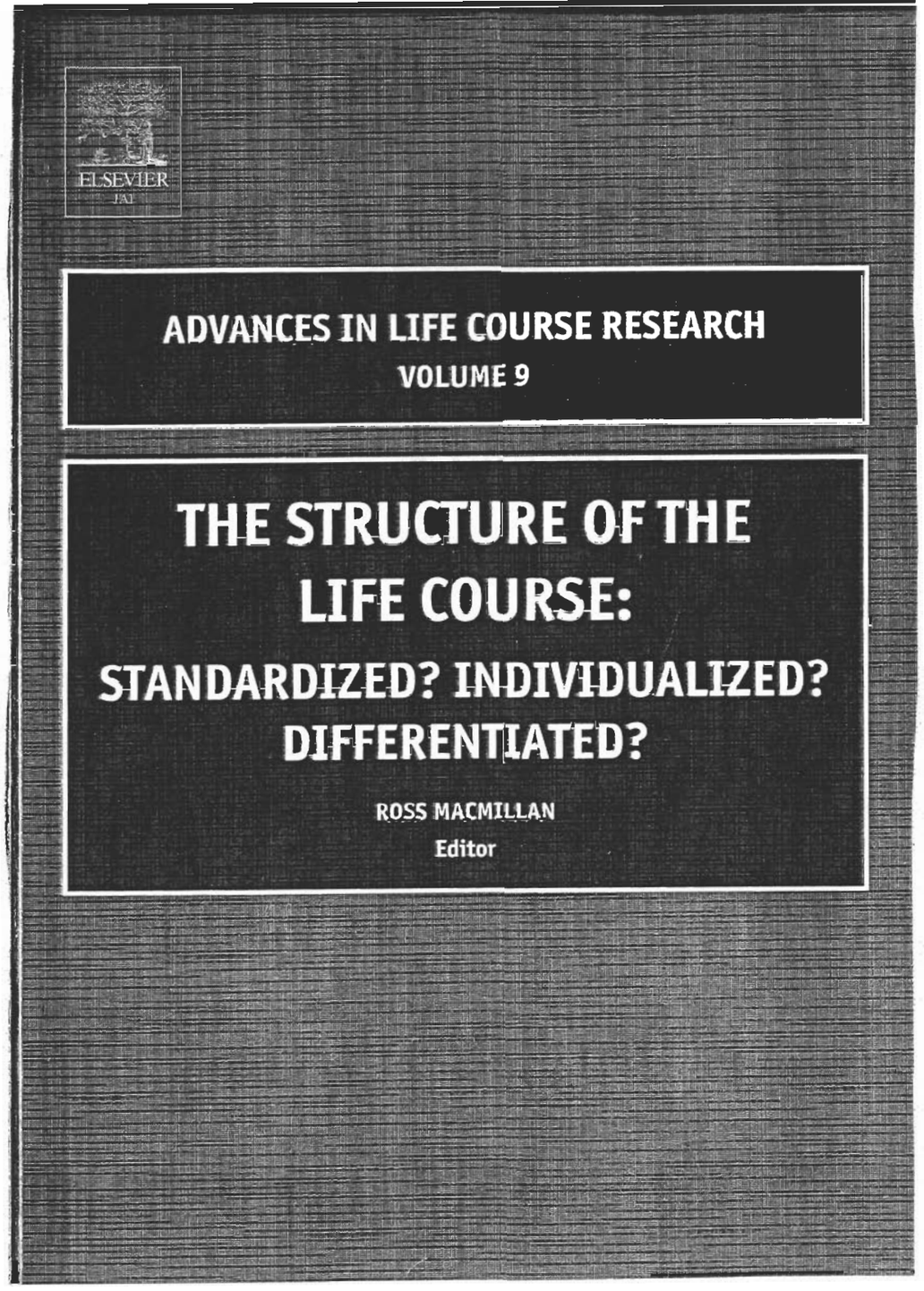
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THE STRUCTURE OF THE LIFE COURSE:
STANDARDIZED? INDIVIDUALIZED? DIFFERENTIATED?
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THE STRUCTURE OF THE LIFE COURSE: STANDARDIZED? INDIVIDUALIZED? DIFFERENTIATED?

EDITED BY

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EMBEDDED CAREER CLOCKS: THE CASE OF RETIREMENT PLANNING

Phyllis Moen, Stephen Sweet and Raymond Swisher

ABSTRACT

We investigate employees' expectations and planning about a key later life course transition, retirement. Drawing on an organizationally derived sample of workers in dual-earner households in upstate New York, we find that personal mastery, along with health, income, and job conditions, are key predictors of planning. Also important are prior biographical pacing, gender, and relational contexts (at home and at work). Members of today's mostly baby boom cohort tend to plan more financially than for life after retirement, and most anticipate retiring earlier than the conventional age of 65.

When institutionalized clocks govern role transitions, actors approaching them vary little in either their expectations or their plans. But today's American workers experience two conflicting trends regarding a key later life course status passage, retirement. On the one hand, the retirement transition remains entrenched in established social and organizational policies and practices that, by the middle of the 20th century, were normatively defined. These normative expectations, in conjunction with the institutionalization of income supports in the form of Social Security benefits and

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private pensions set retirement apart from unemployment as a work exit that can be planned for, anticipated, and positively defined (Costa, 1998; Graebner, 1980).

On the other hand, changes in the employer/employee contract associated with the restructuring of corporations and a global economy increasingly mean that seniority no longer guarantees job security. Mergers and downsizing have destroyed traditional career patterns, making early and mid-career prospects increasingly uncertain (Hardy, Hazelrigg, & Quadagno, 1996; Kotter, 1995). Moreover, federal policies such as the prohibition of mandatory retirement and age discrimination and delays in Social Security eligibility make continued employment attractive for older adults. Complicating retirement plans even further is the common perception that Social Security may no longer provide a secure safety net for future retirees. This is accompanied by the reality of pensions, savings, inheritance, and escalating real estate values that make a large segment of the population feel they can afford to retire far earlier than did their fathers or grandfathers. Still others feel they can never "afford" to stop working. The mismatch between these shifting circumstances and outdated but entrenched norms (cf. Riley, Kahn, & Foner, 1994) means that retirement for contemporary workers has become an increasingly incomplete role transition, one without a taken-for-granted script. In this regard, the variability of retirement may contribute to increased concerns over the "individualization" (Shanahan, 2000) and "de-standardization" (Bruckner & Mayer, *this volume*) of the life course. American workers in this context increasingly must make strategic selections around this key status passage, developing their own plans and assessing their own risks and prospects (see Moen & Altobelli, in press).

