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What is this thing called Grandparenting?

The social, economic and political influences on the role in New Zealand

A thesis
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Abstract

In 2003 Statistics New Zealand was describing grandparenting as an 'emerging field'. There exists very little academic material on the subject in New Zealand although there is a prolific literature from the US and increasing interest from Britain and other countries in the West. This research study sets out to explore the nature of grandparenting in New Zealand, past and present, reviewing the social, economic and political influences on the role as it is today.

From a review of the international literature three distinct models of grandparenting were identified for enquiry. They are:

- The full-time care grandparent with parental responsibilities.
- The grandparent providing regular supplementary care to assist parent/s to fulfil the parenting needs of their children (e.g. when parents are in work).
- The grandparent with a role characterized as voluntary and varied, outside parent type responsibilities.

Choosing an interpretive approach, I used a case study method of research. Eighteen grandparents were interviewed, some from each model. Additionally six grandparents, two from each model, kept a diary of their grandparenting activity over three months. Grandparents were purposefully selected to represent wide variability.

From grandparents in all three grandparenting models there is evidence of a strong emotional commitment to adult children's families. From past relationship with grandparents, or less often from observing their parents grandparenting their children, the grandparents have learnt a model of grandparenting which is carried into the present. There it is typically expressed in a variety of nurturing and protective behaviours. In this manner grandparents have the potential to provide continuity, stability and a sense of belonging at the micro-social level of the family, and in doing so, at the macro-level, to the broader fabric of society.

When, from social and/or economic circumstance grandparents are parenting grandchildren, they are likely to suffer a deteriorating quality of life, with health and finances especially affected. Grandparents who are providing regular, supplementary care of grandchildren also sometimes experience these effects. Social policies sensitive to both the micro- and macro-social value of grandparents are needed to address their vulnerabilities.

Acknowledgements

My primary gratitude for getting to this point in my research on New Zealand grandparenting is split between what I owe the grandparent participants in the study and what I owe my supervisors. Perhaps I should add a 'third way' in appreciation of the fascinating topic I was fortunate to choose to study.

The fascination of grandparenting has lain somewhat with the richness of the data given me by the grandparents I interviewed and the diary contents of those grandparents who, with such commitment, wrote down their thoughts and feelings of being a grandparent. These grandparents gave me wise and beautiful thoughts expressed in feelingful and colourful words. I hope so much I have done justice to them in my interpretations of their words.

My supervisors gave me direction and encouragement without which I would not have held onto the faith to work on. Life and the world do not stop for a PhD and sometimes both have impinged uncomfortably into my efforts to complete this study. Dr Celia Briar was with me at the beginning and gave me valuable help in finding my way through the related literature and theories on grandparenting. Dr Mary Nash was with me all the way. I believe she, with me, did not at first foresee how long we would take. I am deeply grateful for how she 'hung in' with me. I have been fortunate to have the time, knowledge and experience of Associate Professor Mike O'Brien, who joined Dr Nash to guide me through the latter part of this thesis.

I began this study with the thought that it would always take second place to my obligations to my family. There has been much correspondence between my study of grandparenting and my life as wife, mother and grandmother. I do want now to recognize my family, for their support and tolerance of my time and interest in thesis composing, which has taken time and interest away from them; also for their sometimes practical support in reading and commenting on the writing.

Special thanks should go to Ainsley Mahoney and Katja Bulic with whom I was able to share early collegial conversations on studying grandparenting in New Zealand.

A final acknowledgement is owed to friends: to Keith who has supported the work, and to Judith who, so usefully, put me in touch with some of my participants. This goes also to Takapuna Grammar School for the friends it has provided me with, over nearly sixty years, to keep going on.

Below is a drawing by my then four-year-old grandson, of his 'family'. He is at the top right. I am the one with a lot of hair, with his younger brother, at the bottom left. My husband is above, with no hair and glasses. Olwyn's other grandparents, whom he had met, live in London.

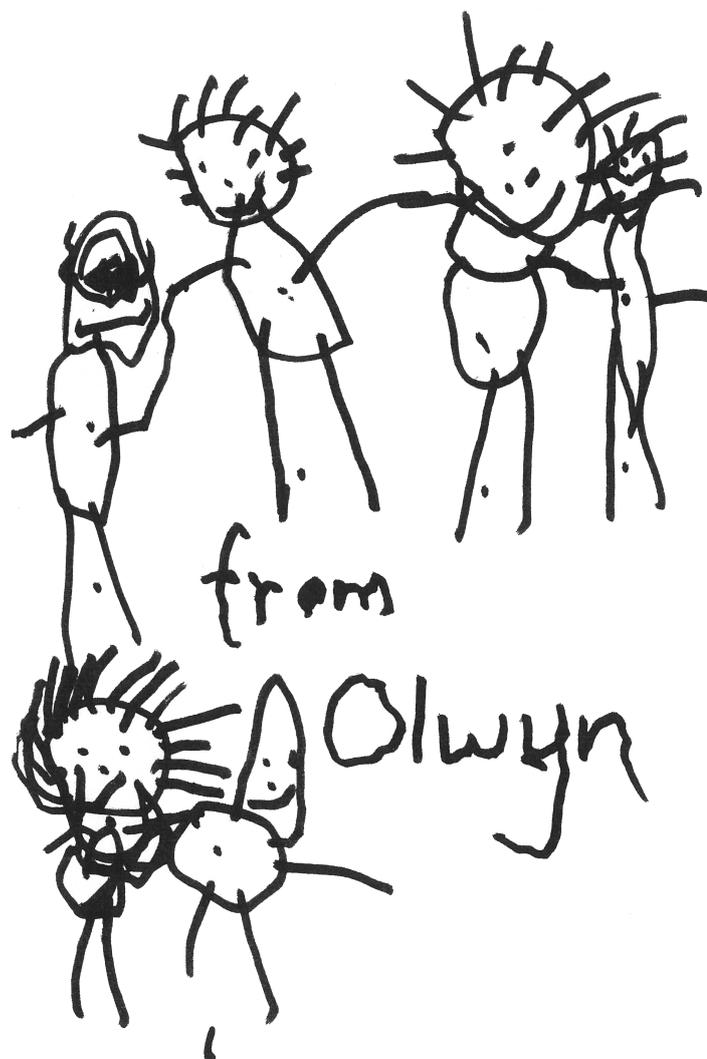


TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
<u>Before Beginning</u>	1
Explaining ‘grandparenting’	1
The place of Māori in a Pākehā study	1
<u>Issues about Grandparenting</u>	2
Early observation	2
Parenting grandparents again	2
The CYP&F Act 1989	2
Difficulties arising from a FGC	3
A rising grandparent awareness	4
Grandparents as carers to their grandchildren	4
<u>Clarifying the Study</u>	4
Sorting my interests	4
About purpose	5
Features of New Zealand families	5
Choosing a pathway	6
<u>Other Research Directions</u>	7
<u>Following Chapters</u>	8
Chapter II: Methodology	8
Chapter III: Grandparents in New Zealand’s History	8
Chapter IV: The ‘grandmotherly’ State	8
Chapter V: Approaches and Attitudes to Grandparenting	9
Chapter VI: Writing About New Zealand Grandparents	9
Chapter VII: Three Pictures Illustrating Qualities in Grandparenting	10
Chapter VIII: Presentation of Data	10
Chapter IX: Discussion of the Data	10
Chapter X: Conclusions and Recommendations	11
 CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY	 12
<u>Introduction</u>	12

<u>Methodological Assumptions Underlying the Research Method</u>	12
<u>Case Study as Method</u>	14
The nature of the study	14
Choice of the case study method	14
What, how and whys?	15
Shaping and thinking the design from observation and experience	15
Shaping and thinking the design from literature and theory	16
Units of analysis	16
Triangulating data	17
<u>Focus on Data Finding</u>	18
<i>‘...a little like starting on a journey’</i>	18
Weighing the focus group interview with the individual in-depth interview	18
<u>Thinking about Data Collection</u>	19
Control and logistics	19
Solicited diary records as research data	20
Here and now – place and time	20
A question of questions	20
The grandparent/grandchild dyad	21
The pilot study	22
Pilot study outcomes	23
Pilot study ethics	24
<u>The Interview Schedule</u>	24
Sequencing	24
Managing emotion	25
More specifically about questions	25
Selecting a purposive sample	27
Sample size and nature	27
<u>Making Contact</u>	28
Accessing participants using a national network	28
Accessing participants locally	28
Exchanging research information with possible participants	29
Selecting out: researcher choice	29
Selecting out: grandparent choice	29
Getting to know the people	30

More about recruitment	31
Winkling the missing grandparents	31
<u>Features of the Data Collection</u>	32
Changeability in the family snap shots	32
More about diarists and diary keeping	33
Using email	33
Features of the diary method	34
Doing diaries	34
The therapeutic value of qualitative research	35
Life stage	36
<u>Shaping the Interviewer/Interviewee Relationship</u>	36
Ethical relevancy	36
<i>‘The social relationships we have with those we interview’</i>	37
Power and accountability	38
About boundary awareness	40
Anonymity and confidentiality	40
<u>Difference and Representativeness</u>	42
Ethnic sensitivity and Māori participants	42
<i>‘the need for taking gender seriously’</i>	43
<u>Moving On</u>	44
Ordering the chaos	44
Looking beyond my own perceptions	44
Limitations to the diversity of the grandparent sample	45
<u>Summary and conclusions</u>	46
CHAPTER III: GRANDPARENTS IN NEW ZEALAND’S HISTORY	47
<u>Introduction</u>	47
A migrant destination	47
<u>Pre- and Early-contact Māori</u>	47
Reconstructing a past	47
The social fabric of Māori pre European-contact	48
<u>Pākehā Settlement from 1840-1900</u>	49
The early European experience	49
Early settler characteristics	50

The young society	51
The new society	52
Addressing misfortune: a family affair	53
In default of family: charitable aid	54
An aging population	54
<u>Grandparenting in Early Pākehā Settlement</u>	55
Personal record keeping	55
A very male correspondence: three generations of closeness	55
Establishing a Victorian extended family in settler NZ: wife and husband	56
Gender, class and personal writing	57
Recording a working class life from grandchild to grandparent	58
<u>Summary and conclusions</u>	59
CHAPTER IV: THE ‘GRANDMOTHERLY’ STATE	61
<u>Introduction</u>	61
<u>A Little, Careful, State Intervention</u>	61
A focus on change	61
Recapping Māori and the forces of change	62
Māori in recovery	62
Pākehā: the forces for social change	63
Was it ‘grandmotherly’?	63
Mary Lee again: living the changes	65
<u>Demography, Families and Grandparents</u>	65
Dredging for grandparents	65
A changing Pākehā demography	66
The colonial heritage as a determinant of family structure	68
Local factors determining family structure	68
Intimacy-at-a-distance: grandparent/grandchild closeness	70
Commonality and diversity in family structure	70
Whānau stories into the twentieth century	71
Grandparenting as common ground?	72
<u>Grandparent Roles in a Mixed Economy of Childcare</u>	73
Who looks after the children?	73
The Interface of institutional and grandparent care	74

Opening the orphanage window onto grandparenting	74
A study of orphanage experience	75
Grandparent and grandchild contact drawn from Crawford's study	75
Safety net or second line of defence?	76
Grandparenting 'the flotsam of society'	77
Saint Mary's Orphanage Register	78
Limitations of Registry evidence	79
<u>Government and Professionals Move In On Family</u>	80
Attention on home life	80
Shaping family through financial legislation	81
Securing the welfare state	82
Families with children	83
Changes for Māori	84
<u>Change: Values, Relationships, Families, Work</u>	85
Families and ex-nuptial birth	85
A mutating in family life	86
Changes in workforce participation	88
Changes for women	88
<u>Family Solutions to Family Problems</u>	89
Rethinking family welfare	89
Precursors to the CYP&F Act 1989	89
Cultural factors shaping the CYP&F Act 1989	90
Economic factors shaping the CYP&F Act 1989	91
Philosophical considerations shaping the CYP&F Act 1989	92
Grandparents and CYP&F Act 1989	93
Grandparent caregiving and working parents	93
<u>Summary and conclusions</u>	94
CHAPTER V: APPROACHES AND ATTITUDES TO GRANDPARENTING	97
<u>Introduction</u>	97
<u>General Characteristics of Grandparenting Studies</u>	98
FIRST GENERATION STUDIES OF GRANDPARENTING: UP TO 1980	
<u>Psychoanalytic Theory and Grandparenting</u>	99

Introduction	99
Ernest Rappaport	99
Ernest Jones	100
Helene Deutsch	100
The psychoanalytic interpretation brought forward	101
<u>The Psychoanalytic Legacy: Attachment Theory</u>	102
The making of affectional bonds	102
The care-giving behavioural system	102
Beyond the mother/child dyad	103
<u>The Psychoanalytic Legacy: Life Cycle Theory</u>	104
Erikson	104
The ‘epigenetic’ life-cycle	105
Grandparents and ‘generativity’	105
Play	106
Integration, identification and separation	106
<u>Sociological Studies of Grandparenting</u>	107
London studies: Townsend and Young and Willmott	107
A glimpse at great-grandparents	108
Typing grandparents: Neugarten and Weinstein	108
Grandparents as older persons: Kahana and Kahana	109
SECOND GENERATION STUDIES: AFTER 1980	
<u>Expanding Interests in Grandparenting</u>	111
A changing context to grandparenting	111
In praise of grandparents: Kornhaber and Woodward	111
Changing features of grandparenting: Cherlin and Furstenberg	112
Bringing together disciplinary approaches to grandparenthood: The National Conference on Grandparenting and Family Connections	114
Role features of grandparenting	114
Distinctions between parenting and grandparenting	115
Grandparenting, demographics and divorce	115
Grandparents as parents: Minkler and Roe	116
Grandmothers when mothers are unable to mother	116
Support systems	117
Personal and public responsibilities across generations	117

The working of kinship bonds	118
Reciprocity and balance in kin relationships	119
Factors in negotiating kin-care	119
Morality in family exchange	120
Kin-care/state care balance	120
Intergenerational solidarity across generation: what holds families together?	120
Conflict and ambivalence	121
Measures of solidarity	121
PROMINENT THEMES IN THE GRANDPARENTING LITERATURE	
Introduction	122
<u>Learning to Grandparent</u>	122
How does it happen?	122
The grandparent heritage	123
A grandparent or a parent template?	124
<u>Nearest and Dearest</u>	125
Proximity	125
The case for attachment at a distance	128
<u>Class and Grandparenting</u>	127
Class and family visiting	127
More on class and grandparenting	127
<u>Health and Grandparenting</u>	128
Grandparenting and mental health	128
Grandparents, health, and grandchildren	129
Custodial grandparenting and health	130
Taking care of oneself	130
Health costs and custodial care	131
Custodial grandparenting, age and health	132
Health and supplementary childcare: when you can't be sick	132
Practice and policy responses	133
<u>Gender and grandparenting</u>	133
A matrilineal tilt?	133
Limitations to gender studies	134
How gender happens	134
Gender or lineage bias?	135

Gender and grandparent childcare	136
What happens in divorce?	136
Gender and affinal links	137
But are they different?	137
Lost grandparenthood	138
<u>Summary and conclusions</u>	138
CHAPTER VI: NEW ZEALAND WRITING ABOUT GRANDPARENTS	142
<u>Introduction</u>	142
<u>Intimations of Grandparents</u>	142
Almost invisible	142
Grandparents revealed in private lives	143
<u>New Zealand's Academic Interest in Grandparenting</u>	145
Introduction	145
Social Aging and Grandparenting	145
Ethnic variation in urban grandmotherhood	145
Grandmotherhood for New Zealand Māori and European women compared	146
'Old-old' grandparents in rural/urban New Zealand	147
People in places	148
Grandparents in rural families	148
Graduate theses on Grandparenting	149
Introduction	149
A qualitative study	149
'What is a grandparent?'	149
Negotiating grandparenting	150
Present and past grandparenting	150
A positivist study	151
Effects of proximity	151
Grandparents and parents	152
Gender factors	152
'Grandfathers: their changing family roles and contributions'	153
The study	153
Grandfatherhood in academic literature	153
Finding out how grandfathers feel	154

How to become a grandfather	154
Belonging and Participating	155
Grandparenting in the family life of ‘Older Adults’	155
Linked lives and independent living	155
The value of grandparents	155
Distance and intergenerational relationships	156
Grandparenting as part of social connectedness	156
Place of residence and family closeness	156
To interfere or not to interfere	157
The kuia ‘Nanny’ and fictive grandparenting	158
The New Zealand extended family	159
The study	159
Characteristics of the extended family	159
Management of childcare	160
Choice, duty and coercion	161
Research and policy	161
<u>Childcare: Grandparents as Parents and the CYP&F Act, 1989</u>	162
Introduction	162
A partnership for kinship care: Worrall and GRG	162
Changed lives, unattained dreams	163
Negotiating kinship care and other relationships	164
Working with the ‘authorities’	164
A survey of ‘GRG’ grandparents	165
Some good things	166
<u>Popular Writing about Grandparents</u>	166
Autobiographical essays	166
Media cover	168
<u>Summary and conclusions</u>	168
CHAPTER VII: PICTURES	171
<u>Introduction</u>	171
<u>Cultural Imprinting</u>	171
<u>A ‘legacy to posterity’</u>	173
<u>‘Grandparents at the door’</u>	174

CHAPTER VIII: PRESENTATION OF DATA	175
Chapter Structure	175
THE PARTICIPANTS	175
<u>Introduction</u>	175
<u>Voluntary, Varied Care Grandparents</u>	176
<u>Regular, Supplementary Care Grandparents</u>	178
<u>Full-time Care Parenting Grandparents</u>	181
<u>Limitations to Study Sample</u>	185
PART I: ‘TELLING’ MEMORIES THAT INFLUENCED	186
<u>Introduction to Participants’ Stories</u>	186
<u>Lessons from Grandparents as Grandparents</u>	186
Mary	186
Helen	188
Hetty	189
Alice	190
Ann	191
The four grandfather participants	192
Clark	192
Galodali	193
Sandy	194
Jack	195
Violet	196
Hine	197
Annie	199
<u>Lessons from Parents as Grandparents: Parents who Confirm the Lessons from Grandparents</u>	202
Mary’s parents and her husband Tom’s parents	202
Hetty’s mother	202
Alice’s mother	202
Ann’s mother	203
Clark’s mother	203
Sandy’s parents and his wife’s parents	204
Jack’s parents and his wife’s parents	204

Hine's parents	205
<u>When Parents have Provided the Grandparenting Model</u>	205
Ruby	205
Carol	207
Briar	207
Rose	208
Flora	209
Pansy	211
Joy	211
Dorothy	212
Resa	213
PART II: GRANDPARENTS TALKING AND WRITING ABOUT THEIR GRANDPARENTING	215
<u>Table Showing Number/s of Grandchildren (and Children) Per Grandparent According to Grandparenting Category</u>	215
<u>'Voluntary and Varied' Grandparents</u>	216
Mary's grandparenting	216
Hetty's grandparenting	219
Ruby's grandparenting	221
Clark's grandparenting	223
Galodali's grandparenting	226
Hine's grandparenting	228
Flora's grandparenting	230
Joy's grandparenting	233
<u>Grandparents Providing Regular Supplementary Care</u>	234
Helen's grandparenting	234
Ann's grandparenting	235
Judith's grandparenting	238
Sandy's grandparenting	240
Violet's grandparenting	242
Jack's grandparenting	243
Dorothy's grandparenting	245
Victoria's grandparenting	248

<u>Grandparents with Full-care Parental Responsibilities</u>	249
Alice's grandparenting	249
Carol's grandparenting	252
Flossie's grandparenting	254
Briar's grandparenting	256
Rose's grandparenting	260
Annie's grandparenting	262
Pansy's grandparenting	266
Resa's grandparenting	269
CHAPTER IX: DISCUSSION OF DATA	272
<u>Introduction</u>	272
<u>Grandparents as Grandparents</u>	272
Grandchildren with grandparents: doing together	
Specials	273
Links to theory	274
Putting lessons into practice	274
How significance happened	275
More about the three-generation households	276
Sickness, age and grandparents	277
Death and absence	278
Tokens of continuity	279
Gatekeepers	279
<u>Parents as Grandparents</u>	280
Observer learning	280
Grandparents as parent help	280
Parents being grandparents	281
<u>Grandparents being Grandparents</u>	282
The 'amoeboid' grandparent	282
The protective being	283
Reflecting data back to theory	284
Responsibility	285
The 'other family'	285
Crossing cultures: separate parents	287

Crossing cultures: intact families	288
Sharing	288
Lineal difference	289
Sample grandfathers	290
Gendered grandparenting	291
Self schedule/child schedule	292
Freedom to grandparent	293
Giving and getting	293
About boundaries	295
Work-life balance	296
Fun	298
Touch	298
Conventions	299
<u>Summary</u>	300
CHAPTER X: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	302
<u>Introduction</u>	302
<u>Findings Common Across Grandparenting Categories</u>	303
<u>Difficulties Arising For Grandparents Who Care For Grandchildren</u>	304
<u>Grandparents At Times Of Change</u>	307
<u>Recommendations to Address The Needs of Caring for Grandchildren</u>	309
<u>Where to Now?</u>	312
<u>Recommendations for Future Research</u>	313
APPENDICES	314
DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRES:	
Grandparents with voluntary and varied responsibilities	315 316
Grandparents providing regular supplementary care to assist parents	317 318
Full-time care grandparents with parental responsibilities	319 320
COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS:	

Initial advertisement	321
Initial letter	322
Information sheet	323
Questionnaire	325
Consent form (to all participants)	327
Diary keeping (information giving)	328
Diarist's letter (voluntary and variable)	329
Diarist's letter (supplementary, regular care)	330
Diarist's letter (full-time, parental care)	331
Diarists consent form	332
Interview schedule	333
Additional questions (supplementary regular care, and for full-time care)	335
Second advertisement	336
Letter to return abstracts	337
Letter sharing profiles for confirmation	338
Bibliography	339

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I. Before Beginning

This is a study of grandparenting based on New Zealand research. Several different experiences and lines of reading about grandparents contributed to my thinking on their role before I began the study proper. Here I shall cover the background to its conception.

(i) Explaining ‘grandparenting’

I have adopted the word ‘grandparenting’ throughout the study, as distinct from grandparenthood. The latter I understand to be an ascribed status (Kahana and Kahana, 1971). By referring to ‘grandparenting’ I am focussing on what is done by grandparents in expression of their role. According to Mestheneos and Svensson-Dianellou (2004) many European languages lack an equivalent to this word. They describe it as a neologism of US origin arising there from the relatively recent social changes that have brought active family roles played by grandparents to higher public notice. These are not stereotypically disengaged elderly, ‘*Grandfather sitting by the fire smoking his pipe; granny in her rocking-chair, knitting, both white-haired.*’ (Thompson, Itzin, & Abendstern 1991, p. 175; see also Else, 2000; Smith, 1991). They hold involved and diverse roles.

(ii) The place of Māori in a Pākehā study

As a Pākehā New Zealander I have not set out to examine the place and quality of grandparenting in Māori culture. But in a country which explicitly claims a bicultural identity, and where intermarriage is frequent (Harre, 1975; Pool, 1991), the study does explore aspects of Māori grandparenting with a view to better understand its significance to grandparenting in New Zealand society, through over 200 years of Māori/Pākehā contact. Two participants identify themselves as Māori. Two Pākehā grandmothers have Māori partners and one Pākehā grandfather has a Māori partner. Five grandparents have part Māori grandchildren. There are also three grandparents who have part Samoan grandchildren.

II. Issues about Grandparenting

(i) Early observation

My initial interest in grandparenting arose when I was working as a counsellor with the New Zealand Family Court at the end of the 1980s. Amongst my clients were several grandmothers who had assumed a parenting role for grandchildren following difficulties for the children's parents. Some grandmothers appeared well suited to their new role. Others appeared likely to repeat with their grandchildren, parenting errors which had given rise to difficulties for their children. I became curious about grandparenting. What was it? Did any qualities belong inherently with grandparenthood? Or was it learnt? Was grandparenting different now to when these grandparents were grandchildren? To what extent was grandparenting a fluid role, responding to the times and circumstances in which it was acted out? What was involved when grandparents took on the parenting of their grandchildren?

(ii) Parenting grandparents again

These questions arose again when, from the 1990s, I was working in a Child and Family Support Service (CFSS)¹. An increasing number of grandparents came to the agency asking for support for their position as full-time carers for grandchildren. Some were looking after their grandchildren following informal agreements within their families. More amongst them had formal, legally endorsed responsibility for grandchildren following a Family Group Conference (FGC) convened by Child, Youth and Family² (CYF) under the 1989 Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (CYP&F Act).

(iii) The CYP&F Act 1989

The Act addresses the needs for care and protection of New Zealand's children and young people who, in whatever manner, are at risk of serious harm. Recognizing the bicultural character of New Zealand's population, the process of the FGC with its consensual and collective decision-making, and its valuing of kin-care, builds on Māori cultural mores. Through the FGC the Act seeks the involvement of a child's *'family*,

¹ A non-government welfare organization with mandated responsibilities for families and children under New Zealand's CYP&F Act 1989, S 396.

² This Government Department has had several name changes but will be given the acronym CYF in this study.

*whānau, hapū, iwi and family group*³ and others closely concerned with the child, bringing them together for decision making and planning for the management of the child's wellbeing. Where children are removed from their homes the Act requires that the primary effort of the group's coordinator, and the child's responsible social workers, is directed towards finding a substitute home amongst family members.

(iv) Difficulties arising from a FGC

The goal of the FGC is a consensual decision. However the group ambiance and dynamics, cultural and social expectations, and the lack of realistic alternative options⁴ can result in family members feeling pressured, even cornered into offering to care for a child.⁵ At the conclusion of a FGC it is grandparents who are most likely to have accepted the parenting role (Worrall, 2009), often ill prepared for such a commitment.

While the FGC is respected as a positive initiative for achieving participatory responsibility amongst family members, and there is often a constructive outcome for children, the level of success for outcomes is dependent on attendant resources. Typically those grandparents who were seeking CFSS support after a FGC, were expressing a sense of abandonment. Their experience of the FGC was '*Good on you for taking your grandchild. Bye-bye.*' They were complaining that their expectations of support from CYF were not being met. The failure to resource FGC outcomes effectively was mentioned by Henaghan and Tapp (1992), the Mason Report (1992), the Social Work Review (December 1993), and in Worrall's Research Reports, (2005; 2009) for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust (GRG).

With some grandparents who approached the CFSS a support group was formed, and for some occasional respite care was arranged, placing grandchildren briefly with foster parents.

³ CYP&F Act 1989, S 13 Principles.

⁴ From professional child welfare preference, from philosophic and social change and for cost reasons, adoption, fostering and institutional care are less available than in the past.

⁵ My personal observation, and reported experience of FGC coordinator, Rob Teppett May, 2004. It is noteworthy that McPherson's thesis (2000, p. 316) found, '*help which results from a lack of alternatives and is not willingly given may be detrimental to the recipients of that help.*'

(v) A rising grandparent awareness

As numbers increased the need for support for parenting grandparents was becoming more generally apparent throughout New Zealand and a national advocacy and lobby group, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG), formed in 1999. Established in Auckland, by 2009 it was networking with 48 support groups set up locally across the country (The Trustees, GRG conference, 2009). It works at grass roots level, and with government, to advance and publicize the needs of grandparents who parent.

(vi) Grandparents as carers to their grandchildren

While grandparents who were parenting had attracted my interest through the 1990s I was also, personally and through media publicity, aware of another category of grandparents gaining prominence over the period. These were grandparents, generally women but some grandfathers, who provided day care for their grandchildren while the parent generation was in paid employment. This was occurring in response to several factors impacting on families with children. Poverty was increasingly apparent amongst one-income families (Dunstall, 1992). The policies of a neo-liberal government exerted pressures on parents in both single and couple families to be earning. Yet relative to comparable countries New Zealand had little out-of-family childcare and what was available was costly (Knutson, 1998; McClure, 1998). Grandparents, if available, promised a resource of safe and cheap childcare for their grandchildren. Teenage and other single parents, along with families suffering disruption from a growing number of social factors such as drug misuse, were similarly helped if grandparents were able to give support through childcare. I came to ask, ‘What is this like for grandparents?’ I added this interest in grandparents who are carers for their grandchildren to my existing interest in grandparents who parent.

III. Clarifying the Study

(i) Sorting my interests

From my curiosity on these two variations of grandparenting I needed to return to my original questions about grandparenting, to explore the underlying characteristics of the grandparenting role and discover how the two variations of the role reflected on the experience of grandparenting.

Having identified grandparenting as a topic of interest for study I was now observing three distinct grandparent settings for enquiry. I formulate them as:

- The full-time care grandparent with parental responsibilities.
- The grandparent providing regular supplementary care to assist parent/s to fulfil the parenting needs of their children (e.g. when parents are in work).
- The grandparent with a role characterized as voluntary and varied, outside parent type responsibilities.

(ii) About purpose

Was there a purpose to my interest in grandparenting? Should I find answers to my questions about grandparenting what purpose might they serve? Given an apparent lack of comprehensive knowledge about grandparenting in New Zealand, expanding understanding of the role, in itself, provided me with motivation for study. However given the stress I had observed placed on some grandparents by the demands of their family role and the origins of my curiosity in social service settings, I hoped additional understanding of grandparenting could lead to policy and practical measures to ameliorate the most difficult circumstances related to the role. At the same time viewing grandparents' capacity to secure and enhance family life for their children and grandchildren I believed more enlightened recognition of their societal contribution (see Kahana and Kahana, 1971) must reinforce their essential significance in society.

(iii) Features of New Zealand families

Reading literature on grandparenting I was aware that I was posing questions about grandparenting against a dispersed background of social change, demographics and intellectual enquiry, all likely to influence the nature of the grandparent role. Emerging changes in gendered behaviour raised a question as to how grandfathers were responding to the increase in their wives' and their daughters' participation in the work force. With periods of uncertain male employment and a raising of the pension age for women I was interested as to whether New Zealand grandfathers are providing a similar level of childcare as was found by Wheelock and Jones (2002) in a north England study. There maternal grandfathers provided nearly half of what maternal grandmothers gave

and paternal grandfathers similarly provided nearly half of the lesser care given by paternal grandmothers.

By association enquiry about grandparents became an interest about families. The New Zealand population is showing increasing longevity and fewer, later births, with an accompanying extension of generations and a reduction of family size. Grandparents can no longer be stereotyped as belonging to retired old age. Erikson (1998, p. 12), referring to the '*historical relativity*' of life stages, sees present day older people multiplying into '*elderlies*' rather than a once rare elite of '*elders*'.

Whereas there is recognition that Māori families have retained much of their traditional cohesion, there is a question as to whether Pākehā New Zealand families incorporate similar collective strengths. What is their capacity to respond to family care demands, especially those made by the CYP&F Act? McPherson in 2000 conducted a study of the Pākehā extended family. In it she describes Litwak's (1965) 'modified' extended family, often '*involving an interlocking set of nuclear families...geographically dispersed and economically independent*', having '*loose, informal and selective*' affective kinship ties (p. 34). The model well applies to the families outlined in this study's current grandparenting stories. In concluding her research McPherson found, amongst her survey respondents, a belief that intra-family help should not be an expectation on kin, but a voluntarily chosen response when ability allows.

(iv) Choosing a pathway

Through further reading I became aware of debate about what family structure English settlers brought to New Zealand. What has occurred in reaching the Litwak model in New Zealand today (McPherson, 2000)? I also found a lack of clarity about Māori kinship at the time of settlement. Both issues appeared pertinent to understanding the character of present day families, and to how grandparents fit within them. I chose then, in studying New Zealand grandparenting, to follow a historic pathway, examining the social, economic, and political influences which have shaped the role since the mid-nineteenth century (see Toynbee, 1995). From reading too, I learnt of the difficulty in presenting past knowledge of the family with certitude (Pool, 1991), and the different grandparenting paradigms currently emerging from different disciplines, such as bioanthropology and genetics.

IV. Other Research Directions

From the past's brief life-spans (Houghton, 1980) many studies depict grandparents to be a minority before the 20th century, amongst all peoples. Nelson, a historian, reported (2002) that of, '3,404 women recorded in an early ninth-century survey of peasant families near Paris, just 26 (1.3%) were grandmothers.' Yet Hassell (2009, p. i) cites anthropologist Wong (2009) showing evidence of a surge in longevity 30,000 years ago with grandparents becoming '*an enduring feature of human societies*'. It is proposed that the change came from improved living conditions, and that the grandparents then present helped their communities to an enhanced cultural sophistication and a survival advantage. Gluckman and Hanson (2005)⁶ update the case into the present, pointing to grandparents benefiting their descendants practically with help in childcare, and culturally by the transfer of complex traditional knowledge. In animal species it appears an extended lifespan is found in association with '*complex social structures which elderly members seem to play an important role in sustaining*' (Harper, 2005, p. 424). The same paradigm debates the 'purpose' of female menopause, suggesting the period women survive post-reproduction is a '*trade-off between the reproductive value of existing kin and the production of additional descendants*', the former providing, through grandparenting, the occasion to better further the survival of lineage (Harper, *ibid*). The argument remains contentious with counter claims '*that menopause is a non-adaptive result of senescence*' (Sherman, 1998, p. 759) and happens more to benefit children than grandchildren (Gibbons, 1998).

While these speculative theories sit outside the domain of this study they must be held in mind in weighing up the value of all grandparent research, with a time in view when different perspectives on the phenomenon can be integrated.

⁶ Additionally they describe the significance of grandmothers' health to their grandchild's genetic health. It is the grandmother's intrauterine environment that will nurse the DNA of any daughter's eggs, of potential grandchildren to be.

V. Following Chapters

This section gives the sequence of subsequent chapters, briefly summarizing their contents.

(i) Chapter II: Methodology

Here I chart my passage through the planning, and later the processes, of data collection. Initially I discuss the choice of a qualitative case study design and factors which led to the definition of the unit of analysis as ‘grandparenting’ with part-time and full-care grandparenting embedded as sub-units of analysis. Selection and management of the grandparent sample is discussed along with sections on the use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews and diaries as research tools. The personal, relationship and ethical aspects of research as they affected participants and me are explored with reverence to theoretical literature and to my experiential path. Finally I identify steps in the ordering and analysis of the data.

(ii) Chapter III: Grandparents in New Zealand’s History

In this chapter I have sought to uncover significant social, economic and political factors influencing the formation of Pākehā families during the later half of the nineteenth century, especially the presence and role of grandparents. I have also examined what is written about the Māori domestic group over the same period. Academic literature in history, anthropology, demography and sociology, personal letters and biography, are used as sources.

(iii) Chapter IV: The ‘grandmotherly’ State

Covering the twentieth century, this chapter follows grandparenting through developments in the welfare state in New Zealand. It tracks through a century of two world wars, Depression, technological advances and demographic change, reflecting on the effects on family life, both Māori and Pākehā, of social and economic policies through shifting political directions. Considered here, as they affect grandparenting, are child welfare policies, housing initiatives, increasing urbanization, especially of Māori, increases in divorce and single parenting, the move of women into the workforce, and effects of the two parent working family and work/life balance. The introduction of the CYP&F Act 1989 is discussed. Studies in social history and examinations of orphanage

registers are used to understand the role of grandparents in family life during the early years of the century.

(iv) Chapter V: Approaches and Attitudes to Grandparenting

In this chapter theoretical and research literature relating to grandparenting is reviewed. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first looks at writings from the mid-century until 1980. These begin with psychoanalytic studies which explore the place of grandparents in theorizing human development across three generation families, and move on to studies in human attachment theory and Erikson's life cycle theory of generativity across the life course. Sociological studies of London family life and early US studies addressing grandparenting per se complete the section.

By the 1980s the grandparenting topic was attracting greater academic interest, initially in the US alone, prompted somewhat by political concern at the expanding aged population. Increasingly too grandparents were being seen as practical and therapeutic 'fixers' for such social ills as divorce, single teen births and drug abuse. Texts and articles from this period, based on large and small sociological and psychological research projects are reviewed. By the 1990s texts and articles are beginning to appear from Britain and Europe looking at a range of grandparenting situations. By then some studies reviewed have a specialist focus on grandparents who provide childcare for parents, single or couple, who work.

The third and final section selects the main themes which have appeared in reviewing the literature, and examines them in depth.

(v) Chapter VI: Writing About New Zealand Grandparents

Covering the period of the twentieth century until the present this chapter repeats chapter IV's time line and parallels its contents. It reviews New Zealand writing, and research about grandparenting until the present. With only occasional literary references to grandparents appearing initially, the topic first became of academic interest in New Zealand in the mid-1990s. Several anthropological research studies give valuable insights into how grandparents value their role in different 'place' settings. Theses and special interest studies fill out understanding of what grandparents are doing here. The hardships encountered by grandparents who are parenting their grandchildren receive

rich coverage. There is recognition of an increasing public awareness of grandparenting and its micro and macro contribution to family and social wellbeing, promoted by active lobbying, popular writing and media.

(vi) Chapter VII Three Pictures Illustrating Qualities in Grandparenting

(vii) Chapter VIII: Presentation of Data

Initially included in this chapter are introductory profiles to the grandparent participants. The data which follows, from both in-depth interviews and diaries, is divided into two sections. In the first section extracts are presented in which participants look to the past, to ways in which their grandparents, parents, in-laws and special family circumstances have been influential in defining a model for their own expression of grandparenting. Recollections of grandparents are presented first, followed by accounts of parents who have provided a grandparent model. Within that framework grandparents are introduced in order of descending age, from oldest to youngest.

The second section presents passages in which the grandparents recount the stories of their own grandparenting. Beginning with grandparents who have voluntary and varied contact with grandchildren, followed by grandparents providing regular supplementary care to assist parents to fulfil the parenting needs of their children, and then full-time care grandparents with parental responsibilities. This section again follows grandparents according to descending age.

(viii) Chapter IX: Discussion of the Data

Here selected themes emerging from the data presented in the previous chapter are explored in depth. Three sections in sequence review, firstly, data relating to participants' memories of their own grandparents, then participants remembering their parents as grandparents and thirdly participants reporting on their experience of being grandparents. The first two sections examine factors which have contributed to the participants' personal understanding of what it is to grandparent. With these histories in mind the third section examines what further factors have shaped the experience of actual grandparenting the participants find themselves engaged in. Reference is made back to the grandparenting literature and to the themes selected from it, which are reviewed in **Chapter V**.

(ix) Chapter X: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter identifies features of the participants' experience, held in common with past grandparenting, which are found commonly shared between the three categories of grandparenting. Grandparents represent family continuity, working to secure descendants' wellbeing, and ensuring social and cultural linkage over often more than four generations. In doing so they provide continuity and stability to the wider social fabric. This is occurring alongside accompanying changes in the socio-economic environment. Examples of change to which grandparents have shown themselves responding are considered.

Experiences of grandparenting which separate the two subunits of full-care and supplementary care categories of grandparenting, from the voluntary and varied category, are reviewed. The stresses which are created with these responsibilities, most especially to health and living standard, are considered, followed by proposals for ameliorating policies.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

The world...becomes a world of meaning only when meaning-making beings make sense of it

(Crotty, 1998, p. 123).

I. Introduction

This chapter considers the design rationale of this case study exploration of grandparenting in New Zealand, especially in the responsiveness of its role to social, economic and political influences. It follows the experiential path I have taken in formulating the design and gathering data related to the topic.

II. Methodological Assumptions Underlying the Research Method

The framework shaping the overall conception of the study is broadly in line with a methodological approach which is termed 'interpretative' in the social science literature. The interpretative approach stems conceptually from a belief that social truth and knowledge are grounded in experience and are constructed in the mind. Philosophically interpretivism stands in contrast to the claims of positivism for a universal and objective external reality, the systematic and empirical enquiry into which will lead, ideally, to general laws of causality and prediction (Ponterotto, 2005; Turner, 2001). Positivism excludes values from social enquiry; interpretivism accepts that values are an integral part of human being.

Elements of Feminist methodology, which argue for an interaction between '*the personal and the political*', and for '*how everyday struggles are linked to social structures*', (Smith & Noble-Spruell, 1986, p. 145) are additionally drawn on. In particular the pertinence of gender and other socially determined classifications of persons to the status positioning of grandparenting, is considered. Where, in the course of data analysis, such positioning is shown to be to the disadvantage of grandparents in

their family role, the efficacy of corrective action will be explored (Alice, 2001; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Snook, 2001).

The interpretative approach is described by Neuman (2006) as emphasizing the significance of meaning to social action and, as well, the part people themselves play in constructing meaning. It accepts the purposive quality of social action. It rejects that absolute truths are pertinent to social knowledge, adopting instead a relativistic position that is sensitive to people's historical, cultural and environmental settings (Crotty, 1998). It is my belief that any understanding of a society, or sector of a society, needs to take into account how its members make meaning of their experience within it. This assumes that the reality people live is created in the process of making sense of relationships, occurrences and entities encountered in their daily lives and carried from their past. Salient in the process of this reality-making is the power of spoken and thought language to formulate, delineate and limit meaning. Language becomes an essential key in the formation and interpretation of social meanings (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997).

In this understanding, social enquiry as distinct from exploration made of the material world, must discover not only what members of a society do and have done to them, but also why they do it, and why it is done to them. What has meaning to them? Social structures, policies and laws to have relevance to a society must, as far as possible, be attuned to the experiences, needs, limitations, beliefs and values of those who constitute it. Access to this introspective lived experience lies outside the reach of positivist tools of observation and quantitative measurement (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997). Methods are needed that tap into the sentient life of human subjects, and to their expression of self in purposeful actions (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). For the social researcher, finding mechanisms to facilitate such empathic learning about how others feel, think and behave is the challenge of method design.

III. Case Study as Method

(i) The nature of the study

This research adopts a case study method. While the case study method employs features common to qualitative research designs it is not a purely qualitative strategy. Specific studies will vary in their position on the qualitative/quantitative continuum (Burgess, 2000; Yin, 1993). In keeping with an interpretative methodology, seeking ‘*to understand human experiences from the perspective of those who experience them*’ (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006, p. 21) this study takes a qualitative approach. Exceptionally, within the early phase of recruitment, quantitative information was gathered through a questionnaire posted to would-be participants along with introductory information. This provided personal data for selection of a purposive sample. The principal primary source of data has been the interviews conducted by me with 18 grandparents and the accounts and diary records of a further six grandparents. From that data I have sought to understand the quality of meaning and feeling these grandparents associate with their grandparenting role and the constraints upon it. I also asked them to recall memories of their own experience as grandchildren. Additionally, in line with the case study approach to research (Yin, 2003), diverse secondary evidence has been sourced from: a review of contextually relevant New Zealand history and social policy, from survey reports¹, from visual depictions, from New Zealand writings, and from the international academic literature on grandparenting.

(ii) Choice of the case study method

A case study is advanced, within the research literature, as logically tying together features of a distinct empirical strategy of enquiry into ‘*complex social phenomena*’ (Patton, 2002, p. 447; Yin, 2003, p. 2). The ‘*case*’ itself is elsewhere defined as a single ‘*bounded system*’ upon which the ‘*study*’ is intensively focussed (Platt, 1988, p. 3; see also Harre-Hindmarsh, 1992; Rubin & Babbie, 2001; Silverman, 2005; Stake, 2000). Alternatively ‘*case study*’ can refer to the eventual product of this specific study process (Patton, 2002). Enquiry is driven by interest in the case as opposed to the hypothesis generated strategies common to deductive research. Interpretations and theories are drawn out of the findings. Movement is ‘*from curiosity to data collection*

¹ ‘*Yes, quantitative data can be part of a qualitative case study*’ (Patton, 2002, p. 449). See also Yin (2003), Burgess (2000) and Lofland and Lofland (1995).

to the developing of formal theory' (Davidson & Tolich, 2001, p. 19). According to Yin the key to establishing the suitability of case study design to a research project lies with the study question.

(iii) What, how and whys?

Initially here the grandparent question arose from my work, in the form of the exploratory 'what?' What is this thing called 'grandparenting'? Then came a 'how?' and a 'why?' addressed to its different manifestations, noted from my observations in personal and social work settings. Yin views the case study method to be ideally applicable when such 'how' and 'why' questions relate to '*a set of events over which the investigator has little or no control*' (2003, p. 9). My primary enquiry into grandparenting, addressing contemporary, real life experiences as natural occurrences complies with this feature of the case study; a situation likewise recognized by Burgess as appropriate for a case study application (2000). (Management of a selected sample of grandparent interviewees and diarists was limited in ways that will be outlined below.) Such a naturalistic setting, where subject and context may be blurred, Yin identifies as a further indicator for the use of the case study (Yin, 2003²; see also Burgess (2000) and Platt (1988).

(iv) Shaping and thinking the design from observation and experience

The choice of the case study method developed after my interest had been caught by the grandparenting topic, and after remarking how its different contexts were apparently reflected in differences in the adult/child caring relationship. Reading Yin's text seemed to fit a glove to a hand and an intentional design process came more to the fore.

I wanted understanding of grandparenting as a New Zealand phenomenon. From a social work position, I wanted to see how and why full-time grandparent care of grandchildren with parental responsibilities, and regular supplementary childcare by grandparents was occurring, and how grandparents experienced these different grandparent roles. Might better experiences for grandparents and grandchildren, and their families, be achieved through shifts in social policy?

² Yin's academic career arose from studies in history and physiognomy. From these bases appears to have evolved the emphasis of his work on pattern and context (Yin, 2003, pp. x, xv).

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(v) Shaping and thinking the design from literature and theory

I would need to engage grandparents directly in sharing the how and why of their grandparenting experiences. There were theories – attachment, life course and systems theories especially³ – which I believed were pertinent to an understanding of grandparenting. There were personal and societal factors likely to influence how the role was acted out. Where did grandparenting fit in the changing demographics of family, in the balancing of work with home, and in an aging population? What appearance did the state make in New Zealand grandparenting? These factors were determinants of the sample of grandparents to be selected. Unlike some qualitative research methods, such as Glaser and Strauss's '*grounded theory*' (1967), which aim to avoid early potentially 'contaminating' theoretical speculation prior to the analytic stage of research (Harre-Hindmarsh, 1992), case study practice uses theory in the design process. A review of literature is seen as important in shaping the approach to the study topic. At the same time, identification of a purpose serves to link the design stage to the subsequent analysis (Yin, 2003). Thus the case study method lies somewhere between those research strategies where the investigator reins in the use of inference and interpretation until after data collection and those in which the investigator's hypotheses or issues determine the study content as well as the design at its outset (Platt, 1988, citing Stake, 1978).

(vi) Units of analysis

Some conceptual puzzles now arose in clarifying what was my unit of analysis, or units of analysis. Did I have three separate case studies – grandparents in a full-time care parental role, grandparents as regular supplementary caregivers and the traditional, voluntary and varied role – or did I have variations of one phenomenon, grandparenting? Any answer had significant implications in decisions around the design and content of interviews and requirements to be asked of diarists. Comfortingly, it appeared I was not alone. Yin notes, '*Most investigators will encounter...confusion in defining the unit of analysis*' (2003, p. 24); see also Burgess (2000) and Rubin & Babbie (2001). Of further comfort was the acceptance that

³ Battistelli and Farneti (1991) list from the grandparenting literature systemic, developmental, behaviouristic and analytic approaches to understanding the phenomenon but find no overarching theory on which to base a comprehensive analysis.

naturalistic enquiry has soft edges and is characterized by greater flexibility than is typically available in standardized quantitative research (Burgess, 1994; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). With sufficient respect for the logic of design, amendments can be made during the research process. Acknowledging the difficulties in unit of analysis definition, Patton (2002) offers guidance:

The key issue in selecting and making decisions about the appropriate unit of analysis is to decide what it is you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study (p. 229).

