feel* or to identify as adult (see Arnett 1998, 2001; Cote 2000). In one study, for instance, gender and family roles were tied to young people's feelings of adulthood (Benson and Furstenberg 2007). The same research showed that full-time work was only important when it was combined with establishing an independent household, a factor that was, overall, quite significant in feeling adult (ibid). In another study, issues of race and class were important to how adult young people felt; young adults with less relative advantage “felt older for their age” (Johnson, Berg and Sirotzki 2007: 299). In fact, there is little consensus from case to case on what makes young people feel adult, since the process is not only cultural/structural, but also contextual and subjective (Fussell and Furstenberg 2005), and one that is increasingly “slippery” and done “by feel” (Newman 2012: 5).

Understanding the specific links between adulthood and home may be even more complex. As Chapters 1 and 2 showed, much literature in this area tends to focus on the importance of leaving home and the subsequent formation of independent households in shaping and signaling adult identities (see Molgat 2002). Arnett (1994: 217, emphasis added) uncovered the significance of these events to adulthood nearly two decades ago in a survey of over three hundred

college students, which found that

establishing an independent household, financing the day-to-day expenses of it, and running it competently are more likely than finishing education or being employed full time to be considered markers of the transition to adulthood.

Participants in Arnett's study lived in dormitories or apartments and thus had not reached what he terms "full residential independence" (217).⁴⁶ According to participants, this prevented them, in turn, from achieving full adulthood. For a young person, efforts to enact home in terms of independent domestic dwellings and family relationships are deeply linked to what Manzo (2003: 52) calls a "new social identity as an independent citizen." While the importance of home in a larger sense is rarely explored in literature on young adulthood, leaving home and establishing an independent, nuclear family household (and, implicitly, a 'real home') is nonetheless seen as a crucial step toward adulthood (Sassler, Ciambrone and Benway 2008). It is probably difficult to underestimate the perception that household and home central to the so-called transition to adulthood. But exactly what kinds of homes are seen as suitable for young people? To what are they expected to aspire in terms of home? The answers to these questions can be explored in participants' narratives about an idea and experience they describe as a 'real home.'

By and large, participants see their experiences of home as legitimate and meaningful. But they also tend to make a distinction between the homes they

⁴⁶ Similarly, Goldscheider and Devanzo (1986, 1989) refer to dormitory living as semi-autonomous.

enact and another kind of home, which they often designate as 'real.' This distinction rests on the idea that 'real homes' and their occupants conform to dominant Western middle-class norms, including marriage, parenthood, home ownership and domestic consumption (including objects they frequently refer to as “grown-up things”). Kenyon (1999) uncovered a similar ideal of 'real homes' in the narratives of undergraduate students in her study. For them, 'real homes' could be attained in the future when they would be presumably more mature and settled and have greater material resources and stable relationships. For instance, a nineteen year-old male participant in Kenyon's study listed home ownership, marriage, parenthood, steady employment, financial responsibility and responsibility for people and possessions as comprising what he termed a 'real home.' In other words, he greatly associated 'real homes' with the conventional trappings of middle-class adulthood.

The distinction between homes and 'real homes' also exemplifies scholarly comparisons between lived and ideal (Chapman and Hockey 1999) or real and imagined (Blunt and Dowling 2006). For Blunt and Dowling, the terms ideal and real are understood as synonymous with idealized and lived. This is in contrast to the ways participants use the term 'real.' For them, such homes are very much lived/material, but they are also highly idealized. Unlike most literature exploring meanings and experiences of home, participants do not draw a distinct dichotomy between homes and not-homes. Instead, they see home(s) along a continuum

with a diverse grouping of homes on one end. These are the homes that they enact in responding to the various structural, cultural and family contexts that shape their lives. At the other end, they identify a more narrow kind of home that they describe as 'real.'

However, the staunchly dichotomous way of describing home can be useful in bringing attention to the fact that typically in contemporary Western society, so-called ideal homes are understood as detached, single-family dwellings built for the privacy and comfort of heterosexual nuclear families (Blunt and Dowling 2006). Conversely, other kinds of homes—ones that are 'lived'— may be considered less legitimate and seen as threats to broad notions of home as fixed, relatively private and family-centered. Finally, the disconnect between what is lived/possible and what is idealized/aspired to echoes a distinction Wiles (2008: 117, emphasis added) uncovered between “home and *the idea of home*” amongst young, migrant New Zealanders. In their narratives, ideas of home were overly simplistic and usually nostalgic, discrepant with the complexity and conflict inherent in actually living home and the resources and constraints that shape the related home work activities.

Participants' distinction between homes and 'real homes' is two-fold. There are first the material characteristics of 'real homes,' which they say revolve around particular kinds of dwellings, material possessions ('grown-up things'), specific activities and nuclear family structures. Chapter 1 went into great detail about the

kinds of dwellings commonly defined as 'homes' in contemporary Western middle-class society. To review, the term is most often applied to single-family, owner-occupied houses, particularly those that are considered spacious and located in suburban neighborhoods. Such dwellings/experiences of home comprise precisely what participants view as 'real.'⁴⁷ Austin's story, at the beginning of the chapter, provides an excellent example of this relationship, as do the following comments (emphases added).

*Corrie: It's not **really a home** until you're sort of, you know, married and you have a house and nicer things.*

*Matt: I do feel at home in my house, but I'll see it as **more of a home** when I'm married some day and have better things, matching furniture and that kind of thing.*

*Tom: But I think it will be even **more of a home** someday when I have a partner there, and eventually maybe if we have kids.*

The above phrases “really a home” and “more of a home” suggest that participants see their own homes as legitimate and meaningful, but that they attach particular importance/status to certain kinds of home. But what are the parameters of such homes? Derek's comments provide a more in-depth example of the material character of 'real homes.'

Derek: I guess I think of a real home as a house, not a condo or an apartment, and we don't own it anyway. I guess I think of a real home as when you own your own home, you're married, you have kids. Because, I guess, that's what I grew up with, two parents, a house. When my family

⁴⁷ This is in spite of their overwhelming insistence that their experiences of home are legitimate and meaningful (with many stating 'This is a home' even while comparing their experiences to what they call 'Real homes').

moved back to Canada, we moved into the house in my picture. And I lived there for part of university. So, I think of that as home. I don't think it's really the same if you're in a tiny little condo and you haven't started your own family yet.

Derek's idea of a 'real home' overtly includes ownership of a house that is occupied by a married (presumably heterosexual) couple and their children and which houses their domestic possessions and pets. This fact comes into clear focus when considering Derek's photograph of home. The picture depicts Derek and his wife standing outside the suburban house where he spent much of his childhood. Derek now lives with his wife in a condominium owned by his parents. He says he feels 'at home' in the condominium and in Foyerville more generally.



In a photo similar to this one, Derek shows himself and his wife in front of his natal home. The image exemplifies participants' views of 'real homes' as single-family owner-occupied dwellings designed for nuclear families.⁴⁸

As Chapter 1 described, the pervasiveness of home ownership and its relationship to adult life in middle-class contemporary Western life is profound. After the World War eras, government rhetoric and policy, municipal planners, mortgage

⁴⁸ This Creative Commons photo has been modified from its original version. Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC 3.0). <http://www.flickr.com/photos/janet/3822520266/>.

brokers and Realtors emphasized that ownership of a single-family dwelling, was not only a matter of the accumulation of personal property, but also a reflection of masculinity, status, family and adulthood (Lands 2008). Moreover, while subsequent demographic and economic changes have impacted the feasibility of owning a home amongst young adults, particularly in urban settings, doing so still proves to be a coveted sign of adult status (Kilmarten 2000)⁴⁹.

But 'real homes' are not merely owner-occupied dwellings. Participants also trace links between filling such dwellings with particular sets of material possessions. These especially include new, good-quality furniture, home electronics and other household items. They frequently refer to such furnishings/objects as *grown-up things* and hold them in high regard for their abilities to imbue dwellings with a particular sense of 'real home-ness.'

RS: You mentioned that your condo feels like a real home? What do you mean?

Magda: That I want things to look nice and feel nice, good quality and have things in good repair. Like, our kitchen, we have really nice appliances, all-stainless, and a really nice sink with a huge tap and sprayer. Those are the kinds of things you'd have in a real home.

While female participants tend to most often link the acquisition of 'grown-up' things for domestic dwellings with 'real homes,' the relationship was by no means limited to discussion with young women. Derek, for instance, hints at this link in describing his gradual acquisition of these kinds of items and how they relate to

⁴⁹ And, according to Somerville (1997), perhaps amongst *men*, in particular.

his views on home.

When I lived on my own, I just had mismatched furniture and my stuff was always in boxes; I had stuff at my parents' in storage and I had a bedroom there, I had stuff at my place, there was stuff in my car. It was always up in the air, where I was sleeping, where my clothes were. I had roommates and all our stuff was total shit. So, no wonder I was always looking back, still thinking of my parents' place as home. Even now that I live with my wife, I do feel like more of a grown-up because we have our own stuff here, everything in the apartment, we are gradually replacing, upgrading, more things match now, we have a full set of dishes, we have matching towels, but I still kind of get the impression that I'll feel more grown-up when we have our own house and start a family.

While Derek offers a caveat toward the end of the passage (that a truly 'real home' would need to include a house and children), he nonetheless also views his ever-increasing cache of 'grown-up things' as contributing to a greater sense of 'real home-ness' and as paramount evidence of his emerging adulthood. Gender differences in the kinds of grown-up things that mattered to participants will be elucidated in greater detail in the following chapters.

Several participants also associate particular *activities* with 'real homes.' Amongst both men and women, these include shopping for furniture, decorations, home electronics and appliances, spending time and money on home renovations and hosting friends and relatives for overnight visits, informal gatherings and formal dinners.

Madga: Definitely, when we moved in here, it felt more like a real home, because we can have people over to stay, we have nicer things, things match.

As Chapters 4 and 5 will show in greater detail, there are also undeniably

profound relational aspects of the material character of 'real homes.' These centered largely around highly *gendered* patterns in what kinds of relationships and activities in which participants feel expected to participate at and around 'real homes.' The vast majority of female participants, for instance, tend to associate 'real homes' with strong bonds of obligation to immediate and extended family. They often list activities related to direct care giving (e.g., cooking family meals, entertaining guests and caring for children). Male participants also note family relationships as important to 'real homes,' but their descriptions focus on the status of relationships (i.e. "would need to be married," "when I have a wife," "if I get married and have kids), rather than on direct care taking. Many male participants see other kinds of homework—such as landscaping and home maintenance—as their key roles in enacting 'real homes.' Both young men and women also mention more general activities relating to the responsibility associated with enacting 'real homes.' These include budgeting, paying bills and banking/investing and participating in homeowner associations and neighbourhood/community organizations. The gendered patterns in how participants describe 'real homes' reflects contemporary philosophical debates by feminist scholars of home, such as Iris Young (1994), who argues that, historically, women's experiences of home have been largely interior and dedicated to preservation of domestic artifacts and Cierraad (2010: 97)⁵⁰ who reminds us that

⁵⁰ The tremendous pressure placed on women to maintain what Harevan (1993) calls an unreasonable ideal of home is discussed in the following chapter.

“Females are described as more prone to the role of curator or custodian of family possessions than males.”

The second aspect of 'real homes' relates to its moral or normalizing characteristics. As shown above, both men and women in the study say they feel pressure to enact home in and around single-family houses, particularly in taking on gender-segregated familial roles. These factors come together to represent an idealized home that a number of participants refer to as 'real.' They are aware furthermore, that in their lives, it is the kind of home most often associated with becoming and being recognized as fully adult. Most participants believe that so-called full adults are married or have a common-law spouse, have or plan to have children, hold standardized employment and likely have at least one personal vehicle. But most importantly, they associated this phase of life with owning a 'real home.' Emily explains the idea below:

Emily: It's like, if you aren't settled down, once you're an adult, there is something wrong with you. It really bothers people, you get pressure from your parents and you see it on TV how couples are always married and buying houses. If you don't have a good job and a savings account and three kids or whatever, you're seen like you're still in limbo. Because you're supposed to fit into a certain mold, a certain place and you shouldn't deviate.

RS: So, would you say that you don't have a lot of wiggle room as an adult? In terms of what you're supposed to do and how you should act?

*Emily: I'd say you can be like younger, a young adult, and then there are **real** adults. And once you're older and you're supposed to be a **real** adult, people kind of expect you to give up just being young and going to school, moving around or doing whatever you want...just like there are homes and then **real** homes. You can say you're at home, you can live where you want, whatever,*

but it's not the same as a house with a husband and kids or whatever.

When I asked participants to explain the impact of *not* possessing (at least eventually) this grouping of elements, including a 'real home,' one participant predicted a delay in life course progression, saying that "You'd just be weird. You'd be kind of stuck being young." Another suggested extreme social exclusion, by being "disowned" by her parents and "shunned" by her friends if she chose not to eventually "settle down." Most participants are less fatalistic about the consequences of either eschewing or failing to achieve these 'markers of adulthood.' Tom, for instance, says he does not "care about the big house with the fence and two kids and a car in the garage." Still, he admits that "it is something other people care about," and so he feels that it is important to being seen by *others* as adult. For most participants, owning, maintaining, improving upon, cleaning, cooking in, hosting from and otherwise enacting 'real homes' is an experience that most irrefutably marks full or 'real' adulthood. Below, Jennie describes what she sees as the primacy of a 'real home' over other markers of 'real adulthood':

Jennie: There is like living on your own, with roommates, whatever. That's home...at the time. Then maybe you move back in with your family, you move in with your boyfriend, whatever. Maybe you're in limbo, maybe you're starting up your own life. But eventually most people end up in a house, they're married, you get nicer stuff, you have your own responsibilities. That's kind of more of a real home.

RS: And what does having a real home mean to becoming an adult?

Jennie: Well, you can be an adult even if you don't like own a house or whatever. But there's just something about it. It kind of puts you in another category. You're really a grown-up then.

Clearly, participants put a great deal of emphasis on particular kinds of domestic residences in reflecting on markers of adulthood, seeing them as not merely an entry on a 'checklist' (i.e, rites-of-passage or attained roles), but rather as one of the capstone opportunities for experiencing and displaying adult identity. As Kilmartin (2000) suggests, enacting home in this way is a coveted sign that one has nearly reached full adulthood. Even for participants who have already achieved what are often listed as traditional markers of adulthood—graduation from university or college, securing full-time employment, financial responsibility, marriage, parenthood—nothing is ranked so highly in contributing to feeling adult as having a 'real home.' Krista demonstrates this relationship in describing her recent acquisition of an area rug for her living room.

Krista: It's so funny because I'm married, I have a kid, a job, a car, a dog, the whole bit. But the other day, I finally got a rug, you know, like an area rug, for our living room and I also had some pictures framed, actually at a framer's, and I looked around and thought, 'Okay, now we're really grown-ups.' It looked really nice. And I thought, 'This is what grown-ups do. They get area rugs.'

Much like the young woman in the anecdote that introduced Chapter 1, Krista feels that no other single achievement or combination thereof has been as important to 'feeling adult' as enacting a particular experience of home in her own house. In her case, specific material objects—a new rug and professionally-framed photographs—are also central as symbolic markers of adulthood.

The moralistic or normalizing character of this facet of 'real homes' is most evident in tensions between participants' beliefs that their 'alternative' experiences of home *are* legitimate and meaningful and others judgments/perceptions. Gita reports, for instance, that although she feels, more or less, at home in Foyerville, she is pressured from her parents to view the natal household and its geographic location as 'home.' She is keenly aware of the idea that a 'real home' is something that:

real adults have, not students, because you're renting, you're on the go, you don't have actual grown-up stuff or a family yet, so it's not really a home to some people, at least, that's how I feel like my parents see it.

A strong parental preference for single-family dwellings is even obvious for some participants who own homes, but not *houses*, such as Magda:

Magda: It was hard, it still is, because I live in a condo, it's not a house, and I don't have a lot of furniture, not a lot of stuff hanging on the walls. My mother thinks a house is a home, not a condo. My parents don't understand why I bought a condo! Even though I find it much more convenient. Eventually, we will buy a house, but for now, this is home.

Similarly, participants in Kenyon's (1999) study complained that their homes were not taken seriously by their parents. Granted, the undergraduate student participants in her study themselves had difficulty seeing their accommodations as home, but the effects of parental influence on where and what is considered home were substantial. She discovered that student accommodations “were not viewed seriously as permanent centres of adult autonomy” (Kenyon 1999: 88). This was despite the independence and autonomy her participants associated with such

homes.⁵¹

Interestingly, immigrant participants are often most adamant that experiences of home outside 'real homes,' are still important, legitimate and meaningful. Take, Ali, a young second-generation immigrant to Canada, who lives with his natal family while attending university.

Ali: Okay, so all my friends from Canada, like, they live on their own, they have their own places, but I'm like, 'This is a real home.' Okay, it's not a real home how like, that, yes, I will eventually move out, get married, start a family, that kind of thing. But, here, I do feel at home, obviously. For now, this is what I want, this is normal in my family. This is where I'm supposed to be, what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm helping my family, I'm helping with the business. I still have my friends. I still go out.

But while immigrant participants tend to accept and embrace less 'Western' ways of enacting home, they, too, nonetheless often see a 'real home' as expected and desirable.

Liz: Eventually, I do want a house, yes, with nicer things, a home that's basically what an adult would have. But for now, I like my little condo. I like not having as much to worry about. It kind of gives me the flexibility to just travel more and think about other possibilities. But, I'm an immigrant and for us, you don't just do nothing. You do a job. You have to think about the future. So, yes, eventually I will want a home home, like a house with nicer things. But I hate the idea that you have to settle into that so quickly. For me, just as long as I'm like working, I'm happy, my family is happy.

Magda: Having my parents stay with me here and seeing me in my home was really important to feeling like an adult. I guess because someone else saw me as kind of comfortable in this setting and sort of the person in charge of making the food and doing the laundry and making sure everyone was having a good time, like sort of the lady of the house, even though that sounds like something my mother would say. But it's kind of true, that's kind of how I

⁵¹ Perhaps a subtle conclusion is that *particular kinds* of homes are more considered legitimate during various 'sub-phases' of young adulthood.

felt. Like it was my house and, to them, this was a new place, it was kind of strange and this wasn't their house, but it was obvious that this is my home now. I basically knew a lot about the city and took them around, but more than that, I really just kind of did the things to make them feel at home, showed them where the towels are, told them to help themselves to anything in the fridge, made breakfast, helped them figure out what to do every day. So, it kind of just made me feel more at home.

RS: And you said it was important to feeling like an adult too?

Magda: Sure, I guess because until they saw me in my own house, even though it's just a condo, they still saw me as a little kid. And that probably rubbed off on me. I kind of feel like they realized I have my own life here, and that let them see that I'm an adult. And it made me realize it too.

This section has shown how several participants feel pressure to enact home in terms of conventional domestic settings—including single-family houses occupied by married couples and their children. Of course, the nature and extent of the pressure varies between and within genders, but usually participants say they feel expected to conform to the ideal of a 'real home.' 'Real homes,' according to participants, are expected to conform to relatively conventional and narrow ideas of home ownership, residential dwellings, gender roles and family life.⁵² However, as the next section will argue, they skillfully oscillate between embracing, reinterpreting and transgressing this ideal and thus enact home in ways that contribute to its transformation.

Negotiating 'Real Homes' in Real Life

⁵² Carter (1995) that we remain nostalgic for homes that are occupied and sustained by these conventional family forms. According to Morley (2000), this is partly because we do not yet have adequate language to describe more contemporary ones (Morley 2000).

How do young adults go about enacting home in the midst of varying complex combinations of expectations, desires, resources and constraints? Wyn and White (2000: 167) provide some insight into how we might understand their efforts in this regard:

Young people, both through choice and coercion, are responding as best they can to their circumstances—they are negotiating contemporary economic and social changes through new and diverse ways of relating to traditional transitional processes.

For Wyn and White, young people deserve the benefit of the doubt; they 'respond as best they can' to their circumstances. But there is more. The quotation above hints at not only young adults' *responsiveness* to the changing and complex circumstances in which they are becoming adults, but also at something more actively agentive. That is their skill, creativity and reflexivity in negotiating these contexts through "new and diverse ways of relating to traditional transitional processes." In this project, participants' narratives suggest they engage the idealized concept of 'real homes' in enacting home. Analysis of their narratives further shows that they do so through creative complex combinations of transgressing, reinterpreting and embracing it. In almost all cases, however, they display a perhaps not unsurprising degree of reflexivity in confronting the discourse of 'real homes.'

In the previous section, excerpts from participants' narratives helped demonstrate the normative ideal of 'real homes' that, for them, functions to solidify the link between home and adulthood. But nearly all participants have the

resources and ability to skillfully negotiate these simultaneous, and often conflicting, expectations of home, and thus, enact homes that they see as both legitimate and meaningful. And the ways in which participants experience and respond to the idea of 'real homes' are themselves shaped by a number of factors (gender chief among them). Thus, enacting home in a given way might be considered extremely transgressive for one participant, but more conformist for another. For instance, a female participant who enacts home near or in the natal household might be understood as conforming to or embracing a 'real home.' For young men, there is less leeway in enacting home in and around the natal household. They are expected to enact home more distally in respect to the natal home. Those who remain near or with the natal family for too long are often stigmatized.

This is further complicated by what may be multiple ideas of 'real homes.' Participants mentioned the contemporary Western idea of home discussed previously. However, there may be subtle (or more overt) variations in definitions of 'real homes,' depending on gender, socioeconomic class, cultural/ethnic background or natal family culture. While the idea of a 'real home' consists of a loose grouping of implied elements in scholarly and popular thought, in practice, individuals must negotiate complex ideas and circumstances that may fragment, expand upon, reorganize or update this relatively simplistic definition. For example, immigrant participants may feel pressure to negotiate competing

definitions of 'real home.' At home and with family, 'real home' might mean familial closeness and obligation, prolonged intergenerational co-residence and economic/professional connectedness and lower investment in entrenched Western values, such as strong individualism and youth mobility. In broader national/cultural contexts, they face Western pressures to be mobile, adventuresome and professionally/personally adaptable and less invested in familial relationships as centres of social/professional life. They also say they feel stigmatized by their peers for living intergenerationally.

Still, no matter how they feel expected and/or able to enact the idea of the 'real home' and regardless of the intersecting structural subtleties they face, it is worth noting participants engage with the concept *as best they can...through new and diverse ways of relating to traditional transitional processes*. None appear to reject the idea of 'real homes' altogether, but some are overtly transgressive of it. Among such participants, combinations of unconventional circumstances tend to substantially shape their efforts. By way of example, for Tom, the death of a parent, difficult relationships with stepparents and a subsequent sense that he "has no home to go back to" means that, for him, a 'real home' is neither necessarily desirable, expected nor inevitable. Without parental pressure to 'settle down' and simultaneous help with material and social capital, Tom says he is happy to "do his own thing." For him, this means essentially running an informal boarding house where he says he enacts home by remaining in control of

household finances and daily operations, decorating and arranging common spaces (without seeking input from his renters) and otherwise providing the opportunity for young people to stay in his home on a short-term basis. He likes the arrangement so much that he imagines any future partner/spouse joining him in the household. He says that, for him, buying a house on his own or with a spouse, having children and working at standardized employment would seriously impede his ability to enact home in a way he would find meaningful. This reinforces the point that for some participants, the relatively simplistic notion that home is located in a single family dwelling occupied by a married couple and their children is a cultural and family-driven ideal that does not make sense in the context of their own lives.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have introduced, in broad terms, the idea that participants do not merely accept, but rather respond—usually quite skillfully—to normative expectations about home. In some cases, participants embrace such expectations. Notably, even amongst the educated, mostly middle-class women and men who make up the bulk of the sample, embracing the idea of 'real homes' is not a straightforward undertaking. However, even those participants for whom a 'real home' is either an unavoidable expectation or a valued personal goal wrestle with desires, pressures and opportunities to enact home in ways that complicate

normative understandings of home. For other participants, enacting home means overtly transgressing the normative notion of 'real homes.' For some, their strategies draws upon considerable material and social resources, while others follow similar paths despite greater barriers. In all cases, however, transgressing or at least reinterpreting the idea of 'real homes' reflects sophisticated negotiation of complex expectations and opportunities.

