

Downsize now. Rejoice at leisure?

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Downsize now. Rejoice at Leisure.



1. Some relevant psychological models
2. Why did people downsize? Who featured in the decision making? What did they regret?
3. The issue of financial strain and its role
4. Summary, more information and what to share

Dynamic Resources Model of Retirement



Zimbardo Time Perspective

PAST

POSITIVE
NEGATIVE

PRESENT

HEDONISTIC
FATALISTIC

FUTURE

Let's meet Danny and Maggie

CASE STUDY



- Maggie 64 and Danny 67
- Married for 40 years
- Bought a house in their early 30s and have lived there ever since
- Added a second storey 20 years ago to provide more space for teenage children
- Margaret retired as a school teacher at 60
- Danny retired as an Engineer last year

Danny and Maggie

CASE STUDY







“When my wife started to have health problems with the staircase & steep driveway I realised we could not live there any longer as the laundry was downstairs, the clothesline upstairs all this compounded her hip & knee problems so we decided to move into a 2 bedroom unit that we had bought a few years ago as a investment, it was ideal for our downsize.”

Downsizing

WHERE DID PEOPLE MOVE?

Number of Storeys	% Former Dwelling	% Current Dwelling
Single	73.6	81.8
2 storeys	23.6	11.9
3 storeys	1.4	2.8
Multi-storey	1.4	3.4

Types of Dwellings

% Former Dwelling	 Dwelling Type	% Current Dwelling
77%	House 	40%
11%	Apartment/Unit 	37%
5%	Townhouse 	9%
1%	Villa 	13%
7%	Acerage/Rural 	2%

Tenure

TYPE OF HOUSING

Type of ownership	Former Dwelling	Current Dwelling
Home with no mortgage	48.9	50.9
Home with mortgage	24.7	12.5
Renting (Private sector)	20.7	20.5
Renting (Public sector)	2.6	4.8
Lease (eg retirement village)	1.1	7.1
Live rent free	0.9	1.7
Other	1.1	2.6

Key Reasons to Downsize

TOP 10

- House was too big
- To be closer to family
- Lifestyle preference
- Yard difficult to maintain
- Financial strain from remaining in former dwelling
- Financial gain from downsizing to new dwelling
- Loss of spouse/partner
- Cost of house repairs/home maintenance
- Concerns about future health
- Changes in neighbourhood

Dynamic Resources Model of Retirement



Resources explaining downsizing

HEALTH

“Age and ability to look after large house and garden.”

“Because of my health, the house was too big for me to maintain. Also, as it was over 100+ years old there were ongoing maintenance/renovation issues that I couldn't afford to do.”

FINANCES

“I could not keep up with the maintenance of my home, which I loved. It was too big. Financially it was extremely difficult to maintain”

“Financial liability of house.”

SOCIAL

“Getting old; needed to be closer to family. Wanted to be closer to grandchildren.”

“All of our children live either overseas or interstate so that we had no-one near to help with work around the house whenever it was needed. As we had been in our house, which we had built, for 37 years it was starting to need more repairs. It was also getting harder for us to do the smaller tasks, both money wise and work wise.”

A good idea? A difficult decision?

A GOOD IDEA?

9.1% worse than expected

23% regretted the move

STRESSED?

40% report medium stress levels

32% very high to extreme stress levels

EASY DECISION?

31% found the decision difficult or very difficult

44% found the decision easy or very easy

Who is making the decision?

Who owns the decision?

85.5% made the decision for themselves

14.5% indicated the decision was made for them

Who helped with the decision?

63% partners

21% children

3% friends

Why decision ownership matters

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

		Who made the decision to move	
		Made the decision myself %	Decision was made for me %
Regrets about moving	No (n = 286)	88.8	11.2
	Yes (n = 66)	71.2	28.8
		$\chi^2(1, n = 352) = 13.41, \rho = .001, \text{phi} = .195$	
Regrets about things left behind	No (n = 182)	84.1	15.9
	Yes (n = 170)	87.1	12.9
		$\chi^2(1, n = 352) = .42, \rho = .518, \text{phi} = .42$	
Regrets about things taken	No (n = 275)	86.2	13.8
	Yes (n = 77)	83.1	16.9
		$\chi^2(1, n = 352) = .04, \rho = .623, \text{phi} = .24$	

What do people most regret?

SOCIAL ASPECTS

We didn't realise just how attached we were to the area in which we raised children and were active in our Street, Church, Veteran and sporting communities until we moved. Over years you build up valuable contacts with tradesmen (Electricians, Plumbers, Auto Mechanics, Painters etc). It is a huge task to start all over and not have a feeling of being ripped off, much worse actually been taken for a ride. You arrive in a new town and know no one, and no one welcomes you to the town or even Street.



What do people most regret?

EMOTIONAL ASPECTS

Feel lonely and sad sometimes and afraid at night.

I find myself in the same situation, depressed and feeling isolated.

I was very isolated and depressed in my former address. Sadly that hasn't changed by the move back home.



What do people most regret?

GARDEN

Miss the acreage, fruit trees, vegetables, access to large workshop.

A shadehouse for my potplants which had only just been erected. Garden of roses which we had planted 13 years before. Shed full of items which were not sorted before we moved so we don't know what might have been left that we should have taken.



What's associated with regret?

- Past Negative Time Perspective
- Few available resources especially financial and physical health
- Lower levels of satisfaction
- Higher levels of mental distress
- Taking stuff that could have been left behind



The relationship with Financial Strain

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

- More likely to be single
- Report higher levels of mental distress
- Lower levels of satisfaction with life and retirement adjustment
- Higher Scores on Past Negative time perspective and Present Fatalistic



Regret and difficulty

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

		How difficult was it for you to make the decision to move				
		Very difficult %	Difficult %	Neutral %	Easy %	Very easy %
Regrets about moving	No (n = 286)	3.8	19.9	25.9	36.0	14.3
	Yes (n = 66)	25.8	36.4	22.7	12.1	3.0
		$\chi^2(4, n = 352) = 54.19, p = .000, \phi = .39$				
Regrets about things left behind	No (n= 182)	4.9	13.7	29.1	37.9	14.3
	Yes (n = 170)	11.2	32.9	21.2	24.7	10.0
		$\chi^2(4, n = 352) = 26.76, p = .000, \phi = .28$				
Regrets about things taken	No (n= 275)	6.5	20.7	27.3	31.6	13.8
	Yes (n = 77)	13.0	31.2	18.2	31.2	6.5
		$\chi^2(4, n = 352) = 10.61, p = .031, \phi = .174$				

Key Learnings

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

- Most people don't regret the move
- Think through all the options and make as many of the decision themselves as possible – timing, new location, type of residence
- Think about the social aspects of new location. How hard will it be to connect?
- If you have a good local social network and support and can afford to outsource services then consider staying where you are.
- If having a garden is important then plan for it in a new home or have access to a community garden etc.
- Be aware that feeling stressed is a common side-effect
- If you are dealing with mental health issues (grief, loss, anxiety, depression) get a handle on these before you move

WHEREVER YOU GO. THERE YOU ARE.

Publication under review (revise and resubmit)

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