The growing number of women in the workforce also influences changing patterns of retirement planning and timing. Women as a status group have historically experienced retirement as their husbands' transition, not their own. Women's workforce experiences have traditionally been intermittent and frequently part-time, meaning that previous generations of women, especially those who are married, have not spent sufficient time in full-time jobs with single employers to accrue pension benefits. Moving in and out of the workforce meant that women often viewed their exits as simply another "leaving," rather than an official retirement. But as women's workforce participation has become the norm (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2001), more women are now confronting retirement than ever before. As a result, most couples now experience *two* retirements, his and hers, and must now take their spouses' careers and retirement plans into account in planning their own retirements (Blossfeld & Drobnic, 2001; Han & Moen, 2001; Henretta,

O'Rand, & Chan, 1993a, b; Moen & Han, 2001; Moen, Kim, & Hofmeister, 2001). How individuals in today's workforce – both women and men – plan for retirement and how couples coordinate retirement expectations in these times of flux remain poorly understood.

Uncertainty about the retirement transition also reflects a larger overall trend toward greater heterogeneity in the timing, duration, and sequencing of all life course transitions – such as completing schooling, moving into full-time work, marriage, and parenting (Han & Moen, 1999; Henretta, 1994; Hogan & Astone, 1986; Moen, 1985; Moen, Dempster-McClain, & Williams, 1989; Mortimer, 2003; O'Rand, 1996; Rosenfeld, 1992; Settersten, 1999; Settersten & Mayer, 1997). Dislocation in the structure and culture of work, occupational careers, and retirement are producing a climate of ambiguity and uncertainty.[1] Understanding workers' planfulness and expectations can shed light on retirement as a key element in the life course, a personal and family transition occurring upon a moving platform of social, demographic, and organizational change. Such macro-level transformations also shape the more proximate environments in which actors develop plans and expectations at home and at work. Workers' retirement expectations and plans have enormous organizational, economic, and policy ramifications.

In this study, we draw on a life course-role context approach (e.g., Moen, Dempster-McClain, & Williams, 1992; Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999; Spitze, Logan, Joseph, & Lee, 1994), along with other relevant theoretical strands, to investigate the planning implications gender, age/cohort, and location in particular workplace and family environments. We develop and test a multilevel model of retirement planning, drawing on data from a survey of two-earner couples in which at least one spouse is employed in one of 10 large organizations in upstate New York. We assess retirement planning along three dimensions: incidence, timing, and degree. We begin by considering the nature of planning, locating it in a broader theoretical frame.

PLANFULNESS AS PRAGMATIC DECISION-MAKING AND CONTROL

Scholars recognize the active shaping of the life course by planful actors (Clausen, 1991; Elder, 1995, 1998; Giele & Elder, 1998; Marshall, Heinz, Krüger, & Verma, 2001; Shanahan, Hofer, & Miech, 2002), but there has been comparatively little work on career planning in general, much less retirement planning. Lachman and Burack (1993) and Prenda and Lachman

(2001) posit that planning may well be an outgrowth of a sense of mastery, feeling in charge of one's life. In turn, planning may facilitate mastery, structuring events that are both predictable and manipulable (see also Rodin, 1990). This suggests that, "the extent to which people see themselves as being in control of the forces that importantly affect their lives" (Pearlin, Menaghan, Lieberman, & Mullan, 1981, p. 340), having a sense of mastery or control, will be positively related to the incidence, timing, and degree of workers' retirement planning.

According to rational choice theory (e.g. Becker, 1981; Coleman, 1990; Homans, 1950; Lindenberg, 1985), individuals weigh various life course transitions in light of perceived costs and benefits. Sociological approaches emphasize the pragmatic embedding of such decisions within the contexts of opportunities, meanings, and constraints (e.g. Breiger, 1995; Giddens, 1984). Much research on retirement similarly assumes that individuals are active, purposive agents in planning their retirements but that they do so in a cultural and organizational environment constraining their options.

Prospect theory was developed to explain decision-making under risky conditions (Kahneman & Tversky, 1983). We contend that decisions about retirement timing represent risky choices, made without advance knowledge of the consequences of future conditions, particularly with regard to health, security of pension investments, and downsizing. Those who value the income, status, and purposeful activity their jobs provide may envision retirement as a role loss. By contrast, workers in jobs with high demands and little control, along with those in downsizing environments, may envision retirement as a gain of autonomy and reduced stress. Thus the age at which workers choose to retire is often in response to changes in incentives, disincentives, and perceived gains or losses (Burtless & Quinn, 2001; Hayward & Hardy, 1985).

Prior studies support this conclusion. For example, older men who are well educated and in professional jobs are more likely to continue working (Hayward, Hardy, & Grady, 1990) and to be better off financially (Siegel, 1993). But a good income permits workers to retire early and to plan to do so and some workers may also face financial penalties if they continue to work beyond the normative retirement age of 65 (Burtless & Quinn, 2001; Quadagno & Quinn, 1997). Those who see their jobs as demanding or unrewarding are also likely to leave the workforce early (Herzog, Kahn, Morgan, Jackson, & Antonucci, 1989; see also Streib & Schneider, 1971). Good health can also be the rationale for planning to retire early in order to do other things, including taking on "bridge" jobs following retirement from one's primary career (Quinn, 1998). Yet poor health of family members may

also focus workers attention on retirement planning, whether to provide care, or as a signal of the possibility of workers' own eventual poor health. By and large, we believe that people who see themselves as very healthy may well put off planning, plan less, and expect to retire later.

This leads to specific, testable premises. First, we propose that both a personal sense of mastery and job conditions providing a high degree control will be associated with earlier and more planning for retirement, as well as an earlier expected age of retirement. Second, perceived financial adequacy and actual household income will similarly be associated with earlier planning, higher levels of planning, and earlier anticipated exits. Restrictions, such as having a demanding job or poor health (of self or spouse), should also predict earlier and more planning and earlier expected exits, although for different reasons.

RETIREMENT PLANNING IN MULTILAYERED CONTEXTS

We hold that retirement planning cannot be understood apart from the multilayered contexts in which lives unfold. These include individual biographies, families, households, workplaces, and the structures and cultures of broader institutional arrangements shaping the life course. Such contexts shape the nature of decision-making throughout life. Becker (1981) developed a model of household decision-making, embedding individual choice in couples' rational assessments of their circumstances. Reference group theory (e.g., Merton, 1968; Williams, 1975) gives even greater attention to the relational aspects of decision-making processes (see also Cook & Levi, 1990). It suggests that individuals model their own behavior in relation to the values and behaviors of the groups to which they belong or aspire (Shibutani, 1961). This approach fits well with symbolic interaction theory's emphasis on shared and socially constructed meanings and definitions of situations that develop through interaction over time (Stryker & Serpe, 1994; see also Reitzes, Mutran, & Fernandez, 1998). It also conforms to the life course emphasis on meaning and linked lives (e.g., Moen, 2003).