This chapter has also elucidated broad links between participants' ideas about home and the so-called transition to adulthood. It showed that while participants enact home in ways that they consider legitimate and meaningful, they face profound cultural and familial pressure to enact 'real homes' and feel expected to view these efforts as irreplaceable opportunities for establishing adult identities. The discrepancy reveals important insights about enacting home amongst participants. First, it brings light to a powerful cultural ideal of home that is linked both to familial aspirations for young people and shaped by wider normative ideals about appropriate behaviours and aspirations for this period of the life course. Second, it shows that normative Western notions of adulthood and home are constraining and even quixotic for a growing number of young adults. They almost always see their home making activities as legitimate and meaningful, but they must balance these experiences with relatively more narrow norms surrounding both home and adulthood.

Most participants employ a high degree of reflexivity in constructing

narratives around home and adulthood and they are usually incredibly skilled at identifying and articulating the dominant norms associated with them. However, at times, they find it challenging to identify and explain how they actually *enact* home. The photographs occasionally served to 'fill in' these narrative 'failures.' More commonly, though, the photographs did not 'match up' to these gaps. But taken together, participants' narratives and photos reveal something profound about how they view and enact home given the complex, and often, competing expectations and constraints they face. For instance, it is telling that only *two* participants (less than four percent of the sample) represented or 'pictured' home in terms of a traditional house occupied by a nuclear family. Many told me that they worried I would expect them to conform to such an idea and several suspected that others would see home mostly in these terms. Yet, almost every photograph depicted not 'real homes,' but what home really is to participants themselves. In this respect, the photographs were incredibly useful in helping participants express themselves and in confirming/revealing deeper analytical insights. The photographs also showed a massive amount of diversity, ranging from domestic interiors (e.g., bedrooms, kitchens and one dining room) to exteriors and outdoor domestic spaces (e.g., a balcony, a backyard and swimming pool) to other buildings and public spaces (including a university campus). They also depicted people (including those richly-affective, but ethically-problematic, close-up shots, as well ones depicting family gatherings), pets, photo displays and

framed artwork, food and associated sundries (e.g., cookies, coffee cups and ingredients for a favourite family meal) and furniture and material objects (e.g. computers and desks, a couch, a puzzle). And as the previous chapter described, several participants could or would not use photography at all.

The following chapters will show how participants enact home in ways that do not merely conform to or transgress the normative expectations of 'real homes,' but also *reinterpret* them in the contexts of changing gender norms, social expectations and subjective possibilities. They enact home, thus, not merely vis-à-vis the ideal of 'real homes,' but also in negotiating the various structural and cultural contexts that shape the contours of their lives. In particular, these chapters will highlight distinct, and at times overlapping, gendered patterns in how participants understand and enact home. They suggest that, despite significant structural/cultural, familial and personal constraints, participants nonetheless enact home skillfully and creatively in ways that they find legitimate and meaningful. In turn, these activities can be seen as reinterpretations of narrow, normative understandings of gender, home and adulthood and expressions of and contributions to changing cultural norms in and around home.

Chapter 4 – Multiple Homes, Feeling Torn and Figuring It Out

Introduction

This chapter and the next begin with a presentation of one of the main analytical findings emerging from the research. Namely, complex experiences of gender play a crucial role in how participants understand and enact home, both in terms of so-called 'real homes' and otherwise. These chapters complicate the notion of 'real homes' by introducing expectations and opportunities surrounding gender and other factors. This chapter begins with a brief introduction to literature on gender, intersectionality and youth and the ways in which these factors have been treated in writings on home.

Following that discussion, the chapter moves into an analysis of the complex and intersecting ways female participants understand and enact home. I will demonstrate that the majority of female participants say they are expected to understand and enact home in and around *domestic settings, particularly the natal household, and with and amongst family*. Simultaneously, they feel pressured and drawn to 'go and make something of themselves' academically, professionally and personally. Consequently, they make decisions about how to enact home in ways that allow them to straddle both sets of expectations/desires. Thus, they must negotiate multiple, simultaneous experiences of home. Enacting home in this way can be seen partly as a strategy for coping with conflicting demands and expectations. More importantly, it can also be understood as a way of responding

and contributing to the transformation of home in contemporary, middle-class Western society and of reinterpreting established gender norms around home.

Gender, Intersectionality and Home

It is nearly impossible to talk about enacting home without also calling issues of gender to mind. The home, Massey (1994) reminds us, continues to remain more or less synonymous with all that is also viewed as 'woman.' As Chapter 1 described, the mid-twentieth century saw an unprecedented gendering of middle-class North American homes with men working for pay outside domestic settings the home and women and children occupying the home (Hayden 2002; 1981). Women were seen as homemakers, while men's roles in and around homes were typically limited to breadwinner and master (Chapman 2004). As I argued, the consequences of this arrangement have been significant. Firstly, while the home was long seen as the feminine sphere, women have often lacked autonomy at home and have not been cast in the role of head-of-household (Munro and Madigan 1999). Secondly, this paradigm values paid work over unpaid socially reproductive labour (Fenstermaker 2002), and consequently women have often been excluded from definitions and discussions about work (Tancred 2005). As more women have reentered the paid labour force, conversations have proliferated over the disproportionate amount of unpaid labour they do at home (Hoschschild 1989; 2003). While men's participation in

housework and childcare has been increasing, there are still gaps in home time use and women lag behind in spending time in leisure at home (Sayer 2005).

But the starkly drawn dichotomy between the so-called masculine sphere of paid work and the private, feminine one in which women perform household work and childrearing is hotly contested. As Saunders and Williams (1998: 91) state:

The home is a major political background – for feminists, who see in it the crucible for gender domination; for liberals, who identify it with personal autonomy and a challenge to state power; for socialists, who approach it as a challenge to collective life and the ideal of a planned and egalitarian social order.

Ideas about gender and the meaning of home that presume a mid-twentieth century, middle-class perspective rarely take into account intersections between gender, age, sexuality and ethnicity (Mallett 2004). Notable exceptions include hooks' (1993; 1991) works on gender, race and class in which she argues that the home has been a space within which black women and men have performed and reinforced gender roles and resisted racialization. In Ahmed's (1999, 2004), home is situated outside of heterosexual, nuclear family dwellings; she constructs post-colonial ontologies of migration to de-stabilize and open up home's meanings for marginalized women and men.

The woman-centered view of home is also being contested. In recent decades, men have been increasingly drawn into homes and homemaking,

especially in the areas of fathering and family,⁵³ division of household labour⁵⁴, and working from/at home.⁵⁵ Still, outside these areas, little research has attempted to theorize links between men, masculinities and homes. Gorman-Murray (2008, 2012) argues that men's relationships to home are complex. For him, home and homemaking practices shape male identities to include “domestic masculinities” (Gorman-Murray 2008: 370). In turn, men's homemaking practices act upon the discursive and material practices of home, reconfiguring them in ways that lead to what he calls “masculine domesticities.” For him, this is evidence of home's unfailing fluidity in terms of gender and sexuality and he sees home as an important site within which men construct and contest gendered identity. But men's experiences in and around home have not kept pace with their newly expanding roles and there is still more room to bring them into debates over home.

As I argued in Chapter 1, the literature on home and gender also has a conspicuous absence around young people, even though as Mallett suggests (2004, emphasis added), “Within households, gender and age are the '*key dimensions*' that differentiate household members' perception of the meaning of home.” Young men may actually fare the worst in this equation; their roles in and around home have never been systematically explored (Blunt and Dowling 2006;

53 As an example and for a complete discussion, see Doucet 2006. Also see Halford 2006; Ranson 2012.

54 See Bianchi et al., for instance.

55 See Marsh and Musson 2008.

Gorman-Murray 2010, 2008). Yet, their stories are equally important. In Canada, for instance, men comprise the majority of young adults over the age of twenty-five living at home (Boyd and Norris 1999). Research also shows that males are more likely than females to return home as young adults (Chiuri and Del Boca 2009). Clearly, it is worth taking seriously Townsend's (2000) warning that understanding home according to gender must do more than simply 'slot-in' women's experiences. She invites researchers to consider age *and* gender—women, men, girls and boys—in attempting to understand the full range of gendered experiences of home.

Viewed from another angle, youth studies have rarely taken relationships with home and gender as objects of inquiry. This gap was identified as early as the 1970s when McRobbie and Garber (1978) called attention to the previously unspoken assumption that youth studies accounted for the experiences of boys *and* girls. They suggested that theories of youth subculture had neglected the experiences of girls and young women largely because they were thought mainly to occupy the protected spheres of the family and home. In the years following, young women's diverse experiences were finally documented, but gender still was not rigorously incorporated into youth studies and the intersections between gender, race and class were still largely ignored (Phoenix 1997). Even by the mid-1990s, the question of gender in youth studies was still considered a fairly new one (Brannen 1996).

The role of gender has been largely overlooked specifically in studies examining transitions to adulthood (Aronson 2008). This is an especially significant oversight for young women, since, as Aronson (Ibid: 57) writes, “While the process of becoming an adult has been changing for everyone as a result of economic conditions, the women’s movement has altered the way that young women, in particular, see themselves.” Sassler, Cambrione and Benway (2008) suggest that women's increased labour force participation and later ages at marriage and childrearing mean their transitions to adulthood have been changed dramatically more than men's. Fortunately, there is increasing recognition that young people's experiences of home are differentiated by gender, ethnicity and social class. For Phoenix (1997: 11) youth experiences of gender are:

plural – racialised, ethnicised and always expressed through a social class position... a full understanding of youth and gender is, therefore, only possible if gender is treated as plural processes which find expression in relation to the other ways in which young people are positioned.

She suggests, in addition to studying how gender processes shape young adult lives, other factors such as culture, sexuality and personal experiences and desires must be taken into account.

This chapter highlights both the common and the dissimilar experiences amongst female participants, while Chapter 5 presents a similarly-structured analysis for male participants. Wherever appropriate, the analysis also highlights experiences that emerge at the intersections of gender, ethnic/cultural background and family status. These intersections usually emerge around what

Mitchell, Wister and Gee (2004: 544) call “ethnocultural and family-related.” They argue that this kind of focus is particularly important in studying young people's living arrangements and experiences of home in *Canada* where multiculturalism characterizes much of the population. While the sample was designed strategically to capture the widest range of experiences amongst both young men and women, it did not specifically set out to capture a representative sample of ethnocultural experiences. However, they nonetheless emerged as analytically important in the stories of most first and second generation immigrant participants. Such participants almost always mention the effects of ethnicity or country/citizenship of origin on their opportunities for enacting home, and so these differences are explored in the analysis. A class-based analysis also comes into play in a much less obvious way. While most participants identify themselves as part of the 'middle-class' and while they all have the financial means to attend higher education, exploring differences in family support, earning power and costs/expenditures is crucial to understanding young people's experiences of home (Mitchell, Wister and Gee 2004).

Natal Households and Family Relationships

Initial analysis of female participants' narratives revealed a stark, but not unsurprising finding. First and foremost, young women in this study feel expected to understand and enact home in ways that are tied to domestic residences, their

natal households and family relationships—a collection of experiences that comprise the very core of what participants identify as 'real homes.' These intersecting themes emerged in answers to interview questions about where home is and how participants make themselves at home. Amanda reflects on the idea of home as an experience of domesticity:

Amanda: I guess home, for me, is a house. It's where you live. Like no matter where I go in the world, I would still need to know I have a house to go back to. It's just where I feel most comfortable.

The notion of needing a comfortable experience of home in order to 'go out into the world' is shared by several female participants. It is explicit, for example, in Jamie Lynn's comment that "home is actually a house for me; no matter wherever else I go, it kind of grounds me." Another participant, Holly, uses the metaphor of the heart⁵⁶ to describe this experience of home in which a domestic setting is both a centre of daily life and a *place of centering*, saying:

The home is like a heart. It's the centre of your life. Everything happens there, eating, talking, sleeping, cooking...even arguing. It's all in the home. So, you can go out every day and do whatever you have to do, but you know that's where you come back to.

Young (1997) identified a similar role for places of dwelling in the invention and development of the self, particularly in its potential to produce the agentive female self who is prepared to act and interact in society. Home appears to serve a similar function for the female participants above; their comments suggest that

⁵⁶ Massey (1992: 11) writes about the gendered nature of ideas of home by flagging this very aphorism ('home is where the heart is'). Specifically, she notes the melding together of female identity and the home in which woman is the "symbolic center" and, thus, the thing that is 'returned to.'

they view domestic settings not only as sites of belonging, but also as opportunities for renewal, reflection and relaxation.

On the other hand, linking home to and locating it within physical dwellings presents practical and ontological dilemmas to some participants. In particular, these dilemmas revolve around the specific expectation to enact home in or in close proximity to the natal household—not simply in or around what one participant disparaged as 'any old house'—and among family members. Amanda, a young woman who lived with her single mother, sisters, a boyfriend of one of the sisters and a niece, while she was an undergraduate student, and only recently moved into an apartment on her own, explains this expectation:

Amanda: My mother still thinks I should be at home. My sisters, they still live at home, one of them has a kid too and her boyfriend lives there on and off. For my mother, unless we're married and even after, she figures we should be living at home. It's cheaper for one thing. But I think it's just more that she thinks that's where we belong...like we're still her kids and we should stick together...take care of each other. "You can't come home for dinner when you're six hours away." That's what she always says to me. I don't think she sees my apartment as a real home at all.

The expectation on Amanda to enact home within the natal household and through family relationships and obligations is made explicit in her mother's reminder about not being able to see family on a regular basis. She says her mother sees her grown children as still belonging in the natal household, even if they are partnered or parents themselves. This presents a somewhat extreme case, but many other participants also note similar expectations. This is especially true for participants from more rural settings, such as Jamie Lynn, a participant from a

rural town who reports that her parents were “not exactly thrilled when I left home and moved into residence for the first time.” Another participant, Holly, moved away from her natal house and province amidst her parents' protests that she would be “better off staying at home.” One participant from a particularly conservative family says her mother and father expect her to, “at a minimum, return to live at home every single summer.” Even participants who are more 'established'—with partners, children and dwellings of their own—feel expected to enact home near and in terms of the natal household. Krista, for instance, feels pressured by her aging mother to move back to her natal city with her young family. “She wants me to be closer by, she keeps saying a mother needs her daughter,” Krista reports.

The prominence of the natal household in female participants' narratives should not be surprising. For most contemporary Westerners, the first experience of home is rooted in the natal household and begins with the natal family. It is for this reason Mallett (2004: 62) claims that “The birth family house holds symbolic power as a formative dwelling place, a place of origin and return, a place from which to embark upon a journey.” For most women participants, this expectation is profound and their adherence to it is ensured through the perpetuation of the idea that their presence in the natal household is not only formative of their own identities and happiness, but also *vital* to the well-being, daily functioning and

overall happiness of aging parents, younger siblings and extended family.⁵⁷ Below, Julia describes the belief in importance of this domestic experience of home and what she sees as its role in promoting familial well-being.

Julia: It's like I feel like my parents' house is home and my family is home too, but also just our neighborhood too because we know everyone in the neighborhood and we go to church there and everyone's Italian on our street, or at least they used to be, and we all go to the same church at holidays. It's all a big part of my life. How could I see home any other way? If I were to...I don't know, move somewhere where I'm far away, they wouldn't understand at all. We have our certain area and that's it for them. And, it's like if everyone stays together, it's just better for the family.

For Julia, enacting home in proximity to her natal community and household is not only expected, but considered 'better for the family.' The expectation is reinforced when she imagines that her family would not support her in moving away.

The expectation that young women should/will enact home in proximity to the natal household *might* seem surprising given the prevailing belief that a failure to leave home contradicts established, age-related norms about leaving home, but there is little evidence that these norms are relevant to young adults or their parents (White 1994). This might be especially true for female participants who say they feel compelled to at least remain in *proximity* to the natal household and maintain regular contact with family members. Research suggests that, in comparison to young men, young women face different and greater

⁵⁷ Chapter 5 shows that young men feel far less pressure to see home and specifically the natal household in this way.

parental expectations to remain tied to the natal family and household and enjoy less autonomy when living in the natal household (see Sassler, Cambrione and Benway 2008).

This is also possible to observe in participants' emphasis on specific *relationships* and *activities* in and around home, especially in relation to the natal household. Kate's comments hint at the importance of relationships and activities within the context of the natal household to how she enacts home:

RS: So, tell me more about what home means to you.

Kate: Well, it's kind of all wrapped up in my parents' house. Even when I was on exchange in high school, I still always thought of my house as home. I think, for me, it's just where you live and who you live with, the things you do for each other, just all that. I'm not one of these people who could just travel all the time and never be in touch with my parents or my brother or never kind of have my own space, a house.

For Kate, home is based in domestic, residential settings (in what she describes both as her parents' house and her "own space"). Yet, it is enacted both through important family relationships (with her parents and brother) and in activities done by and for family members ("the things you do for each other"). In asking her to describe these activities, she replies:

Kate: Oh, you know, just like sharing the car, picking each other up and dropping off, cooking, shopping, cleaning, even just talking when you've had a bad day.

She reports, moreover, that while doing these kinds of things for herself helps her feel 'at home' in the natal household, she finds doing them *for and with others*

most important.

Kate: A lot of the little things I do around the house, it's more for my family than for myself. Some of it, I wouldn't even care about, but I know they do. I'll give you an example. My mother loves holidays, decorating, presents, big family celebrations. She goes all out. I help her, I get into the spirit. It's not really my thing—too much work—but that's the kind of thing she loves and I want it to feel really nice for her.

The kinds of activities female participants report doing to enact home *do* tend to be *for and with others*. These activities include arranging domestic objects and spaces (e.g., decorating, organizing and cleaning), spending quality time with family members, and participating in family rituals and celebrations. Below, Brooke, a young woman who moved away from the small city where she grew up to go away to school, describes these ways of enacting home.

Brooke: Like, I went back over Christmas, last year, and a couple days before Christmas Day, my grandfather went into the hospital with a stroke. It was really bad. So, everyone was kind of just waiting around to hear and I went to work. My mother was at the hospital and even if she was there, I would have been helping anyway. I tidied up the living room, fluffed up the pillows, straightened up the magazines. I kept the laundry done, made the beds. Maybe it seems like busy-work, and yes, it did keep me distracted, but at the same time, it made things that much nicer for everyone. And who else was going to do it?

For Brooke, arranging and tidying domestic objects in a time of crisis was a way of enacting home *for others*. Her question about who else would do the work was rhetorical. The implication is that as a young woman and especially in the absence of her mother, she felt expected to take on the work of tidying and organizing and obligated to continue running the household. Cierraad (2010: 98) argues that

such work is not merely mundane, but also “of crucial importance in the daily reinvention of home.” Brooke's work serve this purpose, both a practical function in maintaining household orderliness and cleanliness and an affective one in making “things that much nicer for everyone.”

As stated above, participants say that home is also enacted in spending time *with* family members. They refer to these interactions as 'family time' or 'quality time,' and list as examples spending time with mothers and sisters (e.g., shopping, cooking); spending time with fathers (e.g., playing or watching sports, cooking) and visiting extended family members. These experiences tend to be characterized as both work and leisure, and when they are done within proximity of the natal household, they are imbued with the special character of contributing to a sense of home. Gita describes such a linkage below.

RS: You mentioned that you spend a lot of quality time with your family. What kinds of things do you do with them?

Gita: Well, I play golf with my dad or we'll watch sports on TV. With my mom, I'll help her do the grocery shopping or run errands or whatever.

RS: And what makes these kinds of activities 'quality time' for you?

Gita: I just really like spending time with them. Now that I live here, and they're all the way up there, I don't see them as much. We don't have those regular just sort of times to just do sort of normal stuff as much. There's not as much time to just hang out and catch up or whatever.

RS: So, the time is more precious now that you have less of it?

Gita: Yeah, that and the fact that I know they really like seeing me too. They miss me and my sister is here too, so they don't get to hang out with us. We

keep them cool! Well, you know what I mean. It's just good for them to have younger people around, like for my mom, we help her pick out clothes, we help her run errands, picking stuff up, whatever, dropping off the car at the garage, just stuff that makes her life easier. But it's also fun to do, to spend time with her. It feels like that's the time that really counts more than other times, like events or whatever.

RS: Is this kind of time any different than say, spending time with friends?

Gita: It is in a way because with my friends, I'm not really doing the things that make me feel at home. I do feel good when I'm with them, but I guess with my parents, everything just feels more...homey.

For Gita, spending quality time with her family in ordinary ways helps her to feel at home. Participation in more extraordinary activities, such as family rituals and celebrations, also holds a special role in how female participants enact home.

These are times when young women may be called upon to enact home in proximity to the natal home by spending time with and on family. Julia's summary of her family's participation in Italian week is an example.

Julia: We go all out for Italian Week. There's so, so much food, wine, my father decorates with flags. I help out with everything. I look after my cousins, I cook with my mother and my aunts. I help my father, hauling stuff, decorations, cases of wine. It's mostly my brother that does that stuff though, I'm usually in the kitchen or watching my cousins or checking on the older ones. Like, do people need napkins? Who needs a refill? Does my grandfather want to take a nap? Is he okay? I am completely exhausted by the end of the week! But it's really fun too, seeing everyone together. We laugh a lot! As my mother's daughter, it's my job to be in the kitchen, helping out with the food and making sure everyone is taken care of.

Julia sees her participation in the family-focused events surrounding Italian Week as not only expected by her family, but also as a source of both stress and pleasure.



Photo similar to one of Julia's photos of home: Cooking with her mother⁵⁸

58 Creative Commons photo used under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).

Seeing both burdens and benefits in enacting home in terms of the natal household and family relationships is common amongst female participants. While they often associate close ties with the natal household and family with support and pleasure, they also note the constraints this expectation places upon them. The disproportionate role played by women in domestic labour and the maintenance of family relationships has been documented by researchers aiming to understand more about changing gendered experiences of home emerging alongside women's increasing participation in higher education and the paid labour force (see Hanson and Pratt 1995; Anderson et al. 1994). Hochschild (1989) termed unpaid domestic work as the 'second shift' when it is done by women who also work for pay outside the home. This is an experience that scholars have noted as particularly burdensome for women with children.⁵⁹ But more recent veins of study have argued that a *range* of groups, not merely women with children, face increasingly burdensome obligations for domestic labour and the well-being of family members at home.