He goes on to rule, ‘*No matter what you are studying, always collect data on the lowest level unit of analysis possible...*’ as data on individuals can be aggregated but data collected on groups cannot be disaggregated (p. 448).

From Patton’s lead, and given that my initial and umbrella question addressed grandparenting, it became the case for study, existing as a baseline to which the two variants of parental role, and regular supplementary caregiver role, related. Thus the main unit of analysis is grandparenting with the two sub-categories of grandparents embedded within, as sub-units of analysis (Yin, 2003). Patton (2002, p. 447) terms this a ‘*nested*’ or ‘*layered*’ case study; see also Stake (2000). The primary source for data is the interviews and diaries from grandparents who were selected to match the three grandparenting models. The design leaves open the possibility of further embedding of individual grandparent stories as exemplary case studies within the sub-units.

(vii) Triangulating data

Other secondary sources of data mentioned have been selected to provide breadth and depth to an understanding of grandparenting. They provide social, economic and political context. They also contribute to a strategy of ‘triangulation’. Triangulation is related to assessing the validity of a phenomenon through corroboration of evidence from multiple sources (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2005; Yin, 2003). Confidence in findings comes from, ‘*the logical integration of data from different sources and different methods of analysis into a single, consistent interpretation*’ (Davidson & Tolich, 2001, p. 34). It is especially applicable in adding rigour to the case study model (Yin, 2003).

The integration of secondary with other evidence will be described in the course of the reporting of analysis and interpretation later. In the next section the selection and management of the grandparent sample is explained.

IV. Focus on Data Finding

(i) ‘...a little like starting on a journey’ (Minkler & Roe, 1993, p. 33)

While Yin’s text of research design and methods influenced my early thinking about the shape of this study, Minkler and Roe’s Grandmothers as Caregivers: Raising Children of the Crack Cocaine Epidemic (1993) was directional in the approach I sought in finding answers to my grandparent questions. The tone of their research was an expression of the qualitative method’s facility to work in ‘depth and detail’ (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Patton, 2002). It was concerned and compassionate, personal but not inappropriately engaged: *‘We also left each woman with a small hand made gift...followed with a hand-written thank-you note’* (p. 42).

Conceptualizing the data collecting became an absorbing private exploration of personal ideas and literature prompted thought, brought to discussion in supervision and with an established community based group of grandparents caring for grandchildren (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

(ii) Weighing the focus group interview with the individual in-depth interview: what road forward?

Initially there were two main decisions: how best are the grandparenting questions asked and from whom? The traditions of qualitative research offer both focus groups and in-depth open-ended interviews as ways of eliciting rich, personal communication. One of the few New Zealand research studies of grandparents, Confidants, Negotiators, and Stress Buffers (Missen, 2002) shows effective use of focus groups as a data source. McPherson (2000) also uses the focus group method in her study of care-giving in the Pākehā extended family in present day New Zealand.

Reading these theses was helpful in suggesting that one-to-one interviews would be more suited to the quality of disclosure I was seeking in data collection. While Yegidis and Weinbach (2006) and Rubin and Babbie (2001) see the collective character of focus groups as being well suited to prompting candid discussion on difficult but commonly shared subjects, I was seeking to understand differences as well as commonalities in grandparenting. Both Patton (2002, p. 387) and Lofland and Lofland (1995, p. 21) question the appropriateness of group interviewing when the focus is on sensitive, personal matters. Topics which are '*controversial*', '*highly personal*', '*embarrassing*' or '*confidential*', are contra-indicated. From my experience of the field I knew that all these elements could be associated with aspects of grandparenting. My interpretation of the topic led me to believe it could be most intimate and that some of the events that led to full care of grandchildren related to life events that were painful in the extreme, and in some cases led to social opprobrium. Even the interviewing of a couple together could limit the frankness of feeling I could expect to solicit.

V. Thinking about Data Collection

(i) Control and logistics

The logistical challenge of gathering together a desired sample was further persuasive in my choice of individual interviewing over focus groups. I wanted to be able to compare peculiarities and commonalities of grandparenting both across and within my three-grandparenting categories of parental role, regular supplementary caregiving role, and voluntary and varied role. I had in mind a small selection of grandparents who represented key characteristics within each category (Stake, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Furthermore I was keen to conduct data collection in as naturalistic circumstances as possible, favourably contrasting the possibility of one to one interviews in grandparental homes with the less intimate and telling setting of a jointly agreed group venue.

(ii) Solicited diary records as research data

Engaging grandparents as diarists to record their grandparenting activities promised even greater direct access to the settings and context of grandparenting (Elliott 1997, 4.1). Diary keeping is promoted as a method for gathering data when participant observation is not practically appropriate (see Bell, 1998; Elliott, 1997; Lofland and Lofland 1990; Zimmerman and Wielder, 1977). Zimmerman and Wielder (*ibid*) liken its nature to an, ‘*annotated chronological record*’ (Sorokin and Berger, 1939) or ‘*log*’ (Allport, 1942). In seeking to engage some participants as diarists I was looking for a ‘take’ on grandparenting very much as currently lived experience, with an immediacy and directness distanced in the management of time-limited, in-depth interviews.

(iii) Here and now – place and time

Zimmerman and Wielder describe an established, two-stage diary-interview model of the diary method, based on two distinct subject-roles they identify as informing the true participant observer: ‘*performer*’ and ‘*informant*’ (1977, p. 484). The model follows on the diary keeping, performer stage of data collection with a second, interview stage, reflecting on the diary content (Davidson and Tolich, 2001; Elliott, 1997). My intended method departed from a replication of this model in omitting a follow-up interview with diarists. This was reasoned, firstly, in recognition that I was gathering extensive interview data from interviewees, and that diaries were to be used as an adjunct and foil to those one-to-one interviews, as a triangulating mechanism; secondly, to interview diarists additional to the task of recording a diary over three months, was potentially burdensome⁴. Both Harre-Hindmarsh (1992) and Harvey (1994) remark on this aspect of the diary method.

(iv) A question of questions

With individual interviews with grandparents decided as the primary data source, supplemented by solicited diary accounts, a schedule of questions needed to be defined to ensure that essential topics were covered. Questions needed to be phrased in a manner that would engage interest and prompt fluent personal stories from participants, seen as a loose guide to discussion rather than a list for questions and answers. Some

⁴ Zimmerman and Wieder (1977, p. 491) note 5-10 page diaries generated ‘5 hours of interrogation.’

would address grandparenting generally and some would be pitched more particularly at full and part-time caregiving grandparents.

(v) The grandparent/grandchild dyad

While still at an early planning stage I had seen it as important to capture, by way of the study design, the distinction between the grandparent and grandchild's experience of the grandparenting relationship. As Ruoppila (1991, p. 123) writes:

When the role and function of grandparents are studied, both perspectives of the interaction parts should be analysed in relation to each other.

She adds:

It is not only model-learning and the identification process which are of importance, but also how the young person interprets behaviour and expectations directed towards her or him (p. 124).

I had thought to interview both parties of the grandparent dyad. In her report, Intergenerational Relations, Rossi (1993) argues that as every marriage is two marriages, a 'his' and a 'hers', so intergenerational relationships have a different meaning for each individual within the relationship. There is a grandchild view of grandparenting and a grandparent view of the same grandparenting. However I foresaw ethical and personal difficulties in being the recipient of confidential, separate evaluations of a common family relationship (see Cotterill, 1992). Additionally respect for other parties in the relationship might influence responses. I came to realize that both these factors could complicate delicate family situations I, a single researcher, sought to enquire into intimately and in depth, and so excluded an approach to both grandchild and grandparent in the same grandparenting dyad⁵.

⁵ Cotterill felt a similar constraint regarding in-family confidentiality boundaries when researching paternal grandmothers and their daughters-in-law about their attitudes to grandparent care giving (Cotterill, 1992).

Further thought suggested that by asking grandparents about their own grandparented experiences I could uncover some of the down/up perspective of grandchild/grandparent relationships and at the same time look for patterns of intergenerational continuity – or discontinuity – relating to the practice of grandparenting within families (Missen, 2002). Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) focus elements of their research on grandparents' recollections of being a grandchild and the significance of these memories once they become grandparents (see also Chemoweth, 2000). Pertinent too is Rossi's finding that '*adult obligations to kin are rooted in early childhood experiences*' (1993, p. 200). A question on 'your experience of your own grandparents' became the introduction to the interview schedule. While the interest in examining one phenomenon from the separate perspectives of its two parties was lost, in replacement was the opportunity to explore the role modelling for grandparenting (Cesare, 2000; King & Elder, 1997). The effect of this is that while the study participants were selected purposefully their experiences of grandparents and of parents as grandparents were uncontrolled.

(vi) The pilot study

Yin (2003), Platt (1988) and Yegidis and Weinbach (2006) recommend the use of a pilot study to refine the interview questions and to test practical aspects of the data collection prior to embarking on 'the real thing'. I welcomed the use of a pilot study for both the recommended purposes, but more especially to give me confidence from practice in the field with 'not the real thing'. While the texts suggest tight compliance with design method is not essential in a pilot study, I chose to follow the engagement ritual of the formal study, posting out information sheets and awaiting receipt of signed consent agreements. Ethical approval of my research proposal required that I did not approach any grandparent directly with an invitation to participate; the rationale purportedly being that even unintentionally I might exert an uncomfortable level of persuasion (Davidson & Tolich, 2001; Miller, 1998). So, avoiding a personal approach, the help of three grandparents of my existing acquaintance was enlisted. They provided, I believed, a rich variety of grandparenting experiences, and were capable of giving me useful feed-back (Boyatzis, 1998). They lived conveniently close by. All agreed to help. One was a very long-standing friend who, unsolicited, offered herself on learning of the study, another a member of a grandparent support group I had been instrumental in setting up, and the third the husband of a study supervisor. Two were

women, one Māori, and amongst the three they grandparented teenagers, primary and pre-school age children, girls and boys, as full-time grandparent and casual occasional grandparents, to grandchildren close at hand and at a distance.

(vii) Pilot study outcomes

The pilot study most usefully gave me familiarity with management of the interview process in company with people with whom I felt comfortable to admit my anxieties and to make mistakes. I was attentive to how the interviewees and I responded to each other generally, in initiating and establishing rapport, and in relation to specific questions I asked. Noting from the literature the caution that case study research requires high level interviewing skills (Yin referring to ‘*cultural competence*’ as a ‘*critical skill*’ 1993, p. 107)), I had originally been anxious about just how high the skill requirement might be. Now I was reassured that a career in social work had given me a sound experience in the art of interviewing (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006).

I was interested to have confirmed the introductory position of the question on participants’ experiences of their own grandparents as a trigger for rich and relaxed reminiscences, which led on easily to their own initiation into grandparenting, and then to a focus on grandchildren. This is in contrast to Patton’s observation that questions tend to be better sequenced with a focus on present to past to future (2002). At the same time I was alerted to having overlooked the possible significance of the participants’ parents as models for their own grandparenting. Parents as well as grandparents provide a grandparenting template (Gribben, 2000). Cesare (2000) devotes a full study to the relative weighting of grandparents and parents as role models for grandparenting. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) elaborate on this repetition of family roles. In considering the family development cycle, Dench and Ogg (2003) identify the help given to children at the point they in turn become parents, as a critical late stage of parenting. And while parents are guiding adult children towards successful parenting they are providing a grandparent model to their children as well as their grandchildren. Or as James (1984) interprets, using Eric Berne’s analytical framework:

Grandparents who are incorporated into the child’s Parent state, have a major impact on the script injunctions and life decisions of

their grandchildren...there are several reasons for children, who use their parents as models, to also identify with and model themselves after their grandparents (cited Strauss, 1996, p. 35).

I also uncovered new areas for questioning. I had omitted directly addressing grandparents' attitudes about their grandchildren's religious and educational needs.

My confidence in the technical aspects of interviewing also grew through practice with a tape recorder. I learnt that things that go wrong can be put right when my recorder stopped and I was able to borrow a recorder from my interviewee. Oral historian Hutching urges '*practice with your equipment before you start recording informants*' (1993, p. 19).

(viii) Pilot study ethics

Yegidis and Weinbach (2006) raise an ethical issue in relation to a pilot interview. They debate what level of deception occurs for those participating in a false run of 'not the real thing'. These three grandparents had a full understanding of their limited role at the time they completed their consents to participate and did, I believe, get some satisfaction out of contributing, in an informed and informing way, to the preparatory stage of the study. Along with study participants they will receive a summary report of study findings.

VI. The Interview Schedule

(i) Sequencing

My final interview schedule (see Appendices II, 11) followed a loosely chronological development from the recalling of past grandparent memories, to the expectations and experiences of first becoming a grandparent, where and how the first grandchild was met, on to relationships with children as parents, doing things with grandchildren and lastly some wider social and policy questions. Grandparents who were carrying parental or care-giving responsibilities were asked how this came about, what changes in family life had followed, how the other partner responded, what it had done to the grandparent/grandchild relationship, and if and how money was involved.

(ii) Managing emotion

It is suggested by Yegidis and Weinbach (2006) that enquiry which is likely to arouse strong emotions in participants is best introduced early in the interview. This, it is argued, allows for a full, supportive exploration of the sensitive issues, without fear of a premature curtailment as time runs out. That appears to make sense, although Lofland and Lofland argue in reverse that by the establishment of trust and rapport at an early stage, more delicate subjects can later be followed up in a mood of greater mutual ease (1995). A case could be made that for many grandparents being asked, early in the interview, about the birth of the first grandchild, touches on an emotive subject. However my experience while interviewing was that it was impossible to predict what question would prompt emotion from what person. Turning at the end to future and policy related questions, and then finally to any additions the participants themselves might want to add, appeared to be a mutually comfortable way to ‘wind down’, drawing on Minkler and Roe’s account of their often highly charged interviews with black American grandmothers:

we asked participants about their dreams for the future and their advice for policy makers, community leaders, and service providers. And we always left plenty of time to discuss anything else that they wanted to share (Minkler & Roe, 1993, p. 41).

(iii) More specifically about questions

Other questions were prompted by the conjunction of my own curiosity and issues identified in the grandparenting literature. Themes were confirmed or introduced from a variety of sources. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) highlight the intense experience of a grandchild’s birth (p. 210) positing an imperative to see the grandchild and establish a ‘*visual imprint*’, initiating ‘*the process of object constancy*’ (p. 59). Also on a grandchild’s birth Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) write:

Becoming a grandparent is a deeply meaningful event in a person’s life. Seeing the birth of a grandchild can give a person a great sense of the completion of being, of immortality through the chain of generations (p. 50).

A question on the term of address for the grandparent, and the story of its acquisition, sought to follow how and from where concepts of identity and role were chosen by the family's members (Mestheneos & Svensson-Dianellou, 2004; Missen, 2002). I was interested to learn how – by what term – full-care grandparents might distinguish their position from that of a child's parents. Several authors describe changes and continuity in the dynamics of intergenerational relationships after the coming of grandchildren. Cotterill (1992), Missen (2002) and Ogg (2003) find an increased closeness between generations with the coming of grandchildren (see also Attias-Donfut and Segalin, 1998 and Kornhaber and Woodward, 1981). Other writers describe an evolving grandparent 'career' as they and grandchildren age and make life changes (Chemoweth, 2000; Cherlin & Furstenberg Jr., 1986; Dench & Ogg, 2003; Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981; Robertson, 1977). Some studies report on intergenerational continuity in the manner of child rearing (Ruoppila, 1991; Vermulst, de Brock, & van Zutphen, 1991). Interest in the relationship of 'in-law' grandparents, and how that relationship operates within the three generation family, was initially stimulated by Jan Pahl's reflections on her grandmothering experience and her identification of the Jewish word for the relationship – 'makatonim' (Pahl, 2002). My interest was reinforced when my daughter-in-law's father, soon after, introduced himself to my husband and me with that term. He is not Jewish but the English language lacks a word for the relationship. Māori has no specific term but relies on the general label for a relative by marriage – 'huānga'. The relationship is touched on by other writers (Arthur, Snape, & Dench, 2003; Battistelli & Farneti, 1991; Cotterill, 1992; Missen, 2002), and Kornhaber and Woodward invite a challenge with the opening sentence of their Grandparents/Grandchildren: The Vital Connection (1981, p. xi): '*Every time a child is born, a grandparent is born too.*' The potential is for four – and with complex modern routes to parenting perhaps more – grandparents to be born (Bengtson and Robertson, 1985; Rosenman & Conroy, 1985).

A late question drew on international examples of public recognition of grandparents with prompts suggesting better financial help for providing care, and the introduction of health (Crew Solomon & Marx, 2000), legal (Albert, 2000; Dyhrberg, 2004), and popular initiatives such as national celebratory observations (Kivett, 1998). Grandparents are recognized by a Grandparents' Day in US, England (Drew, 2000) and

Poland (Tyszkowa, 1991). The US also recognized a Year of the Grandparent in 1995 (Casper & Bianchi, 2002)⁶.

(iv) Selecting a purposive sample⁷

Beginning recruitment of participants introduced a sense that ‘now this is the real thing’. Given that the three categories of grandparenting I sought to study were already defined within the research design, I set out to be carefully selective in whom I chose as subjects (see Silverman, 2005). An advertisement (see Appendices II, 1), briefly outlining my requirements, was an initial stage.

(v) Sample size and nature

I reasoned, with caution, that finding eight grandparents within each category allowed for the engagement of two as diarists and for some to withdraw, and would yet promise rich information for analysis. Not only did I need to consider how I ‘netted’ grandparents peculiar to each of the three categories of full-care parental role, supplementary care role, and voluntary and varied role, but within each category I sought a diversity of social circumstances (see above), what Patton refers to as a ‘*maximum heterogeneity sampling*’ (2002, p. 234).

There:

common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon (ibid, p. 235).

Such sampling promised the potential for two levels of findings, at once describing features peculiar to each grandparenting setting, and at the same time distinguishing core shared themes cutting across all three categories.

⁶ In recent years the NZ government’s Office for Senior Citizens has encouraged schools to involve grandparents in educational programmes, promoting a Greats and Grands month (Keeling et al, 2008) and the Ministry of Social Development promotes a day in October to celebrate grandparents.

⁷ ‘Sometimes cases are selected because they are believed to be able to give the researcher access to some...special perspective, experience, characteristic, or condition that we wish to understand.’ (Yegidis, 2006, p. 204). See also Rubin and Babbie (2001), and Patton (2002, pp. 45, 230) where synonyms ‘*purposeful*’ and ‘*judgemental*’ are also used.

Although I could advertise generally for grandparents to conform with the three categories, it was likely that I would need to sift initial responses to identify a desired mix of particular profiles; or what Platt refers to as '*a strategic choice of types*' (1988, p. 18). This suggested that amongst grandparents offering – and presumably wanting – to participate some might not be included in the study itself, a situation which would require addressing with some show of appreciation for their gesture of interest.

VI. Making Contact

(i) Accessing participants using a national network

My methods of accessing an optimum sample were various and what might be termed opportunistic. The national convenor of GRG agreed to insert my advertisement in the July 2004 newsletter, with a distribution of 2300 throughout New Zealand (Vivian, 2004). This resulted in responses, from the end of July to mid-September, from nine grandparents providing full care. None was in my locality but eight were within reasonable travelling distance of Auckland or Wellington suggesting I might make these cities, together with my home city, catchment centres for other participants. Costs of time and travel had to be set against the valuing of sample richness. The ninth respondent contacted me from the far south. I had to explain that for practical reasons it was impossible to include her, but we agreed I should hold her name and send a summary of the eventual study outcomes. Throughout recruitment I replied in a similar way to any grandparents who expressed interest but whom I had to exclude for practical or design reasons.

(ii) Accessing participants locally

Locally I used radio to publicize the advertisement. An immediate response of four grandparents was exciting. Deflatingly only one followed on to join my recruitment as a further full-care grandmother. Two other full-care grandmothers were recruited through a quasi-snowballing method where acquaintances of mine, knowing of my study topic, offered to pass my advertisement to grandparents of their acquaintance.

(iii) Exchanging research information with possible participants

At an early phase in recruitment I thus had 11 full care grandparents with parenting responsibilities registering interest. To these were posted, with an envelope for returning: an introductory ‘package’ of information on the nature of the research, the expectations placed on participants, a form to be signed if consent was being given to the terms outlined, and a questionnaire (see Appendices II, 4). The questionnaire was designed to gather factual details to build personal profiles, used for selecting-in the richest cases. It drew on the questionnaires used in the grandparenting studies of Missen (2002) and Bulic (2003) and importantly had questions relating to the financial and care-giving contributions of grandparents. It also asked if the grandparent was interested in keeping a diary.

(iv) Selecting out: researcher choice

By mid-September signed consent agreements were returned from eight grandparents. Of the other three, all GRG contacts, I had ‘talk’, by email and by telephone, with two grandmothers. Their participation was not ruled out but was hampered by mutual difficulties. I had some choice whether to pursue their participation and chose not to, as the eight grandparents already agreeing consent promised valuable data. Patton, citing Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommends sample selection ‘*to the point of redundancy...In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations*’ (2002, p. 246). Neither of these two grandmothers promised new information.

(v) Selecting out: grandparent choice

I met with the third grandparent over coffee, by her arrangement, when she was visiting for work in my home city and had already been in touch to register interest. I have continued to think about this ‘interview’ (who was interviewing whom?) and while understanding it to have no direct place in my research data it has slipped informally and indelibly into my research knowledge. It has relevance at a later point when I explore confidentiality in a small population, as remarkably I met her story again told by another participant. This grandmother spontaneously took me into her confidence revealing, unprompted, some deeply disturbing, and possibly criminal incidents concerning her young grandchild.

It was not a case of my becoming privy to some child abuse and a question as to what were my responsibilities. This grandmother's caring and competence was beyond doubt. She did not send back the papers I had talked through with her. I am left wondering if she had a feeling of revealing too much too early, outside the formal boundaries of an interview ritual, where no clear relationship had been established. Finch comments on the prevalence of such immediate trust, and of private revelations emerging in the apparent security of the academic research setting, especially woman-to-woman (1984).

(vi) Getting to know the people

The returned questionnaires and consents from eight full-time grandparents with parenting responsibilities indicated a wide range of family situations with grandparents living together and singly, employed, beneficiary and retired, urban and rural, with a 20-year age range. Given this, though I regretted none cared fully for more than one grandchild I decided not to pursue that variable further⁸. A survey of grandparents raising grandchildren in England and Wales, in 2000, found nearly 48% cared for one child only (Richards, 2001). More recently a New Zealand survey carried out with 323 kin (284 grandparents) providing full parental care for children, found most (62.85%) looked after only one child (Worrall, 2005). With several grandparents, on the way to receiving returned questionnaires, I exchanged simple conversational explanations on the research by telephone or email. These previously unknown people were becoming more real and I felt my interest and a sense of responsibility and indebtedness developing towards them. Grandmothers were in all cases the communicators though one questionnaire was returned with consents completed by both grandparents (see Cunningham-Burley, 1984). In the process of selection I recognized that the questionnaire had an omission. It failed to ask, 'Why do you have care of your grandchildren?' Information below profiling the participants will indicate that my sample proved to be fortuitously rich material. Incidents of mental ill health, insecure life style, broken or unstable parental relationships, drug addiction, and death by accident and illness all featured.

⁸ Both the 'sidelined' grandparents cared for only one grandchild.

(vii) More about recruitment

The eight full-time parenting grandparents proved my most easily recruited participants, explained largely by my having access to an existing network, but possibly also explained by a readiness to come forward given the primary place their grandparenting experience had in their daily lives.

By the time I had received all eight full-care grandparents' consents (mid-September 2004) I had recruited only one participant within each of the other grandparent categories. Those two were exceptional in that they had both offered themselves sometime previously when they had heard within professional networks of my interest in grandparenting. The felt slowness of my further recruitment can be explained partly by my resistance to a 'heavy' recruiting campaign, and somewhat by my wariness of the cost of public advertising. The busyness of grandparents contributed. I had been told by my age group, hearing of my study, '*They will just fall into your lap. Grandmothers so love talking about their grandchildren.*' This didn't happen, even for grandmothers, and anyway I wanted more control than this suggested. I wanted some grandfathers, and I wanted to avoid giving offence to those whom I might select-out. I was careful how I used existing personal acquaintances and it is difficult to clarify how I used subtleties and nuances in closeness or distance, in the approaches I made through third parties, to known grandparents. Otherwise, through my 'talking around', acquaintances again became spontaneous conduits to participants. (see Cotterill & Letherby, 1994).

Being left with fewer grandfathers than I desired, and with no grandparents providing regular supplementary care for grandchildren of two working parents, how did I value these variables and at what price? I recognized I had moved into that state of research described in the literature as '*dirty*' or '*messy*'. I felt, along with Klatch: '*When I moved into the field and began the interviews...the dirtiness of real-life data muddied my plans*' (1988, p. 74).

(viii) Winkling the missing grandparents

The only two grandfathers I had interviewed had been engaged as a result of my targeting through close associations. Already aware that grandfathers were likely to be more reticent (Cotterill & Letherby, 1994; Cunningham-Burley, 1984; Dench & Ogg,

2003; Finch, 1984) I again used a personal friendship to recruit a further ‘voluntary and varied’ grandfather. His ready response was, ‘*But I thought you would have asked me if you’d wanted me.*’

Now in February 2005 I had only five grandparents who were providing regular supplementary care for grandchildren. In all cases the grandchild’s parents were not living together. None was providing care to enable both partners in a two parent family to be in paid employment. This is a grandparenting situation which has grown in recent years in the US (NZPA, 2002) and upon which much policy attention has been directed in Britain (Gregg, Washbrook, Propper, & Burgess, 2005; Carling, 2002; Cotterill, 1992; Wheelock and Jones, 2002). I believe it is an increasing factor in New Zealand grandparenting and I strongly wanted to explore that grandparent function in this study. I therefore applied to the Human Ethics Committee (HEC) for approval of an amended advertisement which specifically sought grandparents providing such care (see Appendices II, 13). The approval was given. I considered whether to advertise in the New Zealand Women’s Weekly or the Listener, aware of a somewhat different readership but anticipating that from each the response would be selective. I made a subjective judgement that for the specific grandparent profile I was seeking the Listener was the better besides being less gender specific. I received 17 replies and was initially in contact with the first nine received. From those I was able to find three within easy travelling distance with whom interviews could be agreed; one, felicitously, being my first and only ‘uninvited’ grandfather. With those respondents who did not proceed to interviews I was in touch by email, letter and/or telephone.

VIII. Features of the Data Collection

(i) Changeability in the family snap shots

Nothing in family life is fixed for long, grandparenting included. My final sample was a shifting landscape, time being a significant dimension. With 24 participants it was overloaded with the full-time parenting category of grandparenting. I had welcomed the contribution promised by an additional complex full care situation and balanced it against a situation where the full care of a 10year old grandson was transferring back to his mother. Then by the time I recorded a follow up interview with that ‘complex case’

the granddaughter had returned to her mother's care. In both instances the grandparents had moved from a full care role with their grandchild to a supplementary caring role to the parent, and the overloading had shifted. Other situations too were fluid, and interviewing my longest serving grandparents – a couple in their 80s – they were able to recount their experiences of each grandparenting category over time. One grandmother said as I was leaving her, '*Probably two years down the track I could be saying something different.*'

(ii) More about diarists and diary keeping

Of the study's 24 participants, eight grandparents with full-time parenting responsibilities⁹, six grandparents providing regular supplementary childcare, and three voluntary and varied grandparents offered to keep diaries. Two were selected from each category with a view to capturing a variety of contexts such as gender, age and work status. Possibly the greater willingness of full and part-time care grandparents to keep a diary derived from the greater prominence in daily life of their caregiving role (cf. the greater ease in recruiting full care grandparents). Through the wordings of the consent agreement, and of a letter to precede meeting with diarists, I had set out my requirements for diary keeping over a three-month period (see Appendices II, 6). They were intended, like the interview schedule, to offer guidance with opportunity for flexibility and choice. Both Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) and Elliott (1997, 3.4) associate openness in diary format with certain enriching features in the resultant data. Some of these find expression in the grandparents' diaries.

(iii) Using e-mail

In particular Elliott (ibid) notes the unstructured diary's '*potential to accommodate different response modes*'. Zimmerman and Wieder (1977, p. 487) endorse the point: '*the form of the elicitation must be fitted to the requirements of the field setting and the characteristics of informants.*' After listening to my introductory explanation of diary keeping, one grandmother asked to work through e-mailing her entries to me. Not previously envisaging this mode of communication quick thinking was required on my part. Having been cautioned at the time of my HEC approval about safeguarding my personal privacy, I balanced out the pros and cons with that in mind, and agreed. I

⁹ The only full-care grandmother not to offer herself as a diarist regarded herself disqualified (rightly) as her granddaughter had recently turned 18.

experienced the regular arrival of the emails as uniquely embracing me closely into the diarist's household issues. It 'writ large' the immediacy of the diary method. While never emotionally uncomfortable it did arouse in me a very active sensitivity to appropriateness of relationship and boundaries. This was the only grandparent situation in which I intervened beyond my strictly researcher role. When family stress was evident in the emails I reminded the grandmother (by email) of the local and national support agencies available, providing contacts (see Cotterill and Letherby, 1994; Ellis, 1999; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Oakley, 1984). A local social service became important in helping the grandmother and her family members.

(iv) Features of the diary method

Elliott finds a further feature of the diary method is its capacity to capture the diarist's idiosyncratic priorities (1997); or in Bell's words, for diarists '*to be heard on their own terms*' (1998, p.75). This showed in the variability of dominant themes in diaries. One grandparent showed high concern for grandchild health and hygiene (Judith), another focussed on health and nourishment (Galodali), and yet another on methods of, and reasons for mutual contact (Hetty).

But this is a muted freedom of expression. Although in the compilation of diaries the researcher is typically **not** present the grandparents' diaries read as if, to the diarist, I was a presence. While allowing for the openness of the diary method permitting diarist's choice, theirs was a record addressed to and shaped for me. Sometimes I was directly addressed even though, with the exception of the emailed diary, none was read by me until after the diaries were concluded and passed back. One grandmother breaks off an entry to recount an illustrative anecdote: '*A funny story...*' and later, '*Golly Lesley I am rambling on – is this what you want?*' Bell elaborates this aspect of diary method in her chapter, Public and Private Meanings in Diaries (1984, p.75), '*diaries need to be acknowledged as constructed by both the writer and...by the soliciting researcher*'.

(v) Doing diaries

When I delivered the diaries, and again when I collected them, there was conversation relating to the recording task. With the diarists' consent, I taped it. At times it included general discussion around the themes of the interview schedule. To three grandparents,

at their request, I posted the interview schedule. When I collected one grandfather's diary he excused its note-like format by his dyslexia and we then followed on with an elaboration of his account, akin to the diary-interview model. Thus only two diarists were not prompted to reflect on an origin for their mode of grandparenting.

The diaries ranged in style from the 'log' to the 'annotated chronological record'; from six pages of weekly notes (transcribed to 32KB), to 37 pages of daily, discursive reports and reflections (transcribed to 134KB), to regular emails of daily routines (totalling 268KB). Essentially, by its nature, time passing was a more evident element of the diary than the interview data. In some diaries the sequencing of entry contents conveyed dramatic development as family issues evolved; in what Elliott refers to as an '*ever changing present*' (1998, 2.4). Place was prominent in the accounts. With diary entry to diary entry, I moved from location to location. The diaries all reported on the daily practicalities of routine household living (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977), which were generally missing from the more distanced and reflective interviews.

(vi) The therapeutic value of qualitative research

This focus on practical and active family life was balanced by expressions of strong feeling and insights into family relationships. One grandmother told of how difficult she had found it to write about her granddaughters' responses to their mother's terminal illness; but added she was thinking of continuing a diary. Bell notes that '*diary-keeping may be seen as a kind of coping behaviour*' (1998, p. 73). In this the personal diary and the solicited diary come together.

However, recognition of a therapeutic benefit arising out of engagement as a research participant should not be limited to the diary method. Yegidis and Weinbach (2006, p. 146) remark that '*in a qualitative interview the relationship with participants is likely to be close and even therapeutic*' (see also Patton, 2002). Somewhat similarly Lofland and Lofland observe, in the researcher/subject relationship of qualitative methods, '*many of the features of...the psychoanalytic consultation*' (Silverman, 2005, p.111). While Oakley (1984) rejects the hierarchical nature of this specialist/patient relationship she finds, in her collaborative research with mothers-to-be, a '*therapeutic effect of talking*' (p. 50). Gale (1992, p.2), in a small, comparative study of the experience of therapy versus research, found that a collaborative relationship within the

research approach, recognizing the subjects as '*expert[s] within their own phenomenological perspective*', had the greater therapeutic outcome.

A grandmother returning the transcript of her interview wrote '*it was lovely to read...it probably did me good*'.

(vii) Life stage

Although my youngest grandmother was only 37, characteristically grandparenting comes with age and with age comes death. I could not disregard a natural conjunction of grandparenting with declining health and death. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981, p. 110) claim:

A child's image of old age – and therefore of his own 'ending' – is shaped to a large degree by the presence or absence of at least one close grandparent.

Several of my participants had already exceeded their three score years and ten, and several others were, with me, approaching that biblical life span. I was aware that these ideas relating to the fragility and passing of human life and by association the continuity of line vested in recurring generations, were close to the emotional heart of grandparenting. They gave me a sense of respect and humility in approaching the subject. They challenged me as to how I was to respond in emotional and practical terms to the death of participants, and as to my '*own sensibilities about dying and death*' (Feifel (1963) cited Harvey (1994, p. 157).

IX. Shaping the Interviewer/Interviewee Relationship

(i) Ethical relevancy

I believe that context determines ethics, and that for each new situation in which we find ourselves, we are required to adjust afresh our behaviour in ethical accord with the conditions particular to that situation. Besides my personal values two external ethical frames applied to this research: my accountability to the Massey University HEC, in respect of their approval of my research proposal, and the Code of Ethics of

Aotearoa/New Zealand Association of Social Workers (N.Z.A.S.W., 1993).¹⁰ Reflection on these bases guided the accomplishment of the research task in relation to my engagement with the participants. The subsequent chapter sections outline how ethical considerations related to specific aspects of the study.

(ii) *'The social relationships we have with those we interview'* (Bell & Roberts, 1984, p. 70)

Introducing her study of *'major life events'* Harvey writes (with reference to Middleton, 1978):

Entering 'the field,' one is carrying certain biographical and conceptual 'baggage' which is as 'real' and, indeed, more consequential than the note books, tape recorder and other 'tools'...

(Harvey, 1994, p. 137).

'Baggage' in this sense belongs to both the perceiver and the perceived (Cassell, 1988, p. 97). It will contribute from each to the outcome of their exchange (Harre-Hindmarsh, 1992). I conceived this study of grandparenting and moved it on to engagement with the grandparent interviewees with my own life's *'baggage'*, including many years of social work and the achievement of my own grandmotherhood. In meeting participants I was, in Finch's word, *'placed'* (1984, p. 79) as a grandmother meeting fellow grandparents on matters related to grandparenting. This was known of me prior to participants putting themselves forward for interview, with my background sketched in the introductory *'information sheet'* (see Appendices II, 3). We were in a sense meeting on a level playing field, approximating a relationship which is variously termed *'peer'* (Platt, 1981), *'native'* (Stacey, 1994) and *'kindred'* (Cotterill & Letherby, 1994) within the literature, so recognizing a shared group membership of researcher and researched. This served to lessen the often remarked upon status discrepancy, the up/down, or the less frequent down/up relationship (Cassell, 1988; Cotterill & Letherby, 1994; Harvey, 1994; Platt, 1981; Wikan, 1991) between *'them'* as interviewees and me as interviewer. That said I was aware through the sequence of interviews of evident (e.g. gender) and subtler (e.g. child care mores) differences and

¹⁰ As Yegidis and Weinbach (2006, p. 25) emphasize *'research should serve practice...never the other way around...professional values must be adhered to.'*

that, minimally, I was adjusting my manner to suit, as I thought, the person to whom I was talking. I make a confident assumption that person was making some adjustment to the person whom they met as me. As proposed by Cassell and Burgess (1988, p. 104) ‘*most people make efforts most of the time to ingratiate themselves with those with whom they interact.*’ Conceptualising the ideal interviewing process as a ‘craft’ devised for the pursuit of truth, Bourdieu, with greater sophistication, argues for the improvisation of:

*strategies of self-presentation and adaptive responses,
encouragement and opportune questions, etc., so as to help
respondents deliver up their truth or, rather, to be delivered of it*

(Bourdieu, 1996, p. 621).

In all interviews I believe mutual sincerity and vested interest established a level of social comfort sufficient to allow a fluent, genuine and generous response to my questions. This sincerity and interest apparently acted to neutralize inhibitions which might have arisen from asymmetries of age, race and class between the grandparents and me. I reflect below on my experience of gender difference when interviewing grandfathers.

(iii) Power and accountability

Whereas I am interpreting the relationship within the direct exchange between the grandparent participants of this study and me, as largely collaborative¹¹ in nature, a power differential exists outside the personal communication weighted in favour of me as researcher (see Cotterill & Letherby, 1994). In shaping the design, choosing the questions, selecting grandparents, and in a monopolistic use of the data drawn from interviews and set alongside other data of my choice, I have assumed sole responsibility for what I make of the participants’ contributions (Stake, 2000). In Bourdieu’s perception of this responsibility it is I:

¹¹ In general I use the word ‘participants’ when referring to the grandparents who contributed through interviews to my research data. This is to recognize what I felt to be the collaborative nature of an interactive relationship over our period of contact (N.Z.A.S.W., 1993, 7, 2.6). In some instances a simile may be used to denote a role e.g. ‘interviewee’ rather than the person, or for a rhetorical preference (see Oakley, 1981).

who starts the game and sets up its rules and...unilaterally and without any preliminary negotiations, assigns the interview its objectives and uses

(1996, p. 609).

He locates an especially powerful position in the use of language, '*linguistic capital*' (1996, *ibid*; Fowler, 1996). It is through language the researcher works to give expression to the research material, to structure the study and give form to its outcomes (Harvey, 1994). Through use of language I, the researcher, am accountable to the grandparents in how I represent them, their grandparenting stories and their interests (Harre-Hindmarsh, 1992; Stack, 1996). Pertinent to this, in line with social work values, Lofland and Lofland refer to feminist ethical understanding that research should be '*at the service of the objectives and needs of the [study] population*' (1995, p. 27; see also Oakley, 1981). To pass to participants some control over their words and intent in the recorded interviews I returned their transcripts, with a request that factual inaccuracies were corrected (Finch, 1986; King, 1978) (see Appendices II, 14).

Klatch quotes Sanders's (1976) advice, '*to expect to feel edgy throughout the data collection*' (1988, p. 82). Having forfeited control of the transcripts my moments of greatest edginess were waiting for their return. This captures sharply the problem of 'whose ownership'? Transcripts came back to me scattered over four months which included a Christmas, i.e. an especially disrupted period in family life. This was precious data, *my* precious data (Harvey, 1994). In several instances I was nagged by worry as to how much I could reasonably hassle, how often I communicated with a reminder. If you were having a 90th birthday where did my study fit? And there was the concern as to how much would be deleted. In the event I was surprised how little was removed. Grammatical errors and syntax were virtually all that was changed. Though not of essential significance this has regrettably taken away from me some of what Lofland and Lofland (1995, p. 81) refer to as the '*character and contour*' of words as spoken. Of benefit, sometimes telling notes were added.

(iv) About boundary awareness

Whatever the elations, stresses or threats to participants' personal lives at the time we met, I knew of them only through the participant grandparent keyhole. This applied

also to those grandparents I knew, more or less intimately, in prior acquaintance. There, perhaps even more especially and I believe with mutual care, we skirted inside a ring-fence of understanding between relevant to grandparenting and not relevant, focused on what, as cited by Burgess (1988, p. 138), Sidney and Beatrice Webb described as '*conversation with a purpose*'¹².

In her report, *On Interviewing One's Peers*, Platt (1981) explores minutely the tensions around role boundaries and the ethical issues arising in research engaging familiar others. She asks if the manipulation inherent in the situation and the extent to which interviewer and interviewee are instrumentalized is morally and personally acceptable. She is however writing from a particular context where, unlike this study, interviewees were involuntarily engaged and where, importantly, researcher and interviewer were not one and the same person.

I was most acutely sensitive to boundary protection in listening to a grandmother's account of accumulating loss, and thinking all the time, 'But she still has her other daughter', only to note as her story moved on that the other daughter was no longer being mentioned. She too had gone. How? Why? How awful! How unfair! How I wanted the details, but I didn't ask. Writing later she thanked me as '*a sensitive and empathic listener*'. Cassell (1988, p. 92) refers to empathy and intuition having the power to aid '*knowing the other*', as keys to understanding. And there was a nearly reverse experience as another grandmother began, before I asked a question, almost as we were seated, with, '*You want my story*'... It came tumbling out and I was thinking, 'Is this all relevant?' Of course it was. To her there was preface and introduction before first chapter, and it did all matter.

(v) Anonymity and confidentiality

A recurrent ethical debate threads through qualitative research literature over the maintenance of anonymity and the preservation of participant confidentiality. MacDonald makes an appealing, even convincing case for giving the names of '*ordinary*', long dead women settlers to New Zealand as a counter to their transitory, often forgotten and invisible lives (1990, p. 90). Lofland and Lofland similarly

¹² For a different experience of interviewing friends see Cotterill and Letherby (1994).

recognize the cogency of ‘*giving voice*’ to the personal individuality of a participant (1995, p. 44; see also Patton, 2002; Myerhoff, 1978). Robinson, in her ethnographic study of women currently ‘belonging’ in a provincial New Zealand town, is complying with her participants’ wishes in linking their words and stories with their own names. She too is convincing in her argument for naming as a force for validation and affirmation – and argues for the subjects’ choice (2006).

In contrast is Delamont’s unequivocal assertion, cited by Akeroyd (1988, p. 203), that ‘*individuals should be protected whether they like it or not*’. Writing from a British context Akeroyd herself dwells on difficulties inherent in attempts to disguise personal data used by a researcher (ibid). Also writing as a British academic, Finch (1986) makes the point that in the frequently small scale, intimate nature of qualitative research projects, it is crucial to guard against what Lofland and Lofland refer to as ‘*slippage in the cloak of confidentiality*’ (1995, p. 43). As Schuller (1988, p. 66) warns, ‘*anonymity is a necessary but not sufficient safeguard for the subjects of research*’. New Zealanders will know the risks are compounded in a country of low population (Kerr, 2002; Snook, 2001). Within this small study, spaced over a distance of more than 600 kilometres of New Zealand’s North Island, I met two separate instances of crossed-over stories. In each case I sat silently listening, sharply attentive, as I recognized the nameless grandparenting stories recounted by an essentially unrelated participant, living in only regional proximity. The anecdotes precisely mirrored the subject families’ stories. It impressed on me the ‘*sacred trust*’ of confidentiality I held in the circumstances of this study (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 43).

All participants were asked to select a pseudonym. This was presented as an HEC requirement but also as my preference, for the reasons set out above. Some complied more readily than others. Only my oldest participants resisted. Probably in deference to their age I agreed to the less than total disguise of using family nicknames. On the return of the transcripts their perception had changed. They were more guarded about the interview content, not only for themselves but also for other family members: ‘*We certainly don’t want the children to see that. Perhaps change...to Mary and Tom.*’ I have found myself sharing Delamont’s experience that it is ‘*harder today to recall the real names of my sample than the pseudonyms*’ (cited Akeroyd, 1988, p. 203).

Lofland and Lofland moot that the substitution of real names by pseudonyms, has the potential to distance data content from the solely personal that is connoted in the use of true names, and so to facilitate understandings which can be generalized beyond the particular (1995, p. 44). Making a similar case, Ellis and Bochner explain their use of substitute names as focusing on the *experiencing* of events, instead of the particular persons involved in them. They are lifting personal and possibly idiosyncratic experiences out of the private and putting them into the public domain where they '*might, under other circumstances, be usefully regarded as typical*' (1992, p.99).

X. Difference and Representativeness

(i) Ethnic sensitivity and Māori participants

Even discipline-to-discipline expectations may differ regarding personal privacy. Much depends on the research setting (Akeroyd, 1988). My approach to safeguarding grandparents' confidentiality drew on the client/worker relationship encoded in social work ethics (N.Z.A.S.W., 1993). Culturally too responses to confidentiality will vary (Hall, 2004). Personal privacy may not carry the same salience in a culture such as Māori with a collective social ethic (Walsh-Tapiata, 2003), as in Western cultures which elevate individualism; protection of culture itself may sometimes be of greater importance (Stokes, 1985). With two participant grandmothers who identified themselves as Māori I was conscious of the call by Māori that research with Māori takes place in a Māori cultural framework (Robinson, 2006; Kerr, 2002; Davidson and Tolich, 2001; Walsh-Tapiata, 2003). My research is conceived within a Pākehā/Western cultural framework (see Armstrong, 2002) and I was interviewing these grandmothers as individuals, in isolation from any whānau¹³ support but within a context of extended family. Although all participants were offered the choice of someone with them during the interviews (see appended letter to grandparents) both Māori grandmothers chose one-to-one interviews, each, exceptionally, in a work setting. Significantly this was not Māori focussed research and 'my' Māori grandmothers offered their voluntary participation, primarily and knowingly to the study, as grandmothers, a status I shared with them. While the character of their

¹³ The Māori family.

grandmothering experience can be expected to be coloured by their Māoritanga¹⁴ it is placed here in the general context of grandparenting. Māori research on grandparenting undertaken with Māori grandparents promises separate outcomes showing both difference and similarity¹⁵.

(ii) ‘the need for taking gender seriously’ (Morgan, 1984, p. 94)

The inclusion of two Māori grandparents in this ethnically non-selective sample of twenty-four grandparents in 21st century Aotearoa/New Zealand, can be expected on the basis of population ratios¹⁶. That only four grandfathers appear, when grandfathers represent a large proportion of New Zealand’s grandparents, requires different understanding while posing for me, a woman interviewer, somewhat similar issues of sensitivity to difference. Some cause rests with the social role expectations for grandfathers vis-à-vis grandmothers in the care of children, the ‘*common sense beliefs about the respective roles of men and women*’ (Cunningham-Burley, 1984, p 332), and some with a non-aggressive, woman mediated recruitment. In line with Eichler (1988) and Jayaratne and Stewart’s (1991) arguments against sex role assumptions I purposefully sought grandfathers for insight into the lived differences and similarities between genders in grandparenting roles; as Cotterill and Letherby (1994, p. 114) interpret Morgan (see above), by ‘*bringing men in*’. Cunningham-Burley (1984) and Morgan (1984) both draw attention to the particularities of gender of researcher as well as researched and the interaction of the two in the design of, and relationships within, interviews (see also McKeganey and Bloor, 1991).

Interest in grandfathers was heightened by my familiarity with two New Zealand studies reporting on grandfathering. Both identify a need for more research into the role of grandfathers, foreseeing change in the role in response to changes in aging and employment patterns (Missen, 2002; Wilton and Davey, 2006).

¹⁴ Māori culture.

¹⁵ See Missen and Higgins comparative presentations of Pākehā and Māori grandparenting in New Zealand in the 2003 NZiRA/TOWER seminar series.

¹⁶ Approximately 14% of New Zealand’s population identifies as Māori (censuses 2001 and 2006).