Historical and Biographical Contexts

Until recently, the American experience of retirement was a single, irreversible exit that was timed in relation to biographical exigencies (such as

illness or disability), mandatory retirement policies, and strong social norms. By the middle of the 20th century, retirement was a scripted and clearly demarcated status transition, especially for men who spent most of their adulthood in full-time, uninterrupted employment, before moving to full-time "leisure." By contrast, retirement today no longer necessarily means a final exit from the workforce, as growing numbers of people take on post-retirement jobs. In fact, the age at which people actually make their final exit from the workforce may be increasing (Quinn, 2002; but see also Gendell, 2001). O'Rand and Henretta (1999) and Han and Moen (1999) more generally document the increasing "fuzziness" of the retirement life stage. For example, growing proportions of older workers are occupying "bridge jobs." Others are employed in post-retirement work that is either scaled-back versions of their primary career jobs or else something entirely different. There is growing variability in career paths and retirement timing, as well as an increasing duration of time individuals can expect to spend "retired" – whether from their primary career jobs or from the workforce altogether (Fullerton & Toossi, 2001; Gendell, 2001). Such heterogeneity in retirement possibilities may well lead workers to actively engage in planning their own retirements in order to maintain some semblance of control in navigating their life courses. Han and Moen (1999) found that the age workers began planning their retirement was progressively earlier for successive cohorts. As their sample consisted of pre-baby boom retirees, it is not clear whether their findings also apply to contemporary workers, members of the baby boom cohort and those following in their wake. As Uhlenberg and Miner (1996) show, historical changes in the economic, policy, and cultural climates affect both labor force participation and retirement exits. We suspect that workers today begin to plan for retirement, at least financially, even earlier than the retirees in Han and Moen's study. A recent analysis of baby boomers' saving patterns reveals that almost half (46%) save regularly, with another three in ten (30%) saving occasionally (Gist, Wu, & Ford, 1999).[2] Yet cohort is typically confounded with age, meaning younger workers may well be less apt to plan for (a distant) retirement. In light of growing retirement ambiguities and uncertainties, we expect younger workers who do plan will begin doing so earlier and expect to retire earlier than their older coworkers.

An emerging issue in life course research is the effect of variation in the pacing of life events. "Biographical pacing" refers to the age at which individuals undergo key status passages (Han & Moen, 1999). Such pacing shapes not only life pathways but the subjective side of life as well, coloring workers' expectations and goals. The intention to retire "on" or "off" time,

earlier or later than the conventional norm (Brim & Ryff, 1980; Neugarten & Hagestad, 1976; Settersten & Hagestad, 1996), is likely influenced by other "on" or "off" time transitions (e.g., finishing school, marriage, parenthood). Retirement planning and expectations may reflect not only contemporaneous circumstances, but also the imprints of the timing of prior life course transitions. As there has been little research to date on the effects of biographical pacing as a predictor of retirement planning or expectations, we directly examine this issue, expecting that delays in earlier life course transitions (such as completing education, getting married, and having children) will similarly delay both workers' initiation of retirement planning and their expected age of retirement.

Gender and Gendered Household Contexts

Most of the classic studies of retirement have focused on men. And yet reference group, life course, and feminist theoretical approaches suggest the whole process of retirement planning may well be a different experience for women.[3] Opportunities and constraints regarding social roles, career paths, and passages at all life stages are heavily gendered, as are the differentiated responses to family exigencies among men and women. The traditional (male) career model presumes an unbroken, full-time attachment to the labor force throughout adulthood, culminating in retirement (Moen, 2003; Moen & Roehling, 2005). When men leave their jobs they are exiting from a role that has typically dominated their adult years (Weiss, 1997). Women, on the other hand, commonly experience greater discontinuity, moving in and out of the labor force, in and out of part-time jobs in tandem with shifting family responsibilities (e.g., Han & Moen, 1999; Rosenfeld, 1980; Sorensen, 1983). Consequently, they are less likely to have the same duration of employment or the same accumulation of work experience as men. Given occupational segregation and their less stable employment histories, women are also less likely to be covered by pensions and even those with pensions typically have potential incomes far lower than men's (O'Rand & Henretta 1999).

Since women as a group are less experienced in retirement, we expect that women will plan less and begin planning later. In the past, women who have retired have traditionally done so earlier than men. In fact, this has been institutionalized in terms of women's earlier age eligibility for Social Security benefits, grounded in the assumption that wives are younger than their husbands and that both will want to retire at about the same point in time.

We anticipate that contemporary women workers also expect to retire earlier than men, in part to synchronize with their husband's retirement. Women's retirement plans should be especially tied to life course exigencies around family responsibilities (such as the need to care for an ailing or infirm family member, or having children later in life).

Spouses in dual-earner households may constitute another frame of reference, with each considering their own retirement timing in the context of their partner's. As a consequence, although large gender differences in the amount of retirement planning activities may occur in comparisons among workers, we anticipate fewer differences within couples. Moreover, given their gendered life experiences, we propose that women are more apt to accommodate to their husbands' planning and timing than vice versa. Thus, we expect women to expect to retire earlier and to be more likely to "time" their retirements in relation to their spouses' plans.

Workplace Contexts

Another potentially important frame of reference is the workplace. Coworkers may both create and perpetuate particular workplace cultures with implicit rules and routines regarding retirement planning and timing. Accordingly, we propose that organizational demographics, customs, and norms about retirement timing influence the expectations of individual workers, particularly in terms of their anticipated retirement timing. Weiss (1990) describes workplaces as *relationships of community* that furnish friends and workmates and provide a sense of place and social meaning. In such contexts, whether and when their coworkers expect to retire can shape workers' own plans and expectations.

There is great diversity in the types of relationships cultivated in the workplace and these likely play a role in shaping how employees plan for their retirement exits. Our theory draws upon insights generated through the study of workplaces as social contexts (see, for example, Wharton, Rotolo, & Bird, 2000). In terms of retirement planning, workplace characteristics such as age demographics, workplace policy, and job security likely influence retirement planning efforts in important ways. For instance, younger employees in demographically older or more diverse age organizations may well have an accelerated pattern of retirement planning in comparison to employees working with people who are all about the same age. Age structures of workplaces may be especially important in shaping the culture of retirement planning. Since retirement issues are apt to be more salient to older workers, organizations with older workers are likely to create workplace cultures in which retirement issues are "in the air." Employment in such workplaces should predict individuals' retirement planning efforts, with even younger workers beginning to think about their future retirement. However, the very fact of being around coworkers in their late 50 s and 60 s could reinforce the notion of retiring "on time" or even later. Those in organizations with older workforces may begin planning earlier, engage in higher levels of retirement planning, yet expect to retire later.