At least two of these are significant for participants. The first of these focuses on responsibilities for aging parents, a need that is increasing with longer life spans, and thus, normalizing elder care in the lives of adults (Brody 2004; 1985). Both men and women face filial expectations, but the work is done disproportionately by women (see Kramer and Kipnis 1995; Circerelli 1990).

⁵⁹ See Sanchez and Thompson (1997), Folbre (1997) and Matthews (1999). Also, Perkins and DeMeis (1996), who have shown that while young, college-educated heterosexual couples appear to evenly share in unpaid labour, the works shifts disproportionately to women when children are present.

While the stress of balancing motherhood, marriage and paid work exacerbates the burdens of caring for aging parents (Stephens and Townsend 1997), there is little evidence to support the notion that young people are freer from filial obligation than other adults. Filial obligation tends to increase throughout young adulthood, peaking only in mid-life (or after the death of both parents) and recent generations actually feel *greater* obligations to aging parents than did previous ones (Gans and Silverstein 2006).

The second strand of research explores barriers for young carers, a group typically defined as under eighteen years of age, although young people as old as twenty-five have also been included (Cree 2003; Noble-Carr 2001). What makes young carers unique are their roles as primary care givers to parents or siblings, a status most participants do not share. Nevertheless, the limited scholarship on the topic can provide insights into increasing and gendered responsibilities to family among female participants. Such participants feel expected to ensure the well-being of aging parents and are encouraged by parents to live close enough for them to return the favour through financial and material support, opportunities for family togetherness and offers of childcare for participants' own existing or potential offspring. Participants frequently link the combination of expectations to decisions about where to live, feelings about leaving and living 'away from' home, whether and when to move 'back home,' and how to enact home in their own lives.

Liz: When I visit my family, I do get to check in on my parents, just see if they're okay, how they're managing, if they're lonely, if they're seeing their friends.

RS: Checking in on them. That's something you associate with home.

Liz: Yes, because they're home for me. And my sister and I, we worry about them, without us there. It's kind of expected, too, that we'll take care of them. It's sort of a Chinese thing with parents and daughters. And I do worry about them. Because I live so far away, and I can't check on them all the time. I think about moving closer to them, but my work is here and my boyfriend and his work. So, it's hard...to know what do you do? Do you look after your parents? After all they've done for you? Or do you stay where your job is? Where your life is?

In the best cases, pressure on participants to enact home in terms of the natal household and family relationships comes with with the provision of reciprocal benefits by family members in support of participants. Canadian sociologist, Barbara Mitchell, has studied young adults' natal families and their households from a life course perspective. Her work calls attention to the idea of 'linked lives,' especially the roles of intergenerational relations and social capital in the lives of young adults and their experiences of home and family. She argues that “families (of origin) play an increasingly pivotal role in the life course of young adults” (Mitchell 2007: 2). In this research, the clearest examples of benefits emerging through intergenerational relationships are found in the stories of young women who stay at home or remain near the natal household during university. The benefits they receive are financial/material (e.g., provision of meals), practical (e.g., help with housekeeping, assistance with decision-making) and affective (e.g., moral support). Rachel, a single mother for whom family

support is particularly important, provides a summary of the benefits she receives as a result of her close ties with her natal household and family members:

RS: How did you feel about leaving home for the first time?

Rachel: For me, when I left home it was because I was giving birth to my daughter, I wanted to live with my boyfriend, my parents didn't want to deal with it. But we worked it all out eventually and I moved back with my daughter. Sometimes it's hard, but mostly, it's really nice to have our own space because we have the whole basement to ourselves. My Dad finished it for us, there are two bedrooms and they're small, but we each have our own bedroom. And there's a bathroom with a tub for Tavia and a playroom with a TV, so she can be playing and I can be in my room studying and still keep an eye on her.

RS: It sounds like there are a lot of upsides to living with your parents.

Rachel: Totally...no rent or low rent, no bills, my mother cooks dinner, so I can study, she watches Tavia while I'm in class and the rest of the time, it's all on me. My parents do get on my nerves and Tavia and I are moving out soon, but it's been really nice to have them there to babysit, to help me figure out my next steps for school, just for everything.

For a young single mother like Rachel, the benefits of living in the natal household are undeniable. Still, even those who move away from home can benefit from strong family ties. Below, Magda, a young woman who lived at home during university, but then moved to away for graduate school, explains how this kind of reciprocity works.

RS: You said that when you go 'back home,' your mother takes care of you. What kinds of things does she do?

Magda: Well, like I showed in my picture, my couch is really home for me because when I'm at my parents' place, I just sort of lie on the couch and my mother takes care of me. It reminds me of being a kid when I was sick and

she would bring me soup and stuff.

RS: So, that feels like home for you?

Madga: Yeah, just being at my parents' house, I can pretend that I'm a little kid again and leave all my problems behind.

RS: What else can you tell me about what your parents do for you?

Madga: Well, it's kind of important for me because they're getting older, so they do need me around, I feel, for that kind of social aspect. They have really good friends in their neighbourhood, but it's not the same as family. They really expect me to be there and raise my kids there because they want to help out with taking care of my kids when I have them and then I'd be around to help them too, especially when they get older, if they are sick or something.

RS: Do you feel it's expected of you? To live closer to them and help out as they get older?

Magda: It's expected, yes, but, in a way, I also expect that of them. Like I can't imagine having kids away from my mother, not having that ability to just, you know, drop the kids off when you need a babysitter at the last minute or just to have my mother there for advice and also have my father there. I would want my kids to be near him, growing up, I would want him to be able to teach them things and take them out or whatever, especially if I had, like, a son. My brother lives near them, but it's not the same.⁶⁰ For me, I just really see family and doing all that with them as home and without it, home just seems kind of different.

For Magda, reciprocal benefits of enacting home in and around her natal family center around sharing unpaid labour, pooling resources and the provision of companionship. For others, benefits vary, depending on family dynamics and participants' own circumstances and desires. For single women, for instance,

⁶⁰ Magda's suspicions that her brother's proximity to her parents is "not the same" are most likely correct. Coward and Dwyer (1990) found that in mixed-gender sibling networks (i.e. families with at least one son and one daughter), daughters are more likely than sons to care for impaired parents. Similarly, among adults who actually live *with* their parents, grown sons contribute less to household finances and chores than grown daughters (Goldscheider and Waite 1991).

family may provide a sense of security, like for Kate, a participant who has always lived with her parents:

Kate: My parents have been behind me 100% in all my choices. They don't shelter me from what is good and bad. Having that has let me see what the world is like and kind of what it takes. They've encouraged me to test the waters myself. And my parents cook all the food, but I do all the cleaning. So, it's a win-win. I have my parents there. We live in a good neighbourhood. I'm not out there on my own, just living alone, doing everything for myself. It's safer. I feel safer. And it's nice to have those things there that they do.

Other participants report the benefit of a built-in social network during both family-oriented holidays and celebrations (e.g., Christmas, summer vacations) and times of stress, such as university exams.

Gita: It's nice to have that, that ability to go back home after exams, and just veg out, relax. Especially over Christmas because there are always events and it's nice to be able to go back to that. That's just such a nice feeling, to be able to count on that. Nothing feels more like home to me.

In one case, parents provide child care to a participant who is a single mother (both the participant and her daughter live with the participant's parents). Aging parents of some childless participants make promises of future household help and child care.

For other participants, however, close ties to the natal household and family are either unwelcome or non-existent. In the context of the former, the costs of receiving 'help' outweigh the benefits. This is evident for Ruth, who found that living at home during university had significant downsides.

Ruth: Staying at home was good in a way because I had a place to live, I had groceries, I could use my parents' car. But at the same time, I have three younger brothers and they're kind of spoiled because they're boys. I always had to drive them around. They were always coming into my room. My parents just let them do what they want and...well, my parents, too, they kind of would come into my room, ask me where I was going, kind of expect certain things of me because maybe it seemed like I owed them in a way.⁶¹ I guess they were just trying to take care of me, but it wasn't worth it to give up my freedom. I saved my money for a long time and bought my own car. I have my own place now and it's much better even though I'm responsible for everything.

For Ruth, enacting home in the natal household context costs her privacy, personal space and the ability to make daily and life decisions without interference. She resents being conscripted into playing chauffeur to her younger siblings. What is more, she believes that at least in part because of their gender, her brothers receive disproportionate opportunities, resources and autonomy. In contrast, she views the help she receives from her parents as an intrusion at best and a hindrance at worst.

Costs and benefits of enacting home in terms of the natal household and family relationships are particularly noticeable amongst first and second generation immigrant female participants. For them, expectations to enact home in terms of the natal household and family relationships are shaped drastically through what they termed 'the immigrant family' or the 'immigrant thing.'⁶² Such

61 See previous note and Coward and Dwyer's (1990) article for a possible explanation of Ruth's assessment of her brothers' access to resources and rights in the natal household versus her own. Also see Shehan and Dwyer (1989). Their research indicated that boys are more likely than girls to expect to live with their parents and receive help and support into adulthood.

62 Experiences of participants who were immigrants were themselves, in turn, differentiated by gender. Young female immigrant participants, for instance, enacted home under seriously conflicting sets of familial and societal expectations to both remain connected to the natal family and household and 'make

participants use this short phrase to refer to substantial cultural expectations to remain connected and obligated to the natal family and household well into adulthood. One young woman, a member of a former Hindu joint family household in India, reports that this expectation, combined with difficult family circumstances, has influenced her to continue living with her parents well into her twenties.

Sophia: It was really expected. I'm South Asian and the daughter is expected to stay with her mother. That's normal to us.

RS: And what do you think of the arrangement?

Sophia: She needs me, as her daughter, and it's really nice to have her support too. I rarely have time to clean or cook, so it's very nice.

Sophia does not feel pressure to attend university or even move out on her own. Instead, her parents expect her to live at home and work in the family business. She was not overtly discouraged from attending university and her parents were well-enough off to support her financially. It has, however, been difficult for her to attain her degree and then go on to pursue a Master's degree, given her incredible responsibility helping to run the family business. As she reports below, the immense expectations on her as a young woman were exacerbated by 'the immigrant thing.'

Sophia: I didn't really have a childhood. I've always been working. So, leaving home? I couldn't.

something' of themselves. Male immigrant participants, conversely, typically benefited from the unpaid work of female relatives well into adulthood, while participating meaningfully in major decision-making and engaging in paid labour, benefiting the natal family. The next chapter will discuss the experiences of all male participants in greater detail.

RS: So, you think the business sort of limited your choices?

Sophia: Sort of? It definitely did. I couldn't leave home, but I didn't really feel at home either. My mother needed me, all her family is back in India. We are relatively alone here and so it all fell to me. It's not just the business because I know lots of friends with family businesses, but they have family around, they know what they're doing. In my family, I speak the best English, I know the system better. I know how to get things done. And they were fighting all the time. They still are. And I end up staying with them to take care of everything, because who else is going to do it? I'm their daughter.

For Sophia, autonomy to enact home is severely constrained by what Charlip (1995: 29) calls “bonds of obligation.” For her, such obligations are only exacerbated by her parents' limited language and cultural competency. Charles, Stainton and Marshall (2009) found that difficulties in the dominant language of the culture can put young people into exactly this kind of situation. This kind of role reversal can put incredible pressures on youth and vitiate opportunities for social development (Chase 1999).

At the same time, female immigrant participants identify somewhat unique advantages to enacting home in terms of the natal household and family. In particular, as Sophia concedes, they see their close ties to family as a both built-in social network and a source of support in sharing responsibility for household labour.

Sophia: But, hey, the big benefit is that I am close to my mother. She cooks, she cleans and that leaves me to work in the business, take classes when I have time. I don't feel a pressure to get married. I am independent in that the business can't run without me. They don't want me to leave and get my own

life, so I am close to them and it's nice to have family around.

Having handy access to unpaid household labour allows Sophia to engage more freely in academic and professional pursuits, as she is pressed neither to marry nor to establish an independent household.

For other immigrant female participants, such as Liz and Magda, the relationship between home and some degree of mobility is an advantage they possess over most of their Canadian-born counterparts. For them, home is not understood as a fixed entity or place, but rather as something that moves with family members. This is evident when each participant describes her family's experience of immigration and its effect on her understanding of home.

*Liz: You have to understand that we moved **countries**. It was really hard when we came here because we had our friends, my parents had family friends, but we were all trying to figure out where we fit in. So, we moved a couple times, my sister moved out, I went away to school, my parents are moving again. We sort of don't see home as one set place, just more that when we all get together, it's home.*

Magda: Wherever my parents are, that's home. I thought it was really out West, where I mostly grew up, but now that I've moved, I see that if my parents came here, that could be home too. We kind of all have that tie to where I grew up, but at the same time, we moved here from another country, so there is that recognition that home isn't really in a certain place.

Scholars of youth note important links between culture-of-origin, familistic values and how and where young adults enact home (Boyd 2008) in which families of non-Western origin may actually see 'early' home leaving as a negative phenomenon (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). Gee, Mitchell and Wister

(2003: 250) assert that cultural groups “create and reproduce their own social timetables.” This can affect timing and circumstances of home leaving and constrain opportunities for enacting home outside the natal household. They remind us, further, that 'traditional' cultural norms can significantly affect decision-making about the life course.

Such timetables, it should be noted, are often gendered (Mitchell and Lovegreen 2009). The point is particularly important in understanding pressure on young female immigrants to enact home in terms of the natal household and family relationships. Rumbaut and Komaie (2010), for instance, point to a number of US population studies showing that, in many immigrant families, young adults provide financial and practical support to parents and younger siblings.⁶³ They cite the Southeast Asian Refugee Study, in which participants viewed their own earnings as part of the family's income. In other studies, young adults lived in natal family accommodations (rented) in order to save enough money to become the family's first homeowner. Moreover, the authors draw on the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York study to argue that reciprocal flows of resources within families provide mutual benefits within families. For instance, pooling resources allowed for high urban rent payments to be met. Perhaps most importantly, young immigrant adults living with their natal families were more

63 Jones (1991) showed that young people from working-class families also tend to contribute to family finances at early ages. Although differences in social class were rare amongst participants in this project, it is important to note that in various circumstances, children and adolescents are not mere consumers in families; some young adults are well-practiced in earning money and assuming at least partial responsibility for household bills.

likely to attend post-secondary education than those living on their own. The authors term these kinds of obligations as 'giving back' and show that, amongst immigrant youth (whether first or second generation or beyond), the practice occurs both for young adults living at home and for those who send money 'back home' and maintain emotional, supportive ties with family members who are there.

Studies have also uncovered the presence of reciprocity in intergenerational co-residence more generally (see Parker 2012 and Smits, Van Gaalen and Mulder 2010). A Pew Research survey showed that the new context for co-residence is one of greater equality with ninety percent of adult offspring contributing to housing or household expenses, resulting, perhaps, in what is now a lessening sense of stigma over living in the natal household (Parker 2012). Thus, young people increasingly see co-residence, or what Newman (2012) calls 'in-house adulthood' as a positive lifestyle strategy (Mitchell 2004), although Newman argues that the experience is largely class-based.

This benefit of intergenerational co-residence is also apparent amongst participants who reside within the natal household. Laura, for instance, a young woman from a single-parent household who lived at home during university, cites financial concerns, the need to help care for a younger sibling and the desire to provide comfort and companionship to her family.

Laura: I was originally going away for university and then for grad school. But I didn't really want to move away from home that much and I thought

the program here was a little better. It was convenient and I didn't really want to leave my mother. She's alone and my little brother was still at home. I wanted to be there for them both. And ... it was cheaper!

RS: So, there was a financial advantage and a practical one. You got to be near your mother and brother. Did you ever babysit him?

Laura: He was too old to need babysitting, but I cooked a lot. My mother works, obviously, so I started cooking dinner in high school and it just continued into university. I also did a lot of driving around, driving my brother around, picking him up from soccer practice, band, school, whatever. I did grocery shopping. I did a lot around the house actually. But it was kind of nice, like having two adults in the house to do things, which I didn't have after my parents got divorced.

RS: It sounds like it was a win-win for all of you.

Laura: It was, it was even a kind of way of practicing to be an adult. I basically was responsible for a lot, but my mother was there too, so I wasn't going to fall on my face. If there had been two parents there, it wouldn't have been the same because maybe she wouldn't have needed me as much, so I wouldn't have gotten that kind of rope.

For Laura, thus, enacting home initially in the natal household allowed her to save money, attend the university program of her choice and even 'practice' at running a household. She believes, furthermore, that attaining this kind of autonomy might have been less likely in a two-parent household. At the same time, however, she relies heavily on her single mother for support. Settersten and Ray (2010) write that:

parents contribute sizable material and emotional support through their children's late twenties and into their early thirties. Such flows are to be expected in more privileged families, but what is now striking are the significant flows—and associated strains—in middle-class families at a time when families themselves have become increasingly stressed or fractured. The heavier reliance on families exacerbates the already precarious plight of young

people from a variety of vulnerable backgrounds.

This section has demonstrated the immense pressure on young women to understand and enact home in domestic settings, in proximity to the natal household and through family relationships. It has shown that, depending on structural circumstances and family status, young women may see enacting home in this way as a burden and a benefit. Sometimes the expectation is welcome; other times it comes at a cost. The section also showed that demands on young women to enact home in these ways are exacerbated among immigrant participants. Yet, while such participants report a higher level of 'guilt' over enacting home outside and away from the natal household, they also believe that close family relationships pose significant advantages. These include ready-made social networks and a more fluid conception of home, based on family members and relationships, rather than on a specific location or residence. The burdens and benefits of enacting home in and around the natal household and among family members also appear more pronounced for participants living in natal households headed by a single parent. Such participants contribute to family finances, do unpaid household work and watch younger siblings, but their efforts are usually repaid with no or low housing and food costs, access to family vehicles and, perhaps, most uniquely, valuable opportunities for gaining the skills required to run a household.

The following section will show that young women simultaneously enact

home *away* from natal household and family relationships. These activities are undertaken as a result of pressures and desires amongst young women to 'make something of themselves,' academically, professionally and personally and occur amongst young women who both live at and away from from the natal household. To do so, they must negotiate multiple simultaneous experiences of home, a balance that reflects significant constraints, but also opportunities to find personal satisfaction and belonging; to respond and contribute to the transformation of the concept and practice of home in contemporary Western society; and to reinterpret established gender norms in and around home in complex and meaningful ways.

Go and Make Something of Yourself

The second major analytic theme emerging from female participants' narratives arose in response to questions about participants' plans for the future. For instance, what are your plans now that you have graduated from university/after university? Will you be working? Attending graduate school? Something else? Staying put or leaving? In answering such questions, participants cite overwhelming pressures and desires to excel academically, professionally and personally, what Lahelma and Gordon (2003: 380) refer to as leading "a life of their own." More specifically, they want to attend university and get good grades, participate in extra-curricular activities during their student years, befriend other young people and exercise a fairly high degree of autonomy over their living spaces and daily routines. Following the post-secondary years, they say they wish

to begin interesting, fulfilling and financially rewarding careers and they are often willing to move around to do so. For the most part, they see professional successes as natural and deserved extensions of their efforts in university and they tend to think of these years as a time when they will begin, in earnest, establishing their own domestic residences. Concurrent with academic and professional achievement, many female participants also see their young adult lives as a time for what they call 'personal growth.' More specifically, they say they wish to make and maintain new and rewarding friendships, travel for work and pleasure, volunteer and participate in community life and date and form romantic partnerships. Many also see motherhood as a key experience, although some despair about when it fits best into the life course.

At first glance, some of these experiences may not appear to be examples of enacting home. All the same, participants provided these very answers in responding to questions about how they enact home and see themselves enacting it in the future. This is further evidence that although female participants experience pressure to enact home in terms of domesticity and family, they also view a broader range of activities and relationships—including the development and maintenance of varied social networks, civic participation and increased mobility—as important to enacting home.

Time and again, participants attribute most of these activities as part and parcel of the desire to 'go and make something of yourself,' exemplified in Emily's

narrative about deciding to move away to go to university.

Emily: I thought about staying home. I thought, 'Well, I could do my degree here, where I know everyone and everything is familiar,' but I had this sense that I was over it, you know? I just wanted to get out and do something different. I wanted to have different experiences.

Emily's desire for mobility and professional success is echoed by the majority of participants. Magda, for instance, reports leaving home because she wanted to “do something with my life.” Amanda made a similar comment, saying that she wants to “do more,” while younger participants like Jennica stated that they want to “do something cool.” Other participants, particularly immigrant participants, mention wanting to “use the opportunities given to me” or “not just waste my life.” Finally, some participants who grew up in relatively stable, nuclear middle-class families, show a desire to reject what they see as the expected path. Kate, for instance, expresses the hope of enacting home in ways that even temporarily deemphasize normative domestic settings in or near the natal household and family relationships.

Kate: I don't want to just do what's expected. I want to live on my own, away from my parents, away from home. I want to have those experiences.

Kate's desire to live 'away'—from both the natal household and the city in which it is located—says something compelling about the desire of young women to enact home in 'going and making something of themselves.' There is a sense that the 'going' is important. This is not to say that young women who enact home within or near the natal household do not also desire to 'make something of themselves.'

Indeed, they sometimes enjoy more support in doing so as a result of having a more or less 'ready-made' household and family from which to enact home. For participants who grew up in Foyerville, especially those from more or less intact nuclear families, there appears also to be greater pressure to as one participants put it,

do the right thing in the end and get married and have kids, too, because there's that idea that home is where the woman is, ultimately.

In some cases, participants decided to remain at home because of financial advantages, but end up regretting the missed opportunities for new experiences.

Ruth, for instance, a young Jewish woman who grew up in a middle-class suburb, decided to live at home during university, but laments her decision.

My parents told me that I could live at home and go to school here and they could help pay my tuition or I could go away for school and the money would go less further. My brothers were still living at home and my parents could only help me so much, but I would have really loved to go away to live. I really regret not going. It's an experience I would have liked to have had.

While staying 'at home' provides a financial advantage, Ruth regrets giving up the chance to live away, chiefly because of the experiences she feels she missed. For Kate, giving up opportunities for adventure was only one disadvantage of remaining in the natal household. She wonders if living away might have also provided her with greater life skills and practical knowledge.

Well, for me, see I haven't been many places. I haven't had a lot of experiences. Don't get me wrong. My childhood was great. My parents are amazing and my whole family gets along. But I haven't really ever had a reason to leave. I've just always sort of stayed with them because it's so easy to stay. So now,

*my friends are going on exchanges or I know people from school who moved here, and I keep thinking that they've done stuff, moved around, had all these cool experiences and I've just sort of been here. I'm not stuck here, I guess, actually I could leave at any time. But am I **going** to leave? Am I **going** to do something cool? Maybe not. And that's a problem because I don't necessarily know how to cook, I don't necessarily know how to set up a lease or whatever. I help my parents around the house for sure, but some of those other things that you have to learn on your own? I don't have that.*

For other participants, particularly those who had left home to live on their own or with others, the idea of 'going' appears to be paramount to their desire to enact home by 'making something of themselves.' As Magda reported, "I just wanted to get out there so bad. I just knew there was something more." When asked what that something more might be, Magda replied that she guessed it was "just my home, a place for me."