XI. Moving On

(i) Ordering the chaos

In preparation for an in-depth examination and interpretation of the 437 pages of data transcribed from the grandparents' interviews and diaries, several texts were studied. Acknowledging the likely prolific and chaotic nature of data gathered in the process of qualitative research the texts commonly promote certain stages in the ordering of the collected accounts (Ezzy, 2002; Ritchie, Spencer & O'Connor, 2003). Accordingly, alongside close reading of data, I began 'coding' micro-themes by way of coloured dots, also termed 'tagging' or 'labelling' (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Ritchie, Spencer & O'Connor, 2003); then categorizing for commonalities and aggregating themes in a systematic process of searching and checking data back and forth through grandparents' words; paying attention not only to those words but to how I was interpreting the intention of those words (Ritchie, Spencer & O'Connor, 2003). Texts refer to revisiting data again and again... crisscrossing (Stake, 2000) in an iterative, analytic procedure (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Then for each grandparent micro-themes were drawn as phrases into 13 categories: purposeful grandparenting (i.e. factors shaping grandparenting); determinants of grandparenting (i.e. health/material situation); others involved; other commitments; doing things/shared activities; outside involvement; feelings expressed; ideology/expectation; geographical factors; difficulties; attitudes to circumstances/change; suggestions; pleasure. It was from the contents of these categories that the macro-themes for data selection were drawn.

(ii) Looking beyond my own perceptions

But when in this analytic procedure was I discovering meaning and when attributing meaning? Strauss and Corbin's counselled (1998, p. 97) to separate '*our voice*' from '*participants' voices*', to allow them 'proper voice' (cf. Boyatzis 1998). Ezzy made the case that: '*meaning is always negotiated between one's own preconceptions and those within the horizon of the other*' (2002, p. 26).

But new discoveries did appear from out of the interview and diary material, and new insights appeared from out of preconceived concepts matched in the data. So

recognizing the denial or disruption of grandparenting expectations implicit in the ‘gayness’ of children came as new. The frequency of mention of ‘the war’ and ‘the depression’ in backgrounding formative family settings – what Hagestad (1985, p. 31) refers to as the ‘*footprints of history*’ – came with surprise. While the symbiotic interweaving of grandparents’ own lives with the lives of their parent-children and their grandchildren opened up fresh understanding of the intergenerational motivations and the emotional and practical exchanges entailed in the ‘moral economy’ of grandparenting¹⁷ (Mauss, 1990; Finch & Mason, 1993; Arthur, Snape & Dench, 2003).

(iii) Limitations to the diversity of the grandparent sample

Given its formation my sample was skewed, with a middle-class, well educated, articulate bias. This is apparent from the personal details given in the questionnaire (see Appendix II, 4). There can be no claim as to its representativeness of New Zealand grandparents. As participants opted in there are no reluctant grandparents hesitant to speak of an undesired status. Those relatively few grandparents who put themselves forward from the GRG network indicated an unusual degree of motivation to having their say. It was expressed most clearly as an apparent altruistic desire to be helpful, if not directly to themselves, then in the cause of other grandparents providing parenting care. Those grandparents who participated through my own networking, even if not already known to me, were of my social status. As a Listener reader I was, there too, tapping in to my own kind. Common amongst participants, across the three categories of grandparenting, I discovered a willingness to participate associated with being able to see a link between a participants’ own experience and a conceptualization of grandparenting.

XII. Summary and conclusions

An interpretative approach has been chosen for the thesis in the understanding that the social truths and knowledge to be researched are grounded in the experience and constructed in the minds of the subjects. The approach recognizes that meanings thus constructed purposefully shape social action.

¹⁷ Arthur, Snape and Dench describe ‘moral economy’ as conceptualising the ‘*reciprocity, or weighing up of “give and take” of support and assistance between family members*’ (2003, p4).

A case study method is used. Initially quantitative personal information was obtained from questionnaires completed by grandparents who volunteered an interest in participating. From amongst the respondents 24 grandparents were purposefully selected to provide a wide range of grandparenting variables. Primary qualitative data was sought through in-depth, open-ended interviews with eighteen grandparents. The remaining six grandparents kept written diary records of their grandparenting over three months.

A thematic analysis of individual grandparent's data was made. Identified themes were then aggregated and ordered according to emergent patterns and commonalities. Discussion of the research findings has drawn on the resultant macro-themes, augmented with references to secondary data.

Secondary data was sought from New Zealand's history and social policies, orphanage records, survey reports, New Zealand literary and academic writings, visual depictions and international academic literature.

The following chapter examines New Zealand's history during the colonial period for features influencing grandparenting.

CHAPTER III: GRANDPARENTS IN NEW ZEALAND'S HISTORY

'If we are to understand family and kinship relationships today, we need to know more about our past.'

(Toynbee, 1995, p. 9).

I. Introduction

(i) A migrant destination

Most New Zealanders hold in common a consciousness of their migrant origins¹ (King, 1999; Pool et al, 2007; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997; Shirley et al, 1997). Māori, who came first by many generations, keep this consciousness alive in their traditional histories and enactments of waka arrival in Aotearoa (Metge, 1976; Sinclair, 1991)². Migrants from Europe, and above all those sailing from principally British ports, came in increasing numbers through the nineteenth century to establish New Zealand as the most recent and most distant of the English speaking 'new' countries. With their settlement New Zealand became the domicile of two very different cultures. This chapter will seek to understand how grandparents fitted into the social and economic fabric of 19th century settler New Zealand.

II. Pre- and Early-contact Māori

(i) Reconstructing a past

The social organization of Māori prior to the earliest European arrivals is uncertainly known (Biggs, 1960; Davidson, 1997; King, 1997; Orbell, 1978), reconstructed tentatively from oral histories and archeological remnants³ (Davidson, 1997; Houghton, 1980). The system that was in place at the beginning of the nineteenth century was

¹ In writing of Latina women in New Zealand, Rivera (1997) draws on Jackson's usage of the term '*migrant*' to denote someone moving from one country to another for a significant time, accompanied by significant social change. Both physical and social dislocation occurs.

² The earlier arrival of prehistoric people, like the Māori of East Polynesian origin, is lost to record.

³ Pool (1991) warns that these and even nineteenth century historic sources are likely to be subjective and inaccurate, with much confusion of terminology.

about to undergo long term, at times turbulent, change through the colonizing activities of the new migrants (Orbell, 1978; Pool, 1977). However it seems that some continuity can be recognized, even to the present day, in the then basic unit of social organization – the Māori family, or whānau.

(ii) The social fabric of Māori pre European-contact

Contemporary reports suggest an extended family group, working together and living in close proximity, and with a corporate identity (Best, 1924; Firth, 1973; King, 1997; Metge, 1995). They were likely to be living in the vicinity of similar groups. Typically an established senior couple, or in some cases a man and several wives, would live amongst the clustered dwellings of their single and married children. It is estimated 15 to 30 persons might have been present as a norm, but with much variation (Davidson, 1997; Firth, 1973; Metge, 1995). Instead of primacy being given to the parent/child bond, *‘parents largely held their children in trust for their immediate relatives’* (Stowell, 1913, cited Orbell, 1978, p. 109), with much of the task of raising the children lying outside the responsibility of their biological parents.

Māori marriage represented the symbolic coming together of two family groups rather than two individuals (Buck, 1950, cited Orbell, 1978). It was likely to occur at an early age and pregnancy to soon follow (Pool, 1977). However ‘early’ should be held in context and Houghton (1980) cautions that the local less-than-favourable environment⁴ probably restricted pregnancy till the late teens. Characteristically patrilocal in nature, group interests in certain circumstances determined a man moving to join a wife’s whānau and descent links were frequently traced by way of female forebear (Shirley et al, 1997; Schwimmer, 1977; Webster, 1975).

While knowledge of genealogical descent is fundamental to past and present Māori cultural identity (Metge, 1976; 1995), it is likely that, as lived, early family groups were generationally shallow. Although Best mentions the entity of ‘whānau’ extending through four generations (Best, 1924), other writers (King, 1997; Metge, 1995) suggest a maximum of three generations living in association, and Orbell is convincing in her case that a minority of early Māori would live to see grandchildren grow up. A hard life,

⁴ It is likely an earlier warm New Zealand climatic temperature declined from the 17th century.

characterized by war for men and heavy physical work, chastisement and childbearing for women (Biggs, 1960; Orbell, 1978), ensured ages of 50 or over were exceptional⁵. Skeletal evidence indicates 30 to be a likely average life span (Davidson, 1997; Houghton, 1980; King, 1997; Orbell, 1978; Pool, 1991)⁶. Thus the practical application of communistic child rearing in the pre-contact and early-contact Māori family group would typically have extended more strongly horizontally, across sibling ties⁷. Arithmetic indicates three generational overlap would have been limited. Debility would have restricted participation by the elderly in physically demanding activities and child rearing responsibilities (Davidson, 1997, p. 8). Where grandchildren and grandparents were contemporaneous it is likely their relationships were developed through the oral transfer down of lore (Firth, 1973; Metge, 1995); just as the ancestress of the mythical Maui imparted to her grandson through the agency of her enchanted jawbone, knowledge and skills essential to early Māori (Alpers, 1975).

III. Pākehā Settlement from 1840-1900

(i) The early European experience

It was not until near the close of the nineteenth century, that the growth of the Pākehā population by migration was outpaced by the increase of local births over deaths of the 'new' New Zealanders (Simpson, 1998; Sinclair, 1991). For approximately the first half century of its colonial history a large proportion of Pākehā New Zealanders were living separated from their parent generation (Tennant, 1989). For many this created a distancing from family who would never be rejoined. The journey, rarely less than three months, must often have been harsh and, as well, dangerous. Realistically, death from disease was as much to be feared as death from sea borne disaster (Simpson, 1940; Simpson, 1998). Settlers who received free⁸ or subsidized passages, by far the majority, were not easily placed financially to make a return journey until, if fortunate, they had accumulated wealth. By then their older family members at 'home' might be dead. The

⁵ In whatever human group, there have always been, exceptionally, some very old people (Wechsler, 1985).

⁶ Pool registers doubt at such a low estimated age limit once maturity was reached (1991).

⁷ Houghton (1980, p. 98) speculates, '*when so many parents die young, all must be parents of a sort, and perhaps here lies the basis of the extended family pattern*'.

⁸ Free passage to New Zealand was not as readily available as to some other New World destinations. Clear criteria restricted, at least officially, the nature of those qualifying.

same conditions meant that few made the voyage to New Zealand purely to visit for family attachment (though ‘chain’ extended family migration to join resident settlers was not uncommon⁹). Given the immense barriers to holding on to family ties it is a remarkable witness to the strength of kinship bonds that so many migrant families retained contact with ‘home’ family. For while the 12,000 miles between New Zealand and Britain put geographical distance between loved ones and loved places, the separation was felt in terms of time, physical environment and as well, the reversal of seasons (Simpson, 1940). A reply to news had to be awaited at least six months for its receipt and any response to be known. The arrival of mail must have carried an intensity of anticipation only guessed at today¹⁰.

What did this migrant experience mean for the intergenerational relationships of New Zealand’s early Pākehā population? Whichever way the debate goes as to just how close the grandparent, parent, grandchild relationship was in Britain in the nineteenth century (see below), the occasion of emigration to New Zealand must have reshaped it for the majority of families affected. Where it persisted, it did so above all through the mediation of letters (Fairburn, 1990; Macdonald, 1990).

(ii) Early settler characteristics

Of nineteenth century immigration Daley writes: ‘*We know very little about the peopling of New Zealand*’ (Daley, 1991). Few grandparents were likely to be amongst the first settler landings. Both the early, arranged arrivals in New Zealand through the Wakefield companies, and later organized arrivals under provincial governments, were selective (Macdonald, 1990; McClure, 2000; Simpson, 1998; Sinclair, 1991). A settled home and family life was seen by the authorities as a primary goal for the immigrant population. Those who were helped to come with free or subsidized passages were expected to have desirable qualities: the right trade skills, to be married or to contribute to a managed gender balance, and to be young (Dalziel, 1986; Simpson, 1998; Toynbee,

⁹ Toynbee claims many settlers came as part of kinship groups, basing this on Dalziel’s study of early New Plymouth arrivals, but leaving open the nature of relationship (1995); and MacDONald notes the employment of settler families as a working unit (1990). Olssen and Levesque write that ‘families often migrated together or followed relatives’ (1978). The latter fits with what Fairburn (1990) and Thomson (1998) term ‘chain migration’, where new arrivals acted to facilitate later immigration of friends and family.

¹⁰ In her collected poems *From a Garden in the Antipodes* Ursula Bethells, described by O’Sullivan as New Zealand’s ‘truest colonial voice’ reflects time and again on themes of distance, the significance of mail and reversed seasons - (O’Sullivan, 1985).

1979). It suggests a very flat generational structure with young single migrants, or young parents with children the norm (Fairburn, 1990; Pool et al, 2007; Tennant, 1989; Thomson, 1998). An 1839 advertisement specified an age not exceeding thirty years (Simpson, 1998). However a close study by Dalziel (1991) of the New Zealand Company arrivals at New Plymouth from 1840 to 1843, indicates that rules were broken and ages misrepresented. Amongst the travellers, especially steerage class, were a number of three-generation families. Of those the grandmothers were all in their forties. The large number of children typically born to New Zealand's early Pākehā families meant that some of these women were likely, eventually, to have even larger numbers of grandchildren; examples occurring of over a hundred. Thus while the number of grandparents remained relatively few the number of grandchildren increased rapidly, at a rate described by Dalzell as '*truly terrifying*' (Dalziel, 1991; see also Pool et al, 2007).

Some twenty years later labourers and domestic servants up to fifty years old, were being sought; that is an age when grandparenting is likely (Simpson, 1998) but where the potential exists to create again, in reverse, the separation across hemispheres of grandparent and grandchildren generations.

(iii) The young society

As far on as the late nineteenth century the nature of both the planned and unplanned immigrant population operated to limit the numbers and significance of the grandparent generation. Young single women and widows were helped to emigrate to supply domestic work, and to counter the disproportionate population of men alone who were attracted to the pioneering industries of the country: gum digging, timber felling and especially gold discovery (Clarke, 1989; Simpson, 1998). By the 1870s Thomson reports almost all women were married (1998) and Olssen and Levesque chart a similar picture of marriage or widowhood for women over 45 years (Olssen & Levesque, 1978). Malone (1986) reports for the same period a 75% marriage rate for women aged twenty or more years. MacDonald (1990) finds three quarters of women aged 15 and over in 1871, either married or widowed – a higher proportion than women in Britain¹¹ (1990). However these somewhat disparate measures reconcile, they indicate that most women did marry, which together with unusually high fertility and health (Pool et al,

¹¹ From both the 1841 census and the 1851 census Macdonald (1990) reports 'women significantly exceeded the number of men in the British population'.

2007; Thomson, 1998), suggest some success with the ‘mate and produce’ recipe for the desired stable, domestic foundation for the colony (Olssen & Levesque, 1978). It would take a generation for these wives and their husbands to become grandparents (Fairburn, 1990). Furthermore, their relatively high standard of living (Beagle, 1974; Dalziel, 1986; Sinclair, 1991; Thomson, 1998) and the character of the settler economy, meant that New Zealand mothers were less likely to work outside the home and more likely to combine their childcare responsibilities with home based work, than their urbanized British counterparts. The call for grandparent support in the home was likely to be less. Children, rather than parents of parents, helped the nuclear family function (Dalley, 1998; Fairburn, 1990; Olssen & Levesque, 1978; Toynbee, 1995). In Toynbee’s 1980s research (see below) interviewees reminiscing the late nineteenth century experience of their parents, tell of mainly daughters and sons contributing as members of two-generation family economies¹². Some of the opposition directed towards the 1877 Education Act was sparked by the threat withdrawal of children’s time for school attendance presented to such family economies (McClure, 2000; Pool et al, 2007; Toynbee, 1995). Up to the 1890s most New Zealand families lacked support from, and were spared responsibility for a grandparent generation (Olssen & Levesque, 1978).

(iv) The new society

The strength with which nineteenth century Pākehā New Zealand upheld the ideals of independence and self-sufficiency is emphasized repeatedly in studies of the period (Belgrave, 2004; Cheyne et al, 2000; Fairburn, 1990; Sinclair, 1991; Tennant, 1989; Thomson, 1998). The early formation of Pākehā society saw the welfare safety net of the English Poor Law very positively rejected. Individuals and families expected, and were expected, to provide for themselves. A relatively high standard of living prevailed (Cheyne, O’Brien, & Belgrave, 2000; Dalziel, 1986; Thomson, 1998). The few older people worked while they could and if no longer able to manage for themselves, were generally assisted by relatives (Thomson, 1998). Grandparents, where available and

¹² The ‘family economy’ is characterized by the economic interdependence of all members of the family operating as a unit. In the case of farming families, from settler days until well into the twentieth century, this meant farmer, his wife, his sons and daughters (while living at home) all contributed work to the farm’s overall financial functioning. The adult children’s work might be paid in money or keep. In towns it was most likely the father only who regularly brought in earnings, but in working class families dependent children might, from an early age, contribute small wages according to their earning power, as might a wife, who with the help of children would be responsible for ‘keeping house’ (Toynbee 1995).

able, undoubtedly helped their children manage their lives. Tennant writes of mothers alone, in the latter part of the century:

The more fortunate women were able to rely on family support with the grandmother sometimes applying for outdoor relief. How many ex-nuptial babies of the past grew up believing that their birthmothers were their sister (1989, p. 113; see also Toynbee, 1995).

And there are, in accounts early grandparents have committed to letters and diaries, insider pictures of the personal nature of their three-generation family life. (See writings of McLean, Hirst and Lee following).

(v) Addressing misfortune: a family affair

Accompanying this dominant, informal system of social support were several legislated mechanisms, developed to buffer hardship for the relatively few most vulnerable and isolated, who might fall victim to misfortune. This legislation gives some insight into the functioning and presumptions about family and community at the time.

Very early in the colony's life, 1846¹³, an ordinance was introduced '*for the Support of Destitute Families and Illegitimate Children*' (Koopman-Boyden, 1978, p. 59). It is the first in a string of related acts, over fifty years, addressing the '*worthy*' social need of the '*deserving*' and eventually extending to the care of the ill, the aged, neglected children, and deserted wives. The Ordinance sets out the primary responsibility for those unable to care for their own wellbeing as lying with:

the father and grandfather, mother and grandmother and the children of every destitute person, not able to support himself by his own labours, [who] shall, being of sufficient ability, be liable to support every such destitute person in the manner hereinafter mentioned

("Destitute Persons Ordinance, 1846"; see Thomson, 1998, p. 22).

¹³ This legislation was finally repealed in 1968 with the Domestic Proceedings Act (Pool et al, 2007).

Interestingly it is the core, direct lineal descent family, which is called upon to provide assistance at a very point when such families were a minority. It suggests a strong ideological recognition of a three-generation tie reaching from grandparents to grandchildren. According to both Tennant (1989) and Thomson (1998) there were few enforcements of this legislation in its early years and practical expression of a family's legal obligation was not apparent till later in the century. By then a more extended family responsibility was embraced by the law, including grandchildren (1894), and convictions with fines and even imprisonment, were not unusual.

As the century was ending, Thomson finds for the first time, grandfathers ordered to provide for grandchildren at the Christchurch court (1998).

(vi) In default of family: charitable aid

Developing early, and coincidentally with these legislated, coercive methods of familial social assistance, were benevolent societies and church groups which provided charity, initially mainly for women and children (Tennant, 1989; Thomson, 1998). They can be interpreted as community standing in for extended families where few existed. Some churches instituted homes for orphaned and neglected children. Also introduced from an early date, so called '*pauper placements*' similarly served to provide the child-care which, in other circumstances, might have been expected from grandparents. Here women providing child-care were able to draw on income from government capitation payments, for what Tennant (1989, p. 121) has termed '*sale of the women's nurturing skills in the privacy of their own homes*' – present day foster care. The church initiated children's institutions came likewise to be subsidized by government finance. Increasingly a piecemeal system of provincial government funding, supplemented by central government contributions, operated to manage the provision of locally administered charitable aid (Tennant, 1989; Thomson, 1998).

(vii) An aging population

The initially small, young and healthy settler population, had experienced limited unmet needs (Cheyne et al., 2000). In establishing an identity separate from Britain, help from family where possible, otherwise private or church benevolence, was preferred over assistance from authorities. However, economic depression in the 1880s brought

change. And as the century ended the Pākehā population of elderly surged. In 1881 those aged over 65 stood at 6895; by 1901 it had increased to 31, 353 (Thomson, 1998). For the first time New Zealand had a significant older generation. In 1898 a state pension for those over 65 was introduced, recognizing a very changed demographic map (Olssen, 1992).

IV. Grandparenting in Early Pākehā Settlement

(i) Personal record keeping

While most settlers were from the labouring or lower middle classes, it is likely that a majority had some reading and writing ability (Macdonald, 1990). Simpson reports that in early nineteenth century England approximately half of the child population had some schooling and would have at least basic reading and writing skills (1998). By 1861 it is claimed nearly 70% of the population had some reading and writing ability (Simpson, 1998). However, while diaries and letters written by the less educated, working class migrants are preserved, most of the contemporary nineteenth century accounts of domestic life, in which a depiction of grandparenting is likely to be found, come from the lives of the more affluent colonists.

(ii) A very male correspondence: three generations of closeness

Sir Donald McLean was an influential and prosperous civil servant. Undoubtedly an exceptional man he played a pivotal, if controversial role in Māori land purchases (Sinclair, 1991). His much beloved young wife died in childbirth and McLean, never remarrying, was left to bring up their son (Porter, Macdonald, & MacDonald, 1996). Beginning in 1860 to ‘*My dear Mr Strang*’, there is a long correspondence (McLean, MS-Papers-0032) between the father and his dead wife’s father. This is father and grandfather sharing a precious child. The grandfather is told: ‘*[Douglas] never ceases to speak of his Grandpapa there is no one like him.*’ Trivial moments are passed on: ‘*[Douglas] rather enjoys the sheep and muddy paths at one time he used to throw off his shoes...and run about bare footed.*’ McLean writes of finding a long letter from Douglas to his grandfather, but so misspelt he has chosen not to send it. Photographs are exchanged and McLean wants a portrait of ‘*Douglas and you*’. Visits are also exchanged. The grandfather is consulted about sending Douglas to school in England and, once there, Douglas writes to his grandfather who also receives school reports.

Each of these three people is shown of major significance in the lives of the other two. Given the hazards of local travel at the time (Simpson, 1940), the letters which pass within New Zealand are as essential to holding these three together as those which pass between England and New Zealand.

(iii) Establishing a Victorian extended family in settler New Zealand: wife and husband

Beginning within the same period, Grace Hirst's copious family correspondence from New Zealand, Letters to My dear people (Hirst, MS-Papers-5507-01 to -04), depicts a very different grandparenting life, and no less devoted. She writes in 1869: '*This makes our 25th grandchild.*' And she continues almost to the end of the century, portraying a caring, supportive role, full of activity and busy-ness to the two descending generations of her family. Her letters go to family in New Zealand and England, and like McLean, her children make journeys back to England. '*I was very pleased to hear such good accounts of my grandchildren in England.*' The letters are full of the attainments, habits and health of the children. With daughter Annis's two young sons suffering complications from whooping cough, she attends on them Saturday and Sunday and '*yesterday I was there all day as it was washing day.*' In 1870 she is caring for two granddaughters, and writes of her arrangements for their schooling she is apparently managing and paying for.

The care is returned. After her husband's death she writes: '*My children and grandchildren do everything that lays in their power for me*'... A letter in 1897 reads:

Grannie is very well: now and again she has a sleepless night...but she generally rests well, and enjoys life ...we are never a day without some of the clan popping in.

Both his own letters (few) and reports from his wife, show that Thomas Hirst held his role as grandfather with a similar warmth and responsibility. Grace writes of a return to New Plymouth from Wellington: '*nearly all the grandchildren had been before to kiss and welcome grandpapa.*' When Grace has nine '*fine, healthy*' grandchildren to tea, '*Grandpa had great jokes with them after tea.*' And especially of one grandchild she writes:

I never saw an old man and a child more fond of each other than Grandpa and he are. If Grandpa has been out the child [16 months] is delighted when he comes home and kisses his face all over and grandpa has a great amount of patience with him which is a great comfort.

(iv) Gender, class and personal writing

Several causes combine to account for the lesser quantity of personal records of working class familial living in nineteenth century New Zealand (Cooper, 1992; Fairburn, 1990; Green, 2004; 2004; Macdonald, 1990); and with it of grandparenting. Women are shown to be the primary source of ‘kin-keeping’ through both face-to-face contact and letter writing (Cherlin & Furstenberg 1986; King & Elder, 1997; Missen, 2002; Rossi, 1993; Spitze and Ward; Stack, 1996; Toynbee, 1995; Wilton and Davey, 2006). The division of the Hirst correspondence between Grace and Thomas can be taken as a typical weighting of ‘hers and his’ domestic letter writing. Whether or not writing itself came easily to a working class immigrant woman, it was the time and energy demanded for work for a wage, to provide for her household, or both, which was even more restrictive. Before age pensions were introduced, as the century ended, it is most probable many older people needed to continue working well after grandparenting status was reached, in order to survive financially (Thomson, 1998). For them circumstances conspired to limit the time and vitality available to be active grandparents, and the leisure to write about their experience. Fewer middle class married women were required to contribute to the family income in the same way, and many had paid help in the home (Macdonald, 1990; Simpson, 1998). There were further pressures on poorer families, which meant that the preservation of any correspondence that existed was less likely. More mobility was required in seeking work¹⁴ (Macdonald, 1990; Thomson, 1998; Toynbee, 1979), and their accommodation was more likely to be unkind to the safe keeping of ephemera.

¹⁴ The parents of Mary Lee (see below) moved at least nineteen times in their first ten years in New Zealand (Cooper, 1992).

(v) Recording a working class life from grandchild to grandparent

It is significant that Mary Lee wrote her autobiography, *The Not So Poor* (Cooper (ed.), 1992), when she was no longer dependent on her own earnings and, in relative stability, living with one or other of her sons sometime about 1936. Mary was aged six when she came to New Zealand with her parents, assisted emigrants from Scotland, in 1877. Her story of her life immediately establishes her place in a three-generation family. In her first memory she is watching her mother and grandmother attend to her dead aunt. Within the same introductory paragraph she reminisces an incident involving both her maternal and paternal grandmothers. The next paragraphs give brief portraits of the women and the two vivid scenes they have left Mary still recalling sixty years on. In one scene the maternal grandmother is living with the family. For the '*rows a plenty*' it was decided '*they might be Better away from Relations*' (p. 48). Mary's suggestion is that the family emigrates to remove itself from the parent generation. To help the move '*Father's Mother who had both money & houses gave him a good Bit of money Before he left*' (ibid). It is noteworthy that it is the grandmother who is recorded as having gifted the money at a time when women had only recently been able to hold rights over their own wealth and property. It is well possible that the grandmother's motivation for supporting the emigration was not to be rid of her son's family but to aid the potentially greatest opportunity available for her descendants' improved future.

Mary's story in New Zealand continues the strong theme of three-generation interdependency and care. In spite of her early rejection of a highly discordant home life all Mary's children went to stay with her parents for lengthy periods of their childhood. Both her parents lived with her and the children at times. Her mother visits to care for the children when Mary is hospitalized and again when Mary has scarlet fever. She then takes the younger grandson back from Dunedin to the country during his quarantine period. Her older grandson, the politician John A. Lee, in his fictionalized depiction of the family, describes this grandmother as '*warm, loving and a well-loved woman when sober*' (Cooper, 1992, p. 24), with an established place in her grandson's affections. Mary writes of having:

my Mother with me and as my Mother was fond of Children, we had my Little Grandson in the house most Every Day and the Baby liked being with me (p. 131).

When her daughter becomes ill and eventually dies it is Mary who takes on the care of the now nine-year old grandson. She outlines the relationship, through anecdotes of his naughty larks, with more suggestion of pride than affection. Finally, in her last years, ‘*deferred to*’ and ‘*never ignored*’, Mary is remembered by one of her three adoptive grandsons as:

part of the family but very deaf and old. She also seemed to have an endless supply of blackballs, which she used to give us. She could lip-read very well and we boys had to watch what we said, she had a quick temper (Cooper, 1992, p. 16).

V. Summary and Conclusion

Grandparenting in nineteenth century New Zealand, for Māori and for Pākehā, was influenced by the demography of the two peoples, and by their family and social traditions.

Until the late nineteenth century both Māori and Pākehā families were largely missing a grandparenting third generation. With unfavourable conditions determining that life expectation was short, the communal kinship ties which characterized the Māori family tradition were predominantly expressed horizontally, with few elders living to assume a grandparent role. For the selectively young Pākehā families geographical distance, which severed inter-generational closeness, also created shallow two-generation families. In spite of the relative rarity of a grandparent generation personal records reveal Pākehā grandparents who were engaged, influential and appreciated when present.

Factors from their past, imbuing them with a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency, influenced English immigrants’ first response to social needs. They established a relatively comfortable living standard, generally able to provide social support voluntarily and informally between themselves. Earliest state legislation, from 1846, mandated family, including grandparents, to take responsibility for the

care of family members in need. Where family was in default there evolved a piecemeal system of church and charities, supplemented by provincial and central government funds. Mary Lee's story, and the letters of Grace Hirst and Donald McLeod, illustrate how, when available, grandparents were actively engaged with their children's families.

At the end of the century, following economic depression in the 1880s, and with a population increasing in numbers and complexity, the government took a more interventionist approach to socio-economic issues. The new laws had implications for families through much of the next century.

The following chapter advances, through to the present, the exploration of how the role of grandparents has been influenced by developments in New Zealand's social, economic and political character.

CHAPTER IV: THE 'GRANDMOTHERLY' STATE¹

I. Introduction

This chapter follows on from the last using a loose historical framework to trace, to the twenty-first century, the inter-relationship between population change, social and economic development, and the patterning of New Zealand families, especially in relation to the role and visibility of grandparents. Evidence of grandparenting is sought in both socio-economic and family academic studies, and in the records of orphanages. The main focus continues to be on New Zealand's Pākehā population, but some material reflecting on the major demographic and social changes which occurred for Māori over the period, is included; as are reflections on grandparenting as experienced within the Māori whānau.

II. A Little, Careful, State Intervention

(i) A focus on change

The historian Marc Bloch wrote:

No law of nature enjoins that only those years whose dates end with the figures "01" coincide with the critical points of human evolution... human time will never conform to the implacable uniformity of fixed divisions of clock time. Reality demands wide marginal zones

(Bloch 1992 pp. 150, 156).

Bloch is right of course, but as 19th became 20th century future-shaping changes became evident for both the Māori and the Pākehā people of New Zealand. At the time they were experienced by two, separate populations, largely isolated from one another

¹ See Olssen, 1992, below.

culturally and physically (King 1997; Pool 1991), though the significance of the changes would eventually embrace both.

(ii) Recapping Māori and the forces of change

Māori had developed a promising and effective trade relationship with the expanding Pākehā settlements by the middle of the nineteenth century (Sorrenson 1997), before Pākehā land-grab and war led most to retreat to rural isolation (Pool 1991; 1995). There a steadily decreasing population reached a point where it was generally believed that Māori was doomed. Dislocation of traditional life resulted in poorer living conditions, nutrition and health (Maning 1948; Pool 1977), which compounded the immunological susceptibility of Māori to newly introduced infectious and sexually transmitted diseases which in turn depressed living conditions and industry, perpetuating the cycle (Pool 1991). Maternal, perinatal and childhood death rates were very high. The immunity void meant however that old and young were equally unprotected and mortality was high across all ages. In 1857 life expectancy at birth had descended to only 20 years (Pool 1991). Few grandparents would have been available as a resource within the bereaved whānau.

But as the century moved towards its close, immunity was gradually building, opening for more survivors the possibility of lives extending into their 50s and beyond. By 1905 40% of Māori would reach the then life expectation at birth of 32-35 years, denoting increasing longevity and an increasing population of third generation whānau (King 1997; Pool 1991).

(iii) Māori in recovery

Additionally contributing to improving Māori wellbeing and the promise of a more robust future were two pieces of legislation introduced in 1900. These were the Public Health Act, relating to the management of health issues for the whole New Zealand population, and the Māori Council Act. The latter largely relied on Māori to work on a professional and community level to raise the standard of hygiene and housing in local settlements (King 1997; Pool 1977; Pool 1991). Where the programme operated notable improvements were reportedly achieved. Pool cites from Lange (1972):

The beginning of the century marks a new era: not only was the threat of numerical extinction banished for ever, but the health of the people made a demonstrable advance that has continued ever since

(Pool 1991, p. 119).

(iv) Pākehā: the forces for social change

Also close on the turn of the nineteenth century, a further cluster of important changes was occurring relating more immediately to factors within New Zealand's growing Pākehā population. The evidence of poverty and distress emerging across all ages (McClure 1998) called for new solutions (Graham 1992a). The nature of the social and political responses arising confirmed a shift in national character. Attitudes embraced in the subsequent legislation influenced social development through most of the following century (Dalley 1998; Olssen 1992; Sinclair 1991; Toynbee 1979). Increasingly the state stepped into the realm of the family. Responding to public concern, it took a greater role at national level in providing for, and monitoring, the care of delinquent and neglected children (Beagle 1974)². Those deemed delinquent and in need of reform were to be retained in separate institutions from orphans and rejected children (Dalley 1998). It was an attempt to separate practice responses to 'bad' and 'good' children that can be tracked forward through future child legislation into the twenty-first century. For the adult labour force the introduction of the industrial arbitration law³ established the principle of a family wage, endorsing the nuclear family unit of male work-place earner, female housewife-dependent and children (Cooper 1992; Tennant 1989). The introduction of an old age pension in 1898 especially had a lasting impact on how New Zealanders saw their country.

(v) Was it 'grandmotherly'?

At state level Olssen chooses the label 'grandmotherly' to describe the nature of the developments in policy as New Zealand moved on from the nineteenth century (Olssen 1992)⁴. The metaphor invites closer examination. Its relevance attaches to the gradual provision, by an inherently laissez-faire government, of more welfare interventions to

² Industrial Schools Acts 1882 and 1884 and Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1900.

³ Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894.

⁴ Pool et al identify the shallow kinship structures of the neo-local Pākehā society (with limited grandparents present) as causative in the welfare interventions of the Liberal government reforms (2007).

an expanding number of social groupings – akin to the traditional grandmother image, standing behind the family, not ‘interfering’, only stepping forward to comfort a growing brood in times of need. However its aims can be shown to relate to a rather different grandmother image. They were generally controlling and the amounts shared out were constrained (Cheyne et al 2000; Fairburn 1990). Cheyne et al go so far as to use the word ‘miserly’ in relation to the government response to increasing evidence of social disadvantage (Cheyne et al 2000; McClure 1998). Even the vaunted Old Age Pensions Act, was not a simple, humanitarian recognition of the income needs of an increasing older population, but also a response intended to appease a growing labour disquiet (Richardson 1992). Thomson (1998, p. 18) remarks that:

for much of the first half of next century the nineteenth century's stress on personal responsibility remained more important than...citizens' rights to public support...

as proved to be the case again by the latter part of the twentieth century.

In contrast to the first decades of settlement, epitomized by a rejection of formal welfare provision and state intervention, the emphasis on personal responsibility was now married to an acceptance of restrained and conditional public caring. While citizens had limited claim to rights the state could give with discretion. Here Olsson's grandmother metaphor nicely fits the imperative non-interference attribute, so frequently identified with Western grandparenting in the academic literature (Attias-Donfut and Segalen 1998; Casper and Bianchi 2002; Dench and Ogg 2003). This traditional grandmother is a constant background presence, on call for crises and permitted to ‘meddle’ in the parental spheres of responsibility and child management only in case of mishap (Kornhaber and Woodward 1981). Other terms too can be drawn directly from grandparenting studies to give further resonance to Olsson's description: ‘second line of defence’ and ‘safety net’ (Kornhaber and Woodward 1981). These too can be applied to the early welfare state as it tentatively provided limited, carefully targeted, not-too-intrusive management of its citizens.

(vi) Mary Lee again: living the changes

An example of the interchange between generations in the context of the changing welfare relationships, between family and state, comes from returning to Mary Lee (Cooper (ed.), 1992) and her life in New Zealand from the end of the nineteenth century. In spite of her own earnings and some family help, including recurring contributions of child-care by her mother in times of illness and stress, Mary's years as a single working mother were shadowed by an uncertain reliance on charitable aid from the Otago Benevolent Society⁵. Typical of the system (Cheyne, et al. 2000), Mary's records show that her personal 'worthiness' was assessed before her requests for payments were answered. Grants were both discriminatory and discretionary (Tennant 1986). In 1910, when Mary's father moved in to live with her, any financial dependency on his daughter was relieved by his receipt of the small, nationally distributed, old age pension which he paid over to her. Mary's father was paid in respect of his status as an 'aged poor', but dependent on '*not having a history of family desertion or gaol, being sober and of good repute*'. (Old Age Pension, 1898, cited Sinclair, 1991, p. 187; see also Cheyne et al. 2000; McClure 1998). In grandmotherly fashion the welfare state had slipped in alongside the welfare family.

III. Demography, Families and Grandparents

(i) Dredging for grandparents

Though stories such as Mary's flit in and out of records there is no coherent evidence as to how the development of the grandmotherly state affected grandparents themselves. They have never been a distinctive, unitary feature of its landscape. Grandparents appear off-focus through biographical and fictional literature⁶ (see below), through pictorial images (see below), and through academic studies of family (see below). As a category they are notably invisible in most public documentation. Some can be found

⁵ Mary's case exemplifies the trap created for a single mother with dependent children to care for. The low wages an unskilled woman could expect to earn would not allow her and her family full financial independence however many hours she worked. Yet social expectations required her to be self-supporting, and to be present as homemaker and protector with her children. Mothers who went out to work leaving children 'home alone' risked being charged with neglect (Olssen & Levesque 1978; Tennant 1986; Cooper 1992; Toynbee 1995). There are parallels to be drawn to the present day.

⁶ Pool et al caution about the veracity of '*novels and diaries...as a representative data source*' (2007, p. 163).

recorded in institutional archives (see below). They have a minor presence in a little legislation (see below).

So how turn of the century policies influenced grandparents' experience and fulfilment of a role has largely to be understood through informed reflection. The grandmotherly state had the potential to weaken inter-generational ties, nudging expectations of an active grandparent role within the family to one side. It can be argued that grandparents' social significance in providing support for grandchildren⁷ was lessened as parents could look to state authorized institutions to take in their children in times of hardship. The family wage, by enshrining the two-generation nuclear family, served to relegate grandparents to its periphery. Similarly the Old Age Pensions Act had the potential to lessen generational interdependence⁸. Contrarily, its introduction may in some cases have contributed importantly to an enhancement of relationships. As aged family members, freed from the full obligation to work to provide for their old age, grandparents could have found more time and energy to devote to supportive caring relationships with their children and grandchildren. Viewing from the perspective of the younger family, Cherlin and Furstenberg argue from the findings of their US based research on grandparenting, that over the twentieth century intergenerational bonds of sentiment have flourished as bonds of obligation have declined (1986). The researchers support their case with reference to Anderson's study of nineteenth century England's Poor Law relief, which found economic commitment to aged family in reverse relation to affective commitment (cited Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr. 1986).

(ii) A changing Pākehā demography

The social tensions driving such policy initiatives as the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894, the Old Age Pensions Act 1898 and the Public Health Act 1900, arose from a period of relative economic depression and were grounded in the country's changing demographics. By the early twentieth century age and gender characteristics of New Zealand's Pākehā population had become not unlike England's (Olssen 1992; Thomson 1998), with some particular aspects of its own. While at a unique pace (Thomson 1998) it had, in a sense, caught up with old age (Olssen 1992) it still did not

⁷ As was enacted in statutes from 1846 to 1877 to 1910 regarding responsibility for support within three generation, extended families.

⁸ Thomson cites evidence that families were still being required to support elderly members under the Destitute Persons legislation after the introduction of the old age pension (1998). .

have a normal content of grandparents. A high proportion of ‘family-less’ old men, the residue of the single young men, former fortune seekers, were found in homes for the aged (Thomson 1998). Duncan MacGregor, who in 1886 became Inspector General of Hospitals and Charitable Aid (McClure 1998; Tennant 1989), spoke of *‘disproportionate numbers of our population who at this stage of our history have grown old without contracting family ties’* (Fairburn 1990, p. 164). If these were biological grandfathers any ties to grandchildren were broken. Older women were a minority (Tennant 1986). Though the drive to attract immigrants became less age-selective towards the end of the century, the appeal to emigrate would not have been great for older women (Macdonald 1990; McClure 1998). In 1901, amongst New Zealand born Pākehā, Fairburn (1990) found that only 4% were women aged 50 or more. Yet, perhaps as a consequence of the quality of health generally enjoyed, life expectation was relatively high, and once a woman or man lived to 60 it rose to 77 and 75 years respectively (Pool 1977; Thomson 1998).

A uniquely thorough glimpse of Pākehā family life of the period comes from work by Toynbee. In the 1980s she made a study of 107 elderly interviewees recalling their own childhood lives and at times reminiscing back to memories of their parents’ stories. She writes that at the turn of the century *‘[women] were fortunate if they lived long enough to see their grandchildren’* (Toynbee 1995, p. 13). My ‘fortunate’ settler great grandmother, dying in 1915 at 82, lived to see a number of great grandchildren and to be a fondly remembered grandmother by my mother, born in 1900. The likelihood of three-generation Pākehā families resident within New Zealand shores was by then increasing (Thomson 1998) concurrently with signs of a population recovery by Māori.

As British immigration became a weaker demographic influence, several changing internal factors significantly contributed to the continuing high population growth (Thomson *ibid*). They were reducing age at marriage, decreasing infant and maternal mortality, and increasing life expectancy. They had the potential to change the quality and shape of family life, as did a contrary factor: a decreasing birth rate (McClure 2000; Olssen 1992; Pool 1991; Toynbee 1995). For the next generations there would be fewer aunts and uncles to share child-care, but more grandparents of fewer grandchildren.

(iii) The colonial heritage as a determinant of family structure

It would appear that on entering the new century, Pākehā New Zealand, now given the generational resources to establish a norm of a lineal extended family structure, did not. MacDonald (1990) echoes the suggestion of Olssen and Levesque (1978) that the experience of migration inclined the Pākehā family to a nuclear form. The sense of isolation from kin would have been painfully real for many settlers and must have had a forceful influence on the way they would live within their new country (Graham 1992). They brought a long and strong heritage of generally simple, one or two generation 'North Western' pattern families (Fairburn 1990; Laslett and Wall; Riley and Riley Jnr. 1993; Thomson 1998) from Britain (see above). For, while in England the industrial revolution saw some increase in extended family households in towns, with grandmothers moving in to provide child-care for working mothers (Anderson, 1973; Ogg, 2003), the extended family generally continued to be a minority household structure, and was less common in urban than in rural areas⁹(Thompson et al. 1991; Thomson 1998; Dench and Ogg 2003). European settlers brought to New Zealand a nuclear family tradition long imbued with individualism and independence (Attias-Donfut and Segalen 1998; McPherson 2003; Ogg, 2003). For Pākehā an existing tradition was compounded by the truncation of generations through distance.

(iv) Local factors determining family structure

It is hard at this time lapse, and with the inchoate, informal nature of New Zealand's historic data, to estimate to what extent local factors, including emotional forces, drew its Pākehā families into closer togetherness or encouraged them to reach out and nurture extended kin bonds. Families had arrived over time from different social and class settings and with histories of their own. The mix of what they brought and what they found undoubtedly created a range of family structures where grandparents had greater or lesser significance at different times even within the same descendent family (Toynbee 1995).

New Zealand's physical terrain must have been an immediate challenge well into the twentieth century (Fairburn 1990). A sea strait, mountain chains and fickle weather

⁹ This is illustrated by Anderson's population studies based on 1850s England. He found 21% of rural families living with kin beyond parent/child relationships but only 13% in an urban setting doing so; and whereas in rural areas 14% of homes contained three-generation families in urban dwellings only 9% were found (Anderson 1978).

created barriers to easy, countrywide communication. Coastal sea travel was dependent on favourable conditions. While the main trunk railway reached through both North and South Islands by 1912 (Brooking 1992), for most travellers horses provided the common means of land transport into the first two decades of the twentieth century, until motor vehicles and roadways became increasingly available. Unsettled and isolated lives continued to be commonly experienced (Toynbee 1995), especially amongst the poorer families (Fairburn 1990; Thomson 1998; Toynbee 1995). Toynbee (1995) found only a minority of working class, growing up at the time, recalled relatives close enough for affordable weekly visits, though in urban areas, especially amongst the middle class, visits often did occur. Some were remembered as obligatory Sunday visits to grandparents, including regular family dinners¹⁰. Otherwise, where cost allowed, holiday visits to grandparents and other kin are reported. But many poorer families simply had not maintained contacts even if travel was possible.

(v) Intimacy-at-a-distance: grandparent/grandchild closeness

Proximity and ease of contact are viewed in a number of academic studies on grandparenting as crucially contributing to the nature of the grandparenting experience. Proximity is generally found important, with the debate being as to whether physical distance can be sufficiently compensated for by the methods and motivation grandparents bring into play in ensuring their relationship with grandchildren. In the past, as now, physical distance translated into issues around time and money. Keeping in touch required the ability, personal and economic, to organize those resources with priority and purpose, thus creating greater difficulties for working class families. The McLean and Hirst family letters (see above) show that, for families with means, adequate literacy and commitment to kin, distance and the difficulties of travel did not stand in the way of strong, intimate relationships even between colony and ‘Mother’ country.

¹⁰ Kornhaber and Woodward identify ‘sharing family meals’ such as the ritualistic family Sunday dinner, to be one of the ‘vital connections’ they rate as essential to a close, intimate grandparent/grandchild relationship. One of their significant grandmother roles is as a provider of food – a ‘grand nurturer’ (1981). Not all of Toynbee’s interviewees had favourable memories of such grandparent events.

(vi) Commonality and diversity in family structure

By the first decade of the twentieth century about 30% of Pākehā were living in four cities as urbanization became a more marked feature of New Zealand's social distribution (Olssen 1992). In the country family farms were flourishing (Olssen 1992). Trade in dairy produce, meat and wool was strong (McClure 1998). Toynbee's study picks up on similarities and distinctions across urban and rural family structures. She finds in each that a continuation of the two-generation family predominated, and that neither shared habitation, nor the exchange of help with a grandparent generation, was common (Toynbee 1995)¹¹. She identifies the stronger kinship link to be from children to parents, whether the economic basis of the family was farming or urban business. Given the large families in question, generally with some adult children not married, Toynbee suggests that most typically it was they who provided the extra help, which might otherwise have been sought in grandparents. The households of most farming families already operated as two-generation economic units. When mothers required help with managing the children of their large families, spanning up to two decades, Graham (1992b), in another study of early 20th century family life, found it was often older siblings who took over the nurturing of their younger siblings, sometimes having them to stay in their separately established households.

Examples of three-generation co-residency are, however, reported, such instances apparently being unusual and peculiar to the individual circumstances (see Koopman-Boyden, 1978)¹². Amongst Toynbee's interviewees two middleclass farming families included a grandparent and in both a widowed mother's mother had joined the families. Six respondents from working class families recalled grandparents living with them, three for a long period and three more briefly. In two cases grandfathers had moved in to provide a male presence to mothers who were without the help of a husband. Two grandmothers moved about, living in turn within their adult children's households. Then in a business family, paternal grandparents took in their baby grandson after their son's early death. Of the 'rare' working class families living close to grandparents (Toynbee,

¹¹ Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) caution against confusing three-generation family households and three-generation family networks. See also Griffen (1991). The family household patterns that Laslett, Wall and Anderson, amongst others, reveal from historical contemporary records do not show the invisible but meaningful relationships between separated family members that are expressed in meetings and in letters, personal accounts and diaries. Toynbee (1995) finds three-generation households rare and three-generation networks not common in New Zealand.

