

INDIVIDUALLY BUT TOGETHER: COUPLES EXPERIENCES OF RETIREMENT

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Background

- Older couples and holistic services
- Need for more support and counseling to families
- Family therapy

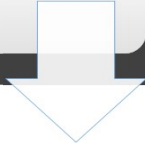
Qualitative method

Research question:

What is the couples experience of retirement and it's influence on the marriage

Participants and data collection

In-depth interviews with five couples
who were retired, aged 68-75 years

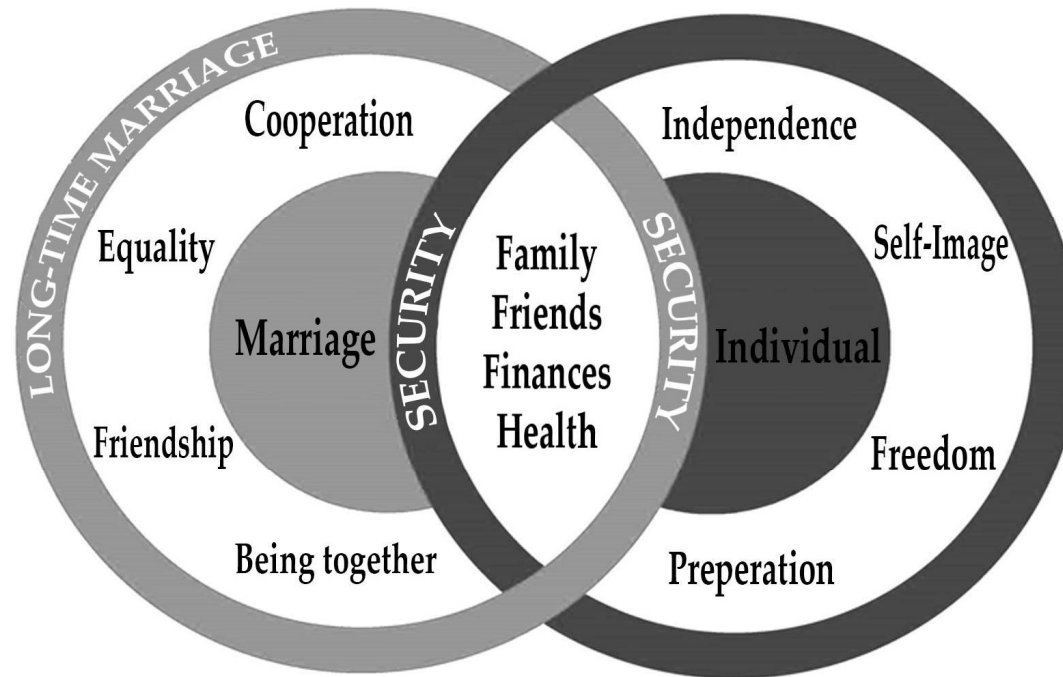


Couples were interviewed separately
– 10 interviews in all



The Vancouver School of doing
Phenomenology

Analytical model



Key findings

- Individually but together
- Retirement has varied impact on the marriage
- Positive experience related to long married life
- Quality of the relationship



The Individual (internal factors)

Freedom

*When you stop working then freedom comes
... and my opinion is that every person should
be able to do what he wants when he wants
as long as it does not change anything else ...
and that's what I think is most wonderful
about retirement*

80 years old as an
Icelandic fashion model



Skies in Iceland
in his nineties

The Individual (internal factors)

Preperation - difference between gender

- ✓ *I could say that I had been determined for a long time, two or three years, to have a part time job ... kind of taking the retirement in steps ... that was my plan*
- ✓ *I chose my birthday ... It just happened to be a good day to take the step...I was not letting go because of my age ... I just made a decision to quit working ... I had been thinking about it for some months before I resigned*