As discussed above, the activities participants report doing to enact home for themselves are wide ranging. Some of those activities mimic closely the ones that are done by young women in the context of the natal household, but they are usually carried out for individuals' own benefit and to suit their own tastes, desires and goals. This is very clear, for instance, in their reports of arranging domestic objects and spaces on their own or with friends, roommates, partners or children of their own. Gita's comments about decorating her bedroom and living room (in a rented house she shares with one other young woman) demonstrates these impulses:

Gita: Making myself at home now that I'm living on my own, well, with roommates, is partly just being able to set everything up how I want to

without worrying about whether or not all the little throw pillows match or whatever.

RS: That's important to you? Being able to set up your place how you like it?

Gita: It is. For me, it's my parents taking care of me when I go home. They cook and do everything around the house and that's just home. I guess I want to get that feeling when they're not around too, in my own life. So, that's why I decorate my room, I put up pictures of my family. I put up little things on the walls. Same with the living room. We have little pillows and candles. Things to make it feel more like home. It's really important to me that it's really cozy, but it doesn't have to be just so, which is more how my parents do it. I kind of do it my way, but I still want it done. I want to come home to a nice, comfortable place.



One of Gita's photos of home: Family photos and a vacation memento

Thus, Gita uses decorations, artwork and personal memorabilia to gain autonomy over her own home, by negotiating natal norms and her own emerging desires for some degree of homeyness (McCracken (1989)).⁶⁴

Negotiating Multiple, Simultaneous Homes

The previous sections demonstrate first that female participants feel expected to understand and enact home in and around the natal household. Second, it shows that they are also simultaneously pressured/drawn to enact

⁶⁴ Homeyness is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

home by 'making something of themselves' academically, professionally and personally. This section shows how young women manage these conflicting expectations, not by rejecting them altogether or even by attempting to satisfy one over the other, but rather by negotiating both sets of expectations. In other words, young women feel they must make decisions about how to enact home in a larger sense that allow them to both spend time with and on family members *and* pursue higher education, paid employment, social networks, their own households and families, travel/mobility and other opportunities for personal development. Liz's story is an excellent example.

RS: So, said you you feel quite 'at home' when you're around your family?

Liz: Yes. I'm lucky. My boyfriend shares my family values. So we make an effort to go and see his family as well as mine. This weekend, we're going to go see my Dad for his sixtieth. It's just going to be the six of us. This Christmas, he's going to spend Christmas Eve with me and then Christmas Day, we're going to go to his family's for dinner. Most of the time my parents will go back for Chinese New Year.

RS: Is it ever a lot to juggle?

Liz: It is. Like, I've always wanted to go back for Chinese New Year, but I've never been able to go because of school. It's right around where exams and reading week is. There's no way you can take time off to go and travel all that way and be jet lagged when you get back.

For Liz, enacting home involves negotiating paths between her natal family, her partner's family, her family and country of origin and her school obligations. Such competing expectations and desires emerge in several other female participants' narratives. Brooke, for instance, refers to her natal household and

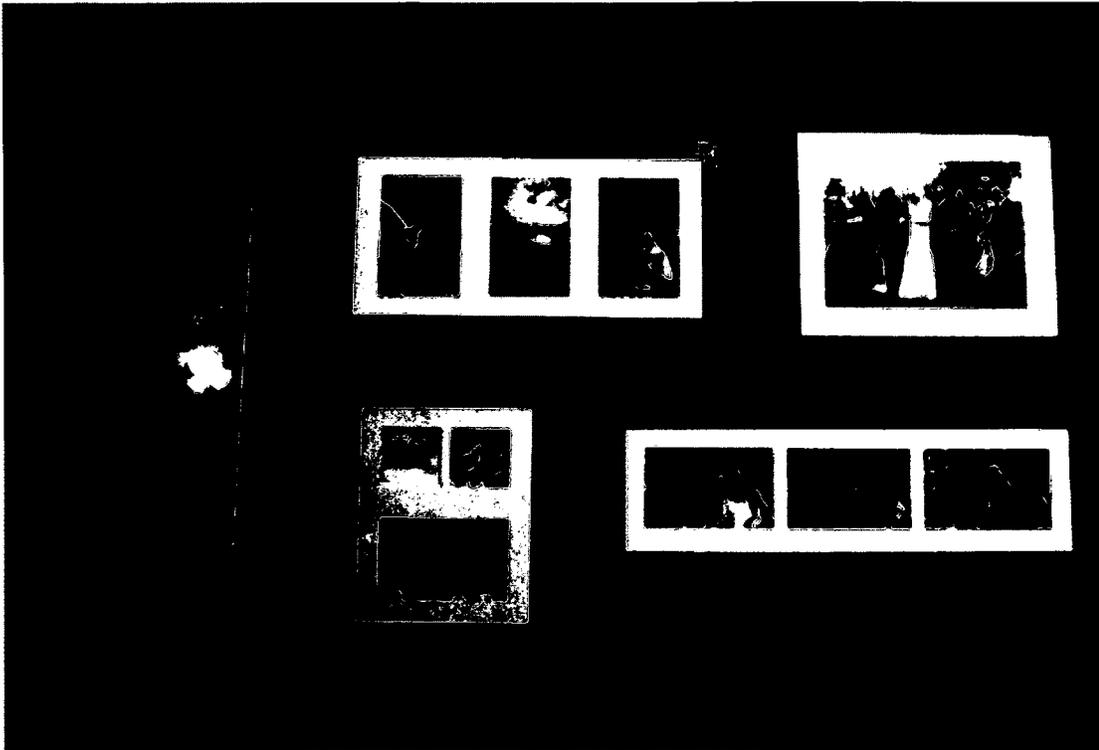
community as 'back home' and visits nearly every holiday. At the same time, she sees her own household as equally important and says she has also found a meaningful home in her academic department at university. For Corrie, "leaving would be too hard because I'd be back here all the time and I'd have another life somewhere else." Negotiating two homes are easier for Corrie if they are located in the same city. Even for Laura, who lives at home with her mother and brother, she imagines that enacting another home would mean frequent visits back to the natal household to "make sure everyone's okay."

Given the enormity and diversity of expectations on female participants about how, where and when to enact home, it is no wonder that their narratives reveal multiple, simultaneous experiences of home. Kenyon (1999) found something similar in her study of young adults—men and women, aged eighteen to twenty-three. Namely, participants could not and did not locate only *one* experience of home—either in terms of meaning or material locus. Instead, they almost always maintained connections to the natal household and expected, at a minimum, to return to it on holidays.

The dynamics involved in enacting home in terms of multiplicity and simultaneity are also especially evident amongst young women who moved away from home for higher education. This is particularly striking in participants' photographic (re)presentations of home. For many, a single photograph was inadequate for the task, a telling clue in how young women enact home. Liz, for

example, first provided a photograph of her parents in a rare display of levity at a family dinner, but sent an additional photograph a few days later. The second, depicting a wall adorned with framed portraits⁶⁵, provides a glimpse into her own household and family and their importance in how she enacts home. The leftmost portrait shows her partner while he was visiting her in Africa, where she did an internship after university. In the middle portrait, the couple is shown in on a weekend holiday in Canada. The portrait on the right captures Liz in her Canadian hometown, where she and her family lived for a number of years when they arrived in Canada. Home, for her, as the chapter previously demonstrated, is located in and around her natal family (even as the locus of the household itself shifts), as well with her partner in their own household and finally, in her sense of adventure through travel for work, pleasure and to see family. Taken together, the image of her parents at a family dinner and the one showing her many photographs of home, reflect multiple, juxtaposing understandings of home—and she enacts them *simultaneously*.

65 Such 'photo walls' or clusters of framed photographs displayed on furniture, such as nightstands and dressers, was not uncommon among female participants. The role of photography, especially digital photography, in young women's negotiation of multiple, simultaneous experiences of home, is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

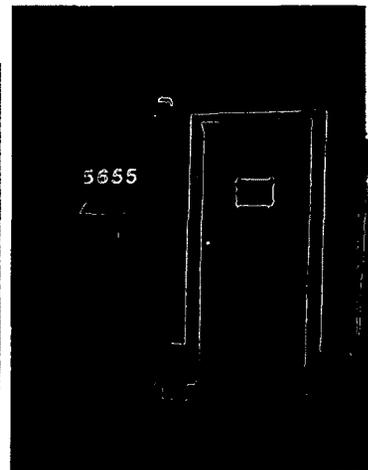


In a photo like this one, Liz depicts a wall in her condo that she has decorated with photos of her multiple experiences of home.⁶⁶

For one participant, even *two* photographs were not enough to reflect her many experiences of home. She provided several photographs, depicting an informal gathering of her natal family members; a family wedding; the front door of the first house she shared with her husband; some friends on the front steps of that house; her husband playing in his band at a bar the two used to frequent with their friends; her pet cats lounging in the couple's current apartment; two chairs in the apartment; her husband in a moment of playfulness; the ocean-view from

⁶⁶ This Creative Commons photo has been modified from its original version. Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gordonflood/2089391795/>.

the house the pair own; and a multi-generational gathering of her female relatives in the kitchen of that house. “Home is a lot of things for me,” she explained. “I couldn't leave anything out because it's all different aspects of home.” While Marusa's case was unique in that she felt led to present nearly a dozen photographs, it powerfully illustrates the effects of women's multiple, simultaneous experiences of home.



Stock photos and originals depicting four of Marusa's multiple, simultaneous experiences of home

Lahelma and Gordon (2003: 389) demonstrate that the effects of 'push and pull' when moving away from home were evident and that participants felt there was both 'something to be gained and something to be lost' in the process. This tension is evident in Emily's narrative:

RS: So, you feel like going to university somewhere else gave you the chance for different experiences?

Emily: Yeah, I do. But at the same time, it was hard too, you know. I am expected to be a good girl, a good daughter, a good citizen, to grow up and be mature, but I still want to have adventures and educate myself. If I want to go to grad school, how will I do all the other stuff? Sometimes, I'm not sure which way I'm supposed to go because I know I have all this potential, but that means I'll have to move around, which is the opposite of what grown-ups are supposed to do, especially if I want to become a wife and a mother someday, which I do.

RS: Does it ever feel like a lot to manage?

Emily: It does sometimes because I don't want to do the same old thing. I want to make something of myself.

Competing expectations and desires in thinking about domesticity/family versus achievement and growth are also similar to the ones identified by Denise Hinton in her research on Welsh youth. Hinton's (2011) research demonstrates that for some young people on the cusp of beginning post-secondary education, decisions about where to live while attending university are shaped by conflicting ambitions for both sameness and novelty. For the young adults in her research, some

individuals resolved the conflict by remaining in the same country, but moving into their own residences outside the natal home. The simultaneous desire for sameness and strangeness, as Hinton shows, emerges from particular kinds of 'emotional ties' between certain young people and 'home.' In particular, they say they feel both connected to the natal household and keen to move beyond it.

As shown above, female participants who engender these conflicting desires must negotiate complex desires to meet expectations for enacting home with family and to seek achievement and growth. The conflict forces them to enact multiple, simultaneous experiences of home. Heath and Kenyon (2001: 84) maintain that while conflict over competing demands of work and personal life are common among many young adults, "populist accounts of social change...tend to ignore the tensions that arise for many young adults as they attempt to juggle the conflicting demands of their personal and professional lives." For women in this study, personal and professional lives are not only difficult to balance; they are co-constituted. Participants list domestic life, family relationships, school and work as important to how they enact home. They want to both satisfy cultural and familial expectations to remain in or around the natal household, but they also feel pressured and drawn to go forth into the wider world and enact their own experiences of home, tied to school and work, friends and other social networks, travel and their own households and families. They possess what Sidel (1990) calls have-it-all aspirations and expectations. But it does not come easily. Heath

and Kenyon (2001: 83-84) say that young women are alternatively “lauded for their drive and ambition...yet, vilified for their presumed self-centredness and rejection of 'family values'.”

For immigrant participants the dual pressures to both enact home in terms of family obligations *and* be successful in higher education, paid work and their own personal lives is exacerbated. Magda, a first-generation immigrant from Eastern Europe, frames these dual expectations using a concept she terms 'immigrant guilt.'

I always feel this pressure. I am torn. When we arrived here, it was our home. My parents were so excited, we all were, not to be in the refugee camp, to be in Canada, that it became home very fast. When you're brand new to a country and far away from home, you hold onto things and really value home and family, so when I moved here for my Master's degree, it was hard. It was hard to leave them. My brother is there, but that's not the same thing.

Emily, a second-generation female participant reports similar pressures. She, too, expects to enact home in terms of domesticity and family. She also equates home with family to a large degree, although she feels less of so-called 'immigrant guilt' and therefore more able to consider enacting home away from the natal household.

Emily: I don't know if I'll go back there. I do feel guilty, a bit, but my parents are supportive too. They moved here when they were my age, so they do have their own lives and they want me to have my life, make my own way.

According to most female participants, regardless of nearly all other factors, the dual pressures of family and academic and professional achievement

are often at odds with one another and greatly affect how they understand and enact home. As a result, participants must negotiate multiple, simultaneous experiences of home and tend to feel torn over the associated obligations. All the same, participants exhibit a high degree of skill in negotiating these competing expectations. They usually do this by setting up their own, single-person households, living with roommates or friends or by forming new immediate families, while still maintaining strong ties with natal households and family members.

On the one hand, this places challenging expectations on young women deciding how to enact home. For instance, stories about deciding where to live and when to live there show that setting up distal homes can reveal feelings of guilt, especially for immigrant participants whose sense of obligation to aging parents may be particularly strong. Ideas about wanting to get a good education, pursue interesting, profitable paid work and develop and maintain personal friendships/networks and interests are also challenging to execute when pressures to stick close to home abound.

On the other hand, participants tend to see this dilemma as one that they feel able to manage. The possibilities, or resources, that they identify in helping them negotiate these often competing expectations revolve around novel ways of enacting home. For instance, they use digital photography to help them preserve family relationships, maintain a sense of virtual proximity to natal family

members, as well as to their other, sometimes scattered, important social networks. The role of personal/family photographs, art and family mementos in connecting individuals to other spaces and time periods, has been documented extensively by cultural geographers (see Rose 2003). Above all else, digital photography is, as smartphones bring into clear view, portable. When they are used as a strategy for enacting home distally, home itself is rendered portable, shared across local, regional and national borders, over time, through social networks and amongst family, friends and strangers. It is enacted as a visual, virtual, ever-present and changeable reminder and representation of meaningful past homes and used to maintain current ones. In many cases, participants produced digital images in hard copy and framed and displayed them on a wall or furniture. Displaying photographic images in domestic settings is not new, but growing access to inexpensive digital photography technology and printing services means that photographic images are more prolific than ever before. This is notable in participants' 'photo walls' (also known as 'frame clusters'): walls decorated with multiple framed images of 'home,' including natal and extended family members, friends, vacations, special occasions, pets and landscapes.



A photo wall similar to the one Brooke presented in a photo of home.⁶⁷

Overall, opportunities for managing, sharing and displaying images of home are increased through use of digital technology. This allows young adults to enact home in ways that are portable and not tied to a particular domestic space or singular place.⁶⁸ Just as Murray's (2008) research showed that digital photography's greatest novelty is the possibility it opens up for temporariness and transience, qualities that may be inherent in the negotiation of multiple, simultaneous homes. Digital photography allows some of the young women to

67 This stock photo has been modified from its original version. Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0). <http://www.flickr.com/photos/aicher/5344223289/>.

68 Walsh (2011: 522) also found that maps, photographs and artwork were used as “migrant souvenirs” by both men and women in her study of white British migrants.

edit, display and manage multiple, simultaneous experiences of home. It also provides an opportunity to represent, recombine and reaffirm a sense of belonging through collectively-managed and widely-shared, changing digital spaces. Images allow for a very immediate enactment of home in a way that holds the past and future in tension with one another. Photographic representation and display can be understood partly as what Young (1997) calls activities of preservation. For her, preservation is work that helps tie idealizations and realizations of past homes to present ones. Meanings, she argues, “depend as much on the projection of a past as of a future” (152). Moreover, they allow these young women to enact home in ways that are portable and not tied to merely one domestic space or any other single place.

The second way female participants manage these competing expectations/desires is most noticeable amongst immigrant women who reinterpret familial expectations and dominant cultural norms of enacting home in a surprising and somewhat novel way. Specifically, they take advantage of familial histories on mobility and migration to provoke movement of natal households and family members. This probably works better for first generation immigrants whose families have had less time to become embedded in local communities and, consequently, for whom desires to remain close to grown children are often strong. Magda, for instance, feels encouraged by her parents' validation of her household and new marriage. Seeing her in her own home, she

reasons, has helped her parents imagine moving closer to their daughter, her husband and any children the two might produce. Emily's parents, by way of contrast, are more settled into their own lives in her hometown and she does not predict them moving to be closer to her. Even some Canadian-born participants talked about moving aging parents to be closer to them. Rachel's parents, for instance, are considering moving with her and her young daughter to the city where she is beginning graduate studies.

Thus, the increasing mobility of aging parents allows these women to more easily maintain multiple, simultaneous experiences of home. One drawback can be a loss of independence that has been gained by enacting home distally; as one participant points out:

My parents sometimes think about moving to here to be closer to me and my brother, but even though it would be easier for me, I'd also have them in my business.

Young women have the home court advantage such circumstances. They remain embedded in their own academic, professional and personal lives and are better equipped to enact home in ways that continue to provide autonomy and satisfaction and to transform family expectations for their roles at and around home and family. "It would be like *them* coming into *my* life."

Finally, female participants negotiate multiple simultaneous experiences of home by establishing their own households, important social and professional relationships and otherwise independent adult lives. For Jennica, for example,

home is rooted simultaneously in her dorm room, in the next house she plans to share with friends and through her relationships with friends, roommates and classmates. Krista, in comparison, remained in the natal household during university, but married fairly soon after, moved to a nearby city with her husband and only later, returned 'home.' Her time away was initially lonely, but she made a home there by befriending neighbours and colleagues, throwing herself into her work and caring for her husband, daughter and their pets. Scholars have noted such increasing diversity in how young adults enact home, finding that young people are increasingly choosing 'alternative' forms of independent living. For instance, they do not always form new families right away, preferring sometimes instead to live with roommates or friends (Heath 1999). Enacting home outside the bounds of normative family life has become fairly expected and considered an important part of the transition to adulthood (Lofgren 1997), especially amongst educated youth (Bynner et al. 2002).



Jennica's photograph of home depicts a similar view of the campus library as seen from her dorm room window.⁶⁹

The negotiation of obligations to the natal household and family and their own desires for independent and more varied experiences of home has female participants enacting home in ways that reflect something that Weir (2008) calls 'reinterpretive preservation.' That is to say that they carry into the present relationships and activities with and for the natal household and family, but they also reinterpret these obligations in ways that allow them to derive pleasure from their own achievements and relationships and enact home in novel, empowering ways. In other words, young women really 'dig in' to the places they live, work

⁶⁹ Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fattytuna/10200186/>.

and play. They enact home wherever they are, in whatever contexts and they see their efforts as both meaningful and important and as legitimate experiences of home. The concept of reinterpetive preservation comes from Young's 1997 essay on home, in which she argues that:

Homemaking consists in preserving the things and their meaning as anchor to shifting personal and group identity. But the narratives of the history that brought us here are not fixed, and part of the creative and moral task of preservation is to reconstruct the connection of the past to the present in light of new events, relationships and political understandings. (154)

For Young, preservation connects us to past homes in ways that allow us to carry on with more complex and novel homes in the present and future tenses. Massey (1992) and hooks (1991) also see the value in using memories of and connections to past homes in order to reinvent present ones. The kinds of reinterpretation young women do in enacting home—for instance, managing and sharing digital photography, moving natal households to be closer to present ones, developing strong friendship networks—allow them not only to reproduce normative experiences of home, but rather to respond and contribute to the transformation of home in contemporary Western society, reinterpet established gender norms in and around home and, also, to establish a sense of home for themselves that makes sense in terms of the constraints, opportunities and desires that contextualize their lives.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that on the one hand, female participants feel obliged to see and enact home in ways that are tied to domestic residences and family relationships. Participants identify both burdens and benefits in enacting home under these circumstances. This is no doubt because such obligations and advantages vary across social location and according to personal circumstances and desires. The second major theme found amongst the narratives of female participants presents a significant practical dilemma for satisfying the first. Namely, participants report feeling pressure and desire to 'make something of themselves' academically, professionally and personally. Such desires reflect increasing expectations on and of middle-class women in contemporary Canada to enact home in broad ways. Some of these moving away to obtain higher education or paid work, traveling, cultivating diverse social networks and marrying and having children. Participants negotiate these seemingly competing demands by enacting multiple, simultaneous homes in novel and complex ways, efforts that provide evidence for a kind of reinterpetive preservation. That is to say that the ways in which women participants enact home both respond to and instigate the transformation of gender norms at home and begin to redefine the concept of home itself and possibilities for enacting it.

The following chapter shows that while young men negotiate a mostly different set of competing expectations/desires when it comes to enacting home,

they nonetheless also help shape a new understanding of home and novel possibilities for enacting it. Combined, these two chapters will demonstrate that young adulthood can be a particularly useful time for enacting—even redefining—home. Further, they will show that young adults should be supported in enacting home in ways that they find meaningful. The related reinterpretation of cultural and familial norms and expectations is useful for their own autonomy and development. More importantly, however, it represents important lived experiences in the contemporary reinvention of home.

Chapter 5 – Men, Home Away From Home and Homeyness

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that women participants face dual and often conflicting expectations to enact home in terms of domesticity, especially the natal household and family, and, concurrently, to establish fulfilling and diverse lives outside these realms. Thus, they find themselves enacting multiple, simultaneous experiences of home. On one hand, they say the phenomenon causes them to feel torn. At the same time, it allows for the reinterpretation of traditional gender norms in and around home and expanded definitions of home itself. These insights reveal how such women negotiate increasingly complex obligations and desires around enacting home and they help understand what constraints and resources shape these efforts.

The chapter established, thus, that gender plays a crucial role in how participants understand and enact home. If the presence of young people—given their so-called preparatory and transitional places in the life course—in and around homes is rarely acknowledged, the roles of young *men*, in particular, in such discussions are accounted for even less. This should not be surprising. Broader intersections between masculinities and home have rarely been studied (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Mort 1996; Nixon 1996; Walsh 2011), except in terms of fathering (see Doucet 2006, 2004; Doucet and Merla 2007; Doucet and Halford 2006) and housework/working-at-home (see Aitken 2000; Bianchi et al. 2000;

Ciabattari 2004). Thus, Chapman (1999: 164) suggests that “It is usually assumed that men are not interested in the home.” This seems especially the case when home is equated with house/household. There, Natalia (2003: 256-7) argues that men/masculinities have often been “defined through an absence of effort” (the topics of study mentioned above notwithstanding). This position is exacerbated by prominent and persistent gender scripts⁷⁰ that continue to place men 'at work' in the paid labour force (McDowell 2005) and *outside* the domestic sphere (Morgan 1992). The so-called masculine global, '*non-home*' world is seen as an intrusion on what is viewed as the feminine domestic sphere of home (Gupta and Ferguson 2001). In contrast, men are “rendered 'out-of-place'” at home (Gorman-Murray 2010: 2).