¹² Pool et al (2007), in contrast, remark that grandparents were not uncommonly included as household members.

1995), in nine instances grandparents provided some help, often at the time of childbirth. One grandmother acted as her daughter-in-law's mid-wife. In business there were several examples of three generations of men passing on family commercial responsibilities.

The interviewees' personal recollections of these grandparent contacts, too many to detail here, give depth and emotional context both favourable and not, to Toynbee's study. She reflects that when, *'grandmothers were remembered with love, the impression was that this was associated with the absence of ownership or control of private property'*. And from those warmer grandparent memories:

some grandmothers may have been compensated for their efforts in bringing up a large family through their positions as social 'stars', pivotal kin, attracting younger generations and, by doing so, reinforcing links between them all
(p. 115).

(vii) Whānau stories into the twentieth century

In a study interestingly paralleling Toynbee's research, Metge (1995) reports on the early, remembered whānau experiences of 88 elderly Māori, near contemporaneous with Toynbee's Pākehā participants. Contrast is apparent between the two-generation Pākehā norm and the typically extended Māori family. Metge's stories show that in spite of lagging far behind the life expectancy rates of Pākehā (Pool 1991), Māori whānau inherently embraced the growing grandparent generation whenever it was present. Family elders are shown with status and roles reflecting the traditional valuing of ancestors and the heightened consciousness of genealogical descent. In further contrast to Pākehā the vast majority of Māori up until mid-twentieth century were still rural, living in small, close, kin-linked communities, often sharing intergenerational households (Metge 1995; see also Ritchie and Ritchie 1968). Metge notes that child rearing in such environments can give benefits in expanding a child's relationships so that if something happens to their parents there are grandparents or other elders to provide nurturing (Metge 1995). To a culture where death at all ages was frequent, and that was only slowly and consciously moving away from threatened population extinction (Pool 1991, citing Te Rangihiroa), the traditional communal whānau culture

was acutely suited, finding resource in cooperation. Grandparents are described as having a major role in child rearing, often as the primary carers.

The 'kai-whakātu' (those engaged in giving the information) from whom Metge draws her study, recall particular aspects of their relationships with grandparents. They are depicted as more lenient than parents, the latter carrying greater responsibility for control and correction, including physical punishment. Grandparents used gentler forms of child management, relying on building personal esteem and confidence: '*It's a very different way of bringing up from Mum and Dad.*' (Metge 1995, pp. 162). They are remembered for providing treats. But above all for passing on the essence of the culture:

she tells a story every night in the old days. Every night she talks about our history, our tūpuna¹³, marae¹⁴ protocol, how you do this, why you do that...the teaching was very, very old, very tapu, very Māorified

(Metge 1995, p. 184).

These grandparents are reservoirs of knowledge and language. Yet not every memory was happy and examples are given of grandparents not '*mellowing*' with age, of hurtful favouritism and situations when there were just too many grandchildren for adequate attention (Metge 1995, p. 189).

(viii) Grandparenting as common ground?

In spite of the studies by Toynbee and Metge conveying distinct differences in grandparenting amongst early twentieth century Pakehā and Māori, especially in co-residency, in personal contact, and the transfer of parental responsibility, themes appear in common, and with similarities to more recent international and New Zealand studies of grandparenting. In both the Toynbee and Metge studies grandparents avoid the role of disciplinarian. Holidays and treats are well-remembered grandparental features of childhood. Widows move round the family homes of their children.

¹³ Ancestors.

¹⁴ Gathering place.

IV. Grandparent Roles in a Mixed Economy of Childcare

(i) Who looks after the children?

As the twentieth century progressed grandparents are shown filling important family roles identified briefly in several studies. Tennant tells of a widow applicant to charitable aid with nine children, one of whom has lived with his grandmother since infancy (Tennant 1986). Having reached earning age he is paying ‘*keep*’ to his grandmother. This brings to focus again the economic value of children’s presence in families, once they are of working age (Dalley 1998). Adoption records note children as being of a ‘*useful age*’, presumably indicating their capability to perform chores in the home, on the land, or to bring in earnings from outside (Cooper 1992; Fairburn 1990; Tennant 1986). Grandmothers, some themselves in receipt of aid, are recorded as raising the children of their unmarried daughters (Crawford 1995; Tennant 1986; Toynebee 1995). Dalley (1998) reports a grandfather, unusually, taking over the care of the 15-year-old daughter of his daughter.

The frequently large family of the Victorians had often provided for alternative parenting and general help, when needed, from a source of unmarried women – ‘maiden aunts’ – but these women were becoming fewer, with dropping birth rates from the 1880s (Toynebee 1995)¹⁵. Though the high maternal mortality rate had begun to drop by the end of the century (Olssen 1992), it had left numerous widowers without mothers for their children. Unlike Donald McLean who had wealth and kin, including his child’s grandfather to help him parent, many in this situation remarried, often much younger women (Macdonald 1990; Tennant 1986).

¹⁵ The First World War brought a return of ‘maiden aunts’ in young women who would otherwise have become the wives of men killed at war. However it is likely that more of these single women entered work, in wage or salary positions, as their presence became more acceptable in the work place.

(ii) The interface of institutional and grandparent care

Some families unable to parent their children sought out church orphanages which, from early settler days, had stood-in to provide care when families failed (Graham 1992a; Tennant 1989). State institutions were also available¹⁶. These several resources were sometimes used interchangeably with family. In 1914 a widower placed his eight-year old son in a Palmerston North orphanage. Before Christmas the child had been discharged to his grandparents (Harper House 1906-1919). For parents under stress, sensitive to the taint associated with dependence on aid and lacking the help of supportive kin, passing children to an institution, perhaps temporarily, could seem the safe and caring option (McLeod 1992; Tennant 1989; Toynbee 1995). Between 1902 and 1916 Dalley found placements of this nature to be around five percent of all institutional admissions (Dalley 1998). Single mothers, widows or widowers might have no other option than placing their children in a state institution, or privately, paying to board them out (Crawford 1995).

(iii) Opening the orphanage window onto grandparenting

I had already recognized that, as in the above example, the use of institutional child-care could provide a particular insight to family life, especially poor family life, which is not readily available from other sources. I therefore sought out more detailed information on orphanages, both from existing studies and from archived institutional records. From amongst several requests to view historical records only one, to St Mary's Orphanage, Nelson, was approved. A lack of extant personal records and privacy regulations combined to discount the other three¹⁷.

¹⁶ The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act enacted in 1868 enabled provincial governments to provide 'industrial schools' to teach and train children up to 21 years who were in need from poverty or neglect or deemed to be offending. These institutions, managed by the Department of Education from 1880, and under its control from the Industrial Schools Act 1882, were renamed Special Schools in 1908. From the 1882 Act, boarding-out (foster-care) of children placed in institutions became a state favoured option for child-care (Tennant 1986), but it was not until the 1925 Child Welfare Act that it was given statutory primacy over residential care (Dalley, 1998). Religious bodies continued to provide institutional residential child-care (Mathew, 1942), in some cases till near the end of the twentieth century.

¹⁷ Tennant (2004) draws attention to the consequences of the 1993 Privacy Act in blocking historical enquiry into past documentation. The archives unsuccessfully sought related to the Anglican Diocese of Auckland, the Sisters of Compassion, Wellington and St Mary's Industrial School.

(iv) A study of orphanage experience

Orphanage life is explored in a study by Crawford published in 1995, drawing on inmates' stories from the first half of the twentieth century. She remarks that her '*extensive and frustrating*' search for orphanage records produced a '*dearth of information*' (Crawford 1995), adding poignantly, that when one orphanage with extant records was found, those records were devoid of any names or circumstances of the children themselves (Crawford 1995). Of the 57 identified respondents in Crawford's study only 12 make even passing mention of a grandparent (more than any other extended family members). Five children had care, briefly or longer, with a grandparent. Their accounts further show a mixture of caring experiences and how the mix of institution, parent and grandparent was fitted together.

(v) Grandparent and grandchild contact drawn from Crawford's study

In 1904 four-year-old Andy, was admitted for orphanage care by his maternal grandmother, a woman noted then as having '*a very full household*'. His mother had died in childbirth and his father as the result of a railway accident. Daisy too, with her sister, was admitted to an orphanage by her maternal grandmother, described by Daisy as '*resentful*' at having the care of her deceased daughter's children '*thrust on her*' by their soldier father. Ruth and her sister, left in the care of their father when their mother died, were looked after for a time by their grandmother till their father, having lost employment in the Depression, moved away and they were admitted to an institution. From there Ruth remembers they were '*quite often taken to stay with our grandmother and we loved that.*' Betty was looked after by her widower grandfather for three years after her mother died and her father was working away. She then went to live in an orphanage. Both Betty's mother and grandmother had died of tuberculosis (TB)¹⁸. William's mother died and his father returned to a seaboard working life. William stayed briefly with a grandmother before going to an orphanage.

¹⁸ TB appears right through to the mid-twentieth century as a significant factor in breaking families apart and accounting for orphanage admissions. This was confirmed by Sister Josephine, archivist with the Sisters of Compassion, Wellington, in a personal communication (2005). Admissions to orphanages peaked in New Zealand consequent to World War I and the influenza epidemic of 1918 (Crawford 1995). The latter had the potential to doubly deprive children of both parents and grandparents. It was however, unusually, the young and the old who fared less devastatingly from the disease (NZPA 2004), so that an increase in the call on grandparent child-care could be speculated. Conversely, consequent to the epidemic, the loss of parent potential resulted in a drop in birth rate and perforce the supply of grandchildren (Pool 1977 and 1991).

But some grandparents were purposefully rejecting. Tony's grandparents *'forbade'* his mother to keep her ex-nuptial son with her.

(vi) Safety net or second line of defence?

The recollections of Crawford's orphans chronicle the fragile aspects of family. At times compounded hardship is shown to extend over three generations. Families which could respond to death and disaster, with personal and material resources, are unlikely to appear (McLeod 1992). Typically most of Crawford's orphans had one parent still living. For Daisy and her sister, for Ruth and her sister, for Betty, and for William, their entries to institutional life originated in the inability of their bereaved fathers to simultaneously fulfil the role demands of wage earner and parent.

For many poor fathers as for poor mothers not to be an earner was not to be a parent. Single parenthood threatened unmanageable demands for which institutional care provided an answer that was available, and initially sanctioned by the society and political arguments of the day; though approval weakened as the twentieth century progressed and arguments for foster care won favour. The religious affiliation of orphanages gave them social acceptability and added appeal to those who had some identification with their denominations (Crawford 1995; Hughes 1998; Lineham 2004; McLeod 1992). Poor grandparents, with disabilities of age to contend with, were likely to be a less able and reliable answer. Given their financial and health uncertainties grandparents themselves might consider the admission of their grandchildren to institutional care as the most responsible and altruistic recourse to bettering their prospects – and sometimes to retaining the benefits of a traditional 'recreational' grandparenting role.

In consideration of the disadvantaged family circumstances depicted by Crawford's study, the appearance of grandparents at all, although infrequent, confirms their valuing within the extended bonding of Pākehā nuclear families: the *'safety net'* or *'second line of defence'* proposed by Kornhaber and Woodward (1981). It calls to mind comparison with the strengths of the encompassing Māori whānau as noted by Metge above. Crawford (1995) and Beagle (1974) both recount that institutions originally set up by Governor Grey to provide for 'needy Māori children' were taken over by church

authorities to answer the more pressing needs of destitute Pākehā children. (The limited information about the three children who are distinguished as Māori in Crawford's study allows no conclusions special to their being Māori.)

(vii) Grandparenting 'the flotsam of society'

The personal nature of inmates' stories in Crawford's study provides a fuller, but yet confirmatory picture of grandparent/grandchild contact to that drawn from the following two examinations of orphanage registry records.

The impression of a persistent but shadowy background role for a few poor grandparents emerges from the Admissions Register of St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, Dunedin. The Register is cited by McLeod (1992)¹⁹ in her study of the orphanage over approximately the first quarter of last century. Of 134 admissions grandparents are recorded, often tangentially, in 13 instances. (Apart from parents only one other relative, an aunt, is noted.) More questions than answers are prompted by the summary records. When, for an illegitimate child with '*mother in hospital*', information is held about the paternal grandparents' address, does this indicate an affectionate interest, or the orphanage's insurance there is someone to whom boarding costs can be charged? One grandmother, given in the records as '*mother of putative father*', admits her three-year-old granddaughter after she had '*never received payment from parents and [is] now in poor circumstances.*' That the paternal line does actively figure in these accounts of broken families, here and elsewhere in orphanage records, is in itself of interest, with hints of a patriarchy of the period. Current studies find the father link in disrupted parental relationships is tenuous, irrespective of financial obligations which might legally go with it (Chan and Elder, 2000; Dench and Ogg, 2003; Drew et al, 1998; see also Fingerman, 2004; Hagestad, 1985; Johnson, 1998).

The severe living conditions that are conveyed by Crawford's and Beagle's studies indicate that whatever the familial bonds that hold grandparents and grandchildren together, they will be broken at a certain level of poverty. Three sisters, aged eight, five and four years, are admitted from living with their grandmother: '*children illegitimate, father unknown, grandmother kept children since birth, now in poor circumstances, no*

¹⁹ All extracts quoted come from McLeod's database, Appendix I.

money, no property, can keep children no longer.' At a time when prostitution was an important means of earning for uneducated, single women, a little girl is recorded as admitted from the domicile of her '*grandmother, prostitute*', the child's mother also a prostitute.

Whereas these entries in the Register refer to relatively young children, three girls, one aged 13 years, the other two aged 14 years, are recorded as having moved into the orphanage from the homes of grandmothers. Of these, one girl described as '*uncontrollable*', another as '*immoral life, uncontrollable*', appear to fall under the label 'delinquent' generally housed in the Industrial School system (Beagle 1974, pp. 15-16), rather than with the abandoned and bereaved to be found in orphanages. That one grandmother retains care of three other grandchildren gives a measure of her heavy parenting responsibilities. The academic literature on grandparenting draws attention to a 'career' in the grandparent/grandchild relationship which changes character with the developing child (Cherlin and Furstenberg Jr., 1986; Sceats, 2003). In another take on this, recent research suggests that grandparent care is under greater stress with older grandchildren (Richards, 2001). Common sense alone would surmise that for poor and aging grandmothers the management of young women who are sexually maturing and acquiring the independence of an employable age could become an untenable burden. A further factor arising out of disruption to the normal, three-generation family hierarchy, means that when grandparent care assumes full responsibility in the absence of parental care, there occurs an intergenerational loss (Richards, 2001): the safety-valve role that allows grandchildren, especially in adolescence, to turn away from parents to grandparents to find comfort and confirmation, freed from control.

(viii) Saint Mary's Orphanage Register

While my own search of the St Mary's Orphanage Register (Saint Mary's Orphanage 1904-1942), of both boys and girls, showed only scant information on the children, committal and discharge notes give insight into the family circumstances surrounding admissions. From time to time grandparents are recorded there. In 1903 a two-year-old girl is entered beside a grandmother of the same name who is given as responsible for her, but noted as not paying for a long time. The girl is discharged to the grandmother. A nine-year-old girl whose father is said to be ill and whose mother has '*absconded*' departs to a grandmother in Melbourne. In 1910 grandparents are registered as

responsible for paying for a baby boy who has died of measles at six months; as too, a year later, is a maternal grandmother of another six-month-old boy who has died. One record simply notes that the mother is dead and after four months the child has left for his grandmother's home. In 1918 a girl child, deserted by her mother is admitted '*free*' by her grandparents, described as '*poor and old*'. The next year a girl whose mother has died in the influenza epidemic enters for four years after which she goes to a grandmother with a different name.²⁰

ix Limitations of Registry evidence

Little definitive meaning can be drawn from sifting through the few grandparents written into the Saint Mary's Orphanage Register. The full twenty register references to grandparents are more numerous than for any other category of relative except parent, their role appearing again as a 'safety net' rather than the 'first port of call' (Kornhaber and Woodward, 1981). The words pertaining to parents used in the register entries sketch out a high level of human distress behind most admissions: death, illness, asylum, absconding, desertion, illegitimate, prostitute, destitute, gaol, drunkard. They suggest high-risk work, ill health, sexual exploitation, poverty, social disadvantage, which in family contexts could be expected to reach from grandparent to grandchild generation and would restrict the availability of intra-familial care.

Though three grandfathers figure and two more are coupled with grandmothers, they are outnumbered by fifteen grandmothers. Three of these are given as maternal grandmothers. Given the custom of the day, the same name shared between child and grandmother can indicate a maternal grandmother of an illegitimate child or the paternal grandmother of a legitimate child. So while the sparse records conform to the greater involvement of grandmothers in child-care matters no certain claim can be made for one lineage over the other (Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr., 1986; Dench and Ogg 2003; Thompson, Itzin et al. 1991).

²⁰ TB too appears in the Saint Mary's records in relation to admissions but exclusive of grandparent references

V. Government and Professionals Move In On Family

(i) Attention on home life

Baby-farming had drawn notoriety after several cases of babies dying, or being harmed, while with women paid to look after them (Dalley 1998; McDonald 1978; Olssen and Levesque 1978). In response, and against a background of growing interest in professionally informed child rearing methods (Olssen 1992), Infant Life Protection legislation was introduced in 1893 for the registration and oversight of the residential placements of young children. Government officials were appointed for the monitoring task. Kin could be ‘approved’ and seek exemption from licensing and inspection. Such was the case of the ‘superior looking woman’, grandmother of a toddler, who won reported commendations for the quality of her caring from her visiting officer. The legislation was extended in the 1907 Act to apply to adoption also (Dalley 1998).

It can be argued that the leverage which the Plunket Society won in shaping child-rearing practice in New Zealand from the beginning of the twentieth century, was partly due to the vacuum caused through missing grandparents. Fairburn (1990, p. 166) comments that while lack of grandparents may have been a loss for some children, for families:

the scarcity of grandmothers up to the 1890s weakened informal traditions or folklore about child-care and child raising which are usually passed from mother to married daughter (see also MacDonald, 1990).

The passing of the Midwives Act in 1905 (Olssen and Levesque, 1978) and the inclusion of Home Science in tertiary level education in 1909 (Olssen 1992) together with the rising influence of Plunket confirms a shift in social attitudes to home and family life. An increased standardization was being sought in the previously informally managed, personal and private spheres of home life. The relative self-sufficiency of the nineteenth century family was being invaded simultaneously from the state and from professionalism, all with the ‘good grandmotherly’ intentions of developing morally sound, productive, and bodily healthy young New Zealanders into the future (Olssen, 1992); again nudging to one side the call for an active grandparenting role from ‘real’ grandparents.

McDonald, in analysing the historic progression of New Zealand's policies regarding children, sees a new phase emerging, which he labels 'the child as social capital' (1978).²¹ A mixture of support and control is characteristic of legislation through the first quarter of the century. Only after 1900 was the 1877 Education Act rigorously enforced (McDonald, 1978; Olssen and Levesque, 1978) removing the choice parents previously had over their child's school attendance; at the same time there were some benefits for parents, especially in time commitment, from sharing the care and instruction of children with schools. Now issues around ownership of and rights to children become more significant. A tension shows at the boundaries between family and state domains (Toynbee, 1995).

(ii) Shaping family through financial legislation

In 1911, after considerable vacillation, a Liberal government introduced a small pension for widows (McClure, 1998; Tennant, 1989). The amount paid necessitated a subsidiary income. It was less than a living wage for a mother and up to four children, until they reached the age of fourteen, and was unlikely to have removed many families from hardship. However Mathew believed it lessened the necessity for widows to place their children in institutions, and given that it was a non-contributory pension, interpreted it as 'community' established (Mathew, 1942). Toynbee describes widows as '*a kind of social and financial embarrassment to their extended family and the state.*' (1995, p. 193). Through no fault of their own they fell outside the norm of the two-parent family and its gendered father/mother, worker/homemaker, public/private separation of functions (Olssen and Levesque, 1978). Legally a man was the provider for his dependent wife and their children. This nuclear family dualism was endorsed by pay awards of the day. Set through the Arbitration Court they were calculated at a sufficient income level for the breadwinner, his wife and two children (Tennant, 1989). Regarding the widows' pension, Tennant posits that as well as a discouragement to

²¹ Concepts related to eugenics were influential within and outside New Zealand early in the twentieth century. Somewhat prompted by anxiety about the falling birth rate in Western European populations and a fear of social degeneracy, they drew on scientific advances in human development and genetics, and were coloured by beliefs in 'correct' morality, especially women's sexual morality. The establishment of the Plunket movement to further healthy child rearing, the appeal of state interventions into the lives of failing families, and the management of their children in Industrial Schools and in 'respectable' foster homes, owed some of their vigour to ideas associated with eugenics (Belgrave, 2004; Dalley, 1998, PART 1; Thomson, 1998).

dependency, the meanness of payment was intended by government as a pressure on extended family to step into the welfare role – the grandmother ‘safety-net’.

Gradually through the first quarter of the century other pensions were awarded, notably war pensions, (McClure, 1998). The War Pension Act 1915 was unusual in recognizing rights of grandfathers and grandmothers in the dependent extended family of a dead soldier (Henaghan and Tapp, 1992; Thomson 1998, p. 164) in recognition that the soldier, alive, carried responsibilities such as those outlined in the Destitute Persons’ Ordinance for his grandparents’ welfare.

At the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century two Acts of major importance to the state/family relationship were enacted. These were the Child Welfare Act of 1925²² and the Family Allowance Act of 1926. The latter established a precedent on two fronts: it was paid directly to mothers as the manager of family households (under certain income thresholds), and it acknowledged a right to state support for families as the nurseries of its future citizens (McClure, 1998). The Child Welfare Act while consolidating rather than initiating policy, set in place a service that would oversee the child care field for more than fifty years and in doing so would emphasize the primacy of family in the provision of child welfare (Cheyne et al, 2000; Dalley).

(iii) Securing the welfare state

During the Depression of the 1930s the limited payments under the family allowance were reduced, but with the introduction of the Social Security Act by the Labour Government in 1938 it became known as the family benefit, and over the next three years it was extended, as a means-tested payment, to eligible mothers (Shirley et al, 1997) in low income families. Māori, excluded from some social security benefits at the time²³, were eligible for family benefit (McLure, 1998). A number of government policies in child care and protection and housing followed over the next three decades, set in place to support families and their children as the crucial building blocks of social well-being (Dalley, 1998). In operation they acted, much as had age and wage policies

²² Also in 1925 The Guardianship of Infants Act gave a married mother, for the first time, equal custodial rights with her husband to their children (Henaghan and Tapp, 1992).

²³ This was grounded in prejudice against the then communal, largely rural life-style of Māori which it was argued did not ‘need’ the support of government money (McLure, 1998).

introduced at the beginning of the century, to side-line the significance of a supportive grandparent role in families. This is not to say that grandparents were not important members within the privacy of families, but that their family role was not publicly projected and was not given public recognition. Cheyne et al write:

Assumptions about family structure and commitments have resulted in policies (for example, eligibility for social security benefits, education, and state-housing design) based on nuclear family forms with no regard for wider extended family commitments that are part of many cultures. Public policy in New Zealand has typically assumed the nuclear family form to be desirable (and often also universal), which has resulted in other forms of family being ignored, devalued and worse, considered dysfunctional'

(2000, p. 112).

(iv) Families with children

By 1946, following WWII peace, the family benefit was universally paid, free of means-testing for all children, even after some dithering to mothers of illegitimate children (McLure, 1998; Sinclair, 1991). Shirley et al (1997, p. 255) cite Beaglehole (1993) that, at the time of its initiation at 10 shillings a week to a mother with two children, *'this was the equivalent of at least a full day's pay for a labourer.'* Families benefited too from the introduction of free health, maternity and natal care. Additionally non-governmental agencies served as adjuncts to the mother role. From the War Years kindergartens and day care centers gradually became a part of early childhood and in 1947 the Play School Association was formed (Olssen and Levesque, 1978). Plunket continued a strong grip on baby-care (Bryder, 2004). In the standard family of the day mothers were typically engaged in homemaking and child rearing, financially dependent on the father's earnings in a time of virtually full employment (Pool et al, 2007). Labrum (2000) describes the years of the 1950s and 1960s as the 'golden years' of the nuclear family, positioning it in an increasingly consumerist, materialist society (see also Dunstall, 1992; Olssen and Levesque, 1978). But she finds disparity there too. Child Welfare officers came to the fore, able to help 'needy' families financially and with material aid such as bedding and food, to the end of keeping children 'in family', out of state care. She notes on some occasions single mothers were enabled to 'foster' their

own babies and so to receive fostering allowances (see also Dalley, 1998). Out of need some families shared one extended household and Labrum gives several examples, but as exceptions, of grandparents, especially grandmothers living with children and grandchildren.

These were the years until the early 1970s of the ‘baby boom’, with young marriages and up to four children common in Pākehā families (Shirley et al, 1997; Koopman-Boyden and Scott, 1984). Māori birth rate held high and mortality was falling. Immigration too was a population factor (Dunstall 1992). In response the already liberal government support for housing expanded, with new state housing coming available for single-family renting, state mortgages offered, and a programme allowing the capitalization of the family benefit towards the purchase of a family home (Dunstall, 1992; Shirley et al, 1997; Koopman-Boyden and Scott, 1984; Pool et al, 2007). Labrum characterizes the policy as a ‘*vision of young, small families*’ (2000, p. 197), rather at odds with the larger families of the day.

(v) Changes for Māori

At odds too with the past whānau life-style of young Māori who, from WWII, were increasingly leaving their rural roots for urban life (King, 1997). While Māori still suffered a generational imbalance – Pool records only 2% of Māori were aged over 65 years in the mid-60s (1991) – their birth-rate did not decline until the 1970s. They came from a whānau setting where homes, even beds, were shared and life was communal (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1975), to a setting of small, separated, personalized houses on small, separated plots, living juxtaposed with Pākehā as never before (Durie-Hall and Metge, 1992, p. 66). While the post-WWII welfare programmes offered Māori health and socio-economic benefits they directed shock waves at their sense of cultural identity and whānaungatanga²⁴. King (1992) finds a new realization of Māori identity emerging as they adapted positively to urbanization, but this is only part of the picture. As steady employment faltered at the end of the 1960s (Dunstall, 1992) Māori were educationally ill equipped to compete for work and disproportionately amongst the unemployed and poor. By the mid-1980s an important governmental report, Puaoteata-tu (Day

²⁴ The process by which whānau ties and responsibilities are strengthened (Durie, 1994).

Break) stated Māori felt they were *'outsiders and strangers in their own land'* (McClure, 1998, pp. 198, 224).

In the post-war period intermarriage was increasing and with it a convergence of cultures (Pool et al, 2007). Pool describes a *'fluidity of ethnic relations in New Zealand'* (1991, p. 13; see also Cheyne et al, 2000; Pool et al, 2007) and Harre (1975)²⁵ writes of *'a large degree of acceptance of each race by the other, particularly amongst young people'* (p. 127) and that *'children of a mixed marriage are also usually very readily accepted by their grandparents both Māori and Pākehā'* (p. 131). Pool (1991, p. 243) suggests that the decline in the number of Māori births from the 1970s was partly due to the intermingling of Māori with low fertility Pākehā. Partly it can be attributed too to the arrival of 'the pill' to which fertility in Māori, Pākehā and mixed marriages was responding.

VI. Change: Values, Relationships, Families, Work

(i) Families and ex-nuptial birth

Seemingly however, from Dalley's (1998) examination of ex-nuptial births in the 1960s and 1970s, up-take of the pill was far from ubiquitous. In 1972 an estimated 15% of Māori and Pākehā births were ex-nuptial (Pool et al, 2007). In the same year six percent of births (rarely to married couples) were adopted (p. 224). As backdrop Dalley writes of the acute social stigma of out-of-marriage child bearing at the time and of a 'fashion' in adoption. From the 1925 Child Welfare Act 'officers' were obliged by statute to investigate the circumstances of unmarried mothers and their babies. Their brief was to keep child and mother together where, to their judgment, the circumstances promised well. During 1970 all such ex-nuptial births were part of a descriptive survey by O'Neill et al (1976) for the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). It found that almost a third of ex-nuptial babies were being cared for by their mothers as solo-parents²⁶. Of those:

²⁵ Harre drew on his early 1960s research study of 73 Auckland marriages (Metge, 1976). For a contrasting picture of cultural exchange in the first half 20th century see Graham 1996.

²⁶ Dalley found comparable figures for the following year (Dalley, 1998).

Over 60% ...were living with their parents and a further 13% were living with relatives. The majority of the mothers living with their parents indicated that they saw that situation as being permanent (p. 392).

Almost all were judged adequately provided for. The study reports that '*parents' approval of their daughter keeping her baby was associated with her making a decision to do so (p. 128)*'.

What does all this suggest about grandparents? Firstly, many grandparents 'lost' grandchildren to adoption. At a time when all information regarding a child was 'closed' to birth parents and their families following the making of an adoption order the grandchild virtually disappeared. Given the shame attached to an ex-nuptial birth some grandparents may have more or less willingly accepted the loss as the price for invisibility. Sometimes the daughter may have succeeded in concealing the birth from her parents. Other mothers may have persevered with adoption against parents' wishes. In most circumstances a mother's decision would have over-ridden others. However in the same culture of shame and blame there were many grandparents who offered daughter and grandchild home and support. It is suggestive of the climate of social disavowal still attaching to ex-nuptial birth that the report of O'Neill et al describes this '*large proportion*' of grandparents as a '*surprising feature*' (p. 392).²⁷

(ii) A mutating in family life

Moving through the 1970s some significant changes were occurring in the character of the New Zealand family and the values related to child bearing and sexuality it embodied (Henaghan and Tapp, 1992; Koopman-Boyden and Scott, 1984). Pool et al identify the following years as revealing '*an unprecedented mutation of family life*' (2007, p. 265). O'Neill et al's study reports that by 1974 4% more single mothers were keeping their babies than in 1970. Many would be aided in doing so by the statutory introduction in 1973 of the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB), '*entitling any parent to support themselves and their dependent children*' (Pool, 2007, p. 272), and as

²⁷ Shirley et al (1997) report for 1991 that 19% of households were sole-parent, from whatever circumstances, of whom 27% were part of an extended household, the remainder living alone with their children. By this time adoption was out-of-fashion and single parenting had become familiar and more socially acceptable.

beneficiaries to ‘*belong and participate as full members of society*’²⁸ (Knutson, 1998, p. 8).

Perusing family formation on from the 1970s now reveals a busy scene of crisscrossing currents. Looking ahead, Pool et al record in 1992 36% of babies were ex-nuptial and in 2002 the figure had risen to 44% (2007). This followed a shift to what Pool et al, (2007, p. 224) label ‘*informal status...consensual unions*’ where ‘family making’ was becoming removed from the sanctity, even legality, of marriage. So more ex-nuptial children were being born to more or less stable two parent unions. But not all single parent families arose as solo parenting. Divorce was a growing family phenomenon in the 1980s and on as the precocious Baby Boom marriages aged (Shirley et al, 1997), often leaving mothers alone, or more rarely single fathers, with responsibility to financially support and care for dependent children, frequently looking to the DPB for enablement.

At its introduction Knutson records of the DPB, ‘*The real benefit rate for a sole parent with one child rose by seventeen percent between 1971 and 1976*’ (1998, p. 24). Then, in the three years following first the 1987 Labour, and then the 1990 National governments’ applications of neo-liberal principles to socio-economic policy, Fletcher and Dwyer (2008) show the DPB dropped nearly seventeen percent. Welfare benefits across the board dropped to subsistence level (Shirley et al, p. 27). The fall was accompanied by rising child poverty (see Briar, 2005). According to Fletcher and Dwyer (2008), by 1996 seventy-seven percent of children in single parent households were living in poverty. By 2008, following a Labour government’s move away from neo-liberal economics, the figure had reversed somewhat to just below fifty percent, but still over five times the poverty rate for two parent families. Fletcher and Dwyer’s most recent data for Māori children, from 2003/4, show them to be more likely than Pākehā children to be living in poverty (ibid).

Whatever the cause of their aloneness single mothers were, and are, for the most part likely to head families which are income poor, ‘*deprived and disadvantaged*’. They are

²⁸ Knutson’s phrase is citing the 1972 Royal Commission on Social Security.

also at risk of being *'time poor'* and socially isolated (Kammerman and Kahn, 1997, p.13; see also Cheyne et al, 2000).

(iii) Changes in workforce participation

Another element of change in the character of the New Zealand family came as full employment, which had been the mainstay of the New Zealand welfare system, continued to drop. The drop was accompanied by growing poverty (Shirley et al, 1998). Dunstall (1992, p. 472) writes that a *'disparity was appearing between one and two income families'*. Young wives prior to having children and older married women (amongst whom would be grandmothers) had been an increasing feature of the workforce since the war (Belgrave, 2004; Dunstall, 1992; Pool et al, 2007) but they were now joined by partnered mothers of dependent children who became the only employment group whose numbers did not decline²⁹. By the mid-1990s when employment figures were beginning to lift, 60% of partnered mothers were working outside the home (Knutson, 1998).

(iv) Changes for women

Work participation, a woman's control over pregnancy through the pill and the consciousness raising which came with a popular spread of feminist ideas, moved New Zealand women away from the baby boom cult of domesticity. Women too were typically beginning motherhood at an older age.

At the same time, there appeared within New Zealand just those social and economic circumstances that academic studies on grandparenting show as bringing grandparents into a more active family role alongside their children and grandchildren. They are, firstly, single parenting whether through an ex-nuptial birth, especially given New Zealand's extra-ordinarily high level of such teen-age births (Knutson, 1998), or through parental divorce and separation; and secondly, they are unemployment (Shirley et al, 1997) and the economic and consumerist pressures for mothers of dependent children to join the work force (ibid). Pertinent to the latter case are Knutson's (1998) remarks on the paucity of accessible and affordable out-of-family childcare in New

²⁹ McClure records there was a contentious debate in the mid-70s between traditionalists and feminists regarding the desirability of mothers' engagement in work outside the home (1998).

Zealand relative to comparable countries (see also McClure, 1998)³⁰. To single parents, to families out of the workforce, and to working mothers whether alone or as part of a two working-parents' household, a grandparent presence providing emotional support, time, and material resources has the nature of an insurance policy for social survival (Pool et al, 2007).

VII. Family Solutions to Family Problems

(i) Rethinking family welfare

By the later 1980s, in the context of such significant changes in the family, New Zealand's approach to welfare took, if not a U-turn, at least a very abrupt change of direction. Faced with a recession the government sought to limit the rising unemployment (Cheyne et al, 2000) and the numbers of people dependent on government benefits (Knutson, 1998), both of which were attracting political and popular concern. Adopting a neo-liberal approach to social and economic issues the government drew back to a limited role of '*making policy and providing funds*' (Cheyne et al, 2000). Its new ethos in child and family welfare thinking is encapsulated in several texts as '*family solutions to family problems*' (Cheyne et al, 2000, p. 198; Dalley, 1998; Pool et al, 2007; Tapp et al, 1992) as it hived off much of the responsibility for resolving family problems to voluntary, community based services under market-style contracts, and to families themselves. A central feature of the process was the Children, Young Persons and Families' Act 1989 (CYP&F Act).

(ii) Precursors to the CYP&F Act 1989

The CYP&F Act came into being over an extended period under diverse influences. The initial Child Welfare Act of 1925 had been reviewed in 1974, much infused with a philosophy of children's rights (Dalley, 1998), but there were soon moves amongst child care professionals for the law to be reviewed as new understanding of child abuse surfaced from international sources, and its prevalence in New Zealand gained attention

³⁰ The 1975 Select Committee on Women's Rights identified childcare as of greatest importance in advancing opportunities for women, although preference for the care to be by family remained strong. In the decade following children's participation in out-of-family care increased seven fold (Shirley et al, 1997).

(ibid; Tapp et al, 1992). Anxieties over child maltreatment were given added foundation by revelations in 1982 and 1983, in several official reports, of abuse of children in the formal care of the Director-General of Social Welfare. Institutional care had already lost favour with professional social work and the DSW responded with closure of those care institutions *'deemed to be too costly in terms of finance and human and public relations'* (Hanaghan and Tapp, 1992, p. 29), so leaving the state with reduced capacity to accommodate children in need of care. Additionally, as more women left home based duties to join the paid workforce fewer traditional foster carers were to hand. These two factors combined to increase the push to find alternative, 'affordable' placements for children who needed to be moved out of their home, and resulted in a 1984 amendment to the 1974 Act allowing such children to live in a *'whānau or other culturally recognized family group'* of at least one adult, with whom the child has a biological or psychological attachment (cited Henaghan and Tapp, 1992, p. 29).

However this did nothing to address the concerns of those looking to establish a clear policy on child abuse protection, in particular the National Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Child Abuse. Attempts to advance legislative reform in child protection were twice interrupted by elections, in 1984 and again in 1987. Tapp, Geddes and Taylor (1992), who were all close to the process, describe cultural, economic and philosophical factors that contributed to the slow passage of the CYP&F Act and its eventual character.

(iii) Cultural factors shaping the CYP&F Act 1989

As more Māori joined mainstream Pākehā New Zealand there developed amongst them a stronger social awareness and assertiveness of their Māori rights under the Treaty of Waitangi. More generally a moral obligation was recognized amongst New Zealanders to honour the values of biculturalism embodied in the Treaty Māori and Pākehā shared between them. In this ambience the DSW was challenged to take account of the accordance of its practice with the spirit of the Treaty. A particular concern was identified by Māori in relation to the disproportionate number of its young people who were removed by DSW from their whānau and placed in Pākehā administered institutions. In response the DSW convened an Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective (Cheyne et al, 2000). Its report, *Puao-Te-Ata-Tu* (1986), was seen to have much to do with the unique features of the CYP&F Act. The decision-making and

responsibility for children deemed in need of care and protection, and for young persons deemed offenders, was moved from the government to whānau and family groups in line with the report's recommendation, '*[to incorporate] the values, cultures and beliefs of the Māori people in all policies developed for the future of New Zealand*' (cited Durie-Hall and Metge, 1992, p. 55).

(iv) Economic factors shaping the CYP&F Act 1989

The CYP&F Act's recognition of an extended family incorporating authority beyond whānau to hapu and iwi, was welcomed for its harmony with Māoritanga but it fitted less comfortably with New Zealand Pākehā expressions of family. Introduced without any empirical foundation, or any evidence as to how families of both cultures might, in practical terms, be able to respond, the Act was also regrettably not accompanied by any official attempt at independent evaluation. It conformed to some objectives of Puaote-Ata-Tu but avoided others, notably the recommendation to, '*[Allocate] an equitable share of resources*' from the state to Māori (cited Durie-Hall and Metge, 1992, p. 55)³¹. In a period when unemployment and poverty were national problems set against a background of international economic instability, families were being asked, often alone, to solve problems that were attached to national issues (Cheyne et al, 1997). In this regard Henaghan and Tapp submitted:

The policy of family responsibility, and the extended definition of the family, are designed to save the public purse by reducing the cost of the care of abused and neglected children by placing responsibility on the wider family
(1992, p. 31).

They go on with concern about the inadequate level of funding delivered under the Act, quoting the Commissioner of Children:

...the reality of family empowerment depends on resources and support services...The rhetoric of family responsibility can readily

³¹ An example is the state's slowness to make equitable payments to whānau (and to the fewer Pākehā) for parenting grandchildren, as to CYF stranger foster carers.

lead to the reduction of the support of the state sector which is essential to the wellbeing of many families

(cited Henaghan and Tapp, 1992, p. 32).

Difficulties in acquiring sufficient funds to provide to the best effect for children through the processes of the CYP&F Act, were compounded by contemporaneous changes in monetary policy set out in 1989 with the Public Finance and Reserve Bank Acts. The 1973 Reserve Bank Act, as Cheyne et al (1997) point out, was explicitly directed towards the maintenance and promotion of ‘*social welfare in New Zealand*’. By 1989 that principle was no longer evident in government policy, with the emphasis resting instead on cost effectiveness and the containment of government spending. With these imperatives in ascendance, the quality of social service provision to families for childcare, and indeed for poverty relief and for housing, was given low priority. As Cheyne et al write:

services for children and families would be subordinated to [macro-economic and fiscal-policy] goals and would be determined by availability of resources, not by the needs of the children and their families

(1997, p. 211).

(v) Philosophical considerations shaping the CYP&F Act 1989

Tapp et al (1992) express the discontent of the child abuse protectionists with the philosophical principles of the 1989 Act, and their doubt as to the capacity of the wider family to ensure the well-being of children at risk. Labelling reliance on the family as simplistic, they portray the needs of the child as being lost in the interests of the whānau/family. They add substance to their case by citing a pre-Act brief which describes the procedures of the Act to be ‘*based on a belief...a family group will generally make safe and appropriate decisions for children*’, to which is inserted a critical proviso, ‘*given the resources, the information, and the power*’ (cited p. 178).

It is critical because it is largely on those accoutrements to the legalities of the Act that its effectiveness and the experience of affected families, their personal qualities aside,

will depend. It is from the management of the Act that family members who have accepted legal responsibilities for their children know the Act.

(vi) Grandparents and CYP&F Act 1989

Grandparents have been the family members most frequently picking up legal responsibility for children under the Act (Schofield, 2005) and it is grandmothers who, for the greater part, will be the more actively parenting grandparent. The heightened demand for grandparents to parent their grandchildren has arrived at a time when more grandmothers are in the paid workforce than ever before, compromising their availability to assume parenting of grandchildren. This applies to a single grandparent taking on care of a grandchild, or grandchildren, and it applies similarly to two earner households who, increasingly from the 1980s, have become financially dependent on a second income, often with heavy work time commitment as average normal working hours have extended (Pool et al 2007). Not only have many grandmothers preferred paid work to domesticity but also, informed by feminist ideas from the 1960s and 1970s, they are alert to the value to the national economy of their unpaid family care work.

Whatever the particular case they argue, the changed socio-economic circumstances of today's grandparents, especially in the person of grandmother, contributes to the energy and assertiveness moving grandparents to raise their profile in collective political lobbying. The irony of the call by CYP&F 1989 legislation on extended family, and on grandparents in particular, comes from the decades during which the focus of family policy has been on an exclusive nuclear family (Shirley et al, 1997).

(vii) Grandparent caregiving and working parents

Grandparents are again viewed as a family resource by Pool et al (2007). From the vantage of 21st century demographics, grandparents are seen as offering one solution for child-care needs as mothers increasingly enter the work force. While the authors acknowledge childcare services are expanding, they describe them as lacking in flexibility and also as costly, failing to fully reconcile parents' conflicting obligations to work and to family life. Having broached the potential of grandparents as caregivers Pool et al add qualifications. They refer to the high mobility in all generations of New Zealanders, within and outside their country, to the increase in age of grandparents and

in intergeneration years as motherhood is entered later, to the likelihood that grandparents are fully engaged in the workforce, and to a demographic calculation that New Zealand's population is peculiarly disadvantaged as to available and able grandparents vis a vis the number of grandchildren (2007). The qualifications are pertinent. As is traced in this chapter, grandparents in New Zealand of all ages, have gone through their own mutating over the past century.

VIII. Summary and conclusions

Over the 20th century legislation, reflecting an evolving demography, shifts in the well-being of the economy, and shifting political persuasions, influenced public recognition of the grandparent role.

Legislation introduced around the turn of the century balanced modest support with control. Included were the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894, the Old Age Pensions Act 1898, the Public Health Act 1900, and further laws directed towards the welfare of children as socio-economic capital. They heralded a greater encroachment of the State into family life, effectively bypassing recognition of grandparents. They influenced the make-up of the Pākehā family, and consolidated the simple one- or two-generation English family tradition, where grandparents had not been established as integral, household members.

In the same period the Māori population rallied from threatened extinction. Benefits from health, hygiene and housing legislation saw an increase in longevity and more three-generation whānau, often co-resident, with grandparents taking a major role in child rearing. Most Māori were living communally, largely separate from Pākehā, in rural locations.

With its predominantly two-generation nuclear form, reliant on parent-sourced earnings, the Pākehā family was less well equipped than its Māori counterpart to care for its dependent children when misfortune caused family disruption. While records reveal Pākehā grandparents, sometimes with hardship, committed themselves to the care of grandchildren, many children, when family circumstances were

sufficiently harsh, found themselves, in default of grandparents, the responsibility of institutional carers whether under state, church or charitable authority.

Over the first quarter of the century an increased standardization of family life occurred through greater oversight of home life from government monitoring and professional interventions. Two acts significant in the ongoing state/family relationship were introduced as the quarter century was reached. They were the Child Welfare Act, 1925, and the Family Allowance Act, 1926.

Generous state welfare assistance to families was building from the late 1930s, promoting a 'golden age' of two generation nuclear families, a mother at home and a father in employment. Whatever their private role grandparents were peripheral to this public family image.

From the 1970s this model of relatively secure family life underwent significant change with more single mothers keeping their babies, more children born into informal unions, and more parents divorcing. Payments of DPB from 1974 enabled the growing number of single parented families of the day to maintain a living sufficiency in households independent of their parents.

But with a downturn in the national economy apparent by the mid-1980s the government, following a neo-liberal doctrine, restricted itself to making policy and providing funds. The 1989 Public Finance and Reserve Bank Acts set cost effectiveness and containment above welfare goals. There was a claw-back of welfare taking many single families into poverty, full male employment declined while materialist expectations rose. More women, both single and partnered moved into the work force to augment falling incomes. This applied to both mother and grandmother generations. So as young family circumstances called for more support from a grandparent generation that generation became more integrated into the workforce and its time demands.

Following WW II, many previously rural Māori had moved to urban living, alongside mainstream Pākehā. There their generally disadvantaged status became recognized by both Māori and Pākehā. By the 1980s Māori were raising special concern

regarding the high level of young people being removed by DSW from whānau to childcare institutions. The institutions meanwhile, no longer favoured professionally and financially burdensome to government, were being rundown. These conflicting factors, combining with a heightened national awareness of children's vulnerabilities to mistreatment, and in the climate of recession, had the government searching for a new solution to its responsibilities to families. The outcome was the CYP&F Act 1989.

In spite of the merits of the Act it has been compromised by limited government servicing and an over reliance on vulnerable families as a primary resource. Grandparents and especially grandmothers have picked up the care responsibilities for children identified under the act as in need.

It might appear that given the significant growth of the grandparent age population they are the god given answer to committed child care for needy or work pressured young families. This overlooks complications of grandparents' own finances, proximity, housing, health, employment and career commitment, as well as the limits on auxiliary services such as childcare to provide support. Grandparents, especially grandmothers, are lobbying with increasing confidence for greater state recognition of these stresses to their role in caring for grandchildren.

Over the 20th century there has been some consistency to the grandparent role, a background place from where to step forward when need demanded. This is still true in the main for grandfathers. What has changed greatly, recently, is what women do. The overall changes to women's roles over the 20th century have changed how they now view their role as grandmothers.

The next chapter surveys overseas based academic theory and research reflecting on the role of grandparents since the mid-twentieth century.

CHAPTER V: APPROACHES AND ATTITUDES TO GRANDPARENTING

*'to understand more fully the dynamic subtleties and nuances of
grandparenting in our changing society'*

(Rosenman and Conroy, 1985).