DATA AND MEASURES

We draw on data from a sub-sample of the Ecology of Careers Study, involving interviews of both members of dual-earner households and designed such that at least one spouse works for one of 10 participating organizations. This study is well suited to the examination of the contingent and coinciding relationships between spouses' experiences and plans, as well as the organizational contexts shaping them. Approximately hour-long telephone interviews were conducted with both spouses (in separate interviews) in dual-earner, mostly middle-class households in upstate New York. Respondents were asked to report their family, work, and biographical experiences and expectations, including extensive life histories ($N = 1{,}283$ couples).[4] The ten strategically selected organizations from which we obtained random samples of married workers, and subsequently interviewed workers' spouses, represent both manufacturing and service (utilities, health care, and higher education) industries. The sampling is random within organizations but the selection of organizations is not. Although this influences generalizability, these data still offer a rare opportunity to examine individual-, couple-, and organizational-level influences on retirement plans and expectations. We limit our analysis to the retirement planning efforts of the "referent" respondent, that is, the spouse who currently works at one of the ten selected organizations. This produced a final sample of 1,063 workers in dual-earner, non-retired households. Each of the participating organizations offers employees access to pension programs.

Individual-Level Variables

We analyze the retirement planning process along three dimensions, the incidence, timing, and degree of retirement planning. *Incidence* relates to

whether respondents report having done any retirement planning. *Timing* involves the age at which planning began, as well as the anticipated age of exit from one's career job.[55] To capture couple effects, we examine responses to the question, "What influence do you expect your (spouse/partner's) retirement or retirement plans to have on your retirement – do you think it will speed up your retirement, delay it, or have no effect?" asked of respondents over age 40 ($N = 720$).

The design of the computerized survey instrument was such that respondents reporting that they had not engaged in any retirement planning ($N = 89$) or who refused to answer the question ($N = 22$) were not asked when they started planning or intended to retire and are thus excluded from those analyses. Due to concerns about sample selection bias and potential censoring created by the loss of these respondents, we include incidence as a component of our analysis, estimating multilevel logistic models of whether or not respondents engaged in any retirement planning. With the exception of being somewhat younger and tending to be female, the 10.4% of respondents who did no planning do not differ in significant ways. Although the potential for some sample selection effect remains, it is unclear in which direction it would bias our results.

Degree of retirement planning is subdivided into two measures: financial and lifestyle planning. For financial planning, respondents rate the degree to which they have engaged in financial planning for retirement on a hundred-point scale, with 0 indicating no planning and 100 indicating a lot of planning. Similarly, we constructed an index of "lifestyle" planning, combining the degree to which respondents have developed hobbies and interests for retirement, have thought of a second or third career after retirement, or have thought about volunteer work after retirement ($\alpha = 0.60$).

We used the MidLife Development Inventory (MIDI) perceived constraints scale as an indicator of *personal control* or *mastery*. This index was constructed from four questions assessing the degree to which subjects feel (a) helpless in dealing with problems in life, (b) a lack of control over what happens, (c) out of control in responding to life's events, and (d) unable to solve problems ($\alpha = 0.78$).

Family income is the log of respondents' and spouses' combined salaries. *Job prestige* is calculated according to the method described by Nakao and Treas (1990) using BLS three-digit job classifications. Prestige in this sample ranges from a low of 25.73 to a high of 73.51. *Job tenure* is indicated by the number of years working in the present job. *Job security* is gauged by respondents' assessments on a 100-point scale where 0 indicates that one expects to lose one's job in the next couple of years and 100 indicates certainty

of keeping one's job. The *job schedule autonomy* scale consists of eight 5-point items indicating control over work hours, timing of work, working at home, amount of work at home, vacation time, receipt of personal calls, use of personal email, and ability to take a few hours off ($\alpha = 0.75$). *Workload* is an index of three questions that assess the degree to which respondents' jobs require working hard, fast, or involve excessive amounts of work ($\alpha = 0.64$). We also include a measure of self-reported *physical health* ranging from 0 to 10 with 10 indicating the very best health.

We assess biographical pacing along several dimensions. One is the *educational career pathway*, as indicated by the number of years spent in higher education and whether respondents returned to school after age 25. *Marital pacing* is measured by the age at first marriage. Movement into *parenthood* is measured as whether respondents became parents by age 27 (the sample mean) or later, with non-parents serving as the reference category.

Organizational Variables

To develop indicators of workplace context we aggregate the responses of individuals within each organization, yielding mean levels of workforce age, schedule autonomy at work, and job security. Heterogeneity in the age structure is represented by the standard deviation of the *mean age of workers* within each employing organization. Mean workforce age across organizations varies from 38.4 to 45.4 years, with a standard deviation of 2.3 years. *Mean levels of job security* vary quite widely across organizations, with a mean of 72.7 (on a 0–100 scale), and a range of 58.0–91.9. *Mean schedule autonomy* varies from a low of 2.5 to a high of 3.8 (sample mean is 3.5). Intra-class correlations, which capture the percent of total variation that is between rather than within organizations, indicate that 8%, 23% and 26% of the variance is between organizations for mean age, mean job security, and mean schedule autonomy, respectively.[6]

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Hierarchical models (HLM) are used to account for the clustered nature of our sample, with individuals nested within organizations and to test our hypotheses about the effects of organizational-level variables on the retirement planning process (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). For continuous outcomes, we use hierarchical linear models. Using financial planning as an

example, at level 1:

$$Financial_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}Age_{ij} + \cdots + \beta_{kj}X_{kij} + r_{ij} \quad (1)$$

within-organizational variation in financial planning ($Financial_{ij}$) is modeled as a function of a level-1 intercept (β_{0j}), individual-level independent variables (X_k) such as age, gender, family income, etc., and an error term (r_{ij}) capturing the unique disturbance for individual i working in organization j. Variation in financial planning between organizations, is captured at level 2:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}MeanAge_j + \gamma_{02}W_{2j} + \cdots + \gamma_{0S}W_{Sj} + u_{0j} \quad (2)$$

with the mean amount of financial planning in organization j (β_{0j}) a function of a level-2 intercept (γ_{00}), level-2 independent variables (W_S) such as the mean age of workers within that organization, and an error term unique to the organization (μ_j).

Linear models are inappropriate for dichotomous outcomes, such as whether or not an individual has engaged in any retirement planning. For this outcome, we apply the hierarchical generalized linear model (Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2000). Following Guo (2000) we model the probability that an individual has done any retirement planning as $p_{ij} = Pr(y_{ij} = 1)$ using a logit link function and assume p_{ij} follows a Bernoulli distribution. The model at level 1 then is:

$$\log[p_{ij}/(1 - p_{ij})] = \beta_{0j} + \beta_1 Age_{ij} + \cdots + \beta_{kj}x_{kij} \quad (3)$$

with variation in any retirement planning modeled again as a function of an intercept and individual level covariates. Coefficients can then be interpreted as in a standard logit model (Liao, 1994). At level 2, the model is the same as in the hierarchical linear model (2) above.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the individual and couple variables in our analysis. On an average, this (mostly baby-boom age or younger) sample begins to plan for retirement at just under 32 years of age and expects to retire a full 5 years ahead of the traditionally institutionalized retirement age of 65. Subtracting these two figures reveals that at least some planning for retirement now typically takes place for more than 30 years of the adult life course. We also see more financial than lifestyle planning (mean of 68 versus 48 on a 100-point scale).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Individual and Couple Variables by Gender.