Beginning with this rather abrupt reduction—men's exclusion from or avoidance of the domestic versus women's so-called 'place' within it—obscures men's agency and roles in and around homes (not limited to home-as-dwelling). Specifically, it presumes that they are mostly consumers, rather than producers, of home and feminizes virtually all home work activities (Pink 2004). Yet, Gorman-Murray (2010: 2) calls this ideology “incomplete,” in that it does not take into account possibilities for the increasing number of ways of being male at and around home.⁷¹ For instance, we know that men's participation in housework has

70 See Connell (2005) for a complete discussion of hegemonic masculinity.

71 For example, he cites research by Gelber (2000), who argues that the 'handyman husband' is an historically unprecedented form of domestic masculinity. Since around the 1950s, men have been expected to perform work on and around the home, as part of the movement towards 'doing-it-yourself' that swept the English-speaking West at the time.

been increasing over the past several decades (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006). Such possibilities allow for what Pink (2004: 118) calls “new domestic masculinities,”⁷² which are evident in the narratives of some male participants who reveal uncertainty about the meaning of home and its role in their young lives, while demonstrating considerable interest in having and enacting a home.

What comes to mind when we think about young men and home? Perhaps we conjure an image of Tripp, the portentously named kidult played by Matthew McConaughey in the 2006 film 'Failure to Launch.' The character is in his early thirties and still lives at home—blissfully rent-free—where his mother cleans his private bathroom, cooks his breakfast and does his laundry (including superhero-themed bedsheets). The plot is echoed in another recent film, 'Jeff, Who Lives At Home,' in which the protagonist is an unemployed, casual drug user who lives in his mother's basement apartment, rarely leaves the house and does not own a car. His mother—whose success at enacting a 'real home' is displayed during the opening credits when the camera zooms in on dozens of framed family photographs hanging on the walls of the home—is forced to resort to the threat of eviction to get her son to perform a simple household repair.

Or maybe we simply reflect on the frequent news articles painting young men as stay-at-home slackers who drain family resources and refuse to grow up.⁷³

72 Gorman-Murray (2010: 1) uses a similar term: “new (domestic) masculine subjectivities.”

73 See Krisnan (2012) for a recent example. McDowell (2000) identifies similar stereotypes in the UK where 'lads' are increasingly portrayed as 'sads' and there is a growing perception that young men are 'in trouble.'

National published statistics back up the popular belief that young men are now staying 'at home' longer and returning to it more frequently than was the case a generation ago. Between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine, they are around ten percent more likely to live in the natal household than are women in the same age range.⁷⁴ More broadly, they face greater difficulty than young women in setting up independent households (Newman 2012). Otherwise, we know little about how young men enact home. In particular, we rarely interrogate the cultural contexts that lead us to pressure men to enact home away from home and the impulse to stigmatize men who enact home in and around domestic dwellings.

This chapter shows first, that like the young women in Chapter 4, young men say that specific expectations help shape the ways they understand and enact home. Much like the young women, male participants tend to associate home, especially those they describe as 'real homes,' largely with domesticity and family relationships. As for their female counterparts, this appears to be a highly complex relationship, albeit in dramatically different ways. For the men, the complexities tend to lie in navigating the changing borders of contemporary masculinities and what they mean for their potential opportunities for enacting home. Unlike their female counterparts, they rarely feel *obliged* to enact home in and around the natal household and among family members. Instead, their narratives reveal that they feel expected to enact home only insofar as it allows them to be/go *away*

⁷⁴ See Statistics Canada's report entitled "When is junior moving out? Transition from the parental home to independence." *Canadian Social Trends*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, August 2006 (Cat. No. 11-008-XIE, no.82).

from home, where home is understood as a domestic, largely family-centric experience and especially in terms of the 'real homes' described in Chapter 3.

At the same time, men's narratives also indicate that they also feel expected and long to enact home in and around domestic residences. As a result, they enact home both 'away from' home—in contexts that are neither with or near the natal family or other 'real homes'—and 'at home.' When they enact home at home, they both taking on the kinds of work that has been conventionally done by women *and* engage in activities that have usually been relegated to 'non-home' settings. Consequently, participants must work to negotiate contradictory expectations—to enact home both 'away from' and 'at home. As the chapter will show, such tensions in enacting home are shaped by gender, cultural and familial norms, and concludes by suggesting that men's efforts contribute to and reflect at least a partial re-gendering of home.

As a result of men's conflicts over home, they come to feel both a deep sense of autonomy in and around home, but one that is tempered with confusion over their changing opportunities both 'away from' and 'at' home(s) (particularly 'real homes'). Moreover, their efforts contribute to and reflect a partial re-gendering of home and help challenge narrow, normative notions of home. First, it is necessary to discuss a broader context for understanding how these young men understand and enact home, and to elucidate parameters that shaped my efforts in tracing them.

Hearing Hidden Narratives

In the early 1980s, feminist researchers began to question traditional methods for studying social life. They argued that questions relating to gender must be explored in ways that take women's own lives and language into account, rather than merely relying on straightforward survey methods that treat all individuals as 'same.' To this end, Hilary Graham (1983) asked *do her answers fit his questions?* In conducting interviews with young men, it became evident that Graham's question might also serve as a starting point to revise the language used in conversation with male participants. I came to the realization when I encountered their reticence in identifying (through photography and in interviews) and discussing home. For instance, when I asked them about what they did to make themselves at home, they tended to be taciturn at first by saying little or avoiding the question. Their explanations for this position covered a wide range of possibilities, but the primary driver was a strongly *gendered* view of home. For many, home remains a highly feminized space and practice. As one participant put it quite starkly: "it's kind of more of a woman's thing than a guy's." Such a narrative is limited by normative ontological, cultural and popular understandings of home. A shift in language was, thus, necessary to ensure that the research questions fit *his* answers. It became certain that I would need to re-frame the questions in order to clarify my motivations.

Elucidating the concept of home more fully for male participants presented a methodological conundrum, since my purpose in asking questions about home was to elicit and interpret, rather than impose on, participants' narratives. However, some prompting and encouragement was unavoidable for those young men who stated, up front, that they do not relate to popular/cultural understandings and that they believe they do little to enact it.

Methodologically and analytically, I responded to such answers first by seriously considering the possibility that young men *are* less committed to the concept of home than are the female participants. I also took into account the limitations of narrative inquiry in revealing participants' experiences and of individual capacity for reflexivity (Doucet 2006, 2008; Doucet and Mauthner 2003). Analysis of the first few interviews with young men showed that they *do* feel connected to the concept of home and they *do* work to enact it. Still, these kinds of narratives were challenging to draw out when I asked questions and viewed the answers through a 'maternal' or 'feminized' lens on home.⁷⁵

Thus, I began to re-frame and elaborate on my questions about home in ways that suggested broader possibilities for enacting home.⁷⁶ Consequently,

75 In her writing on men, childcare and domestic work, Doucet (2009) argues that the view of gender-based differences in studies of unpaid work tends to suffer from a narrow, 'maternal' lens. This perspective has long contributed to a practical and political strategy for feminist researchers looking to highlight the experiences of women, but in studies taking a traditionally feminized arena (e.g., home) as the prime object of inquiry, the antipode is that *men's* unique experiences are obscured.

76 Gender-revised versions of the questions are shown in square brackets in Appendix A. However, it is important to note that the shapes of individual conversations around wider understandings of home emerged in and through each interview.

participants opened up about enacting home through a number of activities, including finding housing, buying and arranging furniture and artwork, setting up and using home offices and media entertainment rooms, managing households, hosting guests, traveling, acting as landlords, going to school and working (both at and outside the home).⁷⁷ Below is an example of how I re-framed one exchange in order to create an opening for male voices in discussions of home.

RS: Tell me a little about what you do to make yourself at home.

Casey: Um, I don't really know what to say...because I live at home already, so it's kind of like my mom, my parents who do that stuff. It's kind of already done for me.

RS: What do you mean when you say "it's already done"?

Casey: I don't know, just like the house, you know, it's there. It's always been there. What did I have to do? Nothing. It's my parents' place, my mom decorates it and stuff.

RS: Okay, so you don't do a lot of decorating. What about other things? Making home doesn't have to be just the traditional stuff we usually think about. Is there anything you do to make yourself at home? It doesn't even have to be in your house...it could be your neighbourhood, the whole city, anything...that you would see as making yourself at home.

Casey: Well, actually, yeah, I guess if you put it that way. I kinda do have my friends, you know, we go to certain bars, kind of have our certain things we like to do. A lot of us grew up together, so we kinda just, you know, sort of spread out over the city and, yeah, it's home.

*RS: So, you feel at home here. And actually maybe there **are** some things you*

⁷⁷ Oliffe and Bottorff (2007) used photovoice in a study on illness and men and found that visual methods can be useful in helping men overcome issues with self-disclosure and identify and relate their experiences to researchers. Although, I did not note a specific advantage in using visual methods with men (versus with women), Oliffe and Bottorff's article is a good reminder that male participants may respond differently to different research methods, especially when they are not used to 'talking' or for subject matters on which males feel particularly silenced.

even do around your house too? Maybe in your room? Or maybe you help out with certain things?

Casey: Yeah, for sure, because I'm not really a slacker, like I have friends who...they...I'm not one of those guys who just sits at home doing nothing. My dad and I do a lot of projects together. We built a gate for our patio last weekend. My mother was pretty happy about that! Yeah, like I do help out. I think that has changed a lot in the last year, well, since I graduated [from high school]. Now I'm kinda a little more into it [helping around the house.]

As mentioned above, I was careful not to presume that 'home' is a central defining characteristic of men's lives⁷⁸. Rather, my prompting was born out of recognition that *others* tend to rely on this premise, and, as I established in Chapter 1, they tend to problematize the role and meaning of home to young people and to minimize the work they do to enact it. Home has become a central (but rarely interrogated) concept in how young adult issues are discussed in public, policy, academic and everyday discourses. Thus, I sought to explore if and how home is enacted by participants in the study. As I discussed above, I was keen to ensure that all participants, and especially young men, felt able to identify and articulate their less often conventional ways of enacting home, instead of becoming stuck on the idea that this kind of work is predominantly 'feminine' or only related to domesticity. The following section elaborates on the results of these discussions. In particular, it highlights the conflicting expectations and desires young men say they face in enacting home and illustrates the ways in which they navigate them.

⁷⁸ Or young people's lives, more generally, for that matter!

Home Away from Home

As the previous section disclosed, male participants are fairly reticent in identifying and articulating their home work activities and the role home plays in their lives. One of the prime explanations might very well be a key expectation that many of them say they face in enacting home. In particular, they talk about feeling pressured to enact home away from home—that is, only insofar as they can leave home and also remain mobile, a state of being that is at odds with conventional, normative understandings of home that are tied up in the ideas of 'real homes' discussed in Chapter 3. The idea that home and 'away'—particularly via a strong emphasis on the movement required to 'get away'—is not new, as Phillips (1997: 13) reminds us. He writes "the settings of modern adventure seem to be divided between home and away." Morley (2000: 2) writes that home is constructed as mobility's "alter ego." Similarly, Ahmed (1999: 339) argues that "home is associated with a being that rests." Such scholars argue that these narratives divide home and away in a way that fixes the ontological contours of home into an impossibly rigid shape. She calls for a more radical way of thinking about the two, by imagining them as non-opposing and co-constituted. As the next two sections will show, enacting home 'away from home' means that male participants feel expected to *leave* domestic settings, particularly 'real homes.' Consequently, when they do enact home in and around domestic settings, they

must negotiate complex sets of expectations, but rarely obligations.

The theme of enacting home 'away from home' first emerged in answers to interview questions about the meaning of home. Ali's case is a good example of this expectation. Ali grew up in the Middle East and immigrated to Canada with his immediate family when he was a teenager. A little over a year before our interview, he graduated from high school and enrolled in university. He continued to live with his parents and sister, a comfortable arrangement for Ali that his family both condones and expects. At the same time, Ali feels pressure from his friends to get an apartment of his own and 'see the world.' He worries that others might label him a 'mama's boy' for refusing to conform to what he identifies as the dominant cultural expectation linking young men to mobility, as well as adventure and autonomy.

*Ali: I know I'm supposed to move out. What can I say? My parents, they want me to live at home. I want to too. But that's not what you do in Canada. **You go out, make your own way.** Especially if you're a guy. Girls, they can get away with it more. Like my sister, she's living at home and her friends don't say a word. I get a lot of flak. It's called what? A mama's boy. Guys are expected to get out there and see the world. You know what I mean? Like take what is theirs, not, like, hang back at home tied to mama and daddy.*

While, for Ali, enacting home in the natal household and among family members is acceptable for young women, such as his sister, he suggests that, as a young man living in Canada, he is expected to enact home 'away from home.' It is perhaps no wonder that Ali found it difficult to depict home in a photograph. He told me that he first wanted to provide a photograph of his family sharing a meal

together, but worried that I would not agree that his natal family could be considered his 'home.' "I thought you would say that I had to think of my own thing, that my family was something else," he explained.

Ali: I thought, 'she'll think of me as a little boy if I say home is my family. I've got to think of something cooler.'

So, he considered bringing a photograph of the small city in Lebanon where he grew up. In the end, he provided a family photograph because he felt that the migration, although not quite the same as traveling on his own as a young man, nonetheless gave him a degree of credibility in measures of mobility and adventure.



In a photo like this one, Ali shows his family who immigrated together to Canada and still live under one roof.^{f.179}

Ali's story illustrates a main expectation male participants say they face in

79 This Creative Commons photo has been modified from its original version. Attribution-NonCommercial -NoDerives 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0). <http://www.flickr.com/photos/simontaylor/3434813824/>.

understanding and enacting home. Other participants, particularly those who are Canadian-born, describe the expectation to enact home away from home not as a pressure primarily, but as an opportunity or personal desire. For such participants, leaving home may be seen as a rite of passage and being 'on the move' is viewed as a virtue. "I get itchy feet and then I just want to get out there and do something amazing" Matt told me by way of explanation about his long backpacking trips through South America and Europe. Tom said he wants to "have more life experiences" and sees moving away/around as "ultimately a good thing because you're not just getting stuck, you're kind of seeing more and basically growing as a person." Maxim said he seeks out temporary work arrangements in different cities "just to see what else is out there and kind of have that experience of moving around that forces you out of your element."

In light of Ali's narrative, such comments highlight what are undoubtedly differences in resources and cultural/familial norms amongst male participants. Ali's cultural and family context make 'moving around' both a necessity (leaving the country-of-origin to escape political and economic turmoil) and a family affair (in terms of their international migration). Canadian-born participants, such as Matt, Tom and Maxim, in contrast, view the expectation to enact home away from home as an opportunity for greater personal and professional success. When I asked such participants to elaborate more on enacting home in this way, some attribute it to supportive parents and significant material resources. Others

suggest that they draw mostly on a cultural and persistently gender-based proclivity amongst many middle-class Canadian families for young men to leave home and 'make their own way.' Even a participant whose staunchly religious family wishes for him to "settle down close to home," there is a sense that "going away to have at least one or two adventures is just what guys do."

For such participants, enacting home within the natal household or other domestic settings is done restlessly and the dwelling is seen/used as what participants call a 'home base.' That is to say that such participants see home as a place for rejuvenation and rest from which they can go away. One participant, for instance, claims boldly that "if I didn't need a place to rest up every once in a while, I wouldn't even *have* a home." Others are less strident and describe the home-as-base in terms of its potential for "a place to relax," "a chance not to worry," and "just time off to figure out my next move."

It is important to note that the home-as-base is a possibility primarily for Canadian-born participants from upper middle-class two-parent households with considerable financial resources living in a 'real home' (e.g., a spacious, single-family dwelling). Participants in other circumstances, such as immigrant participants and those from single-parent families or those who relocate frequently tend not to see home as a base. Such participants tend to be more engaged in enacting home away from home, although they often have fewer resources with which to do so. One participant in this predicament explained it by

saying that:

I don't have that kind of home base that maybe some of my friends have. For me, I still feel like I don't want to be a mama's boy, but putting yourself out there just isn't the same when you don't really have a place to kind of lean back on...there's no kind of net to catch you, so you just do it anyway because you know you should, but it's harder.

No matter what their socioeconomic circumstance, participants view enacting home away from home not strictly in practical terms, but also in moral ones. For them, enacting home in this way is a distinctly masculine virtue. This can be ascertained from the contrast Ali draws between the differing expectations placed on himself and on his sister. Several others also link mobility to a dominant expression of youth masculinity. Albert, for instance, admits that he moved away for graduate school partly because “In Canada, it seems like you're kind of making it more on your own as, like, a man, if you kind of move away.” Casey says he sometimes feels like a bit of a “sham” because he lives with his parents and “guys are supposed to be all tough and not need their moms anymore.” Chris, a part-time undergraduate student and food industry worker, believes that enacting home away from home (by moving away from his rural hometown) gave him a kind of credibility with his father and peers.

Moving out, I think made my parents see me in a better light. Especially my father...he kind of respects me for moving now, like maybe he sees me as more of a man, instead of just a kid. I think my friends too, a least a little, kind of have that much more respect for me, like it's kind of expected that a guy's going to go out and kind of see the world.

The cultural expectation to enact home away from home is both similar to

and different from the desire to 'make something of yourself' noted by *female* participants. The similarity in the aspirations for professional, academic and personal mobility is conspicuous across gender. However, many more female participants say they feel they must balance these desires with obligations to the natal household and family; most young men (with the exception of two immigrant participants) do not say they are similarly constrained. Mac, for instance, moved out of his natal household while he was still a high school student and subsequently, he has not felt overly obliged to enact home in or around the natal household.

RS: So, you left home when you were still in school. Are you close to your family at all?

Mac: In a way, I am close, but I don't feel like I have to be there all the time or live near them. I feel like they're adults, I'm an adult, we each do our thing.

RS: It doesn't sound like you really feel pressured to live near your family to...maybe keep them company or help them out.

Mac: When I left home, I kind of never looked back. My wife, she is always going back home, taking care of her parents and stuff, worrying about them. Maybe that's why she still wants to go back there. She always says we should move back. She misses it and I think it's still kind of home in her head. But I'm more interested in kind of my own place now, my wife, just making a home with her.

Given the incredible pressure on young men to enact home away from home, it is perhaps not surprising that some participants are reticent to discuss home and that many say they wish to, for as long as possible, avoid enacting

home in and around 'real homes.' Maxim's thoughts typify this kind of worry.

Maxim: Now we can't just pick up and go. We have sort of more of a real home, I guess. It feels like we have more ties here, we have a mortgage, we have our families, we have the cats. We could technically work almost anywhere because, well, I work for myself, and Anne could do her work anywhere, even though I guess her job is a consideration because she does work for an actual company.

RS: How do you feel about having these kinds of ties?

Maxim: That's a really good question. I guess it makes me feel older. But also tied down, you know. It does. I'll admit it. It makes me wonder what else is out there. I wonder if this is it. I think I could feel at home in a lot of places. When I was [working] in Chicago⁸⁰, I felt really at home in that life, just walking around the city, even though I was staying in a friend's empty apartment. I guess I just don't like the idea of not having adventures anymore. It's kind of like owning a home and just caring more about your career and having family close by gives you these ties that are just harder to walk away from.

So far, this section has demonstrated the pressure male participants say they feel to be mobile and some of the ways this relates to how they see home. Next, I discuss how these ideas relate to how these participants enact home. In particular, I will show that they both draw on them as resources and negotiate them as liabilities in their efforts toward homemaking.

Jason grew up in a rural community and moved to Foyerville after going to school and working throughout North America. One of his jobs took him away for long stretches of time and had him working all over the world. I asked him to talk about how he made himself at home amidst these circumstances and he said, "Sort of just moving around a lot, you kind of just stop thinking about staying in

80 Not the real city.

one place and you're just more at home *on-the-go*." As activities/contexts for homemaking, he listed keeping his luggage and hotel rooms clean and orderly, keeping track of friends and family by email and using the same airlines and hotel chains month after month.

There was this rush of kind of knowing how to just be on the fly, no matter what situation I got into, I could kind of make it work. I got to the point where I felt more at home kind of always moving and having to take whatever came at me, more than I was [at home] when I was in my apartment.

As a result, he claims, he does not feel he could have been 'homesick.' Instead, he says, he both "got used to it" (unfamiliarity and fluidity) and "really started to like the excitement of it all" (travel and have novel experiences). Even though he says he feels quite at home amidst (and possibly, *because of*) these conditions, I wondered if he misses *people* or if his relationships were difficult to maintain given this kind of home.

Jason: Not really. I kind of liked just being on my own. I really never felt more at home.

He does admit that he sometimes felt lonely, but he says that being 'at home' does not hold the same sway over him that it once had and he quite liked enacting home in a way that might not typically be described using this term, but that, to Jason, does not feel like being 'away' at all.

The ability to enact home on-the-go versus 'staying put' decidedly contradicts the idea that the typically mobile and transitional nature of contemporary young adulthood limits opportunities for enacting home. And

Jason's narrative is fairly typical. Another participant, Matt, saved enough money from his teaching job to spend six months traveling, something he felt he both excited and *compelled* to do.

RS: Last time we spoke, you said you spent some time traveling last year. Tell me what that was like. Was that the first time you were away from home for so long?

Matt: It's funny you should ask that. I was just thinking of that when I was taking my picture to bring here. Like, I took a picture of my house because I am proud of that, especially the little apartment in the basement and just that it makes me an income, but anyway, I also thought of bringing a photo from my trip. Because people think, 'Oh, you were away from home,' but it didn't feel like that. I kind of just made myself at home on that trip. I made it a point to meet a lot of people and I even got invited into people's houses for dinner and I actually went to a wedding overseas. Being on the road, I kind of just made myself at home wherever I went...just like kicking back in the hostel, cooking, making friends in the lounge, whatever, and it was nice to be on my own, have a different perspective on life and stuff.

Like Jason, Matt's travels do not exactly take him away from home. Rather, they offer unique opportunities for enacting home by developing semi-permanent relationships with strangers and participating in their everyday lives and special occasions, and in fully embracing and using temporary dwellings for functional and affective purposes.

For Maxim, the ability to enact home away from home or on-the-go began early in young adulthood when he traveled to Europe for work and leisure. After graduation from university, he was faced with few job prospects in Canada and so he moved to the United Kingdom to look for work. He quickly learned how to enact home in this setting.

Maxim: I knew I had to stay in touch with people because I didn't know anyone there yet. So, I checked my email a few times a day. And every time that screen popped up, I felt really at home. It was just a familiar layout, I knew I could count on it and I knew I'd be communicating with people, so, yeah, I felt pretty at home, pretty quickly. Looking back, I'd say doing that really, really helped.

The impact of digital communication technology on young people's abilities to enact home away from home should not be underestimated. This is not to suggest that home is only that which has been left behind, but rather that digital devices and online tools are useful in efforts to enact home in more fluid contexts (Germann Molz 2008).

The narratives of Jason, Matt and Maxim call to mind Germann Molz's (2008: 333) claim that for “Even when a traveler leaves home, home does not leave the traveler.” This results in an ability enact home—away from normative, fixed versions of home—in contexts of greater or lesser mobility. But Jason and Matt enjoy a relatively high degree of social and financial capital. What about the expectation of mobility and temporariness for young men who cannot or do not want to travel? As Ali's narrative illustrated at the beginning of the section, the expectation can be burdensome for such young men. Still, even participants who experience the expectation of mobility as burdensome/constraining nonetheless find opportunities for enacting home. John's story helps elucidate this relationship:

John: I'm still young and I've moved around quite a bit already. I just feel restless. I was in school, but I dropped out. I kind of felt like I didn't want to be a sell-out, you know what I mean? I wanted to kind of do something a

little more wild. It seems kind of lame to just do what everyone says. I wanted to kind of do my own thing and see if I could make it on my own without, kind of, just buying into the whole school, job, wife, kids, house thing.