I. Introduction

Grandparenting, as a significant but amorphous family role, has attracted increasing academic attention from the middle of the 20th century. In my search for what is currently thought and known – researched and written about – on the topic of grandparenting I have looked for theories and commentaries relating to a core concept of the grandparenting role, and also for material on what changes to the role are likely to occur in response to external forces such as personal, and political and socio-economic factors. Within this scope I was interested in understanding how the assumption of more or less parenting responsibility changes the experience of grandparenting for grandparents. I became aware that external factors not only affected the grandparenting experience but also affected how grandparenting was approached, and what themes were highlighted over time, in academic and popular thought¹.

In this chapter I have, then, followed the chronology of grandparenting related literature in a loosely sequential structure. There are three major divisions:

The first generation of grandparenting studies spans psychoanalytic theory and grandparenting. It covers foundation theorists Rappaport, Jones and Deutsch. It then moves forward with psychoanalytic theory to consider the psychoanalytic legacy of attachment theory and life-cycle theory, before finally looking at early sociological studies.

¹ Lowenstein remarks on this, '*At any given period sociological writings on the family reflect the moral problems of the time* (2005, p. 405).

The second generation of grandparenting studies show the expansion of interests in grandparenting and reflect changes in society and family life which help to contextualize this study of grandparenting.

The third and final section of this chapter is organized according to themes which appear across the two generations of literature already explored.

These themes were influential in the early conception of this research, and are germane to my analysis of the data from the grandparent interviews below. They relate to the meaning and manner of three-generation relationships over the life course, and to the significance of grandparents through life stages and life transitions, including birth and death. They touch the mundane and practical, the symbolic and transcendent.

II. General Characteristics of Grandparenting Studies

Grandparenting, as a focus for academic enquiry, was for many years located almost entirely in the US (Clarke, Prophet, & McGlone, 2000) and the impetus for many grandparent studies derive from situations in the first instance prevalent in that country. Interest in the topic grew from the 1980s and had expanded to other countries by the end of the century. Studies appeared in New Zealand by the mid 1990s and are reviewed separately below, *Grandparents in New Zealand Writing*.

Academic texts on grandparenting are not uncommonly prefaced by reflections on the limitations of previous writing and research on the subject (Minkler 1999; Somary and Stricker 1998; Zeilig, Holdsworth, & Harper, 2000; see also Blackstone, 2002; Rutter and Rutter, 1993; Shore and Hayslip, 1994). Justification for these thoughts lies in the heterogeneous character of the subject, approached through disparate disciplines (Szinovacz, 1998), the lack of a grand unifying theory (ibid; Battistelli and Farneti, 1991), the ill defined, 'contingent' nature of the role (Pitcher, 1999; Tomlin, 1998; Troll, 1985), and the significance of national and cultural contexts on shaping how grandparenting is differently experienced, performed and valued (Battistelli and Farneti, 1991).

FIRST GENERATION STUDIES OF GRANDPARENTING: UP TO 1980

III. Psychoanalytic Theory and Grandparenting

(i) Introduction

Strauss's annotated bibliography (1996) of the '*rules, rights and relationships*' of grandparents, drawing mainly on US sources, shows early grandparent studies appearing in the 1940s (see also Barranti, 1985; Szinovacz, 1998). Prominent at that time, and influential on later theories of grandparenting, was a stream of psychoanalytic studies based on clinical findings (Kahana and Kahana, 1970; Strauss, 1996). Both positive and negative interpretations are given to the role of grandparent within the family. Examples are given from the writings of Rappaport in 1958, Jones in 1948 and Deutsch in 1945.

Several factors should be held in mind with reference to the interpretations of grandparenting the psychoanalysts present. The clinical examples are often presented anecdotally from pathological situations where grandparents are resident with younger family (Kahana and Kahana, 1971), and this at a period when old age itself was regarded as a problem, the elderly '*obsolete*'.² Many categorized as old were dependent on younger family, lacking financial security and good health (see Casper and Bianchi, 2002).

(ii) Ernest Rappaport

Rappaport is unequivocal: '*The grandparents are always important, even if they were dead when the child was born*' (1958, p. 518). He proposes that the grandparent, dead or alive, brings to the child awareness of its own mortality, which, in unfavourable circumstances can produce pathologically anxious responses in the child (ibid; see also Farenzi cited Strauss, 1996). Alternatively a grandparent projecting a positive model for the grandchild can be a constructive element in moulding the child's personal future and its future relationships and obligations (Rappaport, 1958). Whether cast as a good or bad fairy – Rappaport writes of the '*magic*' of grandparents to grandchildren and

² Uhlenberg and Kirby conjecture the '*grim and villainous*' image of old age up to about mid-century contributed to the scarcity of academic works on grandparenting (1998).

their high presence in child literature – grandparents are viewed as part of an interweaving dynamic of child, parent and grandparent.

(iii) Ernest Jones

From the beginning of the 20th century Jones (1948) developed a theory of grandchildren's identification with grandparents which he termed the 'reversal of generations'. Reflecting on the observation that, while children grow up towards or beyond their parents' stature, many older persons become smaller with age, Jones concluded that children, through the same observation, imagine themselves eventually attaining to the position of parents of their diminishing parents, i.e. becoming as though their own grandparents (ibid). Furthermore in the inter-generational triangle which Jones depicts only as grandson-father-grandfather, the grandfather and grandson pairing alone is free of the tension between control and resistance found in the parent/child relationship (ibid), opening a further path for identification of grandchild and grandparent. Attias-Donfut and Segalin (1998, p. 211) attribute to Jones the recognition that grandparents alone hold the stories – '*exploits and misdeeds*' – of the parents as children (see also Hurme, 1991; Strauss, 1996).

(iv) Helene Deutsch

Deutsch's theories too encompass a unity of three generations. She claims that women, to achieve harmonious being in their mother role, must identify both back to their own mother and forward, with their child, towards the future (Thompson, 1987). Similarly this occurs as the mother transfers feelings held for her father onto her child (Deutsch, 1991).

Deutsch idealizes a state of womanhood as 'motherliness', a quality of caring which does not exclude the childless (Thompson, 1987). She seems to assume grandparenting arrives for women after the menopause (ibid). While she applauds women who then affirm a 'masculine' intellectual facet of their self in work, motherliness is ideally preserved in the role of grandmother. The role has three 'good' forms: as the extension of being a mother, her grandchildren being as though her children; as mothering again but through her identification with her daughter; and best, the grandmother who having renounced her own needs, desires peace and enjoyment in her grandchildren (ibid).

Grandmothers who do not want disturbance from grandchildren, or those who want to own them, are disapproved of by Deutsch (Strauss, 1996).

(v) The psychoanalytic interpretation brought forward

Some interpretations of the grandparenting role, proposed by the psychoanalysts, rest uncomfortably with more recent schools of thought. Other insights persist. By example the gendered capabilities, the infirmities and later-life stage, and the sexuality of the grandparents as depicted by the psychoanalysts, would be exceptional amongst the various images projected by New Zealand grandparents today; and while children are still most often familiarized with age and death by their grandparents³, this would unusually result in the pathology Rappaport reports. However the case made by Rappaport, (1958) and by Jones (1948) that, for grandparents, grandchildren can serve as a counter to age and death, a '*re-incarnation*' (ibid), is corroborated by later research. Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) and Thompson et al (1991) find grandchildren symbolizing, '*biological renewal*' for grandparents; and Toledo, Hayslip et al report grandparents for whom grandchildren signified '*immortality through clan*' (2000).

Subsequent research continues to confirm a further and salient observation by Rappaport and Jones on the character of grandparenting. As Rappaport expresses in Flugal's words, '*grandparents, as a rule, are less responsible for the child's upbringing and education and less stern and vigorous in the assertion of their authority*' (1958, p.521). Jones recognizes the same quality by setting the grandparent/grandchild relationship outside the exchange of punishment, anger and retaliation met within the parent/child relationship (1948). This again approximates Deutsch's ideal grandmother who desires only '*the enjoyment of her grandchildren*' (1987, p.11). It opens a pathway to the association of grandparents and grandchildren with play and story telling. (See also Ihimaera, 1998; Kivnick, 1982; Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964; Pahl, 2002; Robertson, 1977; Thompson et al, 1991; Townsend, 1977; Young and Willmott, 1964).

³ Although the media nowadays plays a much larger part in children's exposure to all life's transitions.

IV. The Psychoanalytic Legacy: Attachment Theory

(i) The making of affectional bonds

It was from a psychoanalytic foundation that Bowlby deviated in the 1950s, to formulate his new interpretation of child social development and emotional maturation. Evolving as ‘attachment theory’ Bowlby’s London based work incorporated much psychoanalytic thinking but drew, importantly, on new intellectual fields, namely bio-evolutionary principles derived from ethology, and on control theory (Bowlby, 1995). It claimed, ‘*Whilst especially evident during early childhood, attachment behaviour is held to characterize human beings from the cradle to the grave*’ (ibid p. 129). A survey of attachment literature, while insightful of close family bonds, casts a tantalizingly oblique light on grandparenting behaviour (see Connor, 2006).

From observation, Bowlby postulated a biological predisposition in very young children, when faced with stressful situations in their environment, to seek security through proximity to a protective being, typically the mother. Given a sense of comforting reassurance and reduced anxiety thus gained a child will venture out to explore its environment, social and physical, again. During this cycle from secure base to venture and back, the maturing child internalises its learning experiences and builds a mental ‘working model’ by which it can direct future behaviour. The achievement of a rewarding early attachment pattern and effective ‘working model’ is predicted to contribute to the quality of life-long behaviour and the formation of affectionate bonds (Ainsworth, 1995; Grossmann and Grossmann, 1995; Howe, 1995; Howes, 1999; Kozłowska and Hanney, 2002; Marris, 1995).

(ii) The care-giving behavioural system

Key to that achievement is the sensitivity and responsiveness of the complementary role of ‘*protective being*’ to the child (Bowlby, 1995, p. 133). Yet the ‘*care-giving behavioral system*’ is a less-understood field in the attachment relationship (Waters and Cummings, 2000, p.166). Berlin and Cassidy propose that, like attachment, its goal is ‘*protection of the young and ultimately of ... reproductive fitness*’ (1999, p. 652). However clarity is lacking in how the shift is made from protection seeking to protection giving, except that it too is assumed to be triggered by perceptions of a child’s vulnerability (George and Solomon, 1999) and a biological arousal associated

with motherhood (Ainsworth, 1995). Drawing on numerous sources George and Solomon describe care-giving as *'the developmental endpoint of early attachment experiences ... [by which] a mother integrates her experiences with her child into her mental schemes of attachment'* (1999, p. 655). Berlin and Cassidy (1999) and Ijzendoorn and Sagi (1999) both review evidence for such a transmission of attachment behaviour across three generations. They find limited empirical data from existing research. But Tomlin reports, *'mothers with adult attachment to their own mothers were more likely to have infants with secure attachments'* (1998; see also Vermulst et al, 1991). Ijzendoorn and Sagi (ibid) together with George and Solomon (1999), suggest that in seeking an explanation for intergenerational transmission of attachment behaviour a *'contextual understanding [is required] examining the mother, the family system, and the environment'* (see also Howe, 1995).

(iii) Beyond the mother/child dyad

Clarity is also lacking in who can fulfil the role of attachment figure. While according to attachment theory mothers typically are biologically and socially predisposed as primary caregivers, the literature recognizes⁴ that for most children further attachment relationships are probable during social and cognitive development; but there is limited explanatory research. Waters and Cummings (2000, p. 168) comment, *'Explorations of attachment in family context and the extension of the secure-base construct to family-wide models is an important challenge for attachment theory.'* Little is known outside the child/mother dyad, even of child/father attachment (George and Solomon, 1999). As both Howes (1999) and Rutter and O'Connor (1999) note almost nothing is known about attachment relationships with grandparents, or of the grandparents' impetus to care⁵. Broadly, the case for protective behaviour linked with genetic reproductive fitness can be made for grandparent care-giving as for parent care, especially for the

⁴ Howes records that Bowlby and others had long accepted a hierarchy of attachment relationships, but as the male breadwinner/mother housewife roles, normative in Western cultures at the time Bowlby first made his observations (Bowlby, 1953) have changed, and as the two-income family has become a frequent economic necessity, most children experience multiple caregivers (Howes, 1999). Some may act as attachment figures, some offer affectional bonds. Dibs, the little boy emotionally isolated from his family in Virginia Axline's classic study of play therapy (1973), felt love only from the comfort of his grandmother, who had been with him for his first month and then regularly for his next three years.

⁵ For discussion of findings for grandparents in a hierarchy of kinship caring obligations refer to Rossi (1993; 2001) below.

maternal grandmother who has certainty of her genetic continuity in her grandchildren (see Attias-Donfut and Segalin, 1998; Dench and Ogg, 2003; Leek and Smith, 1991; Smith, M. S., 1991).

In the provision of secondary care-giving Ainsworth suggests a pivotal role rests with the mother. With motherhood, while a woman is roused to nurture, she is herself in need of protection and care from an attachment-like figure such as '*the woman's mother*' (1995), opening the way for a three-generation unity reminiscent of Deutsch's analysis of the grandmother role (see above).

Figuratively speaking, attachment theory has set the stage for the performance of grandparenting, the script as yet tentatively drafted (see Drew, Richard, & Smith, 1998).

V. The Psychoanalytic Legacy: Life Cycle Theory

(i) Erikson

Lucky the infants who come into this world with good genes, loving parents, and even grandparents who readily relate to them enthusiastically and enjoy them hugely (Erikson, 1998, p. 106; first published 1982).

Meanwhile in post WW II North America Erikson was similarly working from a Freudian heritage to advance a structural framework which emphasized understanding '*the whole life cycle*' (Erikson, 1964). Erikson's ideas had much in common with those of attachment theorists. He shared a life span perspective with Bowlby and similarly saw the early mother/child relationship as critical to later development (Fonagy, 1999). However Erikson's greater focus on later life gives direct relevance to the experience of grandparenting. He conceives grandparents as possible secondary attachment figures, after parents, for the infant and growing child, with power as '*other maternal persons*' [*to strengthen the child's*] '*sense of primal Other – the I's counterpart*'. Important in this is '*a mutuality of recognition by face and by name*', by sight and by sound, between child and Other (Erikson, 1998, p44; first published 1982).

(ii) The ‘epigenetic’ life-cycle

Erikson theorized an incremental staging of the somatically maturing person through psychosexual, cognitive and psychosocial development, in interaction with her/his environment, towards the attainment of self-identity. He termed this ‘epigenesis’. It entailed passing through what he conceived as psychosocial crises, with each stage developing out of the previous and incorporating it. Sequentially the eight stages are: Hope, Will, Purpose, and Competence (developed in childhood), Fidelity (developed in adolescence), Love, Care, and Wisdom (central to adulthood) (Erikson, 1964). Erikson proposed that the psychosocial survival of human-kind depended on:

the interplay of successive, and overlapping generations...[where] the individual’s life-stages are “interliving”, cogwheeling with the stages of others moving him along as he moves them (ibid p. 114).

(iii) Grandparents and ‘generativity’

The position of a person within a stage is determined by historic and cultural setting as well as age (Erikson et al, 1986; Erikson, 1998) but, in general, one can assume present-day Western grandparents occupy the mature adulthood stages of Care and Wisdom. In relation to Care, Erikson argues a human ‘*need to be needed*’ and postulates a quality of ‘generativity’ associated with Care, as typically experienced in parenthood and again in grandparenthood. Generativity, described as ‘*a selfless caring*’, he explains as, ‘*whatever a man [sic] generates and leaves behind, creates and produces.*’ Accordingly Care with generativity overcomes the ‘*ambivalence of obligation*’ (Erikson, 1964, pp.130-131).

In 1986 Erikson, together with his wife and Helen Kivnik, reported on a study with 29 octogenarians from whom data had been collected over 50 years. The life stories are explored with reference to Erikson’s stages of life and the participants’ expressions of generativity. Grandparenthood is identified as ‘*the culmination of the parenting role*’ (p. 306). Yet elsewhere Erikson makes a distinction between the archetypical grandparent role and that of the parent. The parent in Freudian terminology educates the child by way of the superego’s cultural expectations (Erikson, 1998) whereas the grandparent is free to contribute guidance without responsibility, released from the tension inherent in the parent’s responsible love.

(iv) Play

Additionally the grandchild relationship is found offering the grandparent another and associated freedom – the freedom to play. Erikson placed the play stage of the developing child early. With maturing the child's playfulness is moderated by the superego's sense of social propriety. But Erikson makes a plea for the universal value of play and its continuity into old age (1998). Play is exploration and initiative. He quotes one woman (Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986, p184), '*I do things with the grandchildren that I'd never do without them. Just silly little things that make you feel so good*'. And elsewhere he writes of, '*sharing [playfulness and curiosity] with grandchildren*' (ibid, p. 185). Grandchildren give grandparents permission to play:

Thus it is with grandchildren that many elders most freely and enthusiastically express the spontaneity that is deemed inappropriate in so many...other settings and with many of the other people who are part of an old person's daily life (ibid).

(v) Integration, identification and separation

Elsewhere the octogenarians display their absorption in their children and grandchildren, '*many begin to see their grandchildren as extensions of themselves into the indefinite future*' (ibid, p. 66). In a chain of procreation they identify traits and features of themselves in grandchildren but, as well, trace backwards to traits and features of their parents, seeing a lineage repeating. The authors note how the grandparents struggle to reconcile their '*life long concern and feelings of responsibility for their children's well being*' with respect for their independence as parents now themselves (ibid, p87).

VI. Sociological Studies of Grandparenting**(i) London studies: Townsend and Young and Willmott**

The theoretical work of Erikson, the attachment theorists and psychoanalysts, while not addressing grandparenting per se, contributed important insights into the agency and experience of grandparenting in the development of the individual and her/his social

relationships. Similarly, two studies of London family life appearing at the end of the 1950s included valuable tangential observations on grandparenting.

The London studies had a major sociological impact. They shed new light on popular assumptions about the urban English working class family of the day, including how grandparents functioned within it. As Townsend explains in his work, The Family Life of Old People, there was current concern within some sectors that an increasing prevalence of the nuclear family⁶ was isolating the growing population of aging family members. Worries had arisen also that welfare provisions under the State would loosen the ties of obligation between older and younger generations (1977). At the same time Young and Willmott (like Townsend working from the Institute of Community Studies, London) were studying the effect of changes in housing policy, from inner city to outer estate, on kinship networks (1964). Both enquiries found the extended family operating as a strong supportive network of at least three inter-relating generations (Townsend, 1977; Young and Willmott, 1964).

Townsend reported as *'one of the most significant findings of the whole enquiry'* that 63% of grandmothers and 20% of grandfathers shared in regular care for one or more grandchild (p. 62, 1977). Many grandmothers from his London study were as much concerned with bringing up their grandchildren as were the mothers (ibid.). Both Townsend and Young and Willmott distinguish a special quality in the caring of grandparents. Townsend refers to it as *'leniency'*. He likens it to the *'privileged disrespect'* between alternate generations reported in anthropological observations (see Counts, 2007). Grandparents are free to put aside parenting's responsible, authoritative function (1977). As Young and Willmott comment, with grandparents, *'children are supplied with another model of what adults are like'* (1964, p58).

The separate studies remark on the strong mother's mother, mother and daughter bond. Young and Willmott, in illustration, quote (ibid, p. 61):

⁶ There was an opposing concern regarding the extended family. Noteworthy, in view of the contribution to Western economies of grandparents or other kin now providing supplementary or full-time child-care, was a belief amongst political theorists of the time, remarked by Townsend (1977), that the extended family was *'antithetical to progress...[obstructing] occupational mobility'* and thus job and technical advance. Parsons (1955), cited by Burnette (1997, p. 489) proposed the nuclear family *'as a functional response to the evolving needs of industrial societies'*.

My son's a son till he gets him a wife,

My daughter's a daughter all of her life.

(ii) A glimpse at great-grandparents

Amongst the earliest US sociological studies specifically written about grandparenthood, is Albrecht's 1954 report on over sixty-five year olds in a mid-west community. With demographic change and aging lives becoming a national issue, she checks for change in responsibilities between generations, grandparents and grandchildren, and great-grandparents and great-grandchildren.

Although Albrecht identifies ethnicity and locality as influences on grandparent behaviour she does not identify the ethnicity of her sample which was presumably predominantly white, as within it she finds few grandparents with responsibility for grandchildren. Furthermore, although her grandparents and great-grandparents reportedly gain much, and are enriched by contact with their grandchildren, they show little enthusiasm for greater responsibility, and more than occasional care of grandchildren. As grandparents become great-grandparents less bonding and less contact occurs, while responsibility for grandchildren reduces completely.

(iii) Typing grandparents: Neugarten and Weinstein

In 1964 Neugarten and Weinstein broke new ground, seeking to identify distinctive characteristics of grandparenting in the US viewed from the grandparents' experience (Szinovacz, 1998). Like Albrecht ten years earlier they asked how the traditionally defined grandparent was changing in response to social change?

Their study of 70 couples stands at the beginning of research aiming to delineate a typology of grandparents⁷. The authors tease out a classification of styles and meaning of grandparenting, controlling for gender and age in a middle class sample. They considered the comfort grandparents felt in the grandparent role, the significance of the role to the grandparent and the style with which they 'did' grandparenting. As regard style the findings reveal about half the sample reject authority in their relationship with

⁷ Bengtson, Giarrusso et al, (2002), citing Turner and Beeghley (1981), find explanatory typologies offer useful insight in fields of interest yet to develop a unified explanatory theory. See also Attias-Donfut and Segalin (1998) for the enduring influence of Neugarten and Weinstein on subsequent typologies. For a review of grandparenthood typologies see Barranti, (1985).

a grandchild. Neugarten and Weinstein (p. 201) divide the grandparents further as: '*formal*', who while interested in the grandchild, respect a clear separation of their role from parenting; '*fun seeker*' who is likened to a grandchild's playmate; '*reservoir of family wisdom*' who holds status through special knowledge or skill; '*distant figure*', who is benevolent but, living near or far, is not a familiar presence; '*surrogate parent*', who assumes a caretaking responsibility. Notably the authors restrict this last role to grandmothers and at the behest of a '*young mother [who] works*'.

Meaning was found in: a sense of '*biological continuity*'; the potential for success in a new role; giving, either in material terms or out of life experience; the opportunity for 'second hand' achievement through a grandchild's accomplishment. One group of grandparents, categorized as '*remote*', included some young grandfathers who felt detached from their young grandchildren, busy grandmothers, and other grandparents who were estranged from the grandchild/ren's parents. Younger grandparents are also found to be significantly more often amongst the '*fun seekers*'.

Neugarten and Weinstein claimed the grandparent role merited, '*further study as a phenomenon of middle age*' (p. 199).

(iv) Grandparents as older persons: Kahana and Kahana

However the next major contribution to grandparent research came out of an interest in older persons. Kahana and Kahana published research in 1970 on the perceptions by children of different ages, of their grandparents as aged persons. They found a '*career-like*' developmental aging affecting both parties, but suggested:

the meaning of the grandparent role for the aging grandparent must be understood in the context of the changing needs of the developing grandchild (p. 98).

The following year the same researchers published research on the '*meaning of grandparenthood for the old and not-so-old*' (Kahana and Kahana, 1971, p. 261). They question to what extent grandparents and grandchildren influence one another. They see in the grandchild's experience of age, in the person of a grandparent, the familial prototype of societal intergenerational relationships. Seeking to clarify the complexity

of grandparenting the authors consider a five-fold model. Grandparenting can be conceived as a social role, or as a personal experience, as a dyadic relationship, as part of an intergenerational family, and finally it can carry symbolic meaning.

Kahana and Kahana are first to bring to academic notice those grandparents who have returned to parenting when the parent generation has suffered some impairment (ibid). Szinavacz remarks on the 70s decade as a harbinger of social and family change and noteworthy for the increasing importance of grandparents as '*rescuers in family crises*' (1998, p. 6)⁸.

⁸ A reference by Kahana and Kahana (1971, p. 262) to Neugarten and Weinstein's (1964) caretaking role by grandmothers, '*as not* important for the "typical" middle class U.S. grandparent', carries irony when read today. Already by 1985 Troll remarks on an increasing likelihood of such a role.

SECOND GENERATION STUDIES: AFTER 1980

VII. Expanding Interests in Grandparenting

(i) A changing context to grandparenting

By the 1980s, across the West, but especially in US, higher occurrence of divorce, teen marriage and single motherhood, and increasing drug use were amongst indicators of social change bringing unprecedented pressure on the conventional family, and at the same time bringing grandparents into focus as a family resource. Grandparenthood attracted more academic attention. Thomas et al (2000) describe a burgeoning research literature on grandparenting in the 1980s in the fields of psychology, social role, legal rights, health and child development and parenting. Szinovacz (1998) comments on a new interest in gender bringing grandfathers further to the fore. Several major studies were published. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) and Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr.(1986) reported on their grandparent research, and Bengston and Robertson (1985) edited a collection of papers from the 1983 National Conference on Grandparenting and Family Connections.

(ii) In praise of grandparents: Kornhaber and Woodward

In their 1981 text, Grandparents/Grandchildren: The Vital Connection, Kornhaber and Woodward follow thematic leads of the psychoanalysts and early attachment theorists. The report on the comprehensive questioning of 300 diversely placed grandparents and 300 grandchildren aged five to 18 years, also called on the authors' clinical experience.

Kornhaber and Woodward take an apparently pessimistic outlook on grandparenting. While they eulogise the significance of grandparents for family and personal well-being, they see the changing cultural values of the day as advancing material gain and self-interest, thereby threatening the cohesiveness of the family across generations and with it the nurturing, ideal grandparent role⁹. They claim universality for the

⁹ Strom (1999) writes of a socio-economic shift in the 1970s, largely peculiar to US, which saw political and marketing forces encourage Caucasian retirees to resist family duties and to invest time and money in personally centred life-styles.

grandparent/grandchild bond, finding it ‘*as natural as the instinct to parent*’ (1981, p.56). Time and proximity are put at the core of this ‘*vital*’ attachment between grandparents and grandchildren (1981). For the authors quality in grandparenting is then dependent on the fullest sharing of time and intimate contact with grandchildren, with free access representing the most admirable expression of the relationship. The mobility of modern life puts such quality grandparenting at risk.

The robustness of Kornhaber and Woodward’s findings has been questioned (Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr., 1986; Miller and Sandberg, 1998) and their unauthenticated assertions on behalf of grandparenting invite doubt, yet their work identifies salient characteristics of grandparenting that endorse, and are subsequently endorsed by other studies. The contact with a grandparent importantly gives to a child the personal experience of an older person and thence an understanding of older age in general, exemplifying the end point of her/his own life-cycle (Kornhaber and Woodward, 1981; cf. Kahana and Kahana, 1971). The relationship also serves as a model for the child’s eventual expression of her/his grandparenting (see also Cesare, 2000; Kornhaber, 1985; Whitbeck et al, 1993). Once that relationship is established Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) argue, in line with Kahana and Kahana (1970) above, it will evolve, career-like, but primarily dependent on the developing child’s life-stages.

(iii) Changing features of grandparenting: Cherlin and Furstenberg

Kornhaber and Woodward express a nostalgic concern for a grandparenting ideal they believe to be passing. Five years later Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr. (1986), surveying a large sample of grandparents and teenage children, focus research on the then current grandparenting in the US for an understanding of its characteristics, including the aetiology and significance of its changing nature. They question whether, historically, the nurturing, intimate relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, mourned by Kornhaber and Woodward, have ever been a general norm, suggesting that in US, ‘*grandparenthood – as a distinct and nearly universal stage of family life – is a post-World War II phenomenon*’ (ibid, p. 24). They remark on the effect of contemporary demographic changes where longer life span leads to more grandparents, while smaller families leads to fewer grandchildren shared amongst them. Fewer grandparents have dependent children overlapping in age with their grandchildren. There are labour force changes. While more grandmothers are tied to paid employment, other changes in

retirement provision, health, social security and the standard of living frees many older grandparents for new-found time to devote to a grandparenting role.

Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr. define their own typology for consequent grandparent/grandchild relationships. They distinguish ‘remote’, ‘involved’ (where actions are engaged in which are normally reserved for parents, and services are exchanged) and ‘companionate’ (identified as the ‘modern’ grandparent style). Like Kornhaber and Woodward they find proximity and family rituals to be important factors in establishing closeness between grandparents and grandchildren. In spite of such potential for closeness and in contrast to other studies (Kennedy, 1992; McKay and Caverly, 1995; Wiscott and Kopera-Frye, 2000), Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr., ‘*discovered little evidence of intergenerational transmission of attitudes from grandparents to grandchildren*’ (p. 173). This exceptional finding can perhaps be explained by the peer-focused teen years of their grandchild sample. Again like Kornhaber and Woodward, Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr. recognize a passage in grandparenting shaped by the interleaving of grandparent and grandchild life-course¹⁰, and use the term ‘*career*’ (p. 81; see also Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr., 1985; Thompson et al, 1991). They note the propensity for grandparents to have different relationships with different children at different ages, and comment on higher aged grandchildren not so actively keeping contact with their grandparents as extra-familial interests become more important¹¹.

From their 1986 research Cherlin and Furstenberg Jnr found ties to paternal and maternal lineage apparently equal.

¹⁰ Troll (1985) adds depth to this concept, referring to the ‘*synchronicity and asynchronicity*’ of grandparenting with other life processes (p. 139) and Chemoweth (2000) refers to the contextual and dynamic process of the grandparenting ‘*career*’.

¹¹ Silverstein and Long (1998), drawing on survey measurements of US grandparent/grandchild contact and affection over a 23 year period, report a cyclical effect with initial closeness declining through the grandchild’s early-adult years and later reversing as grandparents age towards death. They also identify a ‘*generation stake*’ whereby the older person tends to overestimate the emotional intimacy shared intergenerationally (see Douglas and Murch, 2002; Fingerman, 1998; Tinsley and Parke, 1987).

(iv) Bringing together disciplinary approaches to grandparenthood: The National Conference on Grandparenting and Family Connections

In itself the holding of a National Conference on Grandparenting and Family Connections in 1983 indicates growing US awareness of grandparenthood, and a curiosity about family beyond the parent and child nucleus. The edited collection, Grandparenthood, by Bengtson and Robertson (1985) two years later incorporates papers by participating academics from a variety of social sciences on what is described as an *'elusive'* subject (Hagestad, 1985, p. 48). Together they draw out the objective and subjective factors shaping grandparenting (Bengtson and Robertson, 1985; Johnson, 1985).

Role features of grandparenting

Entry to grandparenthood occurs as *'a life change that is dependent on the role transitions of other family members'*, labelled *'counter-transitional'* (Burton and Bengtson, 1985, p. 71), and *'derived'* (Johnson, 1985, p. 81). The grandparenting role itself is described as *'tenuous'*, *'ambiguous'*, (Hagestad, 1985, p. 36) and *'contingent'* (Troll, 1985, p. 135). For an analysis of role Burton and Bengtson (1985, pp. 64-66) draw on Rosow (1976), suggesting that *'roles are enactments of normatively governed behavior'*. They find Rosow's *'institutional'* and *'tenuous'* role types applicable to grandparenting. The former exists, paradoxically, outside the norm, where exceptionally, grandparents assume parenting responsibilities and so perform specific mandated functions. Otherwise grandparenting is *'tenuous'*, without constant definition, contingent on a personal interplay of objective and structural, and subjective factors. No societal sanctions befall grandparents who avoid their grandchildren¹².

Given amongst objective and structural determinants, constraining or enabling performance of the grandparent role are: age, kinship relationships, obligations to work and marriage (Johnson, 1985), socio-economic position, race, health, and proximity to

¹² In New Zealand the Destitute Persons Ordinance 1846, repealed in 1968 with the introduction of the Domestic Proceedings Act, did *'place responsibility firmly with the "near relatives" of the needy'* including grandparents for grandchildren (Pool et al, 2007, p 153). By the turn of the 19th century some grandfathers had been convicted for not providing for their grandchildren. Similar responsibility was enacted in English Poor Law, repealed 1948. See here, Grandparenting in New Zealand History, above.

grandchildren (Burton and Bengtson, 1985). Subjectively grandparents carry forward to grandchildren an inheritance of values (Johnson, 1985), culture, and a sense of continuity and belonging (McCready, 1985) in personal, symbolic and spiritual communication. Hagestad (1985, p. 31) writes of intergenerational families as, *'meeting places for members of different cohorts...[providing] bridges to historical times they themselves never knew.'* And Wechsler (1985, p. 197) contemplates grandparents as *"living stories"*. *'Simply because they are present to the child, they are signs of the traditional and transcendent.'*

Distinctions between parenting and grandparenting

Aldous (1985) and Kornhaber (1985) consider the duality of grandparenting in the three-generation family, incorporating a continuation of parenting even as the new status of grandparent is evolving. Accordingly Aldous claims, *'parental solicitude does not stop. The term, "postparental stage" is therefore a misnomer'*; but remarks grandparenting is not *'an unconditional temporal continuation of parental roles'* (p. 132). The relationship grandparents build directly with their grandchildren is enacted within the relationship of parents and adult children, with adult children the pivotal generation (King and Elder, 1995). It is beneficially significant as support at the point of transition to parenthood (Hagestad, 1985); and it is when problems occur within the adult child generation that grandparent roles are most likely to change towards greater parenting responsibilities (Aldous, 1985; see also Bengtson, 2001).

Grandparenting, demographics and divorce

Troll (1985, p. 136) questions, *'Why is there a heightened interest in grandparenting at this point in time?'* Grandparenthood, more than previous studies of grandparenting, recognizes the rescue function of grandparents when problems occur in the middle generation. There increasing longevity (availability) and divorce (cause) are offered in answer to Troll. Divorce threatens too much or too little access between grandparents and grandchildren depending on what occurs in the parent generation. Aldous (1985) and Johnson (1985) examine the effects of divorce on the grandparenting role with acknowledgement that the added need for support and surrogate parenting that may accrue to grandparents at their children's divorce is generally unwelcome, reluctantly accepted out of obligation as *'the only solution at a given time'* (Johnson, 1985, p. 88). Kornhaber (1985) sets out the difficult emotional, and legal pathways, some

grandparents encounter in attempting to maintain a meaningful relationship with grandchildren, after a divorce in their family shatters communication.

(v) Grandparents as parents: Minkler and Roe

A decade on and another dimension to the 'rescue' role of grandparents was exposed in Minkler and Roe's 1993 publication of their US research into black grandmothers raising their grandchildren as a consequence of their children's crack cocaine dependency. In doing so, it shifted attention from a generic view of grandparenting to an in-depth examination of a particular category, and heralded a literature devoted to the care-giving, 'safety net' role of grandparents, primarily grandmothers, when parents are unable or unwilling to parent. In spite of being triggered by a situation peculiar to US, Minkler and Roe's study foretold situations now widely familiar throughout Western countries. Their account also looked closely at the practical and political associations of the grandmothers' situation, arising concurrently with a decline in state welfare and foster care provision, and a redirection towards kinship care for children in need (see also Minkler et al, 1994).

Grandmothers when mothers are unable to mother

The authors take an explicitly feminist approach in exploring, through their 44 women participants, the caring responsibility devolving on women, in particular black, poor women. This, it is argued, should not be understood as a simple continuation of a matrifocal African/American tradition but is a new response to changed demographic and socio-cultural circumstances, essentially urban. The grandmothers are shown responding against their self-interests to countrywide problems. They are complying with expectations of a 'family ethic', which presumes families will take care of their own; and women will take primary care. In accepting care of their grandchildren the grandmothers experience a major life readjustment. Minkler and Roe forcibly convey the two-fold anguish felt by the caregivers, arising first from the distress of a child's failed parenting, and then from the multiple stresses of 'off-time', full caring responsibilities. Family health, relationships and finances become vulnerable. Often women have to withdraw from the workforce. Additional hurt can come from a sense that they are in some way responsible for their family's breakdown, relieved in some cases by the hope that, 'second time round', they can compensate for past mistakes (see also Fuller-Thomson and Minkler, 2000).

Support systems

Minkler and Roe's study found social networks were generally retained and were important to grandmothers' well-being. Support groups were helpful and valued. Religious faith gave the greatest coping strength. Financial compensation for the care 'work' – and Minkler and Roe are firm in defining the care as 'work' – was important but often far below payment made to official, stranger, foster carers. They found an assumption under the 'family ethic' that grandparents have a '*duty to care...and don't deserve more than minimum compensation for what should be a labor of love*' (p. 193). Grandfathers did contribute as secondary caregivers in some families but, contrary to the women's tasks, it was to '*things that can be done on their schedules*' (p. 101).

(iv) Personal and public responsibilities across generations: micro and macro issues

In the same year as Minkler and Roe's publication, 1993, Bengtson and Achenbaum edited The Changing Contract Across Generations, a collection of papers which moves the discourse on intergenerational relationships and responsibilities back and forth between family and society. There, in light of changes in demography, family forms and welfare systems, themes of exchange and reciprocity, and ideologies of communality versus individualism are explored (see also Clarke and Roberts, 2002). The papers represent a response to anxiety, foremost in the US, at disparity within Western populations of increasing old and decreasing young, and how and where the means to care for dependent persons is to be managed¹³. Will a population imbalance create an alienating disaffection between generations? The collection nicely reflects the issues Minkler's and Roe's study raises, regarding welfare policy and family care. The case is argued that:

A distinct separation between social policies as a macroissue and caring relationships within the family as a microissue creates a false

¹³ With reference to the intergenerational contract debate Harper (2005, p. 427) argues for: *...the importance of the relationship between the micro and macro experience of social relationship. While public programmes operate at the national level, most people nowadays actually experience intergenerational relationships at the micro-level, through interactions with family...Younger people thus have first-hand experience of older people as kin rather than the public other and see their own families benefit from macro-level policies, even if they do not.* (see Attias-Donfut and Segalin, 1998; Dench and Ogg, 2002; Kahana and Kahana, 1971).

dichotomy, one that not only separates the public from the private domain, but also obscures how state policies affect family relationships.

(Quadagno, Achenbaum, & Bengtson, 1993, p. 264).

On this basis Walker (p. 143) proposes that, '*the provision of care by female kin cannot be explained without reference to macrostructural determinants*'. Depending on social and economic policies, ideologically directed, demographic change can be managed to aid or jeopardize intergenerational solidarity.

The working of kinship bonds

Elsewhere Rossi, turning focus on the family and its biology, reports findings of a large Boston survey of three adult generations. She views emotions to be as critical as rationality in determining intergenerational relationships. The research showed ratings for obligation to primary kin – parents and children – outscoring obligation ratings for kin of one connecting link – grandparents, siblings and grandchildren (see also Finch and Mason, 1993 below; Rossi, 2001). Ratings further decreased as 'separating' links increased. Past was important. Early childhood experience was a significant indicator of the level of adult obligations to kin. For parents and children little variation showed for gender and marital status. For more distant relationships women both evoked and showed higher obligation, important as '*connecting links ...in all dimensions of the intergenerational relationship*' (Rossi, 1993, p. 200). Rossi considers, but here advances no substantive explanation for the mechanisms of early and perduring learning of caring behaviour amongst kin (see attachment theorists, above).

(vii) Reciprocity and balance in kin relationships

Coincidentally with the 1993 US publications, two British academics, Finch and Mason, published a detailed examination of the context in which British family members decide their obligations to other family, and the negotiating processes they employ in choosing to care, or not to care. Negotiating Family Responsibilities (1993) finds the concept of ‘reciprocity’, and with it ‘balance’, central to decisions on care between kin (pp 36/37)¹⁴.

Factors in negotiating kin-care

A complex of variables is shown as determining the achievement of balance in kin exchanges. Time is a factor, with obligations possibly accruing over time. A family member’s biography, his or her past history (a woman’s especially tied into caring commitments), both the public and private image, as well as future expectations, contribute to what is done for whom. Help is most likely to pass between parents and children, with parents’ responsibility being seen as the greater. In some cases of obligation between parents and children examples appear of repayment being carried over to a third party in the next generation (cf. Brannen, Moss, & Mooney, 2003). Childcare, which when ‘occasional’ is most likely provided by sisters or sisters-in-law, and when ‘regular’ is most likely received from grandmothers, appears an area of exchange especially open to becoming unbalanced (Finch and Mason, p.41). Reaching equivalence in such an exchange, so that no one person is in a position of ‘a net giver or a net receiver’, can require very fine interpersonal adjustments (ibid, p. 48). Finch and Mason’s respondents showed that if one person became ‘beholden to another’, or if his or her independence was compromised, the ‘giver’ could be felt and seen to be in a position of power vis a vis the ‘receiver’ (ibid, p. 171). Furthermore the rights attached to giving over-ride rights to expect. However, while adult children typically attempt to avoid too great dependence on parents, and independence is valued by both young and old, the data suggested they were, exceptionally amongst kin, free to call on parent help.

¹⁴ 10 years later Arthur, Snape and Dench (2003) explored the same concepts in The Moral Economy of Grandparenting, ‘weighing up the “give and take” of help and support between family members’ (p. i).

Morality in family exchange

Finch and Mason find similarities in the carefully nuanced negotiations around family responsibilities amongst their British families, and the procedures for gift-giving as explained by Marcel Mauss from his study of 'archaic societies'¹⁵. They propose that incorporated into kin to kin doing or giving is a moral dimension, a transactional commitment, which is created not ascribed and will carry forward into future kin negotiations.

Kin-care/state care balance

From the evidence of their research Finch and Mason remark on an incongruence between how families themselves manage kin responsibilities, and how many modern Western states, including Britain, legislate for kin care. They suggest that with social responsibility shifting from public assistance towards the private realm of family care kin sensibilities relating to the balance of dependence/independence are exposed to compromise.

Confirming earlier English family studies (Young and Willmott 1964) Finch and Mason find the extended family in Britain is '*alive and well...a tangible reality in most peoples' lives*' (p163).

(viii) Intergenerational solidarity across generations: what holds families together?

The actuality and well-being of the extended family is again confirmed by proponents of the intergenerational solidarity model of the family. Taking a life course perspective, this model has been advanced from longitudinal studies by Bengtson and colleagues in California, ongoing from the 1970s (LSOG), and from recent inter-country collaborative research from Norway, England, Israel, Germany and Spain (OASIS). The model explores what holds families together. Making an empirically grounded case for '*solidarity*' being current between Western adult children and parents, the model is extended, taking into account '*cosurvivorship between generations*', to multiple generations (Bengtson, 2001, p. 6). The term solidarity, '*encompasses the multiple,*

¹⁵ In Halls's translation, Mauss's, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1990) reflects, '*in a good number of [societies] exchanges and contracts take place in the form of presents; in theory these are voluntary, in reality they are given and reciprocated obligatorily*' (p. 3), carrying with them spiritual, cultural and socially conserving values (p 14).

complex, and sometimes contradictory ways that parents and children [and grandparents and grandchildren] are socially connected to each other (Lawton, Silverstein, & Bengtson, 1994, p. 59). So grandparenting, Szinovacz (1998, p. 261) notes, can be conceptualised at four levels, ‘*the individual, the dyad, the family unit, and the macro or societal level*’.¹⁶

Conflict and ambivalence

Recognizing the potential for tensions within this complexity of intergenerational connectedness, constructs of conflict and ambivalence have been introduced to later formulations of the solidarity model (Lowenstein, 2005). Whereas conflict can be understood as a normal part of family relations, when difficulties get resolved and the quality of relationships improves, ambivalence is seen as more particularly arising out of uncertainty of roles in the recent rapidly changing family environment. At times of role transition along the life course ambivalence arises at the intersection of solidarity and conflict (Bengtson, Giarrusso, Mabry, & Silverstein, 2002; Katz, Lowenstein, Phillips, & Daatland, 2005), and grandparents can be perceived as part of a process of negotiation in family relationships.

Measures of solidarity

Initially the solidarity model was defined by six single dimensions of measurement. With the accommodation of conflict/ambivalence into the model these six have been redrawn so that: affectual solidarity is represented as both intimacy and distance, consensual solidarity as agreement and dissent, functional solidarity as dependence and autonomy, associational solidarity as integration and isolation, structural solidarity as opportunities and barriers, normative solidarity as familism and individualism (Bengtson et al, 2002; Silverstein, Giarrusso, & Bengtson, 1998).

From his work with the solidarity model Bengtson (2001, p. 7) envisages the three or more generation family in the US becoming increasingly important in the 21st century, a ‘*latent kin network*’ (following Riley and Riley, 1993) that is activated at times of need (see Dench and Ogg, 2003 for Britain).

¹⁶ cf. Kahana and Kahana (1971) whose five-fold typography has the intergenerational family in place of the family unit, and identifies additionally, a symbolic meaning to grandparents.

PROMINENT THEMES IN THE GRANDPARENTING LITERATURE

Introduction

By the end of the 20th century Szinovacz (1998) reported a rapidly increasing quantity of research on grandparenting, but noted little advance in the development of an inclusive theoretical framework (cf. Thomas et al, 2000). Instead there are numerous small scale, often non-representative academic studies developing discrete aspects of grandparenting (see Strauss, 1996). Also some broadly based sociological family studies include analyses of the now demographically and socially noteworthy grandparent phenomenon (e.g. Carling and Duncan, 2002; Casper and Bianchi, 2002) and they, together with a few comprehensive studies of grandparenting per se (e.g. Attias-Donfut and Segalin, 1998; Dench and Ogg, 2003; Smith, 1991), describe important life circumstances which shape the grandparenting experience. The passages which follow draw broadly across the grandparenting literature to review a selection of influential variables. They are prefaced with an examination of the influence of past personal experience on the development of grandparenting behaviour (Kivnick, 1982) and then continue to examine proximity, class, health, age, and gender.

IX. Learning to Grandparent

(i) How does it happen?

Attachment theory currently leaves open how the care-giving behavioural system is reproduced beyond the mother/child relationship. Erikson (1964) gives clearer guidance. He positions a person within his 'epigenetic' stages by historic and cultural agency, as well as by physiological maturing. Accordingly a grandparent assumes the mantle of generativity not simply by age but additionally by garnering from life's passages the qualities of care and wisdom. Furthermore Erikson, like the psychoanalysts, separates the grandparent role from that of the parent. Beyond this Erikson describes no mechanism whereby the grandparent role is transmitted and individually expressed. Rossi, writing in 1993, also expends some thought on how the hierarchy of reciprocated caring behaviour she finds displayed amongst kin is initiated.

Puzzled, she posits a process akin to language acquisition, intuited from multiple familial sources over childhood socialization. Later, in 2001, Rossi is more sure:

how we interact with a grandchild... evokes and is partially affected by how we related to our children at a comparable age, or even how we were treated as children by our parents and grandparents. At a deeper level, an organism's phenotype reflects past environmental influences on our genotype, so that our individual histories are encoded in the very wiring of our nervous and immune systems (p. 243).

She is proposing role model learning, and past conditioning, what Riley et al (1969, p. 960) refer to as '*anticipatory socialization*' i.e. early age learning in advance of its application in later aged adult roles (cf. Kahana and Kahana, 1970; Neugarten and Weinstein 1964). US studies by King and Elder (1997) and by Cesare (2000) look at how grandparent interaction with grandchildren is related to their own past experiences of being grandparented. Cesare questions whether watching one's parents grandparent one's own children might be a stronger learning experience.

(ii) The grandparent heritage

King and Elder worked through phone interviews and questionnaires, with 662 rural, three-generation families to test the premise that, '*early involvement with grandparents influences an individual's subsequent enactment of their own grandparental role, whether distant or close, engaged or not.*' (1997, p. 849). Questions were asked about three modes of once knowing a grandparent. These were: being personally acquainted, having learnt about a grandparent, and having lived with a grandparent. Learning about a grandparent ranged from looking at photos, listening to family stories, sharing a name, to familiarity with heirlooms. In these ways King and Elder remark, '*earlier generations are kept alive and connected to later generations, even when they are no longer physically present.*' (p. 852). A number of general and specific aspects of the current relationship with grandchildren were recorded and examined in relationship to past knowledge of grandparents.