Variables	Men		Women		Total	
	Mean/%	SD	Mean/%	SD	Mean/%	SD
1. No retirement planning	7.67***		13.87		10.44	
2. Age began planning	33.10***	(8.52)	30.43	(7.69)	31.95	(8.28)
3. Financial planning (0-100 scale)	69.68**	(23.72)	66.18	(25.19)	68.11	(24.44)
4. Lifestyle planning (0–100 scale)	49.51**	(22.61)	46.44	(23.65)	48.14	(23.12)
5. Age expects to retire	60.36***	(4.49)	59.18	(5.8)	59.83	(5.14)
6. Age	44.59***	(7.84)	40.77	(7.11)	42.88	(7.76)
7. Health (0-10 scale)	8.26	(1.26)	8.29	(1.3)	8.27	(1.27)
8. Perceived constraints	1.93	(0.46)	1.92	(0.46)	1.93	(0.46)
9. Post high school years of education	4.91***	(0.71)	4.20	(2.5)	4.59	(2.64)
10. Returned to school	42.00		43.00		43.00	
11. Age at first job	22.01+	(2.8)	21.71	(2.86)	21.88	(2.83)
12. Age at first marriage	24.93**	(4.12)	24.27	(4.3)	24.64	(4.21)
13. First birth < Age 28	40.40		39.33		40.00	
14. First birth Age 28 +	45.17*		39.54		43.00	
15. No children	14.43		21.13		7.00	
16. Husband/wife age gap	1.62***	(3.78)	−2.10	(4.46)	−0.04	(4.5)
17. Salary (log)	4.82***	(0.2)	4.65	(0.2)	4.75	(0.22)
18. Job prestige	55.51***	(9.93)	52.47	(9.88)	54.15	(10.01)
19. Job tenure (0-100 scale)	6.66***	(6.49)	5.39	(5.72)	6.09	(6.19)
20. Job security (0-100 scale)	71.59+	(23.31)	74.09	(24.34)	72.71	(23.8)
21. Work schedule autonomy	3.64**	(0.65)	3.52	(0.77)	3.59	(0.71)
22. Work load	2.88***	(0.49)	2.99	(0.49)	2.93	(0.49)
23. Spouse's salary (log)	4.36***	(0.39)	4.69	(0.25)	4.51	(0.37)
24. Spouse's health (0–10 scale)	8.37	(1.31)	8.29	(1.26)	8.34	(1.29)
25. Influence of spouse on retirement						
Delay	7.95***		16.40		11.30	
Speed up	13.86***		28.20		19.40	
No effect	78.18***		55.40		69.30	
N	587		476		1,063	

Note: Significance tests assess gender differences.
***$p < 0.001$.
**$p < 0.01$.
*$p < 0.5$.
+$p < 0.10$.

Given our interest in the gendered nature of the retirement process, we note both similarities and differences by gender among workers in dual-earner households. As expected, men are more likely than women (92–86%) to have engaged in any retirement planning and to report higher levels of both financial and lifestyle planning. Among workers who have planned, men tend to begin their planning efforts nearly 3 years later than women. While our sample is restricted to those employed and in a dual-earner

household arrangement, we attempt to untangle such planning differences from gender variations in salaries, education and other confounding factors in multivariate models below.

Incidence and Timing of Planning and Expected Age of Retirement

We begin with analyses of the incidence and timing of retirement planning. Table 2 presents coefficients from hierarchical models of incidence, that is, whether or not respondents have engaged in *any* retirement planning (logistic model in first set of columns), when they first started to plan (linear model in second set), and when they intend to retire (linear model in third set).[7]

As expected, retirement planning is related to a person's sense of control over their lives. People who perceive more constraints (and hence, less control) tend to both delay planning ($\beta = 1.15$, $p<0.01$) and anticipate retiring later ($\beta = 0.57$, $p<0.10$). Both greater financial resources ($\beta = -0.68$, $p<0.10$) and perceived income adequacy ($\beta = -0.03$, $p<0.01$) predict earlier expected ages of retirement, while spouses' (good) health predicts later retirement expectations. Having a demanding workload is associated with expectations for earlier retirement ($\beta = -0.71$, $p<0.01$). Workers in jobs with very demanding workloads may well associate retirement with a release from time pressures and the beginning of a more leisurely lifestyle.

Age has multiple meanings: it is a marker for cohort, a proxy for proximity to retirement, a gauge of life course location and prior biographical pacing. Older workers are significantly more likely to have done any retirement planning ($\beta = 0.06$, $p<0.01$). Among those who have begun to plan, age shapes when they began to do so, as well as their expected ages of retirement. Consistent with our "cohort" hypothesis, we find that older workers began their planning later than younger ones ($\beta = 0.69$, $p<0.001$). We believe this likely reflects the growing destandardization and uncertainty around retirement, with younger workers having the greater concern.[8] Older workers also expect to retire later than younger workers ($\beta = 0.10$, $p<0.001$). This may reflect societal trends, seen in the expectations of younger workers, toward anticipating retiring from one job only to take up another. It may also, however, be the result of sample selection (i.e., survival) bias, as some older workers who expected to retire "early" may have already retired from these companies and thus are not in our sample.

Workers' current retirement planning and expectations also reflect prior biographical decisions and transitions. Those with longer educational

Table 2. Hierarchial Models of Any Retirement Planning, Age Began Retirement Planning, and Age Intending to Retire.