*RS: So, you sort of **wanted** to move? Would you say it was something you chose?*

John: Hmmm, yeah, but also no. Because okay, I did have to move because partly I couldn't afford school at that time. Not really, even with loans, it was kind of hard. I heard about this job and just jumped on it, even though moving is kind of a pain and okay, it's expensive too, you know? And with moving around for work, I can't really be in school or you know settle down.

John's account suggests he experiences the expectation to enact home away from home as constraining and also difficult to put into practice. He feels he should pursue these ideals and sees them in tension with post-secondary education, standardized employment, nuclear family relationships and home ownership. Thus, he withdrew from university and moved away to start work as a labourer, an experience that he says, actually falls short in terms of mobility, especially in the sense of adventure. "I'm going to move again," he admitted, "I kind of feel like I still haven't done anything really cool."

How does he enact home amidst these circumstances? He admitted that he sometimes wishes for greater predictability in terms of housing and relationships, but that he finds ways to make himself at home in spite of moving around a couple times.

John: Yeah, there are probably some big pluses with kind of doing the school thing, getting married, whatever, getting a job, a house. It's kind of nice to just have that, I guess, if you're talking about home or how you make yourself

at home or whatever. But I kind of just figure out how to get that kind of, I guess, that experience, without sort of having those things. Like I spend time with my roommates, we hang out, they're my bros. And I guess if I moved again, you know, I would maybe have roommates again. But either way, I kind of always have my own space, my room, whatever, wherever I live, and that's kind of how I feel at home with a new place.

John is able to enact home *in spite of* pressures and desires to eschew the trappings of 'real homes.' He does this through relationships with house mates whom he sees almost in terms of family ("bros") and access to and comfort in private spaces in domestic dwellings ("my own space, my room").

Another participant moves every four to eight months as part of his co-op work term arrangement at university. The pressure to enact home away from home coupled with worries over money for tuition and living expenses and a strong desire to build his professional resume prompts these frequent moves 'away from home.' The moves are exciting, but not without costs. Joseph says:

I move like every other semester. I've gone to three different cities in the past two years. It gets tiring, it gets kind of lonely.

Like Joseph participant, other male participants who enact home away from home often claim that the arrangement offers greater opportunities for adventure and autonomy, but comes with costs. Still, they find ways to enact home in spite of them. For Joseph, enacting home gets easier with each move.

I've kind of learned how to make myself at home, basically very quickly and it's now the same every time: unpack, set up my computer, buy groceries, join a soccer league [laughs.] I've sort of realized I need those few things to kind of just feel at home. Once I do that, I kind of sink my teeth in and it's more fun.

Despite the fact that he finds enacting home away from home to be occasionally burdensome (i.e. tiring and lonely), his account provides evidence to suggest that he has become fairly skilled at enacting home in this context.

Tom's story is also a good example of a participant who negotiates tensions over how to enact home in this way. Tom is a young man whose natal family and household are difficult to both define and locate. His mother passed away when Tom was a boy. His father eventually remarried, but Tom and his stepmother did not get along and Tom says he never felt at home in the natal house. After high school, Tom moved away for university, living in an all-male dormitory and then in a rented house with others. Eventually, he moved to Foyerville to live with his father (who had moved for work) and younger sibling. Soon he found himself on the go again in moving to another part of the province to live with his girlfriend. When that relationship dissolved, he moved back to Foyerville to finally finish his degree. By then, his father and sibling had both returned to the natal community, but Tom stayed on in a rented house. When he is asked to discuss how he enacts home, Tom presents a complex narrative.

Tom: Home is my house, for sure, but I also feel at home, to some degree where I grew up. But at the same time, my father is remarried, my brother moved, so it's not really home anymore. Even when I was there, it wasn't always home because my stepmother and I didn't get along. And now, this is home to some degree, especially my house, I take great pride in that. It's a lot of work, setting up every time, but I've gotten good at it, really good.

At times, young men's efforts to enact home away from home have led not

only to fairly unconventional ways of enacting home, but to *reinterpretations* of home itself. Matt, a young man who purchased a house containing an apartment on the ground floor, explains the specific nature of his house and his relationships to it:

*Matt: I guess home is more supposed to be where you live, like your house, but I don't really believe that: it's more of a feeling than anything and you can get that whether you're in a house or not, on the move, traveling, whatever. I just hated the idea that home was a given, like I would be stuck in here forever, buying a house and settling down and thinking that was it. I think I could make myself at home **anywhere**.*

RS: So how does does your photo represent that for you?

*Matt: When you look at a house, you see something solid. It kind of says you're settled down. Well, to me, it said that I was done for. I didn't even want people to know it was mine for a while. I thought about telling people I was renting it because I knew that as soon as they knew I owned it, every time they looked at it, they would see someone who has given up on change, given up on adventure. Houses don't move. They stay put. And so everyone thinks you're staying put too. They think they have you pegged. But I figured out that if I had it as more of a rental property...I bought a fixer-upper in a low-income neighbourhood so it was way more affordable and there was an apartment downstairs, so I can rent it out. That means I have more flexibility. Or I can sell it, whatever. I can still stay sort of light on my feet and that's what I want. **I feel more at home when I'm not tied down.** I like to be able to move around, or just having the knowledge that I could quit my job and go traveling or whatever. Or even just go back for my Master's. I wouldn't mind having that experience, just to live somewhere else and go to school in another city. Anyway, it's still my house, it's my home, yeah, but it still gives me the ability to just pick up and go.*

Initially, Matt worried that home ownership would draw him into a more fixed living situation. He is recalcitrant about anything he perceives as a threat to enacting home away from home, since he says that he feels more at home when

he is not “tied down” (e.g., engaged with or responsible for a 'real home').

Fortuitously, he has been able to reinterpret the fixed sense of home in a way that allows him the flexibility he desires.



Matt's photo of home: House with basement apartment that he owns. He lives in part of the house and rents the apartment suite to a couple.⁸¹

This section has conveyed the pressure on male participants to enact home only insofar as it does not interfere with their ability to simultaneously be away

⁸¹ This photo has been modified to protect anonymity.

from it. In this context, some participants—usually, but not always Canadian-born participants with greater material resources—say they are easily able to enact home, while others may find themselves expending a great deal of effort to enact home *in spite* of the constraints posed by moving around. It is crucial to ask Germann Molz's (2008) question “Who gets to make home when they travel and under what circumstances?” In comparison to many female participants, male participants say they face greater pressure—and more opportunities—to travel for work and leisure. Yet, between male participants, there is significant variation in the expectations and opportunities they must negotiate. Those with fewer education or employment prospects may not have choices in the matter of enacting home on-the-go. Others, from immigrant families, may feel pressured by peers to leave home and travel, while facing family expectations to stay. For them, enacting home away from home may be shaped by distal obligations to the natal family and household. In this respect, they share something in common with most female participants.

The following section will elaborate on the second major theme emerging from men's narratives. Namely that they say they long to enact home in and around domestic residences, both in doing homework activities that may usually be considered 'feminine,' and in bringing so-called 'non-home,' masculine worlds into domestic settings.

Domesticity and Men at Home

The previous section showed that young men say they feel expected and able to enact home only insofar as it allows them to enact home outside of conventional domestic settings, particularly the natal household and homes they perceive as 'real.' The discussion illustrated how some participants see these expectations as constraining, but enact home in spite of them. Largely owing to cultural/structural circumstances, others are more able to fully embrace these expectations and find ways to enact home through them. But young men from both sides of the experience also say they wish to enact home in terms of domesticity, particularly in and around domestic spaces and, to a more limited degree, through family relationships. This comprises the second major analytic theme drawn from the narratives of male participants, which is men's desire to enact home 'at home'—in and around domestic settings, and sometimes through family relationships. This section will show that male participants enact home 'at home' in two distinct, but overlapping ways. First, they enact home in ways that have typically been considered 'feminine.' Second, they bring so-called 'non-home'/'male/masculine' activities into homes. The section explains both ways of enacting home 'at home,' provides excerpts from interviews to illustrate each and suggests that enacting home in these ways reflects and contributes to an ongoing re-gendering of home.

The idea that male participants wish to enact home not only away from,

but also at 'home,' emerged especially in conversations about how they imagine home *in the future*. It was also obvious in discussions about about how moving away/around shapes the ways, spaces and places in which they enact home.

Consider these examples of their responses.

*Casey: I live at home. It's comfortable. It is. And I know I should probably get out there on my own, but what can I say? I am a homebody. So, in the future? I'll probably not be living in my **parents'** house, but I'll no doubt be living in a house with a family or maybe on my own, but either way, I'm really someone who likes to stick close to home.*

Mac: I'm not gonna lie. I love being at home. I work at home, I love to cook. I have a good eye for what looks good with what. I love that. Is it common for a guy? Even among my friends, who are educated? Maybe not, but I don't think that's gonna change. In the future, I see myself really making a home. Whether that means I have to make a few sacrifices on moving around for my career or maybe just not getting to travel, I don't really care because I equally like being at home as I do having adventures.

*Chris: Definitely when I'm older, I see myself settling down. In a way, that's what I want to do now, but that is **not** how you spend your twenties.*

Such statements show that while women have conventionally been seen as custodians of the home (Cierraad 2010), especially so-called 'real homes' and specifically of those activities and objects that contribute to a sense of homeyness, *both* genders are increasingly implicated in sustaining this ideal (Stanley 2011). Still, men's active role in constructing, repairing and maintaining domestic dwellings is relatively new and may have been initially accepted when it emerged because it did not represent a significant or discernible "gender-role compromise" (i.e. in the same way it might if men were decorating or cooking) (Gelber 1997:

68). The role of 'handyman husband' was especially crucial to mid-twentieth century masculinities for men in nuclear family households. A great deal of their domestic identities as adult males were tied up in the ability to 'do-it-yourself,' a notion he traces partly to the need for post-war frugality.

Increasingly, men can enact home in terms of what Gorman-Murray (2010: 73) calls "masculine domesticities" in which men engage in domestic activities that have been traditionally the purview of women. Gorman-Murray writes that men may also enact home through "domestic masculinities," in which activities—e.g., cooking, cleaning, decorating, entertaining and childcare—that have been conventionally considered more 'male' are carried out inside the sphere of the home (Gorman-Murray 2010: 73). These kinds of domestic labour are gaining increasing acceptance as "masculine lifestyle activities" (Hollows 2003: 230) as men become increasingly 'domesticated.' Nonetheless, such labour requires men to "negotiate its associations with femininity" (ibid), a process that takes place partly by making such tasks more "manly" in diverse settings related to home. In some cases men tend to construct their domestic cooking tasks as leisure (projects or pastimes) rather than work (Kemmer 1999). For better or for worse, they help to rework housework and work done in and around houses as more 'dignified,' and therefore as more appropriate for men (Atwood 2005).

What is the draw to make a domestic context comfortable and meaningful? Understanding home as enacted in terms of sustained, meaningful connections to

domestic dwellings/objects and family relationships, is linked to the cultural study of 'homeyness.' A term first posited by Canadian anthropologist, Grant McCracken (1989), it then referred to a particular, 'cozy,' 'comfortable' feeling produced in part through aesthetic choices in design and ornament of houses. The result is considered to be a place that looks 'lived in.' It is theoretically a context/space in which groups of people (usually families) can and do relax, feel comfortable and even 'be themselves.' For McCracken, such a feeling ties individuals to family, place, time and even to self. Research participants' difficulties in defining homeyness has plagued researchers ever since, but the tie to the idea of a house feeling/looking 'lived in' is consistently noted. In Olesen's research (2010: 35), for instance, a participant described the preferred 'atmosphere' of a home as one that invokes a feeling "that people live there." She argues that participants' idea of atmosphere emphasizes "the domestic space as a dwelling, as the physical locus of social life" (Olesen 2010: 35). Typically, homeyness has not been a neutral concept though, but rather an overtly feminized one (Morley and Robins (1995). It is this so-called feminine affect, that of homeyness, which male participants say they are both pressured to eschew and drawn to enact. As a result, they tend to not to reject it altogether, but instead incorporate it into their efforts to enact home away from and 'at' home. Tom's comments exemplify how male participants sometime engage the concept of 'homeyness' in enacting home at home.

Tom: I have the lease on this house, but I rent out three of the rooms on a short-term basis to graduate students and professionals because then nobody

is here long enough to pass the honeymoon period. It's always changing.

RS: What do you like most about that?

Tom: It's kind of like I don't get too comfortable and neither does anyone else. It's not predictable. It's not too cozy either, though.

RS: So, do you feel like that sort of...lets you straddle that line between being flexible and still having a home that we talked about earlier?

Tom: Yeah. I'm kind of still free to do what I want and I'm not tied to any one kind of home, but at the end of the day, it's still my home. I feel comfortable there and so do the tenants.

Tom's insistence on rotating in new members of his household is extreme in comparison to other male participants. Still, his desire for change and wish to be free from the encumbrance of a predictable and overly homey dwelling and conventional family household structure is emblematic of many of his fellow male participants.

As the chapter has already established, there is a strong *gender* component to how male participants see and enact home. In the context of enacting home at home, much of the conflict participants feel is over these strongly gendered views on possibilities for men at home. "It seems a bit girly, if I can say that, to care so much about what your space is like," Joseph confessed. Andrew agrees, stating that "women sort of like to nest, but men just kind of live." Even among men such as Jason who like to, in his words, "do little things to make myself comfortable," there is still pressure to minimize or hide these activities. Participants tend to

characterize their efforts as “embarrassing” or shake them off with jokes about their hidden “metrosexuality.”⁸²

While much of what these young men do to enact home 'at home' occurs outside conventional domestic, family-based versions of home, other participants do enact home at home and some do so in ways that have been traditionally considered 'feminine,' even when they feel the pressure *not* to. Derek, a young man with a fairly narrow and normative sense of home, provides an example of this conflict:

*Derek: It's hard to admit this because I feel like it's not really what I'm used to, as a guy, from seeing my Dad growing up too, but I am kind of the one who is cleaning and cooking. I actually do **all** the cooking these days because Brenda is either working or studying. So, I kind of hold down the fort.*

RS: What are some of the other things you do to make a home? Do you decorate? Entertain?

*Derek: Well, I do decorate a little. When we moved in, we didn't have a lot of furniture, so I went and picked out the sofa and the chairs. I got the lamps, we needed a new TV, and of course, I got that. I even got the sheets for our bed! I kind of like adding those little touches. It's something I never thought I would do. But I guess because Brenda's so busy and I guess because I kind of **like** doing it.*

RS: Anything else?

Derek: I did cook Sunday dinner for my in-laws a couple weeks ago. It felt really good when they came over and everything turned out really well. All the food was done at the same time, the table was set properly, we had appetizers. And then, the next day, they called and left a message on our answering machine saying that they had a really good time and really

⁸² The word 'metrosexual' is typically used in public discourse to describe an urban, heterosexual man who is concerned with appearance, personal and domestic consumption and other pursuits traditionally considered 'female.' Academic writing concerning this 'emerging masculinity' focuses on the links between masculinities, sexuality and consumption. See Shugart (2008), for example.

appreciated having someone else cook for them.

The work that Derek does *at home*—cooking, cleaning, choosing furniture and household items and hosting—to *make home* might be seen as reinterpreting gendered norms around home by keeping the condo clean and furnished, but also homey through 'adding little touches' and hosting extended family members for a formal dinner. His story illustrates opportunities for changing roles at and around home and homemaking for young men. Even though young men may still feel largely expected to enact home away from home—e.g. away from the natal household, 'real homes' family relationships and the perceived absence of what can be described as 'homeyness'—in practice, they often transgress this expectation. Many male participants *do* enact home in terms of domesticity and family relationships. Take Andrew's comments for instance:

Andrew: It's just not something guys do, care about all that, all the stuff girls care about, matching whatever, nice furniture or whatever, getting together for like tea or whatever girls do.

For Andrew, enacting home inside the conventionally feminized boundaries of domesticity (e.g., home decorating/furnishing; home-based socializing) represents a highly gendered set of activities. Yet, he still finds ways to enact home at home.

RS: So, how do you feel about that? Do you feel like you still have a home? Even though you don't really do the same thing girls and women do?

Andrew: Yeah, I guess. I mean, okay, my roommates and I don't have like movie nights, or anything, which my girl friends do, or whatever, I guess girls also go to the mall and buy stuff for their houses together. We don't really do any of that. But we do kind of make the space how we want it. One guy has a

huge flat screen and we set that up with these huge speakers. We set up the living room to kind of make the maximum viewing situation. We totally have the best living room and there are always people over.

Andrew's narrative reveals that he is not only *aware of* how young women might enact home in a shared housing arrangement, but that these activities are distinct from the ones in which he and *his* house mates engage. All-male house-sharing has rarely been studied. However, in Natalia's (2003) research, young males living in single-sex housing arrangements tended to perform housework in traditionally masculine ways. Some of her participants cared about household work and its effect on their own well-being and the affect of the home, but most viewed it as 'women's work.' This reinforces the point that Andrew's narrative makes. That is to say that although he and his house mates do not enact home in ways he sees as feminine (e.g., shop for items for the home together), they nonetheless enact home. In the example he provides above, these efforts revolve around the shared use and arrangement of a prized object (the flat-screen television) and furnishings in a common space to allow for maximum enjoyment and functionality and utility. They also allow for greater sociability both with members of the household and with others ("there are always people over").

In fact, this also occurred within private spaces in domestic residences (e.g., bedrooms). Wing, a childhood immigrant to Canada and caretaker to his mother and sister, talks about the importance of keeping his laptop in his bedroom.

*Wing: Even when I still lived with my mother and my sister, okay, our apartment was **small**. But I had my laptop in my bedroom. I could have brought it out and let my sister use it. But I just need something for myself. I'm connected to the outside world, but I'm also in my bedroom. Sitting at my desk with my headphones on, listening to music and surfing the web, that's just such a good feeling.*

RS: Would you say it feels like home?

Wing: It does, yeah. It's my mini-home for nobody but me.



Photo similar to Wing's photo of his bedroom, which he terms his 'mini-home,' in the apartment he previously shared with his mother and sister.⁸³

Wing uses his laptop to escape his worries and responsibilities and relax in the

⁸³ This Creative Commons photo has been modified from its original version. Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0). <http://www.flickr.com/photos/xjaysonx/3573250473/lightbox/>.

only private space he has within tight living quarters. Conversely, Andrew, in the previous example, enacts home in and around interactions involving the flat screen television placed in the living room of the home he shares with roommates. In this example, the television serves as a visual and functional anchor point for Andrew's enactment of home.

But the production of homeyness only partly characterizes men's efforts to enact home at home. They also bring the so-called non-home/masculine world into homes what Gorman-Murray calls The most notable way this plays out for participants is through the creation, maintenance and use of what are often described in popular media as man caves⁸⁴ or 'manctuaries.' In other words, they create what Wing (above) calls a mini-home *within* homes. These male-dominated domestic spaces are dedicated areas of typically 'real homes,' but also shared apartments and houses, in which men are free to arrange furniture and objects as they wish, set noise and temperature levels, and engage in male sociability. The rooms are often a 'secondary,' or 'less domestic' space, such as a basement, garage or even a storage structure, but bedrooms also suffice for young men who live alone or in smaller spaces. In the media, male-dominated domestic spaces are typically devoted to so-called 'masculine' pursuits: technology/entertainment (television, video games, Internet), sports (watching or playing), alcohol consumption, music (listening to or playing), hunting and fishing. They may be

84 See Goodman (2008) and Guy Collier (2005), for examples.

decorated in a macho aesthetic (e.g., sports memorabilia, stainless steel, unfinished flooring) and are used for both alone time and to foster male sociability. Such spaces are very much an extension of the early feminist call for women to secure 'a room of one's own' as a place of respite and rejuvenation and as a spatial context for creativity. For male participants, enacting home *at home*—especially given their insistence that they feel simultaneously expected to enact home *away from home*—means having dedicated spaces that are free from the overtly 'feminized' aesthetic/activities that typically characterize 'real homes.' Interestingly, these refuges also provide a kind of insulation from unpaid domestic labour, an insight that may help explain why young men who live in the natal household are often viewed as immature slackers free from the burdens of domestic labour and family obligations. If young men feel or wish to be relegated to dedicated spaces within domestic settings, they may be far removed—physically and otherwise—from the daily life of the household. While there is not yet any scholarly research on the topic, a recent newspaper article presents the perspective of Paula Aymer, an American sociologist. She pointed out that while both men and women wish to have personal retreats within the home, women's are typically more open to 'others,' while men are able to make theirs private.⁸⁵

Male participants also enact home at home in *working from home* (in the sense of paid work). They see both instrumental and relational advantages in

85 Aymer is quoted in Belanger (2005).

doing so. For Maxim, working from home is:

nice because you don't have to leave in the morning, you don't have to worry about all the things [you would worry about] in a job, you have time to goof off, you make your own hours, you can get stuff done around the house too.

Working from home, thus, provides fewer demands coupled with greater autonomy to engage in leisure, unpaid work and paid work in a more fluid fashion *within* domestic spaces. Alex, too, dabbles in working from home and is trying to build a client roster that would allow him to leave his full-time job and pursue his own business. He likes this idea because, in his words, “working from home has big advantages; you get to see your family more...it's just nicer, more humane.” I asked Alex what he meant by “see your family more” and he replied that in working at home, he is naturally at home more. “I have more time to see my girlfriend, more time to Skype my parents, my aunt drops by, I even see friends more.”

In working from home, thus, these participants enact it both in instrumental/material terms (e.g, “you can get stuff done around the house too) and affective (“it's just nicer, more humane”) or relational ones (“you get to see your family more”). The downside of enacting home by working at home is one that women have been decrying for years. Within the walls of family homes—and of 'real homes,' in particular—work becomes invisible. While Maxim and Alex feel connected to the 'non-home world' via their clients and the highly visible nature of the graphic design work they both get paid to do at home, they nonetheless say

that they find it isolating. Admittedly, both these young men are partnered and child free. One lives in a condominium with his wife where responsibility for much unpaid domestic labour is collectivized (through condo fees); the other rents an apartment with his girlfriend, which offers a similar home maintenance-free lifestyle. Neither have children, and the pressures of raising children have been shown to drastically transform the nature of working at home, although this seems to be more problematic for women than for men (Ammons and Markham 2004). Hakim (2002) describes men's relationships to working-at-home as work-oriented, while she shows that for women who have children, the experience of working at home is more often family-oriented. However, findings are mixed. For instance, Marsh and Musson (2008) show that men who work at home oscillate between these orientations and sometimes simply refuse to choose in hoping to 'have it all' (i.e. satisfying and successful at-home work and rewarding, committed family relationships).

In discussing how male participants enact home at home, it is also important to note the ways in which they differ from the young women. As this chapter and the previous one have shown, both young women and men enact home partly at home and they derive gender-specific and overlapping benefits from their practices. However, young women's efforts toward enacting home at home tend to be highly responsabilized. Male participants, conversely, appear freer from the obligations and responsibilities that may be associated with enacting

home at home. As this section has shown, the most telling exception to this trend is found in the stories of the few male immigrant participants in the study (particularly those from two-parent families). For those young men, enacting home at home largely revolves around obligation; however, the costs and benefits they cite are largely reciprocal. As young men, they are cared for by female family members and invited to join family business ventures. In return, they protect and 'watch out for' their families by contributing to the functioning of the natal household and family businesses.