Overall the results showed that the experiences of once having known grandparents and/or of having learnt about them through family history were significantly linearly related to type and level of current involvement with grandchildren. A stronger past acquaintance with a grandparent was positively related to more active involvement with one's own grandchild/ren. The effect was stronger for specific shared activities, and weaker for the quality of the grandparent/grandchild relationship and for contact. Contrastingly, sharing a household with a grandparent as a child '*made little difference [to] contemporary involvement as a grandparent*' (ibid, p. 856). King and Elder caution the past is just one, but a significant, contributing influence in the patterning of grandparent involvement with grandchildren.

(iii) A grandparent or a parent template?

From 150 first-time expectant US grandparents – described as biased to a white, middle/upper-class, working and educated sample – Cesare (2000) sought memories and experiences of their grandparents and also of their parents as grandparents, so seeking to understand how grandparenting is learnt. Ninety-three grandparents were maternal and 57 paternal, 102 were women and 48 were men. Data was collected by open ended interviews and self-administered questionnaires. Cesare's results strongly suggest that her respondents learnt their grandparent role from participating in relationships with their grandparents rather than being observers of their parents as grandparents. Experience with maternal grandmothers was the strongest predictor of later grandparenting behaviour over other grandparents and parents. However when Cesare reselected a subset of grandparents who had known all four of their grandparents until at least age nine the disparity amongst gender and lineage was no longer significant.

Unlike the linear findings of King and Elder's research, Cesare's study (2000) showed that while good experiences with grandparents in childhood provided a positive role model for later grandparenting, a poor grandparent experience when a child led to a desire to reverse the past in a satisfying and caring grandparenting relationship.

That grandparenting behaviour is more likely to be learned when a child, from grandparents, rather than in adulthood from parents, might be predicted from the younger age of the learning. Riley et al (1969) suggest that childhood learning is less

complex than later learning which has to accommodate new roles into pre-learned behaviour. The grandparenting template is already strongly formed from childhood, before one's parents become grandparents. According to Cottrell (1969, p. 565) *'self-other patterns established earlier in the developmental history of the person, will appear more persistently than later established ones...with varying tendencies, or "pressures" to be enacted'*.

For grandparenting some of those "pressures" which further shape the manner of its expression are now reviewed.

X. Nearest and Dearest

(i) Proximity

Given prominence in many research findings proximity is a primary but ambiguous determinant of the relationship between grandparent and grandchild. 'How close are you to your grandchild?' invites geographic and emotional interpretation. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) and Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) consider time and geographic closeness the foundations for a 'good relationship' between grandparents and grandchildren. Aldous (1985) reports that research has consistently shown geographic proximity encourages intergenerational contact (see also Clarke and Roberts, 2003; Dench and Ogg, 2002; Drew, 2000; Gibson, 2002; Hodgson, 1998; Kalliopuska, 1994; Kennedy, 1992; Somary and Stricker, 1998; Uhlenberg and Hammill, 1998), and Lawton et al (1994) show contact to be causally related to affection between mothers (not fathers) and adult children. Positive feedback is occurring between contact and affection. However Silverstein et al (1998) and Eisenberg (1988), suggest gender may be a more important factor in affectionate expression than proximity, and Chan and Elder (2000) find rural grandchildren rating relationships with maternal grandparents above relationships with closer living paternal grandparents.

(ii) The case for attachment at a distance

Kobak, (1999), drawing on attachment theory, finds feelings of attachment fed by availability, accessibility and responsiveness, and questions, with Ainsworth,(1995) whether proximity need be literal and physical¹⁷. Rossi (2001, p11) thinks not:

ease and rapidity of transportation and communication permit more frequent contact between close kin who reside many miles apart – by phone, “snail mail”, FAX, email, weekend and holiday visits.

And Kivett (1998) finds that when grandparents move home the frequency of contacts and assistance may reduce but the quality of the relationship remains unchanged (cf. Barranti, 1985; Finch and Mason, 1993; Shore and Hayslip, 1994; Strom and Strom, 1997; Tyszkowa, 1991). Indeed a popular literature exists devoted to grandparenting at a distance (Wassermann, 2001). King and Elder (1995, p. 174) discovered from their US study of rural, three-generation families that *‘proximity though having a substantial effect on contact... is relatively unimportant for relationship quality.’* Thompson et al (1991) write that no direct association between physical nearness and emotional closeness is evident in the reminiscences of their widely sourced English elderly from the 19th and 20th centuries¹⁸ (cf. Counts, 2007; Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964). They emphasize the long held British ideal of intergenerational mobility and neo-local residence at marriage, endorsing three-generation co-residence as an exception¹⁹.

But the two interpretations of grandparent/grandchild closeness – physical and emotional – they find coming together for, *‘above all those children who were cared for*

¹⁷ Finch and Mason (1993) comment that time and distance are open to subjective and objective measure.

¹⁸ This study nicely parallels the N.Z. studies by Metge (1995) and Toynbee (1995).

¹⁹ Strauss (1996, p. ix) and Ikels (1998, p. 46) stake a claim for the centrality of a society’s kinship system in shaping the grandparenting role of its families. Ikels identifies as important, *‘the nature of the descent system, the flexibility of the concept of kinship, and household organization and residence patterns’* (ibid). Kinship in Britain and Pākehā New Zealand is typically of bilateral descent (as also is Māori, see above), is exogamous and flexible, with predominantly neo-local two-generation residence. Consequences follow with a valuing of ties to two sets of grandparents, thence possibly a foursome makatonim/parents-in-law presence, with a potential for greater support to the parent generation and/or competition for the dominant grandparent position (Arthur, Snape et al, 2003; Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986; Johnson, 1985; Pahl, 2002; Szinovacz 1998; Young and Willmott, 1964).

actively by their grandparents [recalling] them in depth and with strong feeling' (ibid, p.89). They suggest opportunity, compatibility, and a sense of common inheritance, are equally as significant as proximity in the grandparent/grandchild relationship. Additionally a class factor is shown as culturally dividing grandparent behaviour. Notably, it is this class factor that could account for the apparent contradiction to the neo-local, nuclear norm, which is presented by the London working class studies of Townsend (1977) and Young and Willmott (1964).

XI. Class and Grandparenting

(i) Class and family visiting

On class Thompson et al (1991) recount:

For the middle and upper classes, visiting often quite distant grandparents was a normal family pattern, so much so that it is the commonest context of recollection. Most often these memories are positive...linked with family traditions and home (p. 57).

Not only are middle and upper classes more mobile than the working classes (Dench and Ogg, 2003; Morley, 2004) but also, enabling contact, they have the resources for travel, and the space to accommodate visitors from a distance. Grandparents at a distance were often remembered for the '*occasion*' of visits, the special quality of the experience that went with the company and place of grandparents (Thompson, 1991, p. 71).

(ii) More on class and grandparenting

While proximity cannot be disentangled from a relationship with class, class itself, socio-economic level, health, education, and culture are similarly entwined. Dressel, Minkler, & Yen (1997, p. 592) refer to Weber's association of class with '*life chances*', usefully capturing the mix of constraints and possibilities which determine the style of grandparenting at different social levels. Werner (1991) observes of the U.S., and Hurme (1991) finds for Finland, that greater flexibility attaches to the obligations and norms of the roles played amongst middle class families, compared with the

expectations of integration and participation amongst poor families, while Vermulst et al (1991) remark on the connections between lower socio-economic position, conformity, and restriction in child-rearing practices being passed from grandmother to mother.

Dench and Ogg (2003, p. 119) explain class as, '*a shorthand way of referring to different settings within which the key variables may interplay in particular ways.*' With this understanding they find class a 'soft' factor and not '*a major determinant of grandparenting style*' (ibid, p. 129). Thus while their British working class grandparents did show as younger, more likely to be part of three generation families (few) and more frequently to have children whose early-aged partnership had split, these were all factors which in themselves influence the mode of grandparenting. Their middle class participants shared less time with grandchildren but shared more money, other gifts, and holidays. The researchers speculate that grandparents of an '*intermediate*' class may be best placed, with some resources and some time (p. xii). However they question the meaning of class in present-day multigenerational family networks, where class lines frequently mix and merge²⁰.

XII. Health and Grandparenting

(i) Grandparenting and mental health

Health can be looked at for its relevance to grandparenting, and grandparenting for its contribution to health. For the latter I have found no recorded enquiry into what, if any, health benefit attaches to the attainment of grandparent status relative to non-grandparent status amongst persons of similar circumstances²¹. But some academic work has addressed the association of grandparenthood and mental health.

Sonuga-Barke and Mistry (2000), in a small London study of ethnic Asian families found grandmothers fulfilling their traditional extended family role had better mental

²⁰ As early as 1954 Albrecht makes the same point for the US.

²¹ Conversely Drew et al (1998; Drew, 2000), in a British based survey of grandparents who have suffered some enforced loss of contact with a grandchild, comment on the emotional and physical symptoms arising from the consequent deep grief of some subjects, and Harper (2005) records that loss of contact with a grandchild (e.g. through parental separation) can result in (unspecified) morbidity.

health than did the nuclear family, out-of-role, control grandmothers. They comment, with reference to Kivnick and Sinclair (1996), '*traditional grandparenting roles [have] been shown to increase feeling of self worth and well-being in elderly people.*'

Earlier Kivnick (1982), reviewing findings of a study which questioned several hundred US grandparents on the meaning, for them, of their grandparent role, reported:

in later life grandparenthood is a role through which grandparents seem to be able to rework earlier, inadequately resolved psycho-social conflicts and, in so doing, to enhance their current psychological well-being

(1982, p. 63).

On this basis she proposes a 'deprivation-compensation' model whereby grandparents use rewards found in grandparenthood to bolster their morale and life satisfaction against hardships.

Eight years later Thomas (1990) reported a similar study where she had evaluated the relationships between grandparents and their eldest grandchild, finding several factors that, she proposes, are significant in predicting aspects of grandparent mental health. Linking her findings with Kivnick Thomas argues for recognition of a mental health component to grandparenting. Then a further eight years on and a study by Fingerman (1998, p. 412) showed, '*a high quality relationship with a special grandchild*' served as a positive psychological resource to grandparents.²²

(ii) Grandparents, health, and grandchildren

Health, as a facet of life's chances, one closely allied to class and socio-economic setting, can be expected to affect the quality of the grandparent experience (see Dressel et al, 1997), at least regarding level of engagement and activity. Yet here also there is surprisingly little direct reference in grandparenting studies. Uhlenberg and Hammill

²² However in a large study on women's management of multiple roles Cochran, Brown, & McGregor (1999) found no significant difference in the reporting by grandmothers and non-grandmothers of depressive symptoms.

(1998), using a large US national survey sample of grandparent/grandchild dyads, and specifically searching for the affects of health on grandparents' contact with grandchildren, found no significant results. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) had earlier reported similar findings. They had also found self-reported health did not restrict what they termed 'involvement' of grandparents in their grandchildren's lives (ibid). Yet, somewhat at odds, about a fifth of their grandparents whose relationship with grandchildren was deemed 'remote', and more than a tenth of 'companionable' and of 'involved' grandparents, declared health restricted their capacity to grandparent. Also mentioned was the limited energy of some older grandparents to engage fully in the demands of grandparenting (cf. Uhlenberg and Kirby, 1998). According to Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Huck (1993), *'health of grandparent has been shown to affect relationship quality between parents and grandparents and between grandparents and grandchildren'* (p. 1028).

(iii) Custodial grandparenting and health

However academic references abound when health is holistically interpreted as functional, mental, and emotional well-being, and attention moves from health affects on grandparenting per se, to considering grandparents who have assumed custodial child-care responsibilities (Fingerman, 1998; Hayslip and Kaminski, 2005; Minkler and Fuller-Thomson, 2000; Minkler et al 1994).

Taking care of oneself

A report from the University of South California (USC, 2008), comparing 5,200 custodial and traditional grandmothers, gives a novel insight into the grandmothers' response to health and role through measuring the up-take of health precautionary measures (e.g. Pap tests, mammograms) by three groups: traditional grandmothers, those transitioning to full care, and full care grandmothers. Grandmothers after two years of full care were found to be the most likely to adopt preventative health measures, while those transitioning to full-care were least likely to seek preventive services. The researchers interpreted the findings as showing the long-term caregivers' health commitment to the future care of their grandchild, once adjusted to the enervating stressors in their new role. Interestingly, a 1999 article by Roe and Minkler reviewing the circumstances of grandparents raising grandchildren and their vulnerability to *'multiple chronic health problems'*, had noted contradictory evidence from their

slowness to seek help (see also Minkler and Fuller-Thomson 2000). Cox (2008) reports the same finding by Joslin & Harrison in 1998 of grandparents raising HIV-affected grandchildren. Does this indicate some success over intervening years for the support interventions to custodial grandparents, advocated by Roe and Minkler in 1999, or differences in treatment of data?

Health costs and custodial care

Shore and Hayslip (1994), also comparing US custodial with traditional grandparents, looked at the psychological functioning of the two groups, for grandfathers and grandmothers. They found the parenting grandparents, with lowered satisfaction and perception of their grandparent role, had reduced scores on the researchers' measure of well-being whereas traditional grandparents, who perceived their role positively, had better well-being scores (see also Glass and Huneycutt, 2002). Minkler and Fuller-Thompson (1999), researching the health of a large sample of caregiving (for at least six months' duration) and noncaregiving US grandparents reported significantly more functional health limitations, compounded by depressive symptoms, amongst the custodial grandparents than the noncaregiving. Burnette (1997; 1999), from research on US, city dwelling, Latino custodial grandparents found high levels of chronic health problems, including depression. Farmer and Moyers (2005) comment on the relatively high incidence of chronic illness and disability (31%) amongst English custodial kin-carers relative to foster carers (17%). They also underscore a number of differences between the circumstances of kin-care in Britain and US so that direct comparisons are unlikely to hold fully valid across national boundaries and diverse cultures.

As Szinovacz et al (1999, p. S385) write, custodial grandparenting '*prevails among already disadvantaged population groups*' where poorer health is common, independent of child-care responsibilities (see also Cox, 2007). Solomon and Marx (2000) consider the difficulties of teasing out the direction of causation in the complex health/custodial grandparent association. Independent of direction the lived reality for a disproportionate number of custodial grandparents must be a higher than normal experience of debilitation paired with parenting responsibility. In their small, English, custodial grandparenting studies, both Richards (2001; Richards and Harris, 2001) and Pitcher (1999 and 2002) simply record the proportion of grandparents who self-reported health problems at the time of research. A quarter of Richard's participants described

themselves as in ‘poor health’ (ibid) and nearly half had activity-limiting health impairment. Pitcher’s study showed more than 20% ‘very ill’, and he recorded as a ‘big’ worry, ‘*What would happen if we died or became ill?*’ (1999, p. 17; 2002 p. 11; see also Connealy and De Roos, 2000).

Custodial grandparenting, age and health

A London study of kinship care by Broad (2004), puts age, alongside ill health, as contributing to kincarers’ problems. Older age is naturally to be associated with increased health risks (Baranowski, 1990; Pinquart and Sorensen, 2000; Sands and Goldberg-Glen, 2000). Yet the grandparent health/age relationship seems more complex with some evidence that young-aged custodial responsibility for grandchildren carries a heightened risk to mental health (Minkler et al, 2000; Rogers and Henkin, 2000; Thomas 1990; Thomas et al, p. 2000).

Transitioning any role change without the benefit of anticipatory socialization is likely to add stress. In some instances young grandparents will feel competing demands from their own dependent children, from employment, and from overall mid-life developmental ‘busyness’ (Watson, 1997). An ‘off-time’ experience of grandparenting within the normal lifecycle (or what Dench and Ogg, 2002, p. 81 refer to as ‘*time disordered*’ grandparenting) apparently creates stress, whether felt by the exceptionally young grandparent (Spitze and Ward, 1998) or those who take on a parenting role at an (older) age associated normatively with voluntary grandparenting (Connealy and De Roos, 2000; cf. Erikson, 1964). Additionally the therapeutic comfort and bonding of sharing both the trials and joys of grandparenting with peers is lost to ‘*off-time*’ grandparents (Lavers and Sonuga-Barke, 1997).

(iv) Health and supplementary childcare: when you can’t be sick

While arguably less critical than the health of full-care grandparents, the health of grandparents providing regular, essential, supplementary child-care for their grandchildren, remains a significant family issue. Wheelock and Jones (2002) describe grandparent caregivers in their northern English study as part of a ‘jigsaw’ of care, where each person has an essential place in a finely meshed system, and sickness in any ‘piece’ can constitute an organizational emergency. The grandparents’ ‘*capacity to...perform is paramount*’ (p. 451). Parents interviewed recognized tiredness as an

age-related problem for their parents. Dench and Ogg (2003) found evidence of stress in grandmothers contributing to childcare for full-time working mothers. Hayslip Jnr. and Kaminski (2005) report Lee et al (2003) found child care of nine hours or more per week associated with a heightened risk of coronary heart disease.

(v) Practice and policy responses

Most of the academic publications referred to above relating to the health of grandparents conclude with passages addressing the practical child and family welfare implications of their findings, and propose policy interventions to support grandparents in their parenting task. The studies predominantly refer to grandmothers, as grandmothers make up most of their subject population, and grandmothers were more frequently (though not exclusively) primary caregivers for grandchildren²³.

XIII. Gender and grandparenting

‘Much work is needed before we can map how grandmothers and grandfathers are alike, and how they are different’

(Hagestad, 1985, p. 35).

(i) A matrilineal tilt?

Gender and sex are repeating themes in the grandparent literature. Primary caregiving grandparents aside²⁴ Silverstein et al (1998) query whether gender is a stronger influence on personal closeness of grandparents and grandchildren, than is proximity. They refer to a US study by Kennedy (1992), which found a student sample of grandchildren, grandsons and granddaughters, more frequently contacted grandmothers (and judged them ‘most-close’) than grandfathers, in spite of the same geographical separation. Another US study by Roberto and Stroes, also in 1992 and similarly

²³ One US study of ‘skipped generation’ families, of which over 50% were headed by married grandparents, noted the wives’ concern for the worsening health of their partners, termed ‘secondary caregivers’, due, it was suggested, to their relatively limited personal resources and higher stress scores (Goldberg-Glen and Sands, 2000). Dench and Ogg suggest, in their 2003 report, that where grandfathers register relatively active childcare this is most likely as ‘secondary caregivers’, assisting grandmothers. Similar results are reported by Millward (1996) from an Australian survey of 114 grandfathers and 272 grandmothers.

²⁴ Casper and Bianchi, (2002, p. 164) show that in 1997 of US co-resident grandparent/grandchild households, 14% was grandchild/ren-grandmother only, 6% was grandchild/ren-grandfather only, 17% was grandparent couples only.

engaging student participants, confirmed a stronger closeness to grandmothers for both granddaughters and grandsons. In their analysis Roberto and Stroes additionally measured for the effects of lineage in recognition of the ‘gatekeeping’ power of parents (especially mothers) in mediating the grandparent/grandchild relationship (see Dench and Ogg, 2003; Hagestad, 1985; Robertson, 1977; Thomas, 1989; Whitbeck et al, 1993). No difference was found in lineage. But on lineage Silverstein et al (1998) refer to a ‘matrilineal tilt’ whereby grandmothers, their daughters and granddaughters, create ‘*the most emotionally intimate intergenerational relationships*’ (p. 145). Such matrilineal preeminence, endorsed in much academic literature (Kahana and Kahana, 1970; Rossi, 1993; Townsend, 1977; Young and Willmott, 1964), is nicely caught by the jingle repeated by Mackay (2002) in Dench’s grandmother anthology (2002):

*Ye canna shove yer granny off a bus,
Ye canna shove yer granny, cos she’s yer mammy’s mammy...
You can shove ye other granny, cos she’s yer daddy’s mammy.*
(cf. Young and Willmott, 1964)²⁵

(ii) Limitations to gender studies

But the claim to preeminence is contestable. Whereas numerous studies compare grandmothers’ and grandfathers’ performance of their roles the findings are diverse (Lavers and Sonuga-Barke, 1997). Explanation for such variability often lies with the tools of research where, most frequently, small, non-representative, convenience samples have been used (Uhlenberg and Hammill, 1998; Woods, 1996) from disparate communities in different countries. Participants have been disproportionately women (Baranowski, 1990; Lavers and Sonuga-Barke, 1997; Roberto and Stroes, 1992; Spitze and Ward, 1998) from grandparent, parent, and grandchild generations²⁶.

(iii) How gender happens

In 1984, with a small, non-representative but homogenous sample of Scottish grandparent couples, Cunningham-Burley explored the expression of grandparenthood,

²⁵ Grandmothers figure more frequently than grandfathers in fairy stories eg. The Little Mermaid, The Little Match Girl, Little Red Riding Hood (Tartar, 2002), though Rappaport (1958) recounts a grandfather story by the Grimms of a grandson taking his grandfather’s cause against his parents.

²⁶ Farmer (2002) and Dench (2002) suggest increasing prominence and publicity has been given to the role of grandmothers following the development of feminism with its analysis and articulation of women’s ‘life waystations’.

to her as a woman researcher, and in the role as it is bound by gendered norms. According to her:

grandmothers and grandfathers talked in different ways during the interviews [and she suggests] differences in communicative styles may actually mask underlying similarities between the sexes

(p. 335; see also Thomas, 1986a).

Her respondents used gender, ‘*as a display*’, and as an explanatory concept to make sense of their distinctive modes of grandparenting (ibid, p. 336).

For Cunningham-Burley gender is a ‘social construct’, which in keeping with a gendered division of labour allocates to women family caregiving and kinkeeping tasks²⁷. So historical context and social change will imprint on any cohort of grandparents a particular interpretation of appropriate gendered behaviour and challenge new responses in its time (Bengtson, 1985; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986; Peterson, 1999; Spitze and Ward, 1998; Thomas, 1986a; Thomas, 1989). For bio-evolutionists and attachment theorists too, the biological mother/baby tie favours the maternal line.

Demographic factors also serve to favour the grandparenting of women over men, and the matrilineal over the patrilineal. Women tend to couple younger, their mothers attaining grandparenting at younger age than their fathers, whose life expectancy is somewhat shorter than their mothers’. Thence grandchildren are more likely to know grandmothers, and those in better health than grandfathers, and they are more likely to be maternal than paternal grandmothers (Spitze and Ward, 1998).

(iv) Gender or lineage bias?

Yet Cesare (2000) found when selecting a subset of US grandchild respondents who knew all four grandparents, that there was, ‘*no significant difference in feelings of closeness to any particular grandparent...significant differences [reported elsewhere]*

²⁷ While from the mid-twentieth century a simple gendered division of family responsibility between men and women has increasingly blurred in Western societies, and grandmothers are possibly as likely as grandfathers to be in the workforce, a residual familism persists to place expectations on women to manage and ensure intra-family functioning (Brannen et al, 2003; Briar, 2005; Spitze and Ward, 1998).

between grandmothers and grandfathers often times disappeared' (pp. 83, 85; see also Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986). Peterson's questionnaire-based, Australian study found '*no significant gender differences in satisfaction*' between grandmothers and grandfathers with similarly close contact to grandchildren (1999, p. 74). Furthermore, Dench and Ogg's British survey (2003), reports that when parents are together somewhat similar contact is maintained with both sets of grandparents. Somewhat similar levels of childcare are also provided. But the survey's most positive grandparenting measures cleave by sex, with maternal grandmothers followed by paternal grandmothers, and then maternal grandfathers, with paternal grandfathers the least actively involved grandparent group.

(v) Gender and grandparent childcare

Wheelock and Jones's (2002) research into childcare usage by employed parents in northern England partly agrees with Dench and Ogg's (2002) findings. It too finds maternal grandmothers most frequent providers, but followed by maternal grandfathers and paternal grandmothers almost equally, and least by paternal grandfathers. Fuller-Thomson and Minkler (2001) drew on a US national survey to examine the nature of grandparent childcare there, not distinguishing lineage. They remark on 35% of caregivers providing over 30 hours of care weekly being grandfathers. Forty-two percent of grandparents providing 10-29 hours' care weekly were grandfathers.

(vi) What happens in divorce?

It is when parents part that evidence points to the greatest divergence between the grandparenting experience of maternal and paternal grandparents. (See above **Grandparenting, demographics and divorce**) Maternal grandparents are likely to play a larger role in their grandchildren's lives, sometimes carrying a burdensome childcare responsibility, and paternal grandparents are more likely to lose contact with their son's children (Dench and Ogg, 2002; Douglas and Murch, 2002; Drew et al, 1998; Lussier et al, 2001; Spitze and Ward, 1998). Custody more often goes to a mother, privileging access for maternal grandparents who, if harbouring competitive feelings towards the father's parents, may act to isolate them further from the grandchild/ren. However Lussier, Deater-Deckard, Dunn & Davies (2001) show, in an English, largely working class community, that this pattern is reversed where custody of

children is with biological fathers and stepmothers, when there is greater contact with paternal grandparents.

(vii) Gender and affinal links

Countering such intergenerational separation are examples of paternal grandmothers retaining reciprocated ties with daughters-in-law even after divorce, as woman to woman kin-keeping (Smith, 1991). Spitze and Ward, (1998) report less contact between maternal grandmothers and sons-in-law. Johnson (1985), drawing from research on divorce in a US middle class setting, understands such enduring ties with in-laws post-divorce as a '*contemporary blurring between consanguineal and affinal relatives*', adding diversity in the modern extended family²⁸. And while Cotterill (1992), who researched affinal grandmother/daughter-in-law relationships when couples were together, acknowledges the potential for competitive tension between families-in-law, and finds maternal grandmothers (a familiar 'known quantity') chosen by preference over fathers' mothers for childcare, she reports paternal grandmothers as an important part of caregiving support, valued by their daughters-in-law (see also Wheelock and Jones, 2003).

(viii) But are they different?

Besides these inconclusive attempts at distinguishing selected aspects of grandparenting in association with sex and lineage, academics have sought to delineate a grandmothering style and grandfathering style and to seek how age of grandparent and grandchild relates to expression of style (see Chemoweth, 2000; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1985, 1986; Kahana and Kahana, 1970; Kivett, 1998; Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964; Thomson et al, 1991). Grandmothering has been associated with a nurturing, expressive, interpersonal manner, with grandfathering inclining to instrumental, task centred activities (Baranowski, 1990; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986; Cunningham-Burley, 1984; Hagestad, 1985; Spitze and Ward, 1998).

Yet from as early as 1958 Rappaport (p. 536) had referred to a '*fading of the sexual differences in old age*' likening sexuality in the old with the vague and confused

²⁸ Similar valuing of affinal 'sharing' of grandchildren in together-families was identified by Cunningham-Burley (1986) as a not always welcome 'rule' of grandparenting. The importance of 'sharing' grandchildren between maternal and paternal grandparents (makatonim) stood alongside other rule imperatives of 'not spoiling' and 'not interfering' and the call to 'be there when needed'.

concepts of infantile sexuality. Neugarten and Weinstein's 1964 research questioned whether it is appropriate to seek to differentiate grandparenting according to traditional gendered behaviour, or whether it is more correctly allotted a neuter gender; and again whether to be 'successful' grandfathers need to adopt some stereotypically 'feminized' attributes (ibid; Spitze and Ward, 1998). In support of this thesis reference is made to Gutmann (1977) who proposed a post-parental 'unisexual of later life', with a reversal of some male and female attributes, men becoming more nurturing and women more assertive (Radin, Oyserman, & Benn, 1991; Thomas, 1986a; 1986b; 1989; Thomas et al, 2000). Alternatively grandfathers' display of nurturing qualities, not usually expected of men, may be an embrace of opportunities largely denied them while bound by the still extant demands of a 'male breadwinner role' (McKay and Caverly, 1995; Strauss, 1996).

(ix) Lost grandparenthood

However the decisive determinant of grandparenting lies not with the gendered behaviour of grandparents but in the gatekeeper position of their children. In its nature as derived, the grandparent role is dependent for realization upon transitions in children's lives relating to their expressions of sex and gender (see above). Parents of children never giving birth whether by choice or infertility are denied the status of grandparenthood (Kivett, 1998; Pool et al, 2007). Parents of children who are 'gay' may similarly be denied grandchildren.

XIV. Summary and conclusions

Theorizing and researching grandparenting began mid-20th century, led by the US. Amongst the early proponents of the subject were psychoanalysts. They focussed attention on the dynamics between child, parent and grandparent in the three-generation family, associating authority with the parent and defining a natural bond, devoid of control, between grandparents and grandchildren, marked by leniency, magic and play.

Building on psychoanalytic foundations post WWII, Bowlby in England, and Erikson in the US, advanced the theories of attachment and the life-cycle respectively. Attachment theory's contribution to grandparenting lies in the significance it places on feelings of responsive exchange, nurture, and protection in building caring relationships. Erikson puts weight on the continuity symbolized in the interplay between successive generations. Erikson proposed that the psychosocial survival of human-kind depended on such exchange between generations.

From mid-century in England and the US, sociological studies were appearing which threw light on emerging issues of concern – the growing population of aged, the changing nature of the family, its geographical mobility, and effects on it of state welfare. The London family studies of the three-generation working class family by Townsend, and by Young and Willmott, confirmed its cohesion and resilience to change. Several pioneering US enquiries between 1954 and 1971 approached the concerns by asking grandparents directly about their experiences of the role. Grandparenting is given value as the prototype of societal intergenerational relationships. Over this period first comes some recognition of grandparents as 'rescuers' in time of family crises.

This 'rescuer' role of grandparents comes more to the fore from the 1980s as higher divorce, teen marriage, single motherhood and drug use impinged on the stability of the conventional family. Full-parenting responsibilities were seldom welcomed and they were negatively coloured by associated causative stresses. The conventional grandparenting role, nurturing and free of authority, importantly serving as a late stage of parenting parents, is lost when grandparents transition to the full parenting role.

By the early 1990s studies from the US and Britain moved grandparent studies into the discourse on care responsibilities between generations: did they belong with family or society and state, and for each what was the nature of the exchange? Reciprocity and balance in the give and take of care, argued as vital to successful intra-family care, were judged as inadequately supported by state, so putting at risk family cohesion.

Intergenerational solidarity studies have been researching family cohesion since the 1970s, examining the ways in which parents and adult children (and grandparents and grandchildren) are socially connected. Recent intergenerational solidarity modelling has introduced a new dimension: 'ambivalence'. Ambivalence arises out of uncertainty of roles in the now rapidly changing family environment. It contains the dissonant emotions of solidarity and conflict emerging at role transitions in the life course.

From the academic literature five prominent themes have been selected and developed for their influence on grandparenting. They examine:

- How grandparenting behaviour happens. Are grandparents or parents the more influential model? Evidence is given for the grandparent template, formed in childhood, to be the stronger.
- What significance geographical proximity has vis a vis emotional closeness in a good grandparent/grandchild relationship? It is suggested opportunity, compatibility, and a sense of common inheritance have primary value in leading to emotional closeness.
- How grandparent behaviour is tied to particular class mores. While some associations are cited a case is made that, for grandparenting, class variations are more usefully seen in association with a concept of 'life chances', and with several interconnecting key social measures.
- How health and grandparenting inter-relate but especially how grandparenting responsibilities impinge on grandparent health. While some studies show mental health and well-being enhanced by grandparenting a wide literature lays out how mental health and well-being are put at risk by grandparenting in the context of custodial care and, though less, by regular supplementary care. Additionally ethnic, financial, social, family, psychological, age and 'off-time' age factors contribute to the diminution of health. Most studies refer to causative socio-economic factors and propose policy interventions to support grandparents who are parenting.

- Gender's role in grandparenting. While a grandmother to daughter to granddaughter bond is given prominence, debate on how to interpret gender difference in grandparenting is inconclusive. As a social construct gendered behaviour is sensitive to historical context, changing social mores, and even current legal practice, as in divorce. There are suggestions that stereotypical male and female attributes merge in grandparents.

The next chapter will explore the presentation of grandparenting in New Zealand writing from the turn of the twentieth century, largely reviewing the academic writing first appearing towards its end.

CHAPTER VI: NEW ZEALAND WRITING ABOUT GRANDPARENTS

I. Introduction

This chapter looks for evidence of grandparents in New Zealand writing. It examines writing about grandparents from the turn of the twentieth century to the present. Initially there is public and academic invisibility when works of autobiography and fiction show grandparents to have been a vital presence in families of the time. By the end of the period grandparenting is emerging as a topic in popular writing, the media, and in academic studies. Academic studies of grandparenting come from across the social sciences: anthropology, sociology, psychology, demography and social work.

II. Intimations of Grandparents

(i) Almost invisible

In her enquiry into grandparenthood Hagestad (1985) turned to popular women's magazines to learn how grandparents were viewed in that context. She found little to help her clarify their role. I searched amongst two early New Zealand women's periodicals¹ to learn how grandparenting was viewed and written about publicly in the past, in New Zealand. These magazines were The White Ribbon, 'For God and Home and Humanity', linked with the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union, and appearing from late nineteenth into early 20th century, and Woman Today, a monthly magazine for women, 'For peace, freedom and progress', published between April 1937 and October 1939. Both magazines seriously addressed family and social issues. I found little on grandparents.

In an early entry in White Ribbon (Gleanings, August, 1895, p. 7) an appealing anecdotal story is told about 'a grandfather well known in the House of Lords...chatting with his granddaughter who was seated upon his knee'. It refers to the grandfather's age and white hair and to biblical Noah. The next month A Story Founded on Fact mentions 'grandpapa who was never tired of trotting [his grandson] on his knee and

¹ Held at Alexander Turnbull Library reference section.

showing him his “tick-tick” (MSP, September 1895, p. 8). Apart from their ambiance of comfortable physical intimacy, both carry a sensitivity to class which is again, but differently, present in a judgemental 1902 comment on a proposed policy for children as, ‘*not affect[ing] the rich. Their orphans are provided for, their neglected children left to the care of servants*’ (Our Children, December, 1902, p. 1). To be noted, grandparents are not mentioned here.

I found only one reference to a grandparent in Woman Today. An account touches on a little girl’s sympathetic relationship to a grandmother with, ‘*an old shaking hand*’ (Hedley Charlton, June, 1938, p. 61).

(ii) Grandparents revealed in private lives

Over the same period New Zealand literary writers have been more expansive and diverse in their depictions of grandparents. From memories of their own grandparents Mansfield, Sargeson, Park and Frame², paint loving images of active old people very present in the lives of their grandchildren. Grandmothers figure more significantly but not exclusively. Lineage leans slightly to the father’s line.

Mansfield (1968) draws on her adored maternal grandmother to describe the busy, attentive grandmother in Prelude as ‘*working like a horse*’ (ibid, p. 18) to order a new home, looking ‘*wonderfully beautiful*’ (p. 21). In The Voyage Grandpa, in ‘*an immense bed*’, white haired and silver bearded, is like a ‘*wide-awake bird*’ as he looks ‘*merrily*’ at his granddaughter (p. 330). The recurrence of beds and sleeping convey familial intimacy. Both Mansfield and Sargeson put grandchildren into the comfort of their grandmother’s bed. There, Sargeson (1940) writes:

She held him in her arms and he pushed his face into her fat. She had a certain smell but he liked it. Comforted...from the security of her arms (ibid, p. 20).

Park (1992) holds early memories of a colourful grandfather, and again smell, the musky smell of his lollies. But it is of her two grandmothers who lived longer into her life whom she can more fully reminisce. Her mother’s mother ‘*often came and stayed*

² Mansfield was born in 1888, Sargeson in 1903, Park in 1917, Frame in 1924.

with us' (ibid, p. 43), with return visits also and, with her mother ill, '*Grandma came for a while and did the washing and cooking*' (p. 65). Of her father's mother Park is more effusive, with passages of warm affection and delight, and indebtedness '*for open[ing] my ears to words and phrases*' (p. 93).

It is on her paternal grandmother that Frame (1983) also lingers most lovingly. Frame's story exemplifies how the context of evolving family constellations shapes the nature of bonds between grandchildren and grandparents. So it was while '*Mother was busy with the new baby*' (ibid, p. 20) that Grandma Frame, who was living with the family, became '*my companion and friend*' (ibid). Later Grandad Frame also lived within the family. Although not so close to Frame, for her younger sister '*who had not yet started school*' (ibid, p. 67), age and circumstance created in him '*her special friend*' (ibid). Interestingly it was the apparent closeness of the bond between her mother and maternal grandmother that doomed the latter to be so unloved by Frame:

She behaved towards Mum as if she owned her, when everyone knew that mum belonged to us, and the saddest thing was that Mum seemed to agree. (ibid, p. 102).

From different milieus³ over more than a generation's span, when grandparents were largely missing from the public view, Mansfield, Sargeson, Park and Frame reveal private family realms where grandparents belong, part of what family is, and where relationships between grandparents and grandchildren can be grown.

³ Mansfield and Sargeson came from middle class families living in developing towns; Park and Frame came from working class families in rural settings.

III. New Zealand's Academic Interest in Grandparenting

(i) Introduction

By the mid-1990s the first academic writing to address grandparenting issues appeared. There were two initial stimuli for the interest. One, New Zealand's population, which was increasingly ageing, much in line with the rest of the Western world; the other child care. In 1989 the CYP&F Act became law. The Act required that family members be the 'first port of call' for substitute parenting when children are not able to live in the care of their birth parents⁴. It coincided with a reduction in alternative care provision for children in State institutions (Henaghan and Tapp, 1992), and continuing high family breakdown (McClure, 1998; Shirley et al, 1998). These too were features New Zealand was sharing with the Western World. Amongst the kin carers who stepped in to become substitute parents for an increasing number of needy children, grandparents were most prominent. Grandparents also gained in importance as day-carers for their grandchildren as more and more mothers entered the paid workforce (Knutson, 1998).

I shall review perspectives on grandparenting in New Zealand first from literature related primarily to issues of an aging population, and second to studies that approach it from an interest in childcare.

(ii) Social Aging and Grandparenting

Ethnic variation in urban grandmotherhood

Beginning in 1996 Armstrong, a visiting US academic, published three reports drawing on data from a Wellington based project on aging (1996, 2002, 2007). Grandmotherhood is the central theme she discusses in each report.

In the first study thirty women in their 60s and 70s, belonging to four of New Zealand's ethnic groups – NZ European, NZ Māori, Central European and Chinese – were interviewed.

⁴ Cf. Domestic Persons Ordinance 1846-1968 and refer chapter III.

According to Armstrong, *'Being a grandparent is widely present in people's ideas about being "old"'* (1996, p. 18), commonly an expectation of what age will contain. Overlaying this the ethnicities showed distinguishable variations. For the Māori women, being a grandmother is *'a central element of social aging'* (ibid. p. 19)⁵. For the NZ European women this was a less powerful experience, though they shared with Māori personal investment in the younger generation's future. For the Central European women the arrival of new life signified compensation for family 'lost' to migration and war. The Chinese women enjoyed a sense of respected centrality, surrounded by their expanding family.

Grandmotherhood for New Zealand Māori and European women compared

Armstrong continued to explore ethnic variation in social aging in 2002 and 2007 publications, again relating to grandmotherhood, this time limited to Māori and NZ European grandmothers.

Time and geographical constraints on contact with their grandchildren were felt by both groups of women. Letters, cards, telephone and email were used to assist communication. Armstrong notes in this there were no significant differences between the groups. Also regardless of group the women appreciated opportunities for family and cultural teaching to their grandchildren. As too, most found satisfaction from their grandchildren's achievements. For the Māori women there was a cultural 'should', associated with their age and possible *kuia*⁶ status, in their enjoyment of grandchildren. This was not however universally felt, with some Māori grandmothers having worry and disappointment from their grandchildren's behaviours. From one European grandmother the point is made that not all grandchildren are necessarily liked. But while some Māori and European grandmothers felt a disjunction between their own and their grandchildren's life-styles, they appreciated a sense of social integration that came through their involvement in their grandchildren's worlds. Grandchildren opened a number of pathways. Armstrong suggests that the European women were not so closely identified with their grandmother role as their Māori counterparts, to whom the role

⁵ Armstrong identifies social age as changes in social and/or economic roles accompanying increase in chronological age (2002).

⁶ A respected Māori woman elder.

gave mana. Her European grandmothers were perhaps more open to grandchild-grandparent support.

‘Old-old’ grandparents in rural/urban New Zealand

Keeling (2007) examines some of the same age and grandparenting issues as Armstrong but with an older group of 20 New Zealanders, described as being second- to fourth-generation, and of broadly Anglo-European descent. None is Māori. They are three men and 17 women aged between eighty and ninety years, living in a small southern rural/urban town. Keeling’s analysis reflects Finch and Mason’s (1993) theories of familial relationships. From her data she indicates:

grandparent status and role are both central to and contingent upon how old-old people negotiate and sustain independence and autonomy in the context of family and friendship networks (2007, p. 64).

To unravel this finding she adapts a typography of grandparenting styles used in American Indian grandparenting research. Like Armstrong’s interviewees Keeling’s grandparents, especially women, display commitment as ‘Cultural Conservators’, passing on family genealogy and their heritage of cultural capital. Amongst grandmother interviewees there are two who have stood in as parents for grandchildren, and they represent the typography’s ‘Custodial’ style. Under this style Keeling also includes the caring anxiety felt by some grandparents for grandchildren’s wellbeing and the sense of celebration they gained from grandchildren’s achievements. The ‘Ceremonial’ grandparent is presented as a figure carrying symbolic significance, important in attendance at family and public occasions such as weddings and graduations. The ‘Distanced’ style explores the effort the grandparents expend to bridge both geographic and generational distance to maintain emotional closeness with their grandchildren. Keeling matches several grandparents to a ‘Fictive’ grandparent style, bonded with young people not biologically related. (Armstrong, and Missen and Kerr (following) also discuss this relationship.) It acts as a proxy or substitute for the real thing, offering a personal integrating link between grandparent and grandchild generations. Finally Keeling identifies examples of the ‘Care Needing’ among her old-old interviewees. She points out that even when some dependency is conceded, and

help accepted, the grandparent would generally find a means to reciprocate by way of money, emotional support or meals.

People in places

In another study of the same community Keeling observes that rural elderly may 'inhabit different places' (2001, p. 607), meaning they exist in a unique situation, distinct from majority New Zealand. In her interpretation of the homogenous community of old-old, Keeling reveals how place, in cohort and locational terms, can colour experience, both separating off and holding together those who live within a community, creating context-dependent intergenerational relationships.

Grandparents in rural families

Information on grandparenting is again used to shed light on rural aging, in a research project by Keeling, Glasgow & Morris in 2008. The information is sought through questionnaires to latency age girls (48) and boys (50) in five rural schools in New Zealand's South Island. Results show that grandparents are a rich social contact for most of the children. Even after death they continue to be meaningful. Seventy-three dead grandparents continued to be counted by children in their responses (cf. Robinson, 2003). The study finds nearly half the grandchild/ren live within 90 minutes of their grandparents and 41% see their grandparents at least weekly. About a third of the children relate that they regularly do things together with grandparents, another third describe doing things with grandparents together with wider family, and nearly one fifth of the children report 'a special relationship' with a grandparent (p.25). Reciprocity figures significantly in these children's activities with their grandparents, maternal and paternal, as no significant difference was evident in lineage relationships.

From its interest in rural ageing this study was awake to population and resource trends in the localities investigated. Most of the schools served ageing communities, arising from members ageing in residence, those who have moved in at retirement from outlying country, and from the loss of young people departing to urban centres. The availability of housing, health and transport resources in the townships varied greatly. One has a residential home for the elderly, pensioner flats, hospital, doctor and dentist, another a doctor one day per week. How community services are managed in the future

will influence the lives of grandparents, the stability of the communities, and whether upcoming grandchildren will have similar access to grandparents.

(iii) Graduate Theses on Grandparenting

In 2002 Missen, and in 2003 Bulic, completed theses on grandparenting. Both recruited participants who fitted the norms for voluntary and varied 'traditional' grandparenting. Both drew on the Wellington commuter region for their grandparent samples. In each case the samples approximated middle socio-economic level and were almost exclusively Pākehā. However Missen and Bulic employed different research approaches, Missen using an interpretive approach and Bulic employing quantitative measures.

A qualitative study: Confidants, negotiators and stress buffers

Introducing her thesis Missen writes of '*a growing interest in the many dimensions of later life*' (p. ii). She recruited her participants through 'snowballing'. She then used semi-structured discussion with three focus groups to collect her data of '*lived experience*' from the resultant twenty-two Pākehā grandmothers and grandfathers, aged from their 50s to over 80. Of a range of marital statuses they included step-grandparents, paternal and maternal grandparents, most at some level of employment.

'What is a grandparent?'

'*An extension of Mum and Dad*' reply Missen's grandparents to this first question she poses (p. 104). They are said to find it hard to differentiate between the roles when pressures occur in the parent generation. Comment from grandparents provides a gloss on current determinants of their role, which Missen remarks is '*formed and reformed from generation to generation*' (ibid, p. 178). Grandparents identified busyness and time pressures, and divorce as formative factors. 'Mums' are seen as:

trying to be something that's impossible...run great homes...do jobs...do extra things...the economic demands of today [are] pushing women with young children back into employment (ibid, p. 102).

There was a sense that time was a commodity, missing for parents, which grandparents were able to provide, giving back in return rewarding time with grandchildren. So grandparents were seen as 'stress buffers'. But, while responding with support at times of marital disruption, there were their own feelings of loss to cope with, '*Why divorce the grandparents as well?...behind each separation there are sets of grandparents*' (ibid pp.121-2).

Negotiating grandparenting

The grandfathers raised a particular here-and-now issue not common in the literature. They voiced their worry at the heightened sensitivity to sexual 'grandfather danger' and its inhibiting effects on natural intimacies with young grandchildren⁷.

Missen identifies as a continuing theme the effort grandparents make to maintain family ties:

the importance of building relationships with different members of their extended family, including the grandchildren, both parents, new partners and the other set (or sets) of grandparents

(2002, p. 93).

Daughters and daughters-in-law, acknowledged as gatekeepers, were seen as holding the key to negotiated grandparent/grandchild/ren relationships. And '*to get on with your in-laws, that helps*' (ibid, p. 131).

Present and past grandparenting

Surprisingly few participants recalled becoming a grandparent but they did hold views on their own grandparents and found great changes in their present day role. One grandfather spoke of grandparenting as a '*gift...like repaying the gift that I received from them.*' Another spoke of '*having fun*'. But many did not recall closeness or affection, not wanting to '*recycle*' the grandparenting they had received (ibid, p. 127). Again, surprising comment in view of several other New Zealand studies that point otherwise, and indicative of the subjective diversity of grandchild/grandparent relationships. It is also perhaps symptomatic of the 'intergenerational stake'

⁷ Worrall (1996a) refers to grandfathers of children known to welfare services as not infrequently perpetrators of child abuse.

phenomenon where, it is argued, older generations rate more highly the significance of intergenerational exchanges than do their younger counterparts (ibid; Douglas and Murch, 2002; Silverstein and Long, 1998)⁸.

A positivist study: research using the grandparent/grandchild dyad

Here Bulic sets out to test hypotheses she identifies from international literature. She uses structured interviews and scaled questionnaires. Families were reached by letter, delivered through nine to thirteen-year old pupils in five schools. If parents agreed to participate they were asked to mediate the participation of any regionally resident grandparents and their child. Samples of 50 grandparents, (31 grandmothers and 19 grandfathers), and 19 girls and 19 boys were gathered. Children were interviewed at school, grandparents in their homes and parents were asked to complete a brief screening questionnaire on their child's behaviour. Thus data is collected from both parties in the grandparenting dyad.