Variables	Any Planning for Retirement (Logistic Model)		Age Began Retirement Planning (Linear Model)		Age Intended to Retire (Linear Model)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Individual Level (fixed effects)						
Intercept	2.38***	(0.27)	32.14***	(0.21)	60.09***	(0.21)
Age	0.06**	(0.02)	0.69***	(0.03)	0.10***	(0.02)
Age at first job	−0.01	(0.03)	0.15+	(0.08)	0.15*	(0.06)
Age at first marriage	−0.03	(0.03)	−0.06	(0.06)	−0.04	(0.04)
Age at first child (< 27)	0.05	(0.34)	1.81**	(0.64)	0.02	(0.48)
Age at first child (27+)	−0.31	(0.30)	−0.32	(0.60)	0.47	(0.46)
Years of higher education	−0.05	(0.05)	0.19*	(0.10)	0.11	(0.07)
Gap in schooling	0.05	(0.21)	0.12	(0.42)	0.62*	(0.31)
Gender (women = 1)	−0.46+	(0.26)	0.04	(0.49)	−0.77*	(0.38)
Age gap with spouse	−0.02	(0.04)	0.01	(0.08)	0.06	(0.06)
Age gap * gender	0.03	(0.05)	0.08	(0.10)	0.09	(0.08)
Own health rating	0.08	(0.08)	−0.44**	(0.16)	0.10	(0.12)
Spouse's health rating	−0.05	(0.08)	−0.01	(0.16)	−0.27*	(0.12)
Perceived constraints	−0.27	(0.23)	1.15*	(0.45)	0.57+	(0.34)
Family income (logged)	0.02	(0.31)	−0.37	(0.54)	−0.68+	(0.41)
Income adequacy	0.01	(0.00)	−0.03*	(0.01)	−0.03*	(0.01)
Job tenure	−0.02	(0.02)	−0.03	(0.03)	−0.03	(0.03)
Job security	0.00	(0.01)	0.02	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
Schedule autonomy	0.17	(0.16)	−0.18	(0.32)	−0.22	(0.23)
Work load	−0.04	(0.22)	−0.05	(0.42)	−0.71*	(0.32)
Organizational level (random intercept)						
Mean age	−0.13	(0.12)	−0.30*	(0.12)	0.27*	(0.11)
Age spread	−0.10	(0.29)	0.27	(0.27)	1.06**	(0.25)
Schedule autonomy	0.73	(0.71)	−0.30	(0.87)	−2.08*	(0.72)

Table 2. *(Continued)*

Variables	Any Planning for Retirement (Logistic Model)		Age Began Retirement Planning (Linear Model)		Age Intended to Retire (Linear Model)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Percent variation explained						
Individual level	—		43.40		9.80	
Organizational level	—		96.90		90.80	
Total variation	—		44.40		19.40	

Notes: Number of respondents is 1,063 for any planning, and 952 for age began retirement planning and age intended to retire number of organizations is 10 for all models.
$^{***}p<0.001$.
$^{**}p<0.01$.
$^{*}p<0.05$.

careers ($\beta = 0.19$, $p<0.01$) or who began their first jobs later ($\beta = 0.15$, $p<0.10$) begin planning for retirement at later ages. Parenthood also suggests the importance of biographical pacing, but not in the ways we anticipated. Compared to respondents who have not had children or had children after age 27, those who had their first child early delayed any retirement planning by almost 2 years ($\beta = 1.81$, $p<0.01$). This suggests that those who remain childless or who postpone having children may be more "planful" in comparison to workers who have their children earlier than average. Other aspects of biographical pacing relate to the anticipated age of retirement in more expected ways. Starting one's first full-time job later ($\beta = 0.15$, $p<0.05$) and returning to school ($\beta = 0.62$, $p<0.05$) both predict delays in expected age of retirement.

In line with our theoretical perspective about the gendered nature of retirement and the life course more generally, gender and gendered relationships influence the retirement planning process. Women in our sample are less likely to have done any retirement planning than the men ($\beta = -0.46$, $p<0.10$) and expect to retire three-quarters of a year earlier than do men ($\beta = -0.77$, $p<0.05$). Health also shapes retirement planning. Respondents who report better health tend to delay retirement planning ($\beta = -0.44$, $p<0.01$), while spouses' positive health ratings delay expected age of retirement ($\beta = -0.27$, $p<0.01$).

Turning now to whether organizational context matters for their retirement planning, a first question is whether or not the outcomes in question

actually vary significantly across workplaces. This is commonly assessed with unconditional (i.e., no covariates) intra-class correlations (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). We find significant variation across employing organizations for both the age when workers begin to plan (2% of variation is between organizations), and workers' expected age of retirement (8%).

Recall we propose that the age structure of an organization might influence the retirement planning efforts of its workers, producing between-employer variation. Organizations with a higher proportion of older workers or a wider age range of employees may be more likely to have a workplace culture supportive of retirement planning. Largely consistent with this, respondents working in organizations with higher average ages of employees begin retirement planning at earlier ages ($\beta = -0.30$, $p<0.05$), regardless of respondents' own ages. The presence of older workers within an organization may spur their younger colleagues to begin planning earlier.

Organizational context also matters for anticipated age of retirement. Workers in organizations with an older average age of workers ($\beta = 0.27$, $p<0.05$) and a wider age range ($\beta = 1.06$, $p<0.001$) expect to retire later. While older workers may create a culture in which retirement planning is "in the air," they may also infuse that culture with expectations about the value of older workers. Specifically, those working within an older workforce tend to expect to retire closer to the traditional age of 65. Workers in organizations offering a greater degree of schedule flexibility and control expect to retire earlier ($\beta = -2.08$, $p<0.05$), suggesting the possibility that such latitude extends to options for gradual or phased retirement. Overall, our model accounts for 19.4% of total variation in workers' expected ages of retirement.

Spousal Effects on Retirement Decisions

We also assess the degree to which partners in dual-earner couples perceive their two retirements as "tied" transitions, as well as factors that predict how their spouses' planned retirement timing influences the intended timing of retirement of respondents. We do this is by analyzing responses to the question "Do you expect your spouse/partner to retire earlier than you, about the same time as you, never retire, or is your spouse already retired?" Responses indicate that many couples plan on retiring in tandem. Nearly half of the men (49.4%) and women (46.3%) in our sample intend to retire about the same time as their spouses. Over one in four men (28.3%) and women (28.7%) expect to retire later than their spouses, with slightly fewer

men (22.3%) and women (25.0%) expecting to retire earlier than their spouse.

Given the tendency to retire together, we further examine the issue of timing. Returning to simple descriptive statistics (see Table 1), 8 in 10 men (78.2%) report that their wives' retirement plans will have no effect on their own retirement timing. By contrast, over two out of five women (44.6%) report that their husband's plans will matter, causing them to either delay (16.4%) or speed up (28.2%) their own retirement.

Prima facie, these findings are compelling, but a full interpretation requires refinement. As these relationships may be more indicative of couple-level disparities between spouses rather than the gendered construction of retirement exits, associations should disappear when measures of spousal difference are taken into account. We assess this by examining the impact of gender, along with respondent-spouse differences in age, health, salary, and job prestige, through a non-hierarchical, multinomial logistic regression.

Coefficients in Table 3 show that even after measures of spousal disparity are included in the model, women are over one and a half times ($e^{0.524} = 1.69$) as likely as men to report that their spouse will influence them to speed up retirement. Women are also over two and a half times as likely ($e^{0.955} = 2.60$) to feel that their retirement will be delayed by their spouses' influence. Because these are gendered processes, we turn to models estimated separately for men and women. Men who earn more than their wives are less likely to see their spouses as influencing them to speed-up their retirement ($\beta = -0.029$, $p<0.01$). No other factors are significant predictors of men retiring earlier because of their wives' retirement. In contrast, a number of factors predict that wives will speed up their retirement timing because of their husbands. Women who are older than their husbands are more likely to do so ($\beta = 0.121$, $p<0.001$), while women who earn more than their husbands are less likely to see their spouses as influencing them to retire earlier that they would like ($\beta = -0.010$, $p<0.10$). No factors in these models were significant in predicting delays in retirement among either men or women.