This section has shown that in enacting home 'at home,' male participants both engage in practices of both domestic masculinity and masculine domesticities. Their efforts provide evidence to suggest transformation in roles for men (and between men and women) in and around domestic residences and contribute to the reinterpretation of home itself. It is expected that men will leave home and afterward that they will rarely be fully engaged in 'real homes.' For such participants, home continues to be understood as a place for married couples and their children wherein adult males are still seen largely as *consumers* of home, even as they occupy increasingly complex roles in and around home.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed competing expectations that shape the ways in which male participants understand and enact home. It suggested that they feel

expected and drawn to enact home both away from and at home, including the natal household and 'real homes.' The discussion also showed that the tension is produced differently depending on a variety of factors, including immigration/cultural background and relationships with natal and extended family. For most Canadian-born participants from two-parent households, enacting home takes place both away from and at home, and such participants skillfully enact home in and around distal and mobile opportunities for education, employment and leisure.

For most immigrant participants, intergenerational togetherness is a strongly held value. These participants' families face financial, cultural and transitional constraints that demand the prolonged presence and participation of young people in or near the natal home. For such participants, the conflict over the cultural pressure to 'go' and the family expectation to 'stay' is considerable. This tension is similar to the ones young women in the previous chapter face, except that the order of the primary and secondary expectations are reversed. Immigrant male participants find it challenging to balance familial obligations with the contemporary, middle-class Western expectation on young men to enact home away from home. When they enact home in and around the natal household and family, they risk stigmatization by their Canadian-born peers.

The chapter also revealed how young men negotiate these opposing expectations. In particular, it showed that some participants enact home mostly

'away from home' and that this way of enacting home is perceived varyingly as desirable and burdensome. Others alternate between being away and at home (especially by using the natal home as a 'base'). Still others enact home mostly 'at home'—either in taking on household labour and making dwellings more homey, or by bringing the so-called 'male' world into the domestic sphere, most often in dedicated 'mini-homes' within dwellings. While the degree to which participants feel able to negotiate home(s) in this way varies depending on immigration and family status, the chapter establishes that even participants from non-normative natal families provide examples of this kind of negotiation. It also observes the difference in obligations toward home and family when compared to most female participants. As one male participant states, “I do my own thing. I'm at home wherever I am. I've moved around, now I live here. I make it work.”

For a typical male participant, enacting home is done less in terms of obligation than for similar female participants. He negotiates paths between his various homes and forms of home with less concern for his natal household and family relationships. As a result, he may be as comfortable living hundreds of kilometres from his entire family as his is enacting home at home. He says that he “cannot worry about every little thing to do with family” and claims that he tries just to 'do his thing.' This young man enacts home away from home without much fear or reprisal over his avoidance of the natal household or family relationships. He, consequently, learns to enact home in terms of greater fluidity and flexibility,

but with fewer connections to fixed dwellings, material possessions and important relationships.

Under certain circumstances, he is also often comfortable enacting home at home. *Vis-à-vis* the natal household, he prefers to use it as a 'home base' in which to rest and rejuvenate himself in order to again leave. He tends to enact home in the natal household in 'a room of his own.' The perception that homes, especially 'real homes,' are unmanly, persists for him. Enacting home at home in a dedicated, non-homey or hypermasculinized space and through conventionally male-dominated activities (e.g., use of technology/home media devices, sports and all-male sociability) allows him to reconcile ideas about masculinity with experiences of enacting home at home.

There is another typical young man in this study who cares deeply about homeyness and engages deeply with the idea and practice of 'real homes.' This participant is also comfortable enacting home at home, and although he admits to feeling conflicted over it from time to time, he reconciles his ideas about masculinity by reworking house/home work in ways that he sees as more manly. He cooks—but perhaps he is at the outdoor grill more than the stove top, cleans and decorates without 'getting too girly about it' and is lauded for hosting and entertaining. The work he does to enact home at home is, thus, often re-conceived as leisure and pleasure.

In sum, this chapter explored the unique perspectives of young male

participants. It showed that they feel far less obligated to enact home in and around the natal household or 'real homes', and that, instead, they are faced with expectations to move around. The final section established that they must negotiate often-competing expectations to enact home both 'away from' and 'at' home. The themes presented illustrate the complexities in equating *where young men live with how they make themselves at home* and show that it is imprudent to view male participants' experiences of enacting home only or predominantly in terms of normative home work activities and family relationships.

For some participants, houses and families are not central to their experiences of home. For others, these types of experiences of home are sometimes hidden by young men because they are embarrassed or shy about their activities. Their experiences may also be overlooked because we look for home work activities through a feminized or maternal lens, emphasizing a feminized notion of domesticity and family and glossing over experiences of home that center around mobility, travel and greater fluidity. We also lack a way of seeing the relationships that young men have in and around domestic residences and with family as legitimate experiences of enacting home. This might explain why planners and policy makers worry about increasing numbers of young men living at home; with our current understandings, we have few ways of seeing their protracted tenures in the natal household as legitimate ways of enacting home. But the research shows that they *do* see home as an important presence in their

lives (although they tend to eschew the often ambiguous and esoteric language of home in favour of more functional descriptions of their home work activities) and they defend their home work activities as legitimate and meaningful.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Summary and Contributions

The increasingly protracted and unpredictable nature of young adulthood in contemporary Western culture is becoming ever-more interesting to academics, policymakers, pundits, parents and young people themselves. In Chapter 1, I contended that sociological studies taking this issue as its object of inquiry tend to focus on home and its role in young adulthood in terms of home leaving. Yet, little research has explored the central questions of the project: how young adults enact home, what factors shape their opportunities for doing so and what these experiences mean to their lives. I showed that the absence of serious and robust treatment how home is enacted by young people is a precipitous substantive and ontological omission. Literature on the so-called transition to adulthood is underpinned by assumptions about the categorical discreteness of ages and stages and the normalization of particular life course trajectories. These concepts, in turn, ultimately rest on the larger assumption that young adulthood is primarily a transitional experience—chiefly comprised of moments of fluidity, experimentation and preparation. In such discussions, the concept of home is rarely interrogated and the lived experiences of young people in relation to it are usually not explored. The project's first contribution is to using home as enacted as a starting point for such discussions, thereby opening up possibilities for thinking about and through diverse homes and ways of enacting them and for

elucidating the relationships between them and young people's identities as adults.

Chapter 2 showed that the research also makes unique methodological contributions. The project used a combination of participant-generated digital photographs and photo-elicitation interviews to collect empirical data and construct knowledge about young adults and home. As such, it is an example of social science research that uses mixed and visual methodologies. Visual data is underused across qualitative sociology, which tends to be overwhelmingly weighted toward the use of oral/textual narratives. This research shows that the use of participant-produced photographs can lead to a number of benefits. First, the process of picturing helps initiate in participants the reflexive process, which is especially useful for the extraordinarily high demands for reflection on and articulation of personal experience and narrative that characterize guided, in-depth interviews. In the interview setting themselves, photos can provide a foil for generating data in interactions between participants and researchers. They also afford participants the opportunity for greater participation in the generation of data. They prove especially useful for research projects dealing with esoteric/conceptual subject matter and for interviewing populations who may benefit from alternatives to oral narrative. Finally, photos are themselves poignant sources of analytical insight, especially in conjunction with oral narrative.

The thesis also shows that researchers considering participant-driven

photography-as-methodology should consider the changing roles of photos-as-artifact. The digital nature of participants' photographs and the mobile circumstances of their lives means that they use photos in highly mobile and historically novel ways. They are packed, moved and unpacked, digitally/virtually shared, adopted for use by others and altered to suit the aesthetic and social requirements of participants' various homes. This raises new methodological and ethical questions that visual sociologists and other researchers using participant-driven photography will need to consider.

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5, I presented the main analytical insights, which draw on guided interviews and participant-produced photographs to explore how a group of young, middle-class Canadian adults enact home for themselves. The results revolve around the idea that gender is a central organizing factor for meanings and experiences of home amongst participants. The first observation I made in this context concerns an issue across gender. Specifically, I argue that both young women and young men, from varying ethnic, religious, family and socioeconomic backgrounds, identify a pervasive expectation to understand and enact home as a spacious single-family dwelling occupied by a married couple and their children. Time and again, participants describe this kind of home as 'real' and they consistently distinguish it from other homes, even as they insist on the legitimacy and meaningfulness of the diverse homes they enact in their own lives.

Chapters 4 and 5 expanded on the theme that gender is a central

organizing factor in how participants understand and enact home. For female participants, this means negotiating first the expectation to enact home in and around the natal household and with family members. Second, they say they must also 'make something of themselves' through academic and professional achievement, as well as personal development, viewed broadly in terms of their own households, marriage, motherhood, mobility, travel and friendships. Negotiating these conflicting expectations means that young women must make decisions about how to enact home that allow them to straddle both. They do this by establishing, maintaining and balancing multiple, simultaneous homes.

The chapter also shows that female immigrant participants face exaggerated expectations to conflate home and family. Such participants report feeling obliged to take on responsibilities for family members and they face 'immigrant guilt' over enacting home away from the natal household. The simultaneous pressure to make something of themselves is also heightened for these participants since they must respond both to social/cultural expectations to succeed in higher education and paid work, and to family pressure to succeed in the new culture. On a positive note, female immigrant participants enjoy built-in social networks and a notion of home that allow for greatly geographic fluidity.

For male participants, enacting home is also deeply shaped by gender. They say they feel expected to enact home only insofar that it does not interfere with their ability to leave or 'go away from' home. They say they feel pressured to enact

home away from home, particularly away from the natal home and by avoiding so-called 'real homes.' Some are better equipped to do so than others and find mobility to be conducive to enacting home, especially when the natal household and family provide a kind of 'home base' that can be used for rest and rejuvenation. Other participants struggle to enact home away from home. This is particularly difficult for young men whose natal households and families cannot or do not provide for them the benefits of a 'home base.' It is also problematic for young men from immigrant families who—like nearly all female participants—face familial pressure to enact home in and around the natal household by providing support to parents, siblings and extended family.

Young men also say they feel drawn to enact home 'at home'—i.e. in domestic settings. They do this in two main ways. First, they enact home at home by reworking activities that have been conventionally seen as female/feminine in genuine efforts to contribute to homeyness, but also with the goal of reinterpreting home work as leisure/pleasure. Second, they bring the so-called masculine/non-home world—e.g., institutional aesthetic, sports, entertainment technology and male sociability—into dedicated male-dominated spaces *within* homes.

In negotiating the expectation to enact home away from home with the desire to do so at home, young men tend to enact home away from the natal household and family. Alternately, they feel expected and drawn to enact home at

home, but this takes place largely on their own terms—in home work that has been reconstructed as leisure/pleasure and in male-dominated spaces within homes. To some degree, they are conflicted over their roles in and around home. Yet, they draw on their usually considerable social and material resources to negotiate these increasingly fluid terrains. Consequently, they enact home in ways that transform male roles in and around domesticity, as well as how home is defined and enacted in non-domestic settings.

Participants' narratives and photos mark a specific point in time and reveal information about their own beliefs and behaviours and also the people and circumstances helping shape them. While there are limits to the generalizability of qualitative data of this kind, this research is a valuable starting point in understanding meanings and experiences of home to young adults in wider contexts and to build insights on the powerful role of home in the lives of young people.

Policy Implications

These findings have important implications for current debates in policy and academia, including policy discussions on Canada's changing families. One of the most pressing exigencies is for policy makers to recognize the difficulties young adults face in entering the home owners market. This difficulty reflects increasing emphasis on prolonged enrollment in higher education, challenges in

securing standardized employment and skyrocketing property prices. Policy concerns over boomerang kids could take into account the need for extended financial aid mechanisms in support of students and graduates, including widespread tuition reduction, expansion of current federal student grant policies for low and middle-income students and debt relief for young people carrying insurmountable student loans. There could also be greater and specific social support for young adults who are unemployed or underemployed, especially in light of the mounting student debt loads mentioned above. Finally, federal government policies on housing could provide greater assistance to adults in securing a range of affordable accommodation, both rented and owned.

Policy-makers may also be concerned with the more subtle, intersectional findings of this project. In particular, the experiences of female immigrant participants cannot be ignored, since they may face exaggerated obligations to the natal family and household in relation to both their immigrant male counterparts and Canadian-born females. At the same time, their stories provide useful insights for the *benefits* of close family ties, especially in terms of their role in helping immigrant youth attend and complete higher education. Branches of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, like the one that houses the Canada Student Loans and Grants Programs, could partner with Citizenship and Immigration Canada Policy, to develop programs in support of immigrant youth and their goals for both higher education and family-centered living.

Research Implications and Future Work

What does it mean to make ourselves at home? How is the ongoing work we do at and around home related to emerging and changing adult identities? While the meaning of practice of home varies wildly, scholars of home are nearly always in agreement that the linkage between home and self is often so strong that each can come to *represent* the other (Chapman and Hockey 1999). Such a view presumes that as dwellings evolve into homes, so do the individuals enacting them emerge as particular kinds of characters. While this project has not aimed to build knowledge on issues of identity per se, it nonetheless generated data to support the broad idea that individuals and homes are co-constituted, especially in terms of gender and adult identities. In future projects, it would be prudent to launch an investigation into the full range of the multi-directional and affective relationships between young people, identity and home. This would allow for greater understanding of how young adults make *themselves* in making *themselves at home*.

Several other foci should also be explored in future work. Namely, research on meanings and experiences of home for young people would benefit from a more complex class-based analysis, including more diversity in the socioeconomic backgrounds of participants. This focus would particularly benefit from attention to the intersections between class and gender/sexual orientation, ethnic

background and immigrant status. Future research might also more explicitly investigate meanings and experiences of home for young adults whose natal families or households were/are less normative in terms of both family structure and stability. Many participants in this study, grew up in intact nuclear family households. Future research might pay greater attention to the role of diverse family/household structures, including lone parent or step-family households, multi-generational households and transnational families with high mobility or dual residences/citizenship. Many young people also grow up in environments that are less supportive or characterized by relatively greater conflict. Their effects on how young people understand and enact home should be explored in greater detail. There is also room to more carefully study the role of regional and geographic differences—including comparisons between rural/remote regions, towns/mid-sized cities and major urban metropolitan areas—in how young people understand and enact home.

Finally, future research should explicitly elucidate the unique experiences of young adults who are fully autonomous in terms of understanding and enacting home. Many young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine are not in school, at home or even living close to the parental home. Their voices are rarely heard in public discussions about where, when and how young people make themselves at home.

Closing

This research tells a story about the pervasiveness of dominant discourses about home and how individuals in a sample of middle-class, educated young adults confront these discourses in their own lives. It also tells two more specific stories, the themes within which are rooted in intersecting issues relating to gender. For the young women, the story is perhaps not surprising. They experience home partly in terms of a 'squeeze.' That is to say that they feel pressure to care for and be close to natal and extended families, households and communities, while simultaneously enacting their own versions of home that include varying combinations of marriage, parenthood, education professionalism and social life. Many confess to feeling burdened by this set of circumstances, which are, more or less, known as the 'double shift' in feminist conversations on work, family and home. But there is an additional dimension to their burden, which is that such multiple, simultaneous experiences of home tend to be geographically scattered, and so, they must negotiate the associated demands in a way that transcends space and place. For the most part, participants in this sample negotiate this tricky terrain with a good deal of skill and creativity, even as they negotiate complex demands relating to home and family.

The story about young men is also complex. While masculinity has typically been defined in terms opposing home, the young men's narratives suggest that this is changing. For them, there are at least two ways of being 'at home' in terms

of domesticity and family. The first can be understood in terms of participants' contributions to work that has typically been done by women, such as cleaning, cooking, decorating, coordinating social activities and caring for household members. The second is rooted in the masculine appropriation of parts of the so-called feminine sphere of domesticity. This can be observed in the creation, maintenance and deep attachment of male-dominated spaces within domestic dwellings that are decorated in specifically 'non-feminine' ways and devoted entirely to the mostly solitary pursuit of typically masculine activities.

Media coverage of young people 'living at' or 'moving back' home tends to report on the trend as if it were a widespread phenomenon, affecting all young adults in the same way. Rarely, do newspaper reports interrogate, for instance, issues of gender, even though a quick scan at the subjects of such interviews suggests that they are nearly always young men. Photographs and illustrations that accompany these stories, furthermore, almost always picture young men and rarely depict females. The images typically show the young males in positions of extreme and regressive entitlement, sleeping in their childhood bedrooms until late afternoon, surrounded by the material trappings of youth, engaging in juvenile activities, wearing stereotypically youthful clothing, eating at 'Mom's dinner table' or hitting Dad up for money.

Such images provide an unjust portrait of young men and home by obscuring the number of contributions many young men, including the relatively

unique contributions of *immigrant* men, make to their natal households and other homes. They also virtually obliterate the experience of young women who live in the natal household and living at home is oversimplified as a kind of extended performance of the adolescent male role.

The recent constant media and scholarly attention on what has come to be called intergenerational co-residence also obfuscates the other, equally important ways in which young people make home. As this research shows, while many young people are living at home longer and returning to it more often, others enact home in different ways—on their own, with roommates or partners, distally rather than proximally, through family connectedness without physical togetherness, multiply, simultaneously, skillfully, independently, cooperatively, creatively and in terms of increasing responsabilisation, especially amongst young women.

Admittedly, as scholars, we often oversimplify the issues surrounding young people and home in much the same way. The insights contained in the thesis point to a deep cultural shift amongst younger cohorts and their families away from the blind and increasingly fruitless pursuit of 'real homes' and toward ones that are *really home* in terms of their connection with an ever more diverse collection of spatial and relational experiences in which young people engage in making themselves at home. The research provides evidence that, given that young adulthood is a life course period freighted heavily with expectations about the

development of independent households and lives, it offers a particularly rich opportunity for not only enacting, but reinterpreting home. Young people should be encouraged and supported—through family, community and policy interventions—to rework home and homework in ways that make sense within the changing structural, social and cultural contexts in which they live their lives.

Appendix A – Photo-elicitation Interview Guide

To provide starting points for and help guide discussions with participants, I developed a Photo-elicitation Interview Guide. The questions were designed to allow participants to both reflect on how their photographs are related to their experiences of home and provide opportunities to reflect on home and its role in their young adult lives in broader contexts.⁸⁶

Photo-elicitation Interview Guide

Photograph

Tell me about this picture...

Introduction/Demographic Information

1. So, how did you end up in Foyerville? How long have you been here?
2. Do you think you'll stay here for a long time?
3. Is it 'home' for you? [Do you feel like you belong here? Does it make you feel 'at home?']
4. Where is 'home'? Do you feel you have one?
5. What are your plans now that you have graduated from university/after university? Will you be working? Attending graduate school? Something else? Staying put or leaving?

⁸⁶ As discussed in Chapter 5, some questions had to be slightly revised in order to respond to men's needs for broader, less obviously 'feminized' language around the concepts of home and home work. The revised versions appear in square brackets.

Seeing and Enacting Home

6. What does it mean to you to 'make yourself at home'? [Don't feel you have to talk about the kind of stuff that you might think of as traditional. Making yourself at home doesn't have to be all about throw pillows and curtains. It can be anything you do from setting up your computer, to decorating your room, to mowing the lawn, to throwing parties.]
7. When you move to a new place, what are the very first things you do in your new apartment or house? In your new neighborhood? New school or place of work?
8. Tell me about how your ideas of 'home' have changed since you graduated from high school. [Even if you don't think about the idea of home very much, can you remember what it seemed like when you graduated from high school? What about maybe how you might see it in the future? Do you think it has anything to do with your life right now? What about maybe thinking outside of literal houses and families? Do you maybe feel at home in other settings? Like at school or maybe with friends?]
9. How do you imagine 'home' for yourself in the future? [Remember, it doesn't have to be thinking about home in the literal sense of a house or a family. It can be whatever it is to you.]
10. Tell me a little bit about your experiences of home or of 'making yourself at home' that aren't related to where you live. For example, you could talk about being 'at home' with a group of people, an organization, at work, in a city or a neighborhood, or even just in your own body.

Home and Moving

11. How did you feel about 'leaving home' for the first time?
12. Do you move around a lot? Why or why not?

13. Do you feel like you *have to* move around a lot? For work? Any other reason?

14. How do you think moving or staying put affects your sense of belonging? Do you feel connected to your neighborhood? Your family? Friends? Place of work? Other people?

15. Are your social networks scattered or mostly in one place?

16. How does it feel to move to a new place? How do you feel once you have lived somewhere for a while?

Home and Adulthood

17. How important is home to *becoming* adult? How important is it to *being* adult? Keeping in mind that you can think of home however you like. It doesn't necessarily have to be about a house or a family.

18. How do you define adulthood?

19. What events, experiences, achievements, or relationships have been important to your 'becoming' an adult?

20. Does one ever fully reach adulthood?

Closing

21. Is there anything else you'd like to say about the picture or anything at all you would like to add?

Appendix B – Who Are the Participants?