Bulic argues for the relevance of life-course theory to the interpretation of grandparenting. She identifies three factors as being of special importance for her enquiry. They are: the geographical distance separating grandparent and grandchild, the parent 'link' generation, and the gender and lineage of grandparents.

Effects of proximity

Bulic was interested to explore the effects of proximity on the amount of contact between grandparents and grandchildren and whether the type of contact had any consequences for their relationship. She found greater proximity resulted in greater frequency, more face to face contact, which in turn was associated with a more positive relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. However as she notes, the direction of cause and effect is not proven and the uniformity of distances limits the texture of her findings.

⁸ It is interesting to note in this context the strength of appreciation of grandparents by this study's grandparents. It raises for me the supposition that the so-called 'career' in grandparent/grandchild relationships continues post the grandparent's death, enhanced or diluted as and how the grandchild matures.

Grandparents and parents

Statistical measures of grandparents' evaluation of their relationship with their grandchild's parents showed that a positive perception of grandparent/parent relationship was associated with a more positive relationship with a grandchild. Bulic also found a positive relationship with parents was associated with more frequent contact between grandmothers and grandchild, but this did not hold true for grandfathers. The self-esteem of both grandparents was positively correlated with their relationship with their grandchild's parents. Again the direction of this effect is unclear.

Gender factors

There was a major disparity in grandmother as against grandfather contact made by grandchildren. More than half saw a grandmother more often while only a small proportion saw a grandfather more often. Slightly more than a third saw grandmothers and grandfathers with equal frequency. Bulic found no gender difference in the closeness grandchildren felt for their grandparents.

Bulic's grandchildren saw their maternal grandmothers more often than other grandparents. And when frequencies for seeing grandmothers, grandfathers and grandparents were aggregated according to lineage maternal grandparents were seen with greater frequency. Grandsons saw their paternal grandparents, especially their paternal grandfather, more often than did granddaughters.

Almost half of Bulic's grandchildren participants came from step or mother-only families. These children saw their paternal grandparents less frequently. She speculates that heightened involvement of grandparents in families, at the time of break-up, could have contributed to families opting in to her research. Grandparents expressed satisfaction at being available for support when their children's relationships were failing.

Overall Bulic found positive relationships and good communication between grandparents and grandchildren and mutual enjoyment in shared activities. Some gender differences showed in the activities shared between grandparents and grandchildren. Bulic queries whether these derive from established gender roles in the

grandparent generation or from expectations by their grandchildren. In reviewing the grandparent/parent relationship she notes the difficult ‘double bind’ grandparents are caught in, responding to two culturally recognized imperatives – to support but not to interfere.

In concluding Bulic notes limitations to her study that preclude generalization. The sample is self-selected and homogenous, and there are a disproportionate number of grandmothers.

(iv) Grandfathers: Their Changing Family Roles and Contributions

The study

Through this reflection on grandfatherhood Wilton and Davey (2006) set out to expand understanding of a role they see as generally neglected in social research, especially in New Zealand. They suggest the paucity of academic material arises from a limited academic appreciation of older people’s contribution to families, and of the changing family roles of men. They background their paper with recent demographic changes in the New Zealand family. Although here differences between New Zealand’s Māori and Pākehā populations are recognized, lack of Māori studies restricts the paper to a Pākehā perspective. The authors survey the overall small amount of New Zealand literature on grandparenting, also stressing the importance of further developing locally based research.

Grandfatherhood in academic literature

In a review of international grandparenting research Wilton and Davey find grandfathers ‘*filtered through a feminised lens*’ (p. 10). Studies of grandmothers predominate and when grandfathers do appear it is mostly in comparison with grandmothers. Three explanations are put (citing Waldrop et al 1999): men participate less in research, grandfathers interact less with grandchildren, grandfathers have a shorter life expectancy. However, after reviewing several reports of grandparenting research which do include grandfathers but give contradictory outcomes, Wilton and Davey consider that the differing approaches and contexts of studies obviate any firm conclusion on the nature of grandfathering.

They continue by examining available material which more directly addresses grandfatherhood, noting on the way that over the thirteen years of its publication (i.e. to 2005) the Journal of Men's Studies has had no articles on grandparenting. A focus on biological aging of older men, or on the masculinities of younger men has tended to marginalize the gendered expression of older men. Also it is posited that a '*prototype masculinity*' of the male as paid worker has obscured other expressions of masculinity. So the retired-man and the family-man are largely overlooked as subjects for study. But alternative models are offered by Erikson's theory of generativity where older men can find fulfilment in family, or by Gutmann's theory that with age men take on nurturing traits. Russell's (1986) study is cited suggesting grandfathering can give men an opportunity for such self-expression, which earlier life commitments prevented.

Finding out how grandfathers feel

Wilton and Davey look with interest at Cunningham-Burley's (1984) conclusions following an exploration of Scottish grandparent-couples' expectations of '*an appropriate grandparenting role*' (ibid, p. 17). Cunningham-Burley found her attempts 'to get inside' the grandfathers frustrated. She concludes gender specific perceptions and expressions about grandparenting by both interviewer and interviewee were blocking the same level of fluency of communication with grandfathers that she was able to achieve with the grandmothers. Grandfathers were performing to a male role overlaying the personal meaning and significance of their grandfathering (refer chapter V).

Moving to custodial grandfathering Wilton and Davey again find little information. The evidence that is found suggests the grandfathers experience stress associated with the assumption of parent-like responsibility, but there is also a potential for positive outcomes. An example provided indicates that there are benefits for grandchildren when single teenage mothers live at home with a grandfather present (see Drew et al, 1998).

How to become a grandfather

What decides how men respond to having grandchildren? Wilton and Davey consider some answers. In Russell's study (above) some men are seen to be making up for

opportunities missed in fathering their children. Other men, engaged in transmitting life values to their grandchildren, identified their own fathers as influencing them in the role (Waldrop and colleagues, 1999). Others still are reported as being influenced by their experiences of grandparents during their childhood.

In their conclusion Wilton and Davey refer to '*a myriad of questions*' (some they list in Appendix 2) yet waiting for answers, and their paper can be seen as a prompting for New Zealand research in the field of grandfatherhood.

(v) **Belonging and Participating**

Grandparenting in the family life of 'Older Adults'

Setting out from an interest in New Zealand's aging population, psychologists Breheny and Stephens (2007) completed a qualitative analysis of the experience of family life of '*older adults*'. Their sample included 16 men and 20 women aged between 55 and 79 years. Those selected for the study were from a range of settings and were closely representative of New Zealand's national ethnicity. Amongst them were some grandparents.

Linked lives and independent living

Breheny and Stephens identified two major themes from the data they gathered, these being: '*linked lives*', conveying the importance to family members of the structures and networks, memories and places, tying them together to others they call family; and '*independent living*', recognizing a social norm within families, from youth to age, to value a sense of independence. The authors add, '*Participants used the social resource of reciprocity to manage this apparent contradiction*' (ibid, p. 9).

The value of grandparents

'Recitations of family typically started with children and grandchildren...and they were understood to be their central family' (ibid, p. 10). Grandparents were remembered as important and those who had missed out on grandparents expressed regrets. Those who had had grandparents hoped, in turn, to be as important in the lives of their grandchildren. Participants reported, '*what they valued about their grandparents and*

understood these things as gifts they could also give their grandchildren (ibid, p. 19). Time was identified as one such gift. Time was also captured within the grandparent/grandchild relationship, looking back and looking to a future.

Distance and intergenerational relationships

Grandchildren's presence is shown as changing grandparents' relationships with their children, especially in seeking greater proximity. Grandparents amongst the participants have many grandchildren overseas and some grandparents consider moving to be near them. One couple had moved to New Zealand to enable a daughter to work and the grandfather describes this demanding experience as, *'like a full time job* (ibid p. 20). Modern technologies of email and texting were welcomed for easing the separation created by geographical distance.

While Breheny and Stephens refer to the primacy of the nuclear family, the family they are referring to in this study embraces three interlocking generations, and the model of family they present is one of interdependence between three generations.

Grandparenting as part of social connectedness

A thesis by Kerr (2002) again allows insight on New Zealand grandparenting from the perspective of age. Kerr begins her study of *'Old Age and Citizenship'* seeking from older people themselves an understanding as to where they fit themselves into their society, and where their society places them. While she is cognisant with socio-economic and demographic interests in an aging New Zealand her principal enquiry addresses what it means personally to be aging in twenty-first century New Zealand. Her research was carried out with six focus groups, each comprising six to eight participants, aged from their 50s to their 90s. They were selected from a range of residential situations within a provincial location: two communities of very different socio-economic character, a rest-home, a retirement village, members of Grey Power and eight Kuia local to the region. Grandparenting is sometimes part of their stories. Themes familiar from the international grandparenting literature are traceable.

Place of residence and family closeness

From rest home residents there was little reference to children or grandchildren though cards and visits were spoken of. Ties beyond the immediate environment are described

as *'fragile'* (2002, p. 244). My thought turns to an early question and reflection by Kahana and Kahana (1971):

What is the significance of grandparenthood for the institutionalised grandparent? ...if the grandparental role too is lost after institutionalisation, the isolation of the institutionalized aged from normal interpersonal contact may be further underscored

(p. 263).

Retirement village residents were more talkative concerning family. A grandfather tells with pleasure of his grandson choosing *'Chinese' at Nana's* for his birthday treat. This grandfather had moved with his wife to the village to be near a son and grandchildren (ibid, p. 270).

Within another group more discussion addressed proximity to family after a couple recounted moving to be near grandchildren, and to be supportive to their children in their parenting tasks. Moving, others said, was not always successful. Kerr finds instances of geographical separation creating schism in families but she also queries whether the modern family can alone satisfy needs for intimacy. She wonders if older people may prefer *'intimacy at a distance'* (ibid. p. 219) and elsewhere she writes of *'the attenuation of intimacy in older age'* (ibid, p. 297). Or may friends offer greater connectedness? On the proposal by one participant to move to family, another responded, *'Oh, you shouldn't go, your friends are more important than family those times when you retire'* (ibid, p. 298). However, within the group, family eventually took priority. Kerr uses their discussion to indicate examples of generativity and of intergenerational reciprocity. One grandmother, who had moved to live near *'two daughters and seven grandchildren'*, had tutored a grandson to achievement in mathematics, to their mutual satisfaction, *'It was wonderful! I felt very proud of it.'* (ibid, p. 302).

To interfere or not to interfere

Less harmonious feelings surfaced over grandparent disapproval of parental discipline and grandchildren's manners, sometimes hindering grandparents in the performance of their normative nurturing role. The grandparenting imperative of *'non-interference'*

became a talking point. In the context of intergenerational connectedness, one grandfather expressed the view that it was *'not his business'* to discuss with his grandchildren their behaviour with which he disagreed. A grandmother then responded, *'I think it's my business to be involved with my grandchildren'*, justifying the exercise of grandparents' rights and responsibilities through feelings of love and respect. Here another grandmother came back with, *'and we don't interfere'* (2002, p. 186). In a different setting a grandmother, with *'love and concern for her eight grandchildren'* said she was careful not to say too much, in case, *'hoha [they get] a bit angry'* (ibid, p. 218). The exchanges are indicative of the sometimes compromised behaviours towards grandchildren and their parents which grandparents will fall back on to negotiate and maintain relationships across generations.

The kuia 'Nanny' and fictive grandparenting

Between them Kerr's eight kuia had one hundred and fifty-five grandchildren. In numerous ways their collective world view, encompassing a wide, rich consciousness of extended family, is depicted as distinct from her other groups of less ethnically homogenous elderly. Kerr finds a childhood 'Nanny' figure to be an important role model, shaping how her participants interpreted their own old age. Once again this may have been a 'fictive' grandparent, not necessarily a parent of a parent, in keeping with Māori tradition of sharing the nurture of children within whānau, and affectionately remembered for her physical and emotional warmth. This portrayal of a kuia concept of an embracing grandmothering role, beyond narrow biological boundaries, intimates that the several references to fictive grandmothering, Māori and Pākehā, in New Zealand studies (Age Concern New Zealand, 2005; Armstrong 2007; Keeling 2007; Missen 2002) may indicate some cross-cultural influence from Māori custom to Pākehā⁹. The same 'Nanny' figure was remembered also for instilling spiritual and cultural connectedness. Place and smell are given as links in such connections. Yet these may not hold significance exclusively for Māori. Park (1992) and Sargeson (1940) above evocatively convey the sensual power of smell to signify the physicality of a grandparent and Keeling (2001; 2007) reflects on a more universal association of physical with spiritual in place, home and identity (see also Robinson, 2006).

⁹ Surrogate grandparenting is however met in international literature, explicitly in Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) and implicitly in Erikson's 'generativity' as activity and concern for the next generations.

(vi) The New Zealand Extended Family

The study

McPherson's (2000; 2003) research into New Zealanders' attitudes to extended family caring in a time of socio-demographic change, and to the role of government in family care, provides a bridge from the foregoing studies in which grandparents appear as older adults in family life, to studies of grandparents viewed as providers of child care (following). Here, more than in the previous New Zealand studies, the author examines her material in relation to its political and economic context. Data is presented on grandparent caregiving in an overall review of family support.

The study draws on information gathered through 252 completed questionnaires and a small focus group originating in a random, predominantly Pākehā sample of 500 people¹⁰. The respondents were selected from census records for a provincial city and its surrounding communities.

Questions enquired into four-generation family demographics, family proximity, and the nature of contacts with those identified as family. Other questions addressed helping behaviour and attitudes to helping. They related to caregiving for sick, injured, disabled or mentally ill family members, to occasional childcare/babysitting and for regular childcare, and to other means of helping.

Characteristics of the extended family

McPherson's New Zealand 'extended' family reaches outside the boundary of household¹¹, a '*modified*' extended family of...*loose, informal and selective ties*' (2003, p.172) generally relating through parents, children, and in-laws but at times more expansive. She remarks that the demographic changes that have led to the twenty-first century 'beanpole' family of vertical extension – more living generations - and horizontal contraction – fewer siblings in any generation – are not conducive to family

¹⁰ Although McPherson includes a description of the Māori whānau/family the body of her thesis does not distinguish a separate Māori dimension as the small sample size prevented sub-group analysis for ethnicity (2000). 83% of the sample was Pākehā and the interpretation is made in terms of Pākehā culture.

¹¹ McPherson states that in 1998 only 6% of three-generation European New Zealand families lived together as one household compared with 23% of Māori and Asian and 41% of Pacific Island people.

help (ibid, p. 74). I note it does however depend on when in the life course care is required. A pivot generation with more parents than children might be well served with grandparents, even competing to give childcare, whereas at middle or young-old age they could be faced with four parents simultaneously needing care.

Management of childcare

McPherson's study finds childcare provided above other care (2000). A high 53% of care was provided by extended family for occasional childcare (i.e. of a child under 14years¹²). Grandparents did most. Eleven were mothers and five fathers of parents, and as well one daughter, two sons, eight sisters and four brothers contributed care, all first remove family. Three mothers-in-law and one father-in-law and four sisters-in-law¹³ also provided occasional care, as did one grandmother, one aunt/uncle and two cousins. Family were also given as the preferred source of this occasional category of childcare. The reasons given were: *'proximity, close relationship or knowing the children, and willingness to help, [with two further,] ...reliability and trust, and reciprocity'* (2003, p. 101). (Similar reasons were given for choosing friends or neighbours.)

Extended family were less involved in regular childcare, three mothers and three fathers of parents being recorded, along with one son and one mother-in-law. Also the preference for family as source of help declined. Here, *'the private sector, involving payment and professionalism, became the most important source of care'* (ibid). A commonly given explanation was that childcare on a regular basis is, *'too great an imposition to ask'* (ibid)¹⁴. Time demands, and a perception that regular childcare was a

¹² Legally children are not to be left alone without adult attendance before attaining 14 years.

¹³ Presumably these in-laws were first remove family to the child's other parent whose gender is not given.

¹⁴ Cotterill (1992, p. 613) finds a comparable effect where neither maternal nor paternal grandmothers were first source of long-term (as opposed to occasional) childcare for mothers. She cites Wilson's (1987) London study of sixty-one white mothers of which this was also true. As explanation she writes of her grandmothers, *'they did not want to be'*. Finch and Mason's study (1993) finds to the contrary that grandparents were most frequent providers of 'regular' childcare. In a further English study Gregg et al (2005) found early infant children of less well educated working mothers gained cognitive/behavioural advantage, when placed in professional child care, over infants in family/grandparent/friend care.

commitment requiring professional expertise, were stated reasons. Government did not rate highly as a childcare provider (2000)¹⁵.

Choice, duty and coercion

Generally proximity and frequency of contact were strongly associated with which source of family help was preferred together with the understood willingness of the giver. How and when help was exchanged between family members was linked to beliefs and attitudes regarding '*duty and obligation*' (ibid. p. 366). From her data McPherson has evidence that while people often do prefer to give and receive help from family, especially first degree family, '*they do not accept that they or others "should have to" do this, rather it should be a matter of "choice"*' (ibid, p. 370). Where government policies serve to coerce family members into giving support, or government fails to provide acceptable alternatives to family support, compelling family to act from '*duty and obligation*', there is a potential for destructive tensions arising within the family. A consensus from McPherson's participants is that government should not replace family assistance to family, but should help families to help themselves.

Research and policy

McPherson uses her material to make a case for family policy being grounded in empirical research rather than ideology, and being sensitive to both demographic change and to the maintenance of the contract between generations. Researching at a time when state welfare had declined, and was continuing to decline, she cites significant statements from policy makers favouring a shift of social responsibility to family, accompanied by cost cutting by government. The CYP&F Act is given as an example. The following studies of grandparenting and childcare are related more specifically to that act.

¹⁵ It is possible this result arose from ambiguity in definition of childcare and there is no indication as to whether childcare centres and community groups or kindergartens were considered as government subsidized sources of childcare.

(vii) Childcare: Grandparents as Parents and the CYP&F Act, 1989

Introduction

Further academic interest in New Zealand grandparenting focuses on grandparents as substitute parents. I have found no writing focussed on the ‘occasional’ grandparent care researched by McPherson¹⁶. What literature there is has developed alongside interest by the public and by professional social work, in ramifications of the CYP&F Act 1989. While kin generally have accepted responsibility for related children through the Act’s processes it is grandparents who have predominately assumed the parenting role (Schofield, 2005), and who, because of their typically older age, have been most vulnerable to consequent emotional and physiological stress, and to life-style disruption¹⁷.

A partnership for kinship care: Worrall and GRG

The most prolific writer examining how New Zealand grandparents manage their parenting task under the CYP&F Act 1989 has been Worrall (1995/6, 1996a, 1996b, 2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2009). In the mid 1990s Worrall researched kin-carers’ experiences under the 1989 Act for a Master’s thesis. Her qualitative study of five kin caregiving Pākehā families included one grandparent couple. Subsequently Worrall, a social worker and academic who has had a long association with foster care, has collaborated with the GRG in several publications. She has been an important adjunct to the Trust’s work in support and political lobbying for custodial grandparents in New Zealand. In 2001 she wrote A Handbook for Grandparents and other Kin Caregivers on behalf of the GRG Trust.

Worrall like McPherson (above) was interested to understand the reality of the New Zealand ‘extended family’. How well could family care, when parents could not? Like McPherson she was critical of the lack of hard knowledge of New Zealand families

¹⁶ A recent publication by the Families Commission, Changing Roles: the pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand (Kerslake Hendricks, 2010), does include reference to this category of grandparenting.

¹⁷ CYP&F Act national data records children placed under its legislation only as with ‘family/whānau or other’, not distinguishing relationship of caregivers (Brudenell and Savage, 2000; Cleaver, 2002; Worrall, 2001a; 2005). In a survey by Worrall (2005), selected through GRG for ‘grandparents and other kin caregivers’, 284 of 323 responses were from grandparents.

informing social policy making. She was also critical of the quality and consistency of services government was providing to support families once they had accepted child care responsibilities under the CY&F Act 1989. She argued that the demands of the parenting 'work' in which the kin families were engaged required special resources to ensure its success. Neither financial nor professional support from government was adequate to maintain the placements at an optimal emotional level, and she found the caregivers stressed in numerous ways – '*going it alone*' (1995-6, p. 21). This was especially true of the women, who carried most responsibility.

Changed lives, unattained dreams

Short accounts by Brudenell and Savage (2000) and by Schofield (2005) reinforce the sense of hardship associated with custodial grandparenting. Smith, Gollop, Taylor, & Attwood (1999) revealed similar difficulties in a qualitative research study of kinship and foster care following government intervention. There all four kinship carers were grandparents caring for grandchildren: one a single woman, one a widow, and two couples. Of the couples grandmothers were said to play the greater parenting role. Worrall's claim that, '*the decision to care meant changed lives, unattained dreams, and changed family relationships*' (1996a, p. 114) is shown to be equally true for Smith et al's grandparents. Three grandmothers had given up work. One, a married woman referring to her alcoholic daughter, is quoted saying, '*I've given up all my life to bring up her children*'. She had withdrawn from a business, a large house and eventually a job. '*And I loved my job*' (1999, p 123). A second explained regarding her granddaughter, '*I feel she needed my full attention.*' (ibid, p. 125). Against this another said, '*And I said to them that I wasn't prepared to give up my job...so I had to arrange for somebody to look after her.*' (ibid); thus requiring the organization and cost of childcare.

Schofield's references to the disjunctive effects of parenting in later life apply to these women. As is indicated from the grandmothers' words the change is typically '*unplanned*', often associated with a family crisis. It marks a divergence from the normative life progression, disturbing the '*kilter*' of life. This can result in what Schofield terms '*generational dissonance*'. Differences in daily demands and priorities can lead to social isolation from peers. Lowered energy levels can limit parent type

engagement in children's activities. Adjusting to current parenting practice and culture can challenge confidence (Schofield, 2005, p. 28).

Negotiating kinship care and other relationships

The research studies of Worrall (2001a, 2005, 2009) and Smith et al (1999) exposed the complexity of issues for custodial grandparents negotiating family relationships. Fear was a particular problem in staying in touch with their grandchild's biological family. Worrall writes of contact between the children and their biological parents being affected by '*fear of meeting the fathers of the children...[leaving] emotions of resentment and fear*' (1996a, p.105), and Smith et al report one grandmother saying, '*I still am terrified*' (1999, p. 130), and another who is fearful of a 'de facto' daughter's '*partners with violent histories*' (ibid, p.132). At the same time grandmothers hold in mind the importance of keeping children in touch across biological links. There is appreciation when an '*other side*' grandmother is willing to take an initiative on contact. Smith et al describe the tension inherent in family visits as grandparents balance need for contact, and need for respite from a grandchild, with the resultant disturbance, including disruption to established discipline, when the child returns.

Other family relationships are affected also. Worrall and Smith et al write of tensions within the nuclear family. Some 'own' children expressed resentment at the changed family constellations; and stress arose between couples. One grandchild is described as jealous of other grandchildren who visit. The same child plays her grandmother and grandfather off against each other. Again the perception of 'grandfather danger' is mentioned. A grandmother refers to her husband's reticence in showing his grandchild physical affection in public, '*a little child with an older man type thing*' (ibid, p. 89).

Working with the 'authorities'

However the multiplicity and intensity of events leading to children moving out of parental care, and into the care of grandparents, will often mean that a further, authoritative network of relationships, external to family, are involved. Worrall (2005) reports that 1674 children in formal care with CYF were living with kin, including grandparents, in 2004. For the grandparents heading those families, and for some others where the transfer of their grandchildren has been more informal, there are potentially even more challenging relationships to be negotiated with social workers, health,

education and legal specialists. Brudenell and Savage (2000) consider these complex negotiations in their paper based on work with a small group of Māori, Tongan and Pākehā CYF kin caregivers. For the peculiar intricacies of kinship care they emphasize the need for a high level of financial and service support in a clearly laid out plan between the parties involved, allowing carers, *'to know where they stand and to feel part of the team... involved in the child's life'* (2000).

In general Smith et al, like Worrall, found insufficient support from health, education and welfare agencies. This applied when help was needed from behavioural and developmental services for grandchildren's recovery from past trauma. It related too to government's payments for caregiving responsibilities. The law too was a source of difficulty. Though grandparents held custody and/or guardianship these were open to challenge. One son had made repetitive claims in court for the return of his son's custody. As Worrall (1995/6) points out this can entail grandparents in great personal costs while the challenging parent, if having a sufficiently low income, is eligible for repeat financial aid.

A survey of 'GRG' grandparents

These legal frustrations are met again in Worrall's report of the GRG's 2005 postal survey. She describes the 323 respondents as being from a wide socio-economic spread, with 81% over fifty years, 1.4% under 40 years. They came from a random selection of 790 members of GRG Trust listed in 2004. Seventy-two percent identify as NZ European. Worrall comments on an apparent skewing of ethnicity in the sample as, in June 2004, 48% of children aged 0-16 years in the care of CYF were stated as Māori.

As well as being frustrated with the legal system, respondents were said to find it *'confusing and very expensive'* (2005, p. 41). Some felt lawyers did not understand their case and some had not been comfortable with its handling by a judge. Some preferred to have no formal legal status. Yet many expressed a need for the law, looking to it for security and protection. Even then Worrall finds almost a third of her sample had experienced legal challenges: *'many caregivers face ongoing litigation that has cost them much in terms of financial and psychological stress'* (2005, p. 45).

Other aspects of financing parenting responsibilities were also burdensome for many caregivers, of whom, as Worrall reports (2005), more than 75% were earning \$40,000 or less. Many described severe emotional and behavioural problems in their grandchildren due to their disturbed, even traumatized earlier lives, which had brought them to leave their parents' homes. Therapy was expensive and financial help for payment was often unavailable. Grandparents' own health was also a cause of concern, identified by nearly 60% as having deteriorated since accepting parenting responsibility¹⁸. Because of health costs several had ignored their own needs to give priority to their grandchild. Whether regarding benefit eligibility from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) or childcare payments from CYF, grandparents had frequently experienced confusion and inconsistency about entitlement to, and full receipt of, government financial support.

Some good things

The impression of cumulative hardship associated with custodial grandparenting is not total. According to Schofield grandparents and grandchildren can find the arrangement mutually rewarding. One of the grandmothers talking to Smith et al celebrates seeing her granddaughter '*flourishing*' after a damaging early life. She says of a training course, '*Oh fantastic*', and she reported a good relationship with the government service (1999, p. 123). A third of Worrall's respondents found assistance from schools helpful, and one wrote of a grandson's arrival, '*This is the best thing that happened to us as it certainly brought us into the 21st century with a big bang...*' (2005, p. 66).

(viii) Popular Writing about Grandparents

Autobiographical essays

By 2000 several books about grandparenting, aimed at a general readership, had appeared in New Zealand, indicating a heightened popular interest in the topic. First of these was Witi Ihimaera's edited collection of autobiographical essays, Growing up Māori, in 1998. His contributors reminisce influences on their growing up, particularly

¹⁸ A minority however reported improved health coinciding with caregiving and while the four kincarers of Worrall's 1996 study reported lowered health the sole grandmother '*felt she had a new lease of life*' (1996b p. 16).

incorporating reflections on grandparents (cf. Metge 1995). They repeatedly and persuasively convey the power of elder care, both grandfathers' and grandmothers', to instil in their grandchildren a personal identity, '*the reality of who we were*' (Jackson, 1998, p. 199), through the telling of family stories and an introduction to customary traditions.

The other books, also edited collections, by Holdom (1999), Gribben (2000), and Else (2000) commonly catch recognizable – but not stereotyped – characteristics of an especially New Zealand grandparenting. In general the three commend the pleasures and values to those in the role, though memories of their own grandparents are more varied. Comments are noteworthy for provoking thought about already familiar themes. Two of Holdom's (1999) grandmothers nicely articulate the association of grandparenthood with a sense of 'immortality through clan', (see Toledo et al, 2000). One speaks of the great joy she has in seeing young cousins (her grandchildren) playing together, while another remarks on seeing aspects of herself, not found in her own children, in her grandchildren. A grandfather, retired from a former CEO work-role and doing back-up child-care for a grandchild, is reported by Gribben as saying, '*I never knew what management skills you needed to do this job*' (p. 47).

Else notes the probability of having four – not to mention more – grandparents extant, imposes a need for at least four distinctive names to differentiate them (2000). She thereby acknowledges a current New Zealand cultural construct where each grandparent is usually recognized by an individual, personalized form of address by grandchildren, designating gender and usually generation, but leaving aside recognition of lineage.¹⁹

I want to note here too that two of Holdom's contributors hold onto a smell associated with a grandparent, as does one of Else's grandfathers. This recurrent association of smell with a grandparent memory surely represents an elemental attachment.

¹⁹ This differs from some Scandinavian countries which do recognize lineage in addressing grandparents while, until recently, many young people speaking European languages using formal and informal modes of address, customarily used the plural/formal 'you', generally a marker of respect and social distance, to speak to a grandparent. This change is said to have followed the student radical movement of 1968 in Europe (Mestheneos and Svensson-Dianellou, 2004).

Lastly grandparents are now frequently modelled in the many children's books which take advantage of the huge children's book market and the increasing grandparent population available to buy them.

Media cover

Various material covering aspects of grandparenting has appeared regularly in New Zealand press publications of recent years. In September 2001 the New Zealand Herald had a column, Grandparents vital in traumatic times, reporting British research on the value of grandparents' support at the time of parents' separation. In October 2005 The Manawatu Standard ran an article, Grandparents offered support group, and in 2008 published a large, visually appealing advertisement sponsored by a charitable agency, promoting 'Happy Grandparents' Day' on the 5th of October. In mid-2009 the GRG website showed sixteen media articles originating in several localities, dating back to 2001, relating to a range of issues faced by grandparents who were parenting grandchildren. In June 2009 The New Zealand Herald carried an article entitled, Grand gestures: The days of occasional, leisurely grandparenting may be over as busy working parents make serious demands on their own busy Mums and Dads to help with school runs, childcare and more.

Of late radio and television have presented programmes covering experiences of families where grandparents are parenting grandchildren (e.g. Linda Clarke, 7th April, 2005, National radio; Close Up, 20th October, 2008, TV1; Raising the Moko, 25th March, 2009, Māori TV).

IV. Summary and conclusions

I have attributed the recent heightened public interest in grandparents in New Zealand to the growing population of able and articulate elderly, in absolute and relative terms, who are grandparents, and to an increasing need for, and concern about childcare, at times when parents are not available to care through some or other parental incapacity, or are part of the workforce. The studies reviewed above have related to grandparents as aged persons, and as family members who provide care, emotionally and practically.

Although only Armstrong (1996, 2002, 2007) researches an exclusively grandmother experience, grandmothers predominate throughout these New Zealand studies. It is they who are present in greater numbers in every piece of research and it is their grandparenting activities which receive greater analysis. Wilton and Davey's (2006) enquiry into grandfathering offers some explanations for this and is an important counter to the gender bias.

The period covered has seen a major shift in women's lives, from the home to the workforce. There are social and personal expectations of women associated with the change, which are not resolved (Sceats, 2003). This is indicated in Missen's (2002) and in McPherson's (2002, 2003) research. Childcare, at the beginning the domain of women in the home - mothers and grandmothers - is now in an uncertain realm between working mothers, busy and/or working grandmothers, and a retrenching state. The pressures on grandparents, created from juggling commitments to work and to self with concern and love for grandchildren, are most powerfully conveyed through the research by Worrall (1996a, 1996b, 2001a, 2001b, 2005) and Smith et al (1999), of grandparents who are parenting. Worrall's work in conjunction with the grandparenting interest group, GRG, gives a lobby and political voice to the difficulties these grandparents encounter on several levels for themselves and their grandchildren:

- Emotional and behavioural maladjustment of grandchildren.
- Legal insecurity.
- Financial insecurity.
- Intrafamily disruption.
- Negotiation of relationships with CYF and other authorities.

The capture by media of these and other grandparenting problems introduces a new public dimension, raising consciousness, reflecting and shaping how grandparents are currently responding to their role (Dalley, 1998, pp. 363/4).

Together these writings explore grandparenting in a uniquely New Zealand social and geographical setting, simultaneously revealing much that is in line with the main body of academic observation on grandparenting in other Western societies.

There now follow immediately, three pictures of grandparents, conveying visually some of the significance that belongs with grandparenting.

The next chapter commences with an introduction to the participants. Then selected data, drawn from the interviews and the diaries of the participating grandparents, provides further insight into the experience of grandparenting in New Zealand.

CHAPTER VII: PICTURES

I. Introduction

Searching to explain grandparenthood Hagestad writes of ‘*an elusive “being here”*’...not easily captured with the language and tools of social science. ‘*We will need the help of poets, photographers and painters to help us capture this presence*’ (1985, p. 48). In examining the development of social theories Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 248) point to the significance of ‘*elements of “material culture”*’...and, citing Gouldner, they describe material culture as the ‘*forgotten man of social research*’ (see also King and Elder, 1997). Tennant (2004, p. 8) too suggests an appreciation of the visual images and cues of ‘*cultural imprinting*’ as being important to an understanding of how people create their social world.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I select two paintings and one photo in visual illustration of grandparenting, serving to offer the ineffable, not easily available to my written word.

II. Cultural Imprinting

In his painting of The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine Dionys Calvaert (1540-1619) presents St Catherine in the company of the three generation Holy Family, the infant, his parents and his maternal grandmother. A faintly seen father, Joseph, is behind Mary, the mother, and to the left is an evidently aged, be-capped grandmother¹, St. Anna (a.k.a. Anne), with Jesus, her grandson on her knee, holding him protectively. The Auckland Art Gallery notes Jesus is more usually in his mother’s arms. Yet in other portrayals of the same subject Calvaert again shows Jesus in his grandmother’s embrace. Other great masters show the infant Jesus with his mother and grandmother (Brinkmann, 2008, pp. 154-158). In 1509 Cranach completed a triptych entitled simply Holy Kinship. Cranach’s work gives special prominence to St. Anna. She is nursing Jesus on her lap, and both child and grandmother lean towards Mary, seated beside them. The wings of the triptych show Mary holding Jesus to the left and St. Anna on the right wing. Whatever their intent in terms of politics and patronage of the day the employment by artists of such family groups can be argued to indicate a domestic ideal.

¹ Customarily older women of the time wear their hair covered (Brinkmann *ibid*)

Sculpted examples of the Holy trio, grandmother, mother and child also exist. From as early as the 14th century from Silesia, and from the 16th century from Southern Bohemia (Prague Museum of Mediaeval Art), wooden carvings depict a unity of St. Anna with Virgin and Child. Sometimes St. Anna holds both Mary and Jesus in her arms (cf. Ainsworth, 1995). Thus imagery back to pre-modern Christian Europe, and in both the Catholic and Protestant faiths, was idealizing the concept of an intimately relating three-generation family, celebrating new with old life, and giving prominence from religious lore to the grandmother in the maternal lineage, even in a time of patriarchy.



The significance of such time-distant artistic creations to present day grandparenting lies in the continuity and ubiquity of Christian imagery in Western culture even to those not familiar with religious practice or visiting art galleries. At another level the imagery glorifies the universality of generational rebirth, biological renewal.

In the course of interviews with Alice, Clark, Violet, Annie, Hetty, Ruby, Dorothy and Resa special reference was made to the occasion of Christmas.

III A 'legacy to posterity'

In 1885, beginning *'My dear Grandchildren'*, Jane Deans (1995, p. 7) writes to her grandchildren after they have *'spent a month very happily together'* with her while their parents have been away. Her purpose in writing she explains, *'as someday you may want to know about grandma...and of course I know more of my own self than anyone else.'* It is these grandchildren who are shown together with Jane and her son and daughter-in-law in a posed photograph on a sheltered, garden lawn, a large Victorian family.



Jane's only child, John (centre back), had been born within a year of her marriage and arrival in New Zealand. Within a year of that Jane's husband died. Jane chose to stay, a widow, in New Zealand. She was helped in her management of the family property by the immigration of her three half-brothers. Jane's son himself died before he was 50 but, by then, he left an established family including eight sons, all but one of whom had sons themselves. For Jane and her late husband an eventual 16 great-grandsons carried the patrilineal name into the 20th century. As Ogilvie's narrative (1996) of the Deans family claims, thus *'establishing a dynasy'* (p. 102), or in the cite words from Alpers,

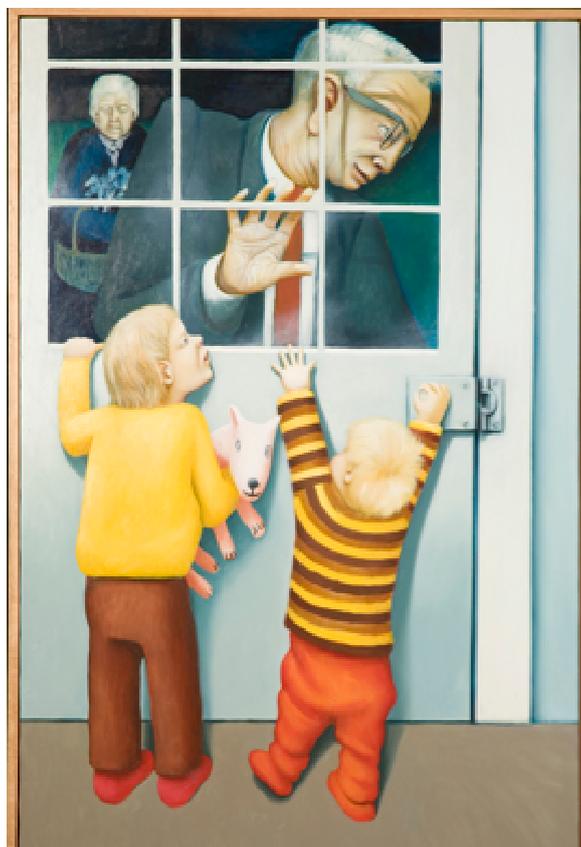
‘how men go down from generation to generation and “One hands to another the burning torch of existence”’; those gendered words nicely countered by Jane’s recognition in the on-line [Dictionary of New Zealand Biography](#) (Miller and Park, 2007) as a ‘founding mother...a faithful servant of her family’s interests’.

Many New Zealanders will be familiar with photographs similar to this recording their own or others’ domestic histories and will read into it thoughts of their own. The family’s outdoor setting, New Zealand given, carries a sense of place, ‘being here’, and of settlement.

IV. ‘Grandparents at the door’

This is the title given by Michael Smither to his 1969 painting now held at the Waikato Museum of Art and History. Smither himself writes of it:

Seeing my children crowding the door to let my parents in made me aware of their frailty. As the observer inside the door I received the first intimation of my parents’ absolute mortality (caption accompanying [The Wonder Years 2005](#)).



CHAPTER VIII: PRESENTATION OF DATA

Chapter Structure

The following selections from participants' interviews and diaries are presented in two parts: Part I and Part II. They are preceded by an introduction to the participants.

Part I presents extracts in which participating grandparents look to the past, to ways in which their grandparents, parents, in-laws and special family circumstances have been influential in defining a model for their own expression of grandparenting. Recollections of grandparents are presented first, succeeded by accounts of parents who have provided a grandparent model. Within that framework grandparents are introduced in order of descending age, from oldest to youngest.

Part II presents passages in which the grandparents recount the stories of their own grandparenting. Beginning with grandparents who have voluntary and varied contact with grandchildren, followed by grandparents assisting parents through regular caregiving, and then full-time parenting grandparents. Part II also follows grandparents according to descending age.

THE PARTICIPANTS

I. Introduction

There were eighteen grandparents who contributed to this study through interviews, and six who contributed by way of diary keeping. Of the total twenty-four, four were grandfathers. The grandparents exemplified three distinct categories of grandparenting role (a voluntary, varied role, regular supplementary care, and full-time parental-type responsibility) and portrayed grandparenting from a wide variety of life situations. Whereas it was initially intended to select eight grandparents representing each role, the very inconstancy of the grandparenting role resulted in the inclusion of nine full care grandmothers, two of whom reverted to a more supplementary role by the end of my

data collection. Consequently only seven grandparents originally selected as having a voluntary and varied role took part in the research.

The personal details of the participants and the conditions determining their grandparental roles varied widely. Here they are introduced grouped according to their roles with their grandchildren. Their characteristics are summarized alongside their chosen pseudonyms, by decreasing age, the brief profiles outlining pertinent features of their lives. The information is gathered from the questionnaires which guided the selection of participants, as well as from their interviews and diaries.

II. Voluntary, Varied Care Grandparents

During my interview with **Mary** her husband **Tom** joined us, occasionally contributing, filling out Mary's stories. Mary was the only grandparent I interviewed who had her own great-grandchildren. Mary was also the only grandparent who had made a cake for my visit, which I choose to interpret as representative of a largely past code of etiquette to a visitor from a distance. In a context of memories she herself spoke of past mores relating to expansive hospitality, when keeping in touch with friends and family frequently entailed long, exhausting journeys.

Mary and Tom had sixteen grandchildren. Over time they had experienced every grandparenting role as they moved with their family through life stages. Mary linked their rich memories of activities shared with family, and their rapport with grandchildren, to the attractive places they had lived in. She described herself as '*a letter writer*', inherited '*from our age group*' by which she and Tom '*stayed in touch*' with globally distributed grandchildren.

Hetty, a diarist, systematically recorded her prolific interactions with a complicated family cast of younger generations. They read like a fulltime occupation, sketching multiple threads of common interest and areas of support. She had no regular care responsibilities for any grandchildren but was in touch frequently with many of her seven grandchildren and her twenty-six step-grandchildren and fifteen step-great-grandchildren. This was busily achieved by visits to and from them, attendance at

school occasions, by family gatherings and celebrations, by telephone, and by letters and emails. As well Hetty had a part-time, paid, work position and was living with her retired partner.

After **Ruby's** marriage ended she moved from the long-term family home to live in the same city in which her four adult children were living. Several years after the move, when I interviewed her, she was very content with her decision to move and be close to children and her seven grandchildren. Ruby described herself as an important part of a loosely linked family circle, involving her actively in her busy grandchildren's school and extra-curricular activities, family celebratory traditions, and beach-house holidays together. She was especially enjoying opportunities to pass on her own creative talents in exchange for learning computer skills from grandchildren, '*They're good little teachers.*'

Clark, with three of his children living close by, saw his eight grandchildren frequently, especially in their visiting of the family home. He believes he and his wife have influenced their grandchildren's lives and was certain they would take on their care should a need arise, albeit aware that young children can tire him. Recounting his experience of being a grandfather Clark drew a strong emotive connection between generational family connective-ness and place. Living in the house originally occupied by his grandfather, where his own children grew up and some of his grandchildren were born, Clark talked observantly about their early developmental milestones against a 'backdrop' of getting to know the home and its physical environment.

On my collecting **Galodali's** diary account of his grandparenting of his four young grandchildren he apologized for the notational form of his diary, explaining he was dyslexic. We then did a follow-up taped interview which extended the diary content. Galodali added memories of his own grandparents, also talking more of the greater satisfaction he had from his grandchildren since his daughter and her husband had moved from a distance away, to being closer to him and his wife. Though he has no regular care commitments he now does see his grandchildren frequently, often daily. The diary gave a lively cover of the shared activities Galodali enjoyed with the children, incorporating them into his daily business managing a smallholding and its produce.

Hine was grandmother to four grandchildren. She was enjoying with anticipatory pleasure the news of another daughter's pregnancy, especially celebrated because it had been understood she could not have children. Her three daughters are all married and live within easy driving distance. She describes hers as a close family. Before her oldest grandchild, now ten, was two years old, when both his parents were working, Hine helped her husband with his weekly childcare for six months. More recently, when a busy job allows, activities shared with her grandchildren have focussed on shaping their values through encouraging appreciation of chosen reading, and knowledge and enjoyment of the natural environment. Hine's paternal grandparents were Māori and she sees Māori culture, with which she identifies, as influencing her thinking on grandparenting.

In interview **Flora** talked of her only grandchild, the one-year-old daughter of a son who is living in an overseas metropolis. She described how she was under great work pressure when she heard of the expected baby together with a pressing invitation to visit. It seemed impossible, but she went. Flora talked of her delight in shopping and making things for her granddaughter, her concerns for her well-being in her very different environment, and the methods of keeping in touch: to date two visits to her family; their annual visits; emails to the parents two or three times a week; fortnightly video conferences, which include play with her granddaughter. Technology was important in Flora's grandchild recognizing and responding to her distant grandparents.

III. Regular, Supplementary Care Grandparents

Helen had valued memories of her first ten childhood years lived in her maternal grandparents' home. When a pregnant daughter returned home to Helen from an abusive marriage Helen again became part of a three-generation household, this time playing a major caring role in her granddaughter's upbringing. Helen, who was divorced and managing a property in the country, found herself earning to maintain the three-generation household, and helping her daughter negotiate custody challenges through the Family Court, by her granddaughter's father. Helen continued offering a high level of ongoing support and, with changes in her own work and location, she eventually enabled her daughter to return to work. She continued a large share of her

granddaughter's care until, two years before I interviewed her, her daughter entered a new relationship. The new partner restricted Helen's contact with her granddaughter much to Helen's grief. Her health is fragile.

Ann moved back from overseas to New Zealand's lower North Island to be nearer to her children and their children, bringing her mother also to New Zealand. The two children of her son were at a far distance in the South Island. She was seeing them about twice a year, visiting or bringing them north. She lived within an hour's drive of her three other grandchildren, a daughter's children. These children, aged eight, five and less than two years, she was looking after three days a week to help their working parents manage a costly and heavily pressured life-style. Ann felt some of this pressure weighing on her. In all she estimated the time spent in transporting and minding the children to be about eighteen hours each week. Ann's husband spent much time working overseas, which left him outside the close involvement Ann had with her grandchildren, and her responsibilities for them.

[Of those participants who were caring for grandchildren on a regular basis **Judith** and **Victoria** selected to keep diary accounts. While the content of both diaries accorded with my request and showed some common experience the style of the entries differed greatly and provided different depths of insight. Both diaries gave progressive accounts of activities through a day but Victoria's was very much centred on the here and now. Judith's was set in the context of recurrent reminiscences of her parents' grandparenting and in her recall of her own mothering (see Benedek 1970, cited Kahana and Kahana 1971; Kornhaber and Woodward 1981). It is notable that Judith, officially entering her 'young old' years (Armstrong 2002) belonged to a different generation from Victoria, who was the youngest participant.]

Judith had retired with an anticipation of providing some help to her daughter's needs when she became a new mother. As it eventuated her daughter and son-in-law both chose to be 'working parents' and took up Judith's offer to supplement paid child-care for her young granddaughter. Judith drove to her daughter's house across the city one day a week to look after her granddaughter. As well she stepped in to give extra baby-sitting help in her own home at times of unexpected work schedule changes. Judith

repeatedly regretted she could not spend the same quality of time with her son's child, a two-and-a-half-year-old grandson living a distance away.

When **Sandy's** married daughter, with two pre-schoolers, wanted to return part-time to a previous work position, it was Sandy who had lesser work commitments than his wife, more easily allowing him to provide care. He travelled to a neighbouring township, two days a week, to be with and mind his grandchildren, his daughter paying the petrol costs. He spoke of a 'definite wish' for him and his wife '*to support our children and their children as much as possible.*' Contact with his other two young grandchildren, living in England, entailed a different commitment of time and money to enable a regular exchange of visits. He and his wife had been present in England when both grandchildren there were born. Sandy describes himself as still 'learning' his relatively new childcare role.