Taken together, these findings show some tendency for women to tailor their later career clocks to those of their spouses, gauging retirement decisions both in their own and their partner's career stages. Women are more likely than men to plan their retirement transitions to correspond with that of their spouses, either speeding up or delaying their own retirement date, and such differences remain even after controlling for common measures of differences between spouses in age and resource inequalities.

Table 3. Multinominal Logistic Regression of Influence of Spouse on Referents' Anticipated Retirement Timing[a] by Gender and Spousal Differences.

Independent Variable	Speed Up[b]		Delay[b]	
	b	(SE)	B	(SE)
Entire sample ($N = 720$)				
Gender (1 = women)	0.524*	(0.237)	0.955***	(0.292)
r–s age difference	0.078***	(0.023)	0.038	(0.028)
r–s health difference	0.001	(0.06)	0.018	(0.077)
r–s salary difference ($1,000)	−0.011***	(0.003)	−0.001	(0.003)
r–s job prestige difference	−0.005	(0.007)	−0.011	(0.009)
Constant	−1.474***	(0.182)	−2.269***	(0.239)
Men ($N = 440$)				
r–s age difference	0.043	(0.032)	0.039	(0.04)
r–s health difference	0.042	(0.033)	−0.003	(0.113)
r–s salary difference ($1,000)	−0.029**	(0.09)	−0.008	(0.005)
r–s job prestige difference	−0.011	(0.004)	0.006	(0.013)
Constant	−1.362***	(0.209)	−2.093***	(0.28)
Women ($N = 280$)				
r–s age difference	0.121***	(0.034)	0.050+	(0.038)
r–s health difference	0.045	(0.085)	0.037	(0.104)
r–s salary difference ($1,000)	−0.010*	(0.004)	0.004	(0.005)
r–s job prestige difference	−0.001	(0.011)	−0.021	(0.013)
Constant	−1.054***	(0.178)	−1.372***	(0.195)

Notes: r–s indicates referent minus spouse differences, referents work at one of 10 organizations.

[a]Asked only for those over age 40 and not retired.

[b]Versus no effect.

***$p<0.001$.

**$p<0.01$.

*$p<0.05$.

+$p<0.10$.

Types and Intensity of Retirement Planning

"Retirement planning" often connotes preparing for future financial security (e.g., pensions, investments). However, given trends in health and longevity, "lifestyle" planning also matters. What is not clear is whether the

same factors predicting financial planning serve to predict lifestyle planning as well. To answer this question, we estimate two hierarchical linear regression models of financial and lifestyle retirement planning (see Table 4).

Somewhat surprisingly, workers' ages are not significantly associated with their degree of financial planning for retirement. Though the reason is not clear, this may reflect the fact that financial planning by workers is increasingly a near life-long process, institutionalized through 401K and other defined contribution pension regimes. The absence of any age effect also underscores that younger cohorts of workers are beginning to plan earlier, perhaps reflecting their low confidence that established Social Security programs will be there for them when they are ready to retire. Lifestyle planning for retirement, by contrast, is significantly and positively related to age ($\beta = 0.69$, $p<0.001$). Planning how one will spend time in retirement is far less institutionalized and normative than is financial planning. Such lifestyle concerns are more salient for older workers, who are closer to retirement.

Consistent with our previous findings, parenthood predicts lower levels of both financial and lifestyle planning for retirement. There is also evidence that entering one's first job later is associated with less lifestyle planning ($\beta = -0.47$, $p<0.10$). Lower mastery (in terms of higher perceived constraints) is also associated with lower levels of retirement planfulness. By contrast, those with greater financial resources ($\beta = 0.372$, $p<0.05$) and more autonomy at work ($\beta = 2.26$, $p<0.05$) report higher levels of financial planning. Those in jobs with higher workloads also report higher levels of lifestyle planning ($\beta = 3.24$, $p<0.05$). This may indicate a view of retirement as a release from undesirable working conditions.

Consistent with expectations and our earlier findings, women engage in less financial planning than men ($\beta = -3.67$, $p<0.05$). But spousal health considerations are related to a greater intensity of financial planning, undoubtedly because of the perception that additional financial resources may be necessary to care for them.

At the organizational level, we find small but significant variation in financial (6%) and lifestyle (4%) planning for retirement across the employing organizations in our study. Specifically, both older workers and workers (of all ages) in organizations with older workforces are more likely to engage in lifestyle planning. We also speculated that working in organizations offering little job security would foster greater financial planning. Our models provide suggestive evidence. Higher average job security within organizations is associated with lower levels of financial planning, regardless of individual workers' own sense of job security. Taken together,

Table 4. Hierarchial Linear Regression Models of Financial and Lifestyle Planning for Retirement.

Variables	Financial Planning		Lifestyle Planning	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Individual level (fixed effects)				
Intercept	68.27***	(0.68)	47.50***	(0.72)
Age	0.01	(0.11)	0.69***	(0.11)
Age at first job	−0.38	(0.27)	−0.47⁺	(0.27)
Age at first marriage	0.16	(0.19)	−0.20	(0.19)
Age at first child (< 27)	−5.18*	(2.26)	−7.28***	(2.18)
Age at first child (27+)	−2.91	(2.10)	−4.51*	(2.03)
Years of higher education	0.23	(0.33)	−0.07	(0.33)
Gap in schooling	−0.74	(1.45)	2.34⁺	(1.40)
Gender (women = 1)	−3.67*	(1.71)	−0.25	(1.64)
Age gap with spouse	0.17	(0.26)	−0.04	(0.25)
Age gap * gender	−0.45	(0.35)	0.05	(0.25)
Health rating	1.10*	(0.55)	−0.80	(0.54)
Caregiving (for infirm relative)	3.33⁺	(1.72)	4.89**	(1.68)
Spouse's health rating	0.11	(0.54)	0.33	(0.53)
Perceived constraints	−7.99***	(1.55)	−5.08***	(1.51)
Family income (logged)	3.72*	(1.91)	−1.72	(1.86)
Income adequacy	0.38***	(0.04)	0.09*	(0.04)
Job tenure	0.01	(0.12)	−0.08	(0.12)
Job security	0.05	(0.03)	−0.04	(0.03)
Schedule autonomy	2.26*	(1.09)	0.72	(1.03)
Work load	0.43	(1.39)	3.24*	(1.42)
Organizational context 2nd level (random intercept)				
Mean age	0.53	(0.40)	1.79*	(0.46)
Age spread	2.18	(1.57)	1.25	(1.37)
Job security	−0.40*	(0.14)	−0.19	(0.12)
Percent variation explained				
Individual level	10.4		7.4	
Organizational level	85.6		93.0	
Total variation	15.0		10.8	

Notes: N is 1,063 respondents in 10 organizations in both models.
***$p<0.001$.
**$p<0.01$.
*$p<0.05$.
⁺$p<0.10$.

our models explain 10.8–15.0% of the total variation in lifestyle and financial planning, respectively.