Pseudonym	Age Range	Citizenship of Origin	Location(s) of Natal Household	SES of Natal Household	Present Household	School/Work Status
Albert	24-26	Indian & Canadian	Foyerville	Middle upper	Natal household	Grad student & part-time teaching assistant
Ali	18-20	Iranian	Foyerville	Upper middle	Natal household	Undergrad student & works nearly full-time in the family business
Amanda	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle lower	Natal household until grad, just got own apt	Part-time retail industry worker retail setting (Bachelor grad)
Angela	24-26	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle lower	Natal household	Undergrad student
Austin	24-26	American & Canadian	Foyerville	Upper	Rented apt w/ roommate	Post-grad student and working full-time at an internship
Brooke	24-26	Canadian	Rural Maritimes	Middle	Natal household, then rented apt with husband	Grad student & part-time teaching assistant
Casey	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household	Undergrad student
Derek	27-29	Canadian	Foyerville	Upper middle	Natal household, then rented apt w/ friends, now living in a condo with his wife	Full-time knowledge industry worker (Bachelor grad)
Joseph	21-23	Chinese & Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household	Working in a paid co-op program position, undergrad student
Kate	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Upper middle	Natal household	Undergrad student
Laura	24-26	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household	Undergrad student

Pseudonym	Age Range	Citizenship of Origin	Location(s) of Natal Household	SES of Natal Household	Present Household	School/Work Status
Krista	27-29	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household, now own a house w/ husband and have a child	Full-time knowledge industry worker (Bachelor grad)
Magda	27-29	Eastern European	Western Canada	Middle	Natal household, then rented apt	Full-time knowledge industry worker (Bachelor and Master's grad)
Melina	24-26	Canadian	Central Canada	Middle	Natal household, then dormitory	Undergrad student
Sarah	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household	Undergrad student
Sophia	27-29	Indian & Canadian	Foyerville India, Central Canada	Middle	Natal household	Runs family business (Bachelor grad, dropped out of Master's program)
Wing	21-23	Chinese	China, Foyerville	Working	Rented room and now rented apt	Undergrad student
Yong	18-20	Chinese & Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household	Undergrad student
Andrew	21-23	Canadian	Central Canada	Middle upper	Rented apt w/ roommates	Undergrad student
Chris	18-20	Canadian	Eastern Canada	Middle	Rented apt w girlfriend	Undergrad student & part-time service industry worker
Colin	24-26	Canadian	Central Canada	Middle	Rented apt	Full-time professional
Emily	18-20	Canadian (1 st gen)	Urban Western Canada	Upper middle	Dormitory, then rented apt	Undergrad student & part-time health care industry worker
Elizabeth	27-29	Canadian	Central Canada	Upper middle	Rented apt w/	Post-grad student and part-time professional

Pseudonym	Age Range	Citizenship of Origin	Location(s) of Natal Household	SES of Natal Household	Present Household	School/Work Status
					roommates	(Bachelor grad)
Gita	18-20	Canadian	Central Canada	Upper middle	Rented apt w/ roommates, then rented apt w/ sister	Undergrad student
Holly	21-23	Canadian	Western Canada	Middle	Dormitory	Undergrad student & part-time research assistant
Jamie Lynn	18-20	Canadian	Eastern Canada	Middle	Dormitory	Undergrad student & part-time service industry worker
Jason	27-29	Canadian	Eastern Canada	Working	Owned house	Full-time professional (Bachelor and Master's grad)
Jennie	18-20	Canadian	Central Canada	Upper middle	Dormitory	Undergrad student
John	18-20	Canadian	Eastern Canada	Working	Rented room	Dropped out of undergrad, contract building industry worker
Julia	23-23	Italian & Canadian	Foyerville	Upper middle	Rented apt	Undergrad student
Liz	24-26	Chinese	Hong Kong, Central Canada, Western Canada	Upper middle	Rented apt w/ roommates	Full-time knowledge industry worker (Bachelor and Master's grad)
Mac	224-26	Canadian	Eastern Canada	Lower middle	Rented apt before high school graduation, now rented apt w/ wife	Graduate student & part-time teaching assistant
Marusa	27-29	Canadian & Eastern European	Western Canada	Lower middle	Rented apt w/ husband	Graduate student & part-time teaching assistant

Pseudonym	Age Range	Citizenship of Origin	Location(s) of Natal Household	SES of Natal Household	Present Household	School/Work Status
Pierre	24-26	Canadian	Urban Quebec	Middle	Rented apt w/ roommate	Undergrad student
Tom	27-29	Canadian	Eastern Canada, Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt w/ roommate, then moved to ON with father, now renting a house and subletting rooms	Dropped out of undergrad, eventually finished, now unemployed
Alex	24-26	Canadian	Quebec, Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt w/ girlfriend	Full-time knowledge industry worker (College grad)
Annie	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt w/ roommates	Undergrad student
Brendan	24-25	American & Canadian	Foyerville	Middle upper	Dormitory	Undergrad student
Corrie	24-26	Canadian	Foyerville	Lower middle	Rented apt w/ roommates	Full-time public relations industry worker (Bachelor undergrad)
Peter	21-23	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt w/ roommates	Undergrad student
Donnie	21-23	Canadian	Foyerville	Lower middle	Dormitory	Undergrad student
Heather	27-29	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household, then rented apt	Full-time knowledge industry worker (Bachelor grad)
Jennica	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Dormitory	Undergrad student
Jeff	24-26	Canadian	Rural area near Foyerville	Lower middle	Girlfriend's natal household, then	Full-time health care industry worker (Bachelor grad)

Pseudonym	Age Range	Citizenship of Origin	Location(s) of Natal Household	SES of Natal Household	Present Household	School/Work Status
					rented apt w/ gf	
Karen	24-26	Canadian	Foyerville	Lower middle	Dormitory	Undergrad student
Liam	18-20	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle lower	Rented apt w/ roommates	Undergrad student & part-time employee at landscaping company
Matt	27-29	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt	Full-time education industry worker (Bachelor and post-graduate grad)
Maxim	27-29	Canadian	Central Canada	Upper middle	Rented apt	Self-employed high tech worker (Bachelor grad)
Peter	21-23	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt w/ roommates	Undergrad student
Rachel	21-23	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Rented apt w/ boyfriend, then natal household w/ infant daughter	Undergrad student, graduating soon and moving away for grad school
Ruth	21-23	Canadian	Foyerville	Middle	Natal household, then rented apt	Post-grad student
Stefania	21-23	Eastern European & Canadian	Foyerville	Middle upper	Rented apt w/ roommate	Undergrad student

Appendix C – Self-Piloting the Interview Guide

The kind of narrative inquiry in which this project engages (one that takes narrative as both the object of study and the method of inquiry⁸⁷) typically includes an autobiographical account of the researcher's own relationship to the project.⁸⁸ But while researcher reflexivity is well-established in *situating* research projects, it is a rarely-used tool for *doing* social science research. However, Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue that autoethnography can both help researcher reflect on their own biases and provide readers with a greater understanding of how they shape subsequent analyses. They argue that this form of intellectually reflective biography can “display multiple levels of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 739) in a way that no other kind of inquiry or genre of writing can.

Thus, before launching the pilot phase of this research, I asked a colleague to test the guide I had developed using me as a participant. We went through the interview again in these same roles once the guide had been refined through the pilot interviews. This process was intended mostly to help reveal about my own assumptions about my objects and methods of inquiry. Note that the interview was not systematically included in the data analysis process, as I was obviously not part of the study and did not want my own narrative to push actual

88 To this end, I provided basic personal details in Chapter 2; however, I did not provide a complete account of the links between my own experiences and the empirical/intellectual puzzles that inform the project. The degree to which the latter is emphasized in qualitative studies tends to vary greatly.

participants into the margins.⁸⁹

Below is my photograph of home and an abridged version of the transcript from the final interview between my colleague (as interviewer) and myself (as participant). Note that I was living in Ottawa at the time of the interview.

Photo-elicitation Interview with Riva Soucie



Photograph

89 See Edwards and Ribbens (1998) for a discussion on the potential problem (and others) of turning narrative inquiry back onto oneself in qualitative research projects.

1. Tell me about this picture...

This is a picture of the blender my father gave my mother when she got pregnant with my older brother. She had told him that if she ever had a baby, she'd want to make her own baby food and would need a blender, so he got her one as a baby present. My brother is in his thirties now, so the blender is pretty old.

Why it is home to you?

Because when I was growing up, it was on the counter the whole time and both my parents used it all the time, even before they were popular. And when I went to university, they gave it to me, which was really, really sweet. It's moved with me from place to place and it makes me feel at home when I unpack it and put it on my counter and hear it whirring when I'm using it.

My parents both had pretty messed up home situations, so there aren't a lot of heirlooms, but this blender has been around for a long time and it really represents home for me.

Introduction/Demographic Information

2. So, how did you end up in Ottawa? How long have you been here?

I've been here since 2002 on and off and full-time since 2005. I came here initially because my boyfriend was doing a co-op term here. Then I came back after undergrad for the summer and lived with my brother who had just bought a house here. My boyfriend came too because he had a job with the government. Then I went to Toronto for my Master's and came back here to finish my thesis the second year. I ended up getting a good offer from Carleton for my PhD, so I stayed for that and to be with my boyfriend.

3. Do you think you'll stay here for a long time?

I do. It really feels like home. I have a lot of friends, some family here, I feel safe here, I like it. Doing my PhD, I probably won't be moving anytime soon and my partner has a job here. Eventually, we want to travel, maybe for his work. But we'll probably always see Ottawa as our base.

4. Is it 'home' for you? [Do you feel like you belong here? Does it make you feel 'at home'?]

*It certainly feels more like home than anywhere I've ever lived, especially my neighbourhood. We bought a condo in 2007 and we have amazing neighbours and the area is really walkable with amazing stores and restaurants and a really great sense of community. I'm from the Maritimes and I never felt totally at home there. I feel **so much more** at home in a bigger province.*

5. Where is 'home'? Do you feel you have one?

*Well, I do feel **at home** in Ottawa, but I don't know if it's really my home. People here don't really know me. I don't have a history. Home seems a bit bigger to me, like a bigger concept. So, I don't really know if I **have** a home. New Brunswick doesn't feel like home. My parents' place doesn't feel like home, especially since they sold the house I grew up in and moved into a tiny trailer. I guess I would say I feel **at home** in Ottawa and in my condo, but even that is kind of iffy because it has some issues that I don't like.*

You said certain things about your condo are 'iffy.' What do you mean by that?

Well, it's on a really busy corner with a lot of windows, so we get a lot of street noise and light and it's pretty cold in winter from the big windows. So, it's hard to feel cozy. Also, it's the first place my partner and I have lived together for more than a year, so we are learning to compromise on decorating ... and everything else!

Plus, he got really sick a couple months after we moved in and that's really coloured how I feel about the place. It's been more of a hospital for most of the time we've lived there.

6. What are your plans now that you have graduated from university/after university? Will you be working? Attending graduate school? Something else? Staying put or leaving?

I'm pretty sure I'll be in university for a long time still. I guess afterward, we'll be staying because of his job. It's a really good job and we couldn't afford to leave it. But we do want to travel and hopefully for work, so we would get

paid to do it. I could get a job anywhere and he could take a leave of absence or he could get transferred with his job.

Seeing and Enacting Home

7. What does it mean to you to 'make yourself at home'? [Don't feel you have to talk about the kind of stuff that you might think of as traditional. Making yourself at home doesn't have to be all about throw pillows and curtains. It can be anything you do from setting up your computer, to decorating your room, to mowing the lawn, to throwing parties.]

*I guess, for me, it's just about relaxing and feeling comfortable. For a long time, I didn't always feel like I could be myself, not in my parents' house growing up and not growing up in a rural, isolated part of the province. In Ottawa, I feel like I'm sort of with **my people**, if you know what I mean. This feels like I place where I can be myself.*

So, it sounds like you have a really good idea of what makes you feel at home. What are the things you **do** to kind of make this happen?

Well, I set things up the way I want them, I try to meet people and make new friends, I try to make appointments I need, like get a new dentist, have the phone company come in and hook up the phone, everything, really. It's pretty complicated, how you make yourself at home. It's no simple process or one formula.

9. When you move to a new place, what are the very first things you do in your new apartment or house? In your new neighborhood? New school or place of work?

The first thing is to unpack and arrange the furniture and then I hang pictures. I also have to have my phone hooked up right away, so I can call my mother. Once I've talked to my mother and had a long bath and maybe something to eat, I feel more at home. If it's a new city altogether, I guess there's getting groceries for the first few times, finding out the best places to buy food and also meeting people and making friends. That's huge, to have a social circle. When I first moved back to Ottawa, I knew like three people and it felt like the loneliest place in the world.

10. Tell me about how your ideas of 'home' have changed since you graduated

from high school. [Even if you don't think about the idea of home very much, can you remember what it seemed like when you graduated from high school? What about maybe how you might see it in the future? Do you think it has anything to do with your life right now? What about maybe thinking outside of literal houses and families? Do you maybe feel at home in other settings? Like at school or maybe with friends?]

Well, I grew up in a really small town with less than two hundred people, so I had a pretty different idea of home than I do now. I thought I would probably stay in New Brunswick my whole life, definitely get married in my twenties to someone from nearby and build a nice house near my parents. I didn't really have a desire to move around or see the world at all. When I graduated, I lived with my parents for a year and worked at a factory. When I was applying for school, for university, I applied to a nutrition program, but I felt like it was too far away from home, so I ended up going to UNB. It's kind of funny now because I love moving around and traveling. I do like staying put in Ottawa though, but I still can see myself moving around more. But at the time, my whole world was there. I kind of see myself being at home in more urban settings now, with more diversity.

10. How do you imagine 'home' for yourself in the future? [Remember, it doesn't have to be thinking about home in the literal sense of a house or a family. It can be whatever it is to you.]

*Well, right now, my boyfriend and I are looking for a big piece of land, I guess, a building lot, because we want to build a duplex with my brother and his wife. We all still want to live here; we just want to pool our money, so we can build what we want and live side-by-side. But it might not happen, it's actually really hard to do. Anyway, I don't feel like I **have** to live in a house in the future, but it would be nice. I can't imagine living away from Ottawa, but at the same time, it would be fun to move around too. I think I'll always see Ottawa as kind of my home base in a way.*

11. Tell me a little bit about your experiences of home or of 'making yourself at home' that aren't related to where you live. For example, you could talk about being 'at home' with a group of people, an organization, at work, in a city or a neighborhood, or even just in your own body.

It's interesting because I would say I never really felt completely at home until I moved to this neighbourhood. I'm pretty good at adapting to any type of

situation, but feeling that deep sense of belonging didn't really happen until I lived here. Although maybe to some extent, I felt that in fleeting moments when I was a kid, at my parents' church or maybe on their farm. But I guess I have a different sense of it now.

Home and Moving

13. How did you feel about 'leaving home' for the first time?

It wasn't easy. It was kind of weird. I had been living with my parents since high school grad, so for another year, and I didn't want to go far away from home, that seemed really scary and impossible. So, I went to UNB, which is like an hour and a half from where I grew up. My best friend was already there living in the dorm I was moving into. So, I didn't feel too scared, but looking back, I was really unprepared and I didn't want my parents to help me at all, which I regret because they would have done anything to help me.

14. Do you move around a lot? Why or why not?

I've moved a fair bit, but not compared to some people I know who have lived in Africa or Southeast Asia. I moved a bit with my boyfriend in undergrad because he was in co-op. He got a co-op job in Whistler and moved there and then I went out to live with him in the summer and actually went back on my own the next summer. Then we moved to here for the same reason and came back when we had graduated and didn't have anywhere to live, so we moved in with my brother. After that, I moved to Toronto on my own for my Master's. And then I moved here. So, there's been a lot of moving for school and work, but then we stayed in Ottawa for a while. But I've lived in quite a few places since I've been here!

15. Do you feel like you have to move around a lot? For work? Any other reason?

To some degree, I guess school and work have been the main reasons I've moved. But now that my boyfriend has a government job and I'm in a PhD program, we'll be staying put for a while. When I graduate, I have no idea what will happen. If I want to teach, we'll probably have to move, but it would be hard for him to give up his job and hard to leave Ottawa, unless it was kind of temporary.

16. How do you think moving or staying put affects your sense of belonging? Do you feel connected to your neighborhood? Your family? Friends? Place of work? Other people?

I think growing up in a small town was kind of stifling. I had a lot of the same friends all through childhood and nothing ever changed. When I started moving around, it was ironic that that's when I really started to feel like I belonged. I felt it in Toronto, like I was in the right place. I never would have believed it because, growing up, Toronto was the place everyone referenced when they were talking about something really exotic. Like it was so crazy. Anyway, now, yeah, I feel really connected to where I live and my friends and people in my life. Maybe not as much to my family, but that's kind of a good thing sometimes and it doesn't make me feel any less at home.

17. Are your social networks scattered or mostly in one place?

Mostly in Ottawa, but I have friends out West, Toronto, New Brunswick, my husband has family in England, my parents are still back East. But even in Ottawa, I have networks in a lot of places, at school, in my condo building, my neighborhood, other friends who live downtown, friends from back home who live here now, writers, friends from my boyfriend's sports teams and a couple we're close to from his work. I think that's huge to making me feel at home, having a lot of connections. I guess not everyone needs that, but I really feel sort of embedded in Ottawa the more people I know and things I do.

18. How does it feel to move to a new place? How do you feel once you have lived somewhere for a while?

*It depends on the place and why I'm moving. I've lived in some pretty awful places, so it felt terrible to move there. I've also lived in some amazing situations, so it was easier to feel at home faster. It takes me about eight months to start to really feel at home somewhere, well, not **really** feel, but feel a little bit more comfortable. I start to feel like I'm in more of a groove.*

Home and Adulthood

19. How important is home to becoming adult? How important is it to being adult? Keeping in mind that you can think of home however you like. It

doesn't necessarily have to be about a house or a family.

*This is my favourite question. I think about this a lot. I think for a lot of people, I know the **house** is the big thing. Everyone starts off with a condo because they're cheaper and you can't really justify anything bigger until you're thinking of having kids, but eventually people want to upgrade to a house. I can see why in a way because people kind of still see you as a kid if you're renting or they don't take you as seriously as an adult if you don't have a house. There are other things that add to it. Like you're taken more seriously if you're married than if you're single or if you have kids versus not having kids. But the house is definitely a big one even with my friends who don't have partners or kids. They all want a house and they'll pay the whole mortgage themselves if they have to in order to have it.*

But I don't really just think of home as a house, even though that's kind of how a lot of my friends do. I think of it, I guess, kind of finding your way, but it doesn't have to be an actual physical place, I don't think. But can you be an adult without that? Yeah, I think so. I guess being an adult is more about taking responsibility and it doesn't have to have anything to do with a house itself, but it is kind of about finding your way. Maybe about finding your way home?

20. How do you define adulthood?

*I don't really. I think it's an idea we have that maybe has kind of outdated meanings even though we talk about different generations and how adulthood is changing and stuff, but I think maybe our ages and stages categories are kind of irrelevant now. But thinking not as an academic? I guess it's kind of qualitatively different than childhood, but it's hard to pinpoint when someone has kind of **become** an adult because there are lots of times when you, as an adult, act like a child. Like acting like really petulant after a fight with your partner, or being sort of goofy sometimes or making bad decisions with money, does that mean we're not an adult? Or not being responsible for the bills? What if your spouse does that? Or like the times when you're feeling like a child because you're really sad? Or scared? It's silly to think that adults are like **this** and children are like **this**. Because a lot of kids have to deal with very grown up issues. Some kids have far greater emotional sophistication than a lot of thirty year-olds I know. Anyway, I don't think that was really thinking like a non-academic, but what I'm trying to say is that I think the concept is a bit strange and I bet a lot of my friends agree with me. None of us*

are looking to become adults, that's what our parents are. We just want to be autonomous and independent without having to be totally responsible and completely conservative all the time. I guess it's kind of how girls today don't want to use the word feminism because they see it as kind of loaded.

21. What events, experiences, achievements, or relationships have been important to your 'becoming' an adult?

When my boyfriend had a surgery and I was up in the middle of the night, after everything else had been done, he'd eaten, taken his meds, finally got to sleep, I had the laundry going, the dishwasher was done, I updated everyone on his progress, the cat was fed, everything was done and it was two am and I was washing something in the sink. It was really quiet, except for maybe a car going by and I was standing there with the cold water running and scrubbing and scrubbing and thinking 'I'm really a grown-up now.' It wasn't moving in together or buying the condo or starting a PhD or publishing my writing or any of the other big things. It was a really small act that was difficult and lonely, but it needed to be done and I was the one to do it. So, at the same time, it felt kind of good. I felt things shift.

The other big kind of moment was the first time I had lived very far from home in Whistler. One morning, I was walking to the bus stop to go to work and I just realized how grown up I had become. Moving out there, against my parents' wishes, sort of running a house with Adam, finding a job and loving it, doing really well out there, even though it was really hard to stick it out before I had a job. It all kind of made me really happy and feel really independent. So, I guess that one is more sort of a traditional reason to feel like an adult. Overall, I guess I kind of reached adulthood through a bunch of little events and big ones, building up. But that doesn't mean I'm fully adult, I don't know if that ever happens.

22. Does one ever fully reach adulthood?

Maybe in moments, but then we do something that doesn't really fit the mold, so are we kids again for a brief time? And what about being really old, when we retire or, for my parents, if I help them out with money in the future, would that mean they're no longer adults?

Appendix D – Ethical Challenges in Using Photographs

In studies involving visual methods, ethical challenges can be great, so much so that visual ethics are already being recognized as a subfield of visual studies (Mitchell 2011). In this research, participant-generated images were associated with two distinct ethical challenges, which warrant attention in similar studies. The first are challenges around **ownership** and **privacy** of photographs. I asked participants to take digital photographs specifically for the purposes of the study, to send me a digital copy of the photograph, and, if possible, to bring a hard copy to the interview. However, the act of production occurred outside my presence and so it is not possible to know whether or not participants actually produced the photographs themselves or if they borrowed them from other sources (e.g., the Internet, a friend or family member), a form of ownership van den Hoonaard and van den Hoonaard (forthcoming) call 'derived.' I suspected this issue in only one case, in which a participant had taken a photo of an easily recognizable public building. The photograph itself appeared to be original; however, the name on the digital file in which it was stored was inconsistent with the participant's personal identifiers. I was unsure of whether or not to ask her about the file name, as I had worked hard to build up a trust with this participant (one of the youngest and least talkative in the study). Fortunately, she explained that the computer had automatically named the file according to the default settings on the computer onto which she uploaded it. The computer belonged to her roommate and was programmed to name all photo files beginning with her

first name. This was a fortunate resolution to a possible dilemma over ownership; however, it would behoove researchers using participant-produced photographs to be aware of possible dilemmas over ownership and privacy of participant-generated images (see Guillemin and Drew 2010).

The second challenge is related to the sticky issue of **anonymity**. While I made participants aware of the steps I took to ensure their anonymity, I also stressed that I could not *guarantee* it (given that photos are more difficult to anonymize than text). Additionally, I asked participants to avoid taking/providing photographs that could be used to identify others (e.g., depicting clear, close-up faces, recognizable buildings or places). However, there was little I could do to prevent them from doing so and some ignored my instruction, claiming that such depictions were unavoidable for them in showing how they experience or enact home. Protecting the privacy of non-participants became especially challenging when participants' narratives provided further corroborating information on the identities of others.

Photographs hinting at others' identities can become *particularly* problematic when they are posted online (e.g., on Facebook or a personal blog). Participants were asked to produce photographs specifically for the purpose of the study and the photographs had to be digital. Yet, some participants chose not to produce *new* photographs, but instead, submitted family photos that, in a couple cases, participants had taken from their Facebook pages pages. Another

participant provided a photograph of his house, which he used in online advertisements for renting rooms in his house (in this case, the photo was posted to Craigslist several times a year). I quickly came to realize that I could not count on participants to keep their photographs private (Pauwels 2008; van House 2011) and I explained that while I was taking pains to ensure anonymity, the public display of photographs used in the study would make this more difficult. None of these participants expressed any concern over this admission. Perhaps this should not be surprising, given that some research participants, especially children and young people, may not value anonymity and may even wish for their participation to be made known (Grinyer 2002). The ethical dilemmas around participants having their own copies of the visual, digital data they provide are complex. Digital files are easily sharable and they can last forever, unlike paper photographs or transcripts, which deteriorate over time. Additionally, in asking participants to digitally share photos via email or print them in hard copy, they retain the original records of their imagery. Thus, researchers upon whom it was formerly incumbent to destroy original records, face a loss of control. On the other hand, this also disrupts the traditional researcher/participant hierarchy and provides participants with greater control over their voices.⁹⁰

The popular way of anonymizing people in photographs is to blur or hide faces or simply place a black line or box across the eyes or eyes and mouth. I find

⁹⁰ Van den Hoonaard (2003) asks what the customary promise by researchers to 'destroy the tapes' says about the value we place (or do not place) on participants' voices. In cases of digital images taken by participants, researchers do not have the power to destroy original records of participants' contributions.

the effect incredibly disturbing and it dilutes the photo's affect. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, in Sampson-Cordle's PhD thesis, she uses a blank text box as a place holder, what she calls 'photo-erase,' when photos are easily identifiable. However, although the use of 'photo-erase' pays homage to the existence and importance of the photos, it also obscures what is arguably rich analytical material. To preserve the intention of each photograph, I replaced it with a similar stock or Creative Commons License photograph as a richer representation. I hope this strategy will help provide a sense of the rich visual imagery that helped inspire my analysis, while still protecting the anonymity of participants.

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