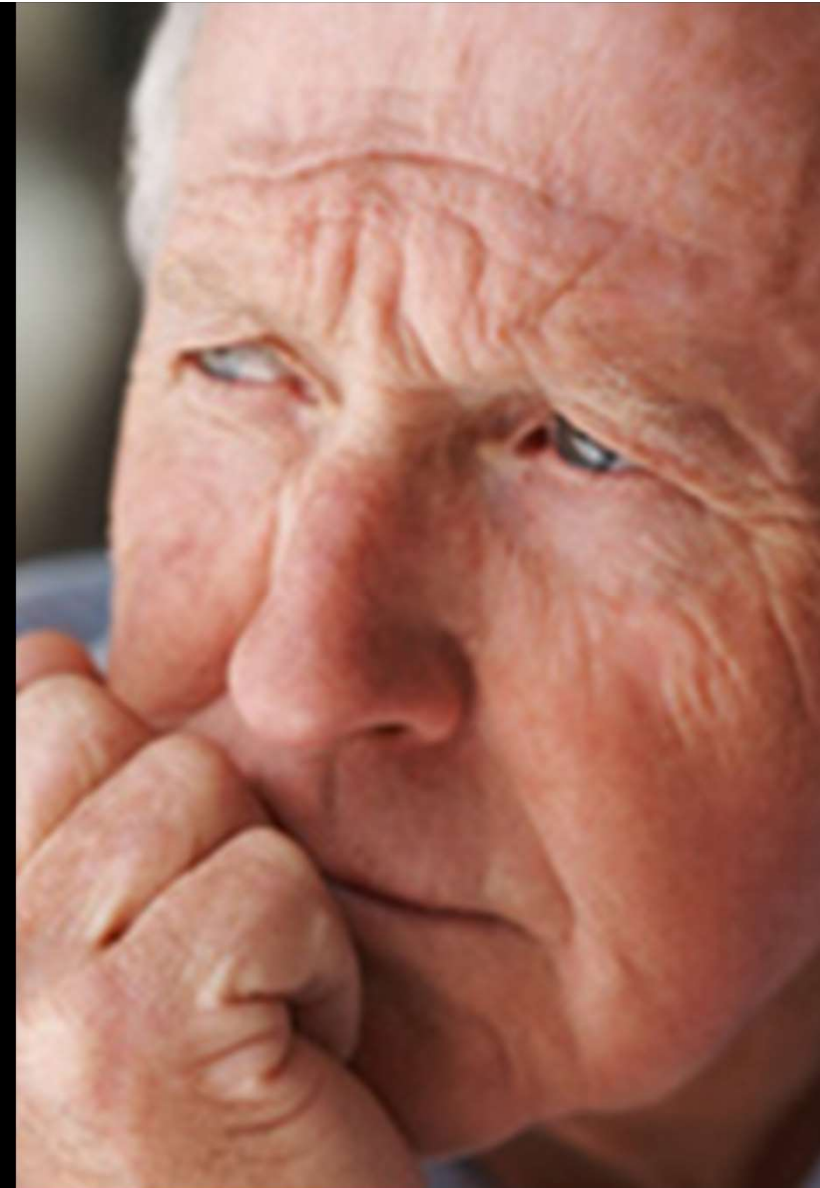


The Individual (internal factors)

Self-esteem

Example of a man

What I felt was strange that in the morning not having to go out at the same time as always. Maybe I'm an A person because I always wake up early ... and I felt strange if I did not go out before noon ... I felt a very peculiar feeling and I did not want to let anybody see me walking downtown and not being at work ... I found it a bit difficult to start with



The Individual (internal factors)

Self-esteem

Example of a woman

It is strange that I'm the oldest ... it's so odd ... if I look in a mirror I see nothing really but a little girl ... just a little bit more mature [laughter] what you think you are



The Individual (internal factors)

Independence

To be able to be alone with one self

Do activities like before and also in a new way

Take time to find yourself in the new role, that is, not being at work

The Marriage (Internal factors)

Working together

The role changed in the household and depended on if the spouse was sick or which one of them retired earlier

Equality

Respect, independence, give each other space, doing activities together

Friendship

We have had a long time together ... we are different personalities but we have enjoyed being together all this time

The Marriage – (Internal factors)

Being together

We met when we were 17 years old ... and by the way ... we have a lot of common experience and know each other very well ... maybe you're impatient about something because you know things too well ... but then you know that good friendship and caring is very important ... so ... I feel lucky to experience such a warmth

Security (external factors)

Family

Friends

Finances

Health

Conclusion

- Quality of a longtime marriage
- Need for more research on couples and retirement with different variables
- Need for research on older couples in relation to the whole family
- Educational material