CONCLUSION

The life course regime established in the United States in the 20th century provided (for white, middle-class men at least) a lock-step template culminating in the leisure of retirement. Institutionalized role entry and exit portals, as well as qualifications for advancement, job security, pensions, and government supports such as Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, welfare, and educational loans created a life course regime marginalizing those out of step with its specifications. Today, as a result of a confluence of forces including increasing longevity, technological advances, shifting gender values, a changing workforce, and a globalizing economy, much of the existing infrastructure around the life course, especially retirement, is now obsolete. The growing age and gender heterogeneity of the workforce, along with the changing social contract that no longer linking job security with seniority, further challenge the traditional career/retirement template rendering retirement an increasingly incomplete institution (Moen & Altobelli, 2005). In light of this moving platform of social change, we are interested in whether, when, and what contemporary workers plan for their uncertain futures. Accordingly, we have examined the incidence, timing, and level of retirement planning as well as expectations about age of retirement among members of dual-earner households, most of whom are part of the large baby boom cohort wending its way toward later adulthood.

Our evidence suggests several biographical and contextual factors shaping retirement planning in this contemporary climate of risk and ambiguity. Consider first the importance of gender, as a shaper of both orientations and resources. Women in the two-earner households in this study are less apt than men to engage in any planning for retirement. Moreover, women make fewer financial plans and tend to hinge their own retirement planning activities on those of their husbands. Women are also more likely to expect to retire earlier. Gender may thus constitute a key frame of reference and meaning, given that retirement has historically been a male transition, part of men's but not women's taken-for-granted expectations. While most factors predicting the planning process operate similarly for both men and women *in similar circumstances*, men and women are seldom in similar circumstances. Thus, financial factors play a role in the level of planning and in the decision to retire early for both men and women, suggesting that

retirement plans turn on having the economic resources to retire, something more likely for men than for women. Perceived income adequacy promotes the financial and lifestyle planning of all workers, regardless of gender, but women are less apt to feel their incomes are adequate to their needs. Both age and biographical pacing also influence the instigation, level, and timing of retirement planning and can shape workers' expectations about an early retirement. But again biographical pacing is connected with gendered life course scripts.

Second, our findings indicate that retirement planning occurs in *relational* environments, both at home and at work, with spouses and coworkers serving as important frames of reference. Our evidence, consistent with prior research, suggests that couples synchronize retirement exits (cf., Blau, 1998). But this too is a gendered process. Women tend to accommodate to their husband's plans, while men make their own plans without taking their spouses' plans into consideration.

We expected workers to shape their plans for retirement timing in accordance with the timing proclivities of their coworkers in particular workplace environments. Demographic characteristics and degree of employment security within an organization help explain employee planning and expectations, regardless of respondents' own personal characteristics. These findings lead us to suspect that employing organizations provide both a structural and cultural environment in which workers make decisions, including plans for retirement. The experiences of fellow employees become a backdrop against which employees' structure their own expectations about retirement.

This suggests the embeddedness of other career decisions within an organizational context, irrespective of workers' biographical circumstances or the large-scale blurring of retirement norms within society as a whole. Coworkers constitute a built-in reference group, shaped by, and shaping, organizational cultures, policies and practices. Additional evidence hints that reference groups experiencing prior downsizing and job insecurity influence how much planning employees engage in. Retirement and other career planning is likely bounded by the types of information workers receive from their social networks, including informally observing and interacting with coworkers and discussions between spouses around the kitchen table, as much as in formal "planning" meetings. Understanding such workplace and family dynamics requires further exploration. Of particular need is better information about the social processes and cultural climates of organizations in which workers spend so much of their adulthood.

Third, we have demonstrated real differences in various components of the planning process. Financial planning is far more common than lifestyle

planning. Policy incentives and constraints (e.g., 401K plans and Keogh IRAs), Social Security eligibility, and cultural templates (exemplified by investment corporations' advertising) all encourage financial planning. By contrast, there are few institutionalized encouragements or templates for lifestyle planning. Adulthood in these post-retirement years remains unscripted, with few institutionalized opportunities for meaningful, productive engagement in a society that marginalizes those outside the conventional working-age years of adulthood. As the baby boom generation moves toward first 60 (2006) and then 65 (2011), it will be interesting to observe the ways in which planning processes play out in their actual retirement exits and life following retirement.

Our findings suggest that understanding career planning and expectations and ultimately the overall structuring of the life course can best be achieved by locating them in a complex matrix of biographical, historical, and institutional contexts, as well as within more proximate workplace and family circumstances. New life course insights can be gleaned by locating lives in the gendered and institutional contexts in which they are embedded, and by attending to the impacts of prior biographical pacing on subsequent expectations. Equally important are the multilayered social changes shaping decision-making. Given the scope and intensity of societal transformations, we anticipate that baby boomers' actual exits and retirement experiences, like their planning, will be only loosely connected to the taken-for-granted norms or experiences of previous generations. Members of this large cohort dominating today's workforce may well reinvent retirement, even as they are reinventing retirement planning, and even as they have individualized every prior phase of the contemporary life course.

NOTES

1. See, for example, results from a 2001 survey by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development (2001).
2. The two most frequent explanations for saving are for precautionary reasons related to life course risks (such as unemployment, illness, security – 28.8%) and for retirement (23.0%).
3. See, for example, the writings on feminist theory by Bem (1998), Anderson (1999), Thorne and Yalom (1982).
4. These data are supplemented with additional respondents from participating companies ($N = 85$) in a sample drawn from census block groups rather than companies. Analyses with a dummy code for these respondents revealed no difference.

5. For this estimation only, those few respondents who reported planning on "never retiring" ($N = 22$) were coded as planning to retire at age 70. Omitting them made no difference in the analyses.
6. Though it would be ideal to have separate sources of data about organizational characteristics, this information is simply not available. Contributing to the reliability of our aggregate measures is the large sample sizes within each of our 10 organizations (Raudenbush & Sampson, 1999) – average is 106, with a range of 30–346. The relatively small number of organizations, on the other hand, limits the number of organizational variables we can consider simultaneously. To guard against the possibility that contextual effects are simply due to the composition of organizations, we include individual-level measures of each organizational variable in our models (e.g., both mean organizational age and respondents' own ages are included).
7. For ease of interpretation, all individual and organizational variables are grand mean centered (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992).
8. It may also reflect, however, a retrospective recall effect, with older workers having to recall further in the past than younger workers, thus partly inflating their reports of the age they began to plan.

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