Violet's young, single daughter was living with her when her granddaughter was born. When I interviewed her, Violet, her daughter and granddaughter were still living as one household. There was limited contact with her granddaughter's young Māori father but Violet had taken steps to help him see his daughter regularly. Her granddaughter had started school and her daughter, having completed a training, was beginning paid employment. Violet was working a full week. She depicted their life together in terms of easy compromise but she emphasized her belief in holding to personal boundaries, protecting her own needs and being clear she was a support to her daughter's mothering, and a grandmother, not an additional mother. Violet foresaw her life would change, and her daughter and granddaughter would move on.

Jack, like Sandy, was a grandfather providing regular 'grandchildcare' as a help to his daughter. She was a single working mother. He was also putting effort into ensuring an attachment between his six-year-old granddaughter and her father's extended family in Samoa. Two days a week, Jack provided pre- and after-school supervision as part of a weekly 'menu of care' for his granddaughter. For this he has been able to negotiate his work hours to accommodate the time he needed for his granddaughter. Initially, when his daughter became pregnant, she had come to live for 18 months in a self-contained unit of Jack's house, making his granddaughter almost a daily presence over her first year.

Jack is living apart from his wife but team-like they work together in supporting their daughter's mothering.

Dorothy's son and his wife had struggled to build a stable relationship before their son was born, but Dorothy's daughter-in-law's mental instability became more pronounced after their son's birth, and they separated about a year on. When he was two Dorothy and her husband took their grandson to live with them for several months. Although he at first returned to his mother his father later became the primary carer for him. Dorothy was there to give backup in a carefully managed three-party schedule, encompassing time with his mother too. During the period she had been caring for her grandson Dorothy and her husband separated, creating special problems as she is partially incapacitated by rheumatism. When interviewed Dorothy's grandson had begun school enabling Dorothy to begin a training in art.

Victoria, like Judith a diarist, identified herself as Māori, and was the youngest participant. She had a teenage son still living at home. She was aged only 34 when her single daughter had a baby girl. When interviewed her granddaughter was nearly three. She herself was working throughout the week but, to enable her daughter to be earning on Saturdays, she was regularly looking after her granddaughter. Her husband contributed to the grandparenting but Victoria had assumed the primary responsibility for the management of the Saturday childcare. Additionally Victoria's granddaughter was part of shared family activities and celebrations, sometimes including her great-grandmother.

IV. Full-time Care Parenting Grandparents

Ten years ago death had brought about **Alice's** assumption of a mother role for her grandson, now aged fifteen. He had been orphaned after her son's death in a road accident, in which he too was injured, and within two years his mother's death from cancer. Alice was living in a rural area with her grandson's step-grandfather. He was employed but Alice had given up a senior management position at a time her own mother's health was deteriorating, and then to help look after her grandson. Health had

been a family issue. Alice had long suffered ill health and her husband was not well. The grandson was apparently affected by the accident trauma and had required treatment for aberrant behaviour since. Alice was experiencing the expense of bringing up a grandchild as a burden but she was well aware of their comparatively privileged position in being able to call upon funding from ACC to cover some of the costs of his needs.

It was a child's death too that wrenched **Carol** from her grandmother role to take on the mothering of a granddaughter. At the time of our interview the granddaughter was still living with Carol though then turned eighteen. Until twelve years previously when she had succumbed to a fatal illness, her mother, a young unmarried woman, had lived at home as part of a three-generation household. Now the family was reduced to just two, grandmother and granddaughter, after the separation of Carol and her husband, and the death of another daughter. In her parenting role Carol had been entitled to draw the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) but at 64 years, and with her granddaughter now aged eighteen, she was having to rethink her income source.

Both **Flossie** and **Briar** had parenting responsibilities for a son of a son. They each provided accounts of their grandparenting experience by way of detailed and comprehensive diaries. This method of disclosure had the effect of giving the sharpness of immediacy to the irritations, anxieties and joys of day-to-day parenting which generally were missing from the broader, more abstract but equally feelingful interview accounts. Entries covered a period ending one school year, summer holidays and, for both grandsons, attendance at a new school.

Flossie's grandson, '*just on 13*', had been with her less than a year when her diary concluded. Previously living with his father most of his life, he had become unsettled when his father began a new partnership. He had begun moving back and forth between parents. Flossie was no longer in paid employment and her husband was retired. Living in the same locality as their son they had felt it necessary to offer the stability of their home environment to their grandson to whom they were already affectionately close. Both were receiving Invalid Benefit and received the Unsupported Child Benefit on behalf of their grandson. Even so Flossie's diary is scattered with frequent

references to the costs of satisfying a teenage boy's needs and his fitting-out for secondary school.

Briar's grandson had been with her most of his ten years. His emotionally labile mother had been unable to make a stable home for him and her continued contact with her son was a disturbing factor in the family's life. Briar's son was overseas. Like Flossie she shared her life with a retired husband but she herself had a full-time professional job. She had an additional family commitment in the shared oversight of her blind, aged mother.

When I interviewed **Rose** her five year old granddaughter had recently left her care, returning to live with her mother after four and a half years of living with Rose and her husband. Their daughter was wheelchair bound and, when her husband proved abusive, Rose and her husband had intervened to protect her and their infant granddaughter. The daughter's health, the bureaucracy of state care, Rose's own health, and her work involvement, had all added complexity to an untimely phase of family life.

Annie lived in the country. Since the birth of her four and a half year old grandson she and her husband had juggled their life-style in their efforts to provide him with security. They and their relationship had been stressed. Annie had eventually found it necessary to resign from her work to look after her grandson full-time. His mother's life had been chaotic since her adolescent years, working in prostitution and mixing in a drug taking, criminal culture. She had been seriously violent towards Annie. Through past neglect and sometimes grossly inadequate care Annie's grandson was showing severely disturbed behaviour. Annie and her husband spoke with disillusionment of their attempts to get help from state and voluntary child protection services, even following a Family Group Conference.

From her granddaughter's birth **Pansy** had increasingly held parenting responsibilities for the six and a half year old daughter of her son. It began as close practical support to her granddaughter's mother, who had a history of emotional instability. After the mother had two more children, and changes of sexual partners, the closeness reduced somewhat and Pansy's role had become one of primary caregiver to her granddaughter, with surrogate mothering of her mother. Pansy's son was not close to his daughter but

the remainder of her family, including her husband, were giving valuable support to her. Pansy has had several health problems. She worked in flexible conditions for the family business.

Joy had a notably busy grandmothering schedule with twelve grandchildren and three step-grandchildren, all living within relatively easy visiting distance. Her case exemplifies the grandparent 'safety net' label (Kornhaber and Woodward, 1985) and the fluidity of the grandparent role. She responded to my request for study participants through the GRG network as a full-care grandmother. One twelve-year-old grandson had been with her for nearly a year. When previously with his mother, his family had gone through an unsettled time which had coincided with a deterioration in his social behaviour. In the face of CYF involvement Joy had taken him to live with her and her husband, offering time-out and security. When I met her it was already planned he should return to his mother before the forthcoming school year. Joy's husband was in paid employment. She did unpaid but demanding work for a charitable trust.

Resa said she had never sought parenthood but then in early mid-life found herself expecting to look after her daughter's son until he was adult. He was six years old when I interviewed her. When he was six months old his mother was admitted to hospital with deteriorating mental health. At that time Resa and her husband took her grandson to live with them. As his mother's mental state had remained unstable Resa had continued to look after him. She spoke of her concern that she should also take over care of his younger brother. Resa's husband is Māori. They both work full-time, but they still find money an issue in providing, in their mid-life years and unplanned, for a young grandson.

V. Limitations to Study Sample

While the design of this research purposefully selected participating grandparents to portray a wide experience of different life situations two variants of grandparenting were ignored in the analysis: great-grandparenting and step-grandparenting. They are seen as topics in their own right. Their representation amongst the grandparents of this study is incidental and their particularities are not explored.

Another class of grandparents, excluded here and worthy of special study, is grandparents who have lost their independence of living. This refers to grandparents who are cared for by family, who live in rest homes, or in other situations of dependency (Kahana and Kahana, 1971; Kerr, 2002).

It is noted that no grandparent talked about the death of a grandchild.

PART I: 'TELLING'

MEMORIES THAT INFLUENCED

I. Introduction to Participants' Stories

With the possible exception of Rose, from the twenty-one grandparents¹ who reflected on the origin of their grandparenting style, all located their role models within their families. Twelve reminisced their grandparents as strong sources of influence, some including their parents as additionally influential. Others viewed parents as the primary source of a grandparenting model. For some, through death or family dislocation, grandparents had not featured directly in their life. King and Elder (1997) suggest that grandparents may not need to have been a physical presence to be seen to influence their grandchildren when they in turn are grandparenting. Their 'being-there', expressed by way of gifts, family stories, photos, and various means of communication over time and distance, may have created an influential internalised presence and/or family culture which colours their grandchildren's behaviour as grandparents (Baranowski, 1990; Bengtson, 1985; Hagestad, 1985). Some accounts given below illustrate such symbolic links perpetuating an already personally established presence of a grandparent. For some participants the very absence of grandparents in their lives has been a formative experience; while a few have consciously rejected a grandparent model passed to them.

II. Lessons from Grandparents as Grandparents

(i) Mary

Aged eighty-one years, Mary was oldest of my grandparents. She also had the oldest grandparenting story to tell reaching back in time within a generation of Toynbee's (1995) and Metge's (1995) studies. Visiting her maternal grandparents entailed long journeys:

¹ Of the twenty-four participants three diarists, Judith, Flossie and Victoria, did not make explicit reference to grandparents or parents as role models for their own grandparenting.

'Great-grandmother, she was lovely...we had to catch the overnight express then we'd travel to Auckland...and we'd go to great grandmother's. And we'd sit in the dining room and we'd be looking out... at the trains and the ferries and it was just magical to us. For country children...And then we'd go from there by car...That's how we spent so much time with the grandparents...we were sent to have winter in the north.

Mary was confident and fluent in her rich account of a past intergenerational family life. The reliability of remembering by older persons may be questioned but memories vary at all ages (Lawrenson, 1994; Rossi, 2001). In defence of recall studies Toyne (1979, p. 63) makes this point with reference to a school study (1976) where *'in general, young people had difficulty in providing information on their grandfathers.'* Elsewhere she writes:

Psychologists are familiar with the concept of the life review in which old people experience a sudden emergence of memories and a desire to remember... (1995, p. 207

Mary herself recognizes this:

'Childhood memories are vague but I was amazed when I started to write how it kept on coming. I realized the little things that I did with my grandchildren I had definitely picked up from my grand parents. They came down a great deal and stayed with us. They were wonderful grandparents. Grandmother was determined to make us into little ladies. She was a marvellous teacher...I think I learnt a tremendous lot from them on how to be a grandmother.

Mary knew her paternal grandparents too, but notes a distinction in her closeness to them:

Although they lived close to us they didn't have as much influence as my mother's family. I think it's because it's the maternal line. But I revered those grandparents.

Later Mary, now a great-grandmother herself, recalls, *'At my granddaughter's wedding I suddenly realized I am the matriarch. I am the oldest who is left.'* Her 'internalized' family lineage reaches three generations behind her and three generations before her. Her interview was studded with intergenerational replays, where her homes, like her grandparents', have provided delights for grandchildren.

In her grandparenting Mary exemplifies what Hagestad terms *'symbols of [continuity and] connectedness within and across lives'* (1985, p. 31).

(ii) Helen

Helen (aged 75 at interview) and Hetty (aged 70 at interview) were next in age descent amongst my participants. Like Mary they recollected influential grandparents, Helen only of her maternal grandparents, Hetty especially of both grandmothers.

Helen, together with her mother, who had delicate health, and her three siblings, lived with her maternal grandparents for the first ten years of her life. Her father was developing an isolated, North Island farm. Of her grandparents she says:

We lived in their house. They were lovely. My grandfather was a local general practitioner and had a big country practice. This was in the 1930s. We were all very poor...They had a few acres of land and often my grandfather would give his patients things out of the garden to eat...There was another daughter...and she lived at home...she was like a proxy parent.

Asked if she thought her own grandparenting was modelled from this experience Helen, a most gentle mannered person, said, *'I'm sure it was there. They were very kindly and gentle people. That's the part that comes out for me...'*

Eventually her family, with her grandparents, moved to join Helen's father:

*It was a big house, huge, out on the coast, miles away from anywhere.
Yes it was a hard life...it was a big extended family. But it was good.'*

At the time I interviewed her Helen still held a small sea-shore portion of the family farm, enough for grandchildren to holiday on, *'That was an extra thing to do. They all want a turn there.'*

When the marriage of one of Helen's daughters ended *'traumatically'*, when she was pregnant, Helen had taken on a major part of caring for her granddaughter while her daughter slowly established an independent life. Given her acknowledged appreciation of her grandparents' family-caring role and allowing for a social time shift – Helen's *'poor'* grandparents had servants and there were three women contributing to the household functioning – Helen's granddaughter's care through her first ten years, largely managed by Helen, a self-supporting divorcee, can be interpreted as a legacy of the care Helen herself enjoyed through the first ten of her formative years.

(iii) Hetty

In the somewhat formal layout of her diary account² Hetty has headed an entry, *My own Grandparents – those memories*. She claims for herself a privileged position:

as an eldest grandchild on both sides of the family I have numerous photos taken with adoring grandparents... and vivid memories of their teachings both formal and informal.

Hetty only briefly mentions her grandfathers but lingers longer on her grandmothers. She writes of both grandmothers emphasizing the importance of family. From her father's mother there was an austere quality to the messages of religion, education and work, tempered with *'love in a strong, quiet manner'*; whereas she adds for her maternal grandmother such lighter messages as, *'lots of laughter'* and *'the importance of pretty things in your life'*.

² Hetty, with her very large cast of grandchildren and step-grandchildren, explains this as defining, *'who was who in the structure so when I was talking about them you would have some point of reference.'*

Dad's mum died when I was 24 and had two children. She was softer with my littlies than she was with us – she loved them to bits. Mum's mum died when I was 14. I felt cheated when she died – I still wanted her love – her respect – her wisdom. She was a special lady – I can still shut my eyes and see her face all these years later.

She taught me to cook, to knit, to do patchwork, to ride a horse, play hockey, to give and be appreciative in receiving. She gave me a model of grandmother that was special – it is still with me. I shed tears when my children were born because she was not here to see them.

From Hetty's words her remarkably encompassing grandmothing can be understood as an expression of her respect for, and indebtedness to her own grandmothers, especially her maternal grandmother. The ways of these women have become part of her self-image as a grandmother. The pleasure she had from them she is now actively passing on. She says, *'I looked forward to being a grandmother...I feel very privileged to have played a role in so many lives.'*

(iv) Alice

Alice was 68 and the oldest grandmother providing parenting for a grandchild – her fifteen-year-old grandson. He had come to her eight years earlier after the deaths of first his father and then his mother. He had come with serious learning and behaviour difficulties. Asked, *'...where did you get your model of grandparenting?'* Alice was sure in her reply:

From my mother's parents. Very similar to the life we live here. My grandfather was a farmer and lost his farm in the depression. My grandmother and grandfather were lovely. I loved being with them...We came from the south. My father moved up here during the war because he felt there was better opportunity. Life wasn't easy for us because we were poor...

Like Mary, Alice remembers childhood journeys to visit her grandparents:

I was the youngest and my mother used to send me down to my grandparents for the school holidays. We had special times. I cherish my times with my grandparents...my mother...used to take me down and put me on the boat and she would give the steward a tip and say to, 'take her and give her some sandwiches and look after her'.

Once there:

*I could go out with my grandfather and help. He was a drover for a local butcher and we would go on a bike. He'd be elderly then but he passed on some wonderful things to me. So did my grandmother. Sitting with them while she crocheted at night, listening to stories by the fire...and my grandfather treating me as a **special** person. I wasn't treated like that at home...*

(v) Ann

Ann, who was aged 66 at the time of her interviews, had strong memories of a maternal grandmother and a paternal grandfather. She related them to me in the context of wartime Britain³. With a home adjacent to a major military base and a father at war, Ann had been shuttled back and forth with her family, seeking a safe haven with one grandparent or the other, 'to get away from the bombing and insecurity.'

Of her grandfather Ann says:

My grandfather was a real character and I loved him very much. He made a big fuss of me. He'd say, 'Let's go pick up.' We had loads of apples. Then he'd store them in these trays in his fruit shed for winter. And years later my cousin and I, we would go stealing grandfather's loganberries and blackberries and raspberries.

³ Edited publications by Edmond, *Women in Wartime* (1995) and Fyfe and Preston, *War Stories our mothers never told us* (1995) include some stories of New Zealand mothers separated from husbands during wartime, who similarly found practical and emotional support through moving to live with their own mothers.

*And...he'd call, 'I can see you two, come out of there' from the kitchen window. And he was a **special** person, and at that stage, in that village, would have been a person of standing in being an officer.*

Of her mother's mother Ann reports, 'She was a great reader. Which I am. It jumped from my grandmother to me.' Yet to a comment by me on the closeness of her relationship with her two grandparents Ann replied uncertainly:

Yes. But no real patterns to being a grandparent myself. But perhaps I have recognized the necessity for the close involvement with these children [her grandchildren].

Ann is referring to her choice to move her and her husband's home – and her aged mother - from overseas, to enable her to offer practical support to her two parenting children resident in New Zealand.

(vi) The four grandfather participants

Following the ordering of interview data according to grandparents' descending chronological age, Clark, Galodali, Sandy and Jack, the only grandfathers, are now found clustered together.

Clark

Clark explained that because his mother had been ill with TB, he and his siblings were:

actually farmed out to a degree. So I spent probably my first two years with my grandmother...So she doted on me and looked after me beyond belief. I was thoroughly spoilt by her. [And] we were fed out to all the great aunts who I regarded equally as my grandparents...so it was an extended family. ...the thing I loved about them and made them grandparents to me, there were two things...firstly there was their affection for me and the other thing was they seemed to have much more open values...It was an affection thing and they actually valued you, you personally, that was crucial.

But it is from his time with his grandmother that Clark's memories stand out:

Yes, lots and lots. I was pretty regularly with her during my childhood. Till she died when I was eight I would stay with her...with my Nana I was absolutely content.

Clark talks of his distress at his grandmother's death, most especially because he was excluded, and found out only after she was buried:

And they'd sent me off in the hills...because they knew Nana adored me and they didn't tell she was dead and it was her funeral...I went screaming down the path. I can remember...It was an absolute disgrace.

Galodali

Thinking of his grandparents, Galodali reflects, 'The child I was when I was little...' and continues, 'Of my maternal grandfather I have very fond memories. It's probably why I am the person I am now.'

This grandfather was a widower:

a rural forester and then farmer and fencer and what have you...I imagine he worked as a payed employee well into his 70s. He went on to the age of 87, died when I was 13. I was very much his inseparable companion...When he died he was really old with white, white hair and side burns, cigarette and tobacco and tea stained moustache...I was his right hand man. I was probably no use at all but anyway I thought I was doing him a great deal of help. He was always very good at encouraging me.

To my asking about his paternal grandparents Galodali replied:

We did go there but they were much more remote. We'd go there and play a card game where you built words...I think the underlying

tension was my Grannie B.'s religion...Besides the normal in-law tensions this religious thing was a bit much for my mother.

Galodali, a maternal grandfather himself, while denying a 'rational model' to his grandparenting style finds:

If I had a model it was my maternal grandfather. If I wanted to make reference I'd remember that. There was eeling, and doing and doing, and participating, and a bit of anarchy. Smoking, drinking, from about the age of eight, ten plus. I'd roll his fags and then get one myself.

Though Galodali's diary does not repeat the 'anarchy' he speaks of here, the '*doing and doing and participating*' are very much part of his current grandparenting activities with his four grandsons. At holidays and weekends they accompany him back and forth to a life-style block in the locality of his childhood.

Sandy

For Sandy grandparents were again 'family at a distance', a pattern which he later recounts, is repeating. Sandy grew up in a country of vast distances:

I had all four grandparents but I knew my maternal grandparents much better. We used to spend our summer holidays with them...so it was quite an expedition. Those were very nice holidays I remember, so I got to know them well and it was altogether a pleasant experience. My paternal grandparents, we also used to spend time with them. They were [also distant.] I didn't know them quite so well partly because my grandfather was eccentric and remote...I know him mainly from the stories my father told me...but they both died when I was relatively young - teenage...I got on well with them as far as I can remember.

When Sandy's mother was ill he remembers his father's mother coming to look after the family, '*I was quite small. I have only vague memories of her being there.*'

In spite of distance the family's commitment to keeping close ties becomes apparent:

We either went by train or drove. The roads were quite rough. Most of them they were in the process of sealing so much of the time we were on deviations which meant rutted roads that had been specially dug. It took three days driving. We went for about a month as a rule...

I suppose I could say I liked all my grandparents. I was very fond of my mother's parents. I guess I had a good grandchild experience.

Jack

Jack's one grandparent memory belonged with a grandfather who had lived in his family:

When I was a child my grandfather, the only grandparent that I knew who was alive when I was born, lived with me, with my family, for the first eight years of my life. I have very clear recollections of him being - it was my mother's father - of him being a very clear part of our family...I suppose I remember him as I was a seven or eight year old, where we used to sit on his knee and he would sing Irish songs to us and he taught us to play crib. Things like that. It's a long time ago...He moved in as a widower when he was not particularly well and my mother cared for him. He was able, and then he got really sick...maybe I was 10. And then he went into hospital and he was in hospital for three years. We went to visit him every Sunday. He was a strong memory.

Jack brought a photo to me.

He was a positive memory except that I know it was a huge stress on my mother who had five children and he was very demanding on her. But it was positive from my point of view.

I asked how it was for him when his grandfather died:

I was 12 when he died and that was a huge gap in our lives. Because, even though he's not been living with us immediately the previous past two and a half years or so, he was prominent in the sense that Sunday was our day for going to spend perhaps all afternoon.

To what extent then had Jack's grandfather, a 'prominent' presence in his formative years, served him as a model for what grandparents do, and inclined him to the active role he was taking in his granddaughter's growing up?

I suppose I hadn't thought of it very much in those terms. I was young but he certainly cared about us and put [in] time and energy. He was retired and was always there.

(vii) Violet

Violet, aged 63, had her single, teacher daughter and six year old granddaughter living with her.

Violet herself had spent her growing-up in a three generation, rural family and some of her memories of grandparents came from there:

Well I had four when I was a little girl...And my maternal grandparents lived with us as well as my father's great uncle who was a bachelor. So for the first few years of my life I thought that's how everybody lived – in an extended family. My grandparents had to come through the depression and lost a lot of their money, and they came to stay with my mother and father, and my uncle lived there because it was his property and my father worked for him...They seemed to get on...My grandmother was the first one to die and she died when I was probably about 10 or 11. And my grandfather lived till I was about 20...he was interesting. He used to listen to parliament and he used to take to his room sometimes when it all got

too much with the children...[My grandmother became] bedridden. She had a heart condition...It was during the war and it was really hard to buy clothes and I had a cousin B....so she unpicked B.'s uniform and made me a pleated skirt on a bodice...She taught me to knit.

Violet's other grandparents lived some hours away but this does not appear to have dimmed the richness and affection of her memories. Of her father's father:

I probably might have been a preschooler...They lived in a wonderful old house that was all sort of spooky and old fashioned with big gardens and things and a verandah all the way round and they only lived in so many rooms. I loved going there. He died...but I had quite a lot of connection with my father's mother, and I remember her dying really, and I always loved going to stay with her. Something about her that I identified with...[She] died when I was at boarding school...and I got a letter and it was all over and I felt very, very left out of that and sort of annoyed...It was as though they didn't understand what she meant to me. Because she was special. She always came when I passed through on the train, going back and forth from boarding school. She was always there for me.

In summary Violet adds:

I did have some role models there. And it was an idea about being involved and being part of that extended family and being important to the children so that you are a significant person in their lives.

(viii) Hine

Hine was 54 years old when she talked with me. She introduced the story of her grandparents by way of her 'European' mother and Māori father, adding:

it's interesting in that it was at the time they came together it was a time when a European woman with a Māori man was not necessarily

the right thing to do. It added a complexity to our lives which I've only appreciated as I've got older.

Both maternal and paternal grandparents were sources of great influence. Of her father's parents she recounted:

My Māori grandparents died when I was three. And they died within a year of each other and their influence though, it was very powerful, because their influence stretched a long way and even exists today, my direct relationship with them was minimal.

When I asked Hine to talk further on this influence she went on:

Oh hugely, because they laid down a value system that we had to adhere to and that's the reason we're here doing what we are doing now...I think it affected the way I parented and how I am grandparenting.

After turning to talk about her 'European' grandparents she returned to continue:

It was one of the edicts that my Māori grandparents laid down, it was in the 50s, was what our parents should do was to have large families because they were aware of the decimation of Māori in that first 50 years of the 20th century. It was horrific...that was those changes, world wars, Depressions...So they were saying to our parents, 'You must have children, and they must be educated. In the next 50 years we have a huge job to do and we must be well equipped to do it. Learn English and learn it well. Learn mathematics.' We had to be thinking 100, 200 years out. That shaped all of us into how we think.

On account of the issue of intermarriage Hine's family was cut off from her maternal grandparents:

...for a long time. I'm one of the youngest, and that contact was resumed. They lived away...but we used to spend most of our school holidays there. And with most of our other 'European' cousins and that was great fun and I have very fond memories of that...Then my grandparents retired and came to live close to us for my mother to take care of them...and we spent a lot of time taking care of them...My grandmother was a very religious woman and the value system based around religion was very powerful in our family because my mother had the same belief system, so did my father, but my European grandfather was an atheist – sorry, he was an agnostic...so we were given from them the ability to think for ourselves, and to discuss, sometimes quite fiercely, different points of view...And even their issue that they had Māori grandchildren was up for debate, was always fraught with difficulty, but never stopped the fact that there was always love. I think that we were really lucky.

These 'European' grandparents of Hine's were still alive when she had her own children:

They really did appreciate it, they were very supportive, they thought it was exciting and they talked about the continuance of a line. What was clear always was the importance of family.

When Hine comes to talk about her time with her own grandchildren she tells of the 'help' she and her husband pass on to them 'in those learning things' in a manner that draws on values and sense of family that can be traced to both sets of her own grandparents.

(ix) Annie

For most of his four-and-a-half years Annie had been providing full-care for her grandson. When I interviewed her she was 52 years old, nearly thirty years younger than Mary, but like Mary, and Hetty, Ann, Sandy, Violet, and Hine, she traced a personal grandparent ideal through each of her parents. On my asking her about her grandparents she began:

My grandparents were hugely influential in my life. And I was very lucky. I knew both sets of my grandparents and they were close.

Annie's parents separated when she was aged seven and she moved close to her paternal grandparents:

My dad's parents were Irish, 14 children – lovely. Very welcoming, very warm, very loving, very strong and very traditional. Lots of music.

I asked if any of their children were then still living at home with those grandparents and she answered:

No, [my father] was one of the babies but, saying that, there were adult children there all the time, coming and going. The house was always full...So I knew all my cousins and we met once a week...And then my mother's family, we went to live with them for several years and that family had all occasions together. We saw them many times a week. My grandfather used to wash and dry our hair. A very loving man. He used to walk me round the garden. I'm sure my love of roses and of growing things has come from him. Also just the general family and the importance of family, the things that you would do and how you treat children...Like our Christmases are all modelled on those Christmases.

Annie then explained, with feeling, her efforts to hold onto a family Christmas tradition and the special quality of her present loss-tinged 'pseudo' Christmases. When her own marriage had broken up her children's father had them for 'the entire Christmas holidays':

...[I] pretended Christmas just didn't exist. Just gone. So my kids and I, we used to have a weekend away at Labour weekend and call that our family time... We still do that.

With two sets of grandparents to see on one Christmas Day, how was that achieved?

We'd see them both on the same day...yeah...Dad would come and take us...It was good, so I was very lucky, and I think that just made it, a lot of traditions were just carried on. My grandfather only died in 1988, and he was 88 years old. Our family traditions were all there.

When I wondered to Annie if the strong model of grandparenting that she had inherited from her grandparents had fragmented with marriage break-ups over two generations she replied:

Well it never shifted about my role, no. And I don't think my mother stopped operating in that role either. It's just circumstances...And the world is so different.

Rather Annie found herself frustrated in expression of the expansive and inclusive grandparenting model she held dear, and fondly recalls from her grandparents. Her potential to fulfil the ideal has been stalled, dependent on her children becoming parents, her one grandchild to date born to a dysfunctional and estranged mother. So when she is talking of the 'lots of stories' passed down to her from her grandparents she reflects:

Yes [my children] have got those stories...I thought when they had children they would come out...[But] they say they wont have children, and I now believe them.

III. Lessons from Parents as Grandparents: Parents who Confirm the Lessons from Grandparents

As mentioned above, some of those grandparents who drew primarily on their grandparents for models of how to grandparent also spoke appreciatively of observing their parents' grandparenting of their children. At times they indicated ways in which this had endorsed or expanded the lessons from their grandparents. Eight grandparents – Mary, Hetty, Alice, Ann, Clark, Sandy, Jack, Hine – talked in this manner of their parents as grandparents.

(i) Mary's parents and her husband Tom's parents

From her rich web of memories of family connectedness Mary acknowledged indebtedness to her and husband Tom's mothers, whose support confirmed their family caring traditions. She and Tom had six children in five years:

[The children] had wonderful grandmothers. They'd give us a break. The two grandmothers...And we'd go away for a weekend. They gave us time out as they call it now...it's just fascinating to see just how much the grandparents were in photographs with the children.

(ii) Hetty's mother

Hetty wrote, *'I think that parenting – good parenting – is intergenerational.'* She describes her mother as:

a wonderful grandmother – She played a very positive role in my children's life – They had knitted jerseys she made, clothes she created. They holidayed with her while I had to work in school holidays.

(iii) Alice's mother

Similarly, Alice's account of her mother's care, as a grandmother to Alice's two sons, is an appreciation of her mother's help as 'late stage' parenting of Alice, enabling her in turn to parent:

I asked my mother to come to live with us so I could go to work and earn some money because times were hard and we were finding it difficult. And she said she would and she felt needed because she looked after the house and I didn't interfere. So she was there for the boys when they came home. So she had a huge role with my two boys and she absolutely adored them and they adored her...They never left the house without kissing and cuddling my mother.

(iv) Ann's mother

In a very different context Ann's mother filled the same role of 'safety net' to a stressed daughter-parent. Ann explained:

So a situation where [my mother] desperately wanted to see the children. And I had written back [to England] when I was finding life difficult, tired, and I'd written back to the extent that I wished I had some help because we'd lived overseas...and had household help. But we couldn't afford household help...so Mother decided she should come out, bless her heart.

Ann continued how, when she then unexpectedly became pregnant, her mother found work to cover costs to extend her visit, 'which was fantastic for me when I was expecting...She loved it. We had the christening and Mum was godmother.

(v) Clark's mother

Clark, who was largely separated from his mother during his childhood, had brought up his own children as her next-door neighbour. This he described in only positive terms:

I think of our children, if they're ever in trouble at home they'd just wander over there, to Nan, and they instantly got a warm response. That relationship between our children and my mum was extraordinary...It became reciprocal so when my mum was really ill and when she was really old, there was always a grandchild over

there to sleep-over...There was no pressure on them to do it. It was just their obligation to Nana. It was great.

(vi) Sandy's parents and his wife's parents

The extracts already quoted from my interview with Sandy, indicate his family's commitment to maintaining intergenerational contact during his growing up. When I moved forward in time to ask Sandy about his and his wife's parents, as grandparents to his children he replied:

Again I'd say it has been good. We were even further away from my wife's parents because by that time we were in New Zealand and they were still [there.] We had several big stays with them with the grandchildren so they got to know them quite well and there was a lot of mutual affection between them, the grandparents and grandchildren. But again a major expedition. My parents were here by then...So we visited them a fair bit. And the children stayed with them on two occasions when we were going elsewhere...we appreciated that support...But certainly we thought we would like to support our children and their children as much as possible. That was definite. And curiously one lot of our grandchildren are in England now so once again a long, long way away.

(vii) Jack's parents and his wife's parents

Whereas Jack's association with his grandfather was as a member of the family household, he described a contrasting relationship with his own parents, and his wife's parents, as 'grandparents by distance really', a complementary formative influence:

there was a strong relationship...I mean they came to visit and we went to visit, probably twice a year and stayed with them and so on... And probably [my wife's] father had the strongest relationship because he lived longer...My mother's been dead for I suppose 10 years. The children were teenagers and knew her well and kept very much in touch and she with them. She was strong at writing letters.

(viii) Hine's parents

Hine identified a repeating pattern between her grandparents, and her parents as grandparents, but noted a change peculiar to her mother as she shifted from parent persona to grandparent persona:

It was much the same pattern but it was interesting how parents treated grandchildren as to how they treated children...When you were hurt my mother would stick your finger in the dettol and throw the band-aid on. It was the father who was the comforter and the disperser of love and care. I had very little memory of my mother being a touchy, feely person. With the grandchildren all of that came out and that was quite a revelation to me. I don't ever recall hugging or kissing my mother in my life, but for my children it happened...My father was the same all the way through.

IV. When Parents have Provided the Grandparenting Model

Some grandparents while having little or no memory of grandparents, or even holding negative memories, had influential memories of their parents in a grandparenting role.

(i) Ruby

Ruby, who was aged 68 when she spoke with me, explained that only one grandparent, her maternal grandmother, lived long enough for her to hold any memories. Of her she said, *'I don't think she was a very grandmotherly grandmother. So not good role modelling there, except what not to be.'*

Initially in her childhood Ruby's grandmother had lived, *'in the same city, but you know travel wasn't easy then, and she was across town so we didn't see her on an often basis.'* Later, as Ruby tells, this grandmother became:

part of the family I guess...and she lived the last four years of her life with us, until she died. And I always thought of her, as a child, as a very old lady because she was a diabetic and didn't keep very well...only much, much later, when I realised she had died at 64, I realised how much younger than me, in those years from 60 to 64 this old lady was, who did very little...And I think of what I do myself. That was one thing, and the other thing was I never felt she cared for me. I never felt that she particularly liked me.

Ruby went on, *'But the grandparenting that I saw my own mother do, and to a lesser extent my husband's mother, was much more real grandparenting.'* Of her mother she expanded, *'She was a very caring mother to me having babies, and a caring grandmother to our children. She enjoyed them.'*

Both Ruby's parents and mother-in-law lived at considerable distance, in opposing directions, from Ruby and her family.

My parents came every time I had a baby and cared, they came for Christmases, we visited them, the children wrote letters, my parents wrote letters. There was a lot of contact...And I need to fit my father in there as well because the children adored him as a grandfather.

Of her mother-in-law Ruby said:

I'm sure my children would have thought of her...as an old woman, and she would have been in her 70s in the children's growing up years, but she visited us once a year after Easter, and stayed about six weeks...We visited...but only for a short time.

This grandmother, mother of three sons, was reported to have especially *'cherished'* Ruby's oldest daughter's arrival – *'a bonus, special.'* Then, when three more granddaughters were born, Ruby found her, *'a bit sad that there wasn't a boy':*

and then when quite a lot later [my son] was born, she was absolutely thrilled that there was a [son of the family name] born...And just the fact that her son had a son, she wanted him to have a son. So that was really quite special to her, and she died actually later, but she had a very special year when he was born...But nothing had changed the joy in that first girl.

(ii) Carol

Carol, 64 when she talked with me, owned no memories of her grandparents who had died when she was young. Rather she had, *'watched my own parents as grandparents...They were incredibly supportive and active so they had a lot of involvement'*.

Carol had brought up her children in close proximity to her parents. It had allowed a time commitment by her parents to her children of a markedly different nature from what had occurred in Ruby's dispersed family; but, like Ruby, Carol in the following excerpt selects her father for special mention:

they took them on school trips because I was working, and when they retired they had them when they were sick and I was working. It was a traditional grandparenting. My parents didn't look after the children one day a week or two days a week like that. It was much more random than that depending on whether they were well...My father was excited about children in general. He loved children. My mother loved her grandchildren but didn't 'need' the mothering, grandmothering thing. She was a wonderful grandmother but in terms of meeting needs in her life, I suppose it wasn't.

(iii) Briar

Briar, aged 59 years, had only one grandparent alive to remember, a paternal grandfather, *'a very eccentric man...we saw only rarely'*. With hindsight she regretted that rarity and the consequent not-knowing:

In retrospect I'm really sorry not to know him, as he'd led an interesting life...He'd treat us, if we were very quiet, therefore 'good', to a piece of blue-vein cheese and a small glass of dry white wine in his study and I love those to this day.

However Briar did not claim this grandfather as a formative model, rather:

It was my parents, aunts and uncles really who shaped my way of parenting/grandparenting. We lived in a small country town and many relatives lived nearby...Also due to uncles in WWII prison camps my parents often helped to bring up cousins. One family of 4 living with us for 5 yrs...Family is family!

(iv) Rose

Rose was 56 when we talked together. In the course of talking she showed that reversed modelling had been an influencing force on her grandparenting behaviour. While holding no affectionate memories of grandparents she yet spoke of how, contrarily, from that lack she placed high value on grandparents; and while appreciating her parents as grandparents to her children, she rejected the grandparenting model they portrayed.

I began by asking Rose, who had grown up in England, what memories she had of grandparents. She replied, *'Well, I can honestly say none.'* Then she amended this to, *'My only memories of my grandfather is that he used to come and visit and drive my mother mad.'* Rose explained that such impressions, and others conveyed in stories about her 'missing' grandparents, steered her to question their patriarchal attitudes to gender roles, attitudes to some extent continued by her parents. *'That's where the negative lay.'* And driven to react Rose resolved her children [and grandchildren] would have equal opportunities and education *'be they male or female'*.

About her 'missing' grandparents - *'an issue'* - Rose spoke with feeling:

As a child I remember people talking about their grandparents, visiting grandma and visiting grandpa. How they perhaps interacted

with birds with them, or pets, or baking. Not everyone I knew of with grandparents had good experiences of them. Some disliked them intensely. But for the most part the people who spoke about them loved them. It was always 'something' - my thought - you didn't have, and you couldn't go out and buy. It was a family thing which we just didn't have.

After Rose's parents followed her to live in New Zealand and initially settled a distance away, she and her husband moved to be close by, to avoid her children being similarly deprived of familiarity with grandparents. Rose said of her parents as grandparents, making special mention of her father, reminiscent of Ruby and Carol:

They were good. They would come to our house and our children would go to their house. And my father was always giving them sly money to go to the shops to buy sweets...and they'd come home and he'd say, 'I used to have these when I was a boy.'...And they'd help him in the garden and they loved him, absolutely adored him. They were absolutely heartbroken when he died.

But added, *'As for following the same model myself, I think no, I don't...I perhaps make a strong effort to make sure that I don't.'*

(v) Flora

Flora was 53 when I talked with her. She began by telling me it was from her parents as grandparents that she had drawn her ideas of grandparenting. This was in spite of some memorable early images of her father's elderly seeming parents and her knowledge of a *'larger than life'* maternal grandmother. Flora characterized all as, *'not hands on grandparents'*.

Travelling to her father's parents across town had been difficult, *'it was two trains and my parents didn't have very much money. But on the 'two or three times a year to visit, we would be allowed to choose a hankie from [my grandmother's] drawer'*. She remembers, *'they had old fashioned roses outside their house, and every time I smell roses like that I think of [my grandfather], all those years later.'*

In contrast Flora's 'flamboyant' maternal grandmother was visited by way of train and bus, 'every Sunday afternoon'. She led a politically active life and Flora regrets that as a child she was unable to appreciate this grandmother, paralleling Briar's retrospective regrets over her little known grandfather. Flora reflects, with adult hindsight:

[my] biggest memory, I guess, as a child, was her coming once when Mum was ill and making my brother and me Davy Crockett hats from one of her old fox furs...and now I think, 'Wow! Wasn't she an amazing woman and I'd love to know her', and I'm really sad.

Of her husband's mother as grandmother to her three sons Flora is explicit: *She had no idea what to do with them...I rather hope she hasn't had a lot of influence on my grandparenting style;* and she admits to a counter bias towards her own parents:

My dad died when my youngest was one...but he absolutely adored them. He loved kids. We used to see them quite regularly, about every six weeks. But he did funny things. He was much keener on girls than on boys, my father...and when I had my second son he was quite disappointed it was another boy.

Flora described her mother, then in her 80s, as:

always actively involved with the kids...so that's been a really good model. She's really spoilt them in terms of what she's bought them and I'm exactly the same...And what's nice is that they genuinely love her and she loves them...so wherever they are...they send her cards, they always go and see her when they're around...Mum never came and looked after the kids and did anything like that. She was working when the boys were born. So it hasn't been that kind of a grandparenting role [but] if I could be a grandmother like my mum, I'd be happy.

My four youngest interviewees, grandmothers, were aged within a year of one another. Pansy, Joy and Dorothy were all 49 and Resa was 48. In common they had few if any memories of grandparents and fill the gap from a range of family experiences.

(vi) Pansy

Pansy's grandmothers had died before she was born. Her grandfathers lived at a distance, and they too died during her early childhood. She considered:

So probably my model of grandparents is from Mum. From Mum...and also from my ex-husband's parents. My mum died eight years ago. She was living with us. She hadn't been living with us very long. She was very ill...but she spoiled my children rotten.

Of her children's paternal grandparents she explained:

They've both turned 80 last January and they're great people. My children respect them and even though I have parted from their father they have never ostracized my children or treated me any differently. I suppose I've learnt from them and Mum about being a granny.

But Pansy, like Rose, without a familiarity with grandparents of her own carried a sense of loss. She talks of building an image of grandparents to fill a void:

[My image of grandparents was] only from my friends. You know all your friends at school talk about, 'I'm going to Nana's or Grandma's' or whatever they called them. And you used to envy them because you used to think, 'Oh, I don't have grandparents.' So I used to think they were lucky.

And adds: *'We should be like they are on the movies.'*

(vii) Joy

Joy's grandparents were, *'all dead before I knew them'*. It was to her mother she turned for lessons in grandparenting:

My mum, she would be your typical old-fashioned grandma, nana, waiting for the grandchildren...Mum simply adored my children...She actually was a gatherer of young ones. She was nana to many. I couldn't have asked for a lovelier mum. She was unjudgemental as well. My mother was my model...

Joy, who had stepped into a family crisis to care for her grandson, recalled her mother taking in Joy's son at a time of crisis:

By the time Mum got there I'd actually lost it...The safety net – yep! That's one of the most important things for the grandparent to be, that one step away.

Neither Dorothy nor Resa acknowledged specific influences on their behaviour as grandparents although both, in the course of telling their grandparenting stories, revealed apparently formative experiences.

(viii) Dorothy

Dorothy explained, *'I'm from parents who were born and brought up in Europe. Therefore, because of Second World War issues I don't have grandparents'*.

Memories linger only of, *'a box at Christmas with the chocolate and the goodies that they sent'*.

Dorothy developed her sense of family further:

My grandparenting skills probably stem from myself growing up, and the skills of my [Dutch] parents. We had a very strong Catholic background...Mum came out of a village situation...We lived simply but there was not a lot of commercialism in our home...and I think now that I'm a grandmother, and I've learnt from caring for my own children, I now suddenly have this heightened hindsight into things that I didn't even know I was learning from my children...I think I'm maturing.

Then continuing, Dorothy strove to make clear her valuing of grandparents for her children:

It's one thing I used to promote. 'You have to go to Grandpa.'
'No...I'd rather stay in a beach suit thanks and do this with my
mates.' – 'Well, I didn't have grandparents. You're lucky to have
grandparents. I think it is very important you realize that these are
important people. And they're not going to be around forever.'

Dorothy's husband's Māori parents have played a close and important part in her children's growing up. At their Māori grandfather's funeral, *'[They] sat in the back with the coffin and everybody else walked behind. So it was actually very, very special.'* Even now they are adult Dorothy continues to push, saying, *'Go in and see your grandma. It's important.'* adding, *'And she just loves it.'*

(ix) Resa

Resa was ninth child amongst eleven siblings. She knew no grandparents. Consequently, she explained:

My way of an example for a grandparent would have been my own
mother being grandparent to my older siblings' children. The
message I got, and it was always drummed into us as children, was if
you were going to have children of your own, look after them
yourself...the responsibility was to stop with us. And my mum and
dad, as the grandparent, were only so to speak the grandparent.
What that meant was for the normal family gatherings, but nothing
longer than a day. The rules were very clear.

Resa, in accepting full parenting responsibility for a grandchild and oversight of his brother, appears at first thought to be disregarding these 'rules' for grandparenting, notably made in a family of eleven children. But viewed again Resa can be seen as respecting the strong message of parent responsibility, in her case for her daughter and

in turn for the children of her daughter. In doing so she said she had the support of her mother.

When I interviewed her, Resa was looking forward to what she said was the regular, family, Christmas/New Year *'big trip'* to be with her mother. She reasoned, *'that is special for him [her grandson] to know her, for him to get a bigger picture. I think it's very medicinal for everybody.* She said this in the context of untangling for a six year old the complex generation layers of 'Grandma' (great-grandmother), 'Nana' (Resa in the parent role) and 'Mummy' (his mother, who does not parent him but is his brother's parent). It also suggests again a message of expanded and inclusive responsibility for 'issue'.

**PART II: GRANDPARENTS TALKING
AND WRITING ABOUT THEIR GRANDPARENTING**

I. Table Showing Number/s of Grandchildren (and Children) Per Grandparent According to Grandparenting Category.

Voluntary and varied grandparents	No.gch. (No.ch.)	Supplementary care grandparents	No.gch. (No.ch.)	Parenting full care grandparents	No. gch. (No.ch)
Mary#	16 (6)	Helen#	7 (3)	Alice	2 (2)
Hetty	7 (4)	Ann#	5 (3)	Carol	1 (2)
Ruby	7 (4)	Judith*	2 (4)	Flossie	2 (2)
Clark	8 (4)	Sandy	4 (2)	Briar*	2 (2)
Galodali#	4 (3)	Violet	1 (2)	Rose*	3 (3)
Hine*	4 (3)	Jack	1 (2)	Annie	1 (4)
Flora*	1 (3)	Dorothy	1 (3)	Pansy	2 (3)
Joy*	12 (5)	Victoria	1 (2)	Resa	2 (1)
				Joy*	12 (5)

- *grandparents expecting another grandchild at time of my contact.
- #grandparents with one child gay. As with Helen's daughter this does not exclude grandchildren.
- Alice had one child still alive; both Carol's children were dead.
- Briar and Hetty had step-children with whom they kept contact, as with step-grandchildren, but they were not part of this study.

NB Joy has been entered in both the 'full-care' and 'voluntary' grandparent columns (she moved to a voluntary role before my contact was complete) most especially to show how, in the fluid domain of grandparenting, 'snap shot' recording of statistics can give an incomplete understanding of the holistic picture.

II. 'Voluntary and Varied' Grandparents

(i) Mary's grandparenting

Mary had the most children born to her, six, and in turn, the most grandchildren of any of my participants. While Mary, and husband Tom, had an exceptional introduction to parenthood, with two sets of twins and two further births occurring inside five years, their sixteen grandchildren were spread over 17 years. In the course of time they had passed through all my three categories of grandparenting. At the very beginning, as Mary tells it:

I suppose every mother's dream...an only daughter, a fairy tale wedding, and all you expect. Actually she came home from overseas pregnant. So the fairy tale was over. We were a bit stunned but, as a family, we all [responded to her]. She was precious and treasured and when the baby came she was just everything anyone could wish. An exquisite little baby. She's been one of our most precious grandchildren.

And later on:

...when [that daughter] came to live with us, when things were getting really tough, we managed to get a house down in the little village ...so she had her independence but we were there...we were the anchors.

And again when the daughter had to go into residential treatment:

We did have quite a bit to do with her children, we didn't interfere in that, but they became ours. I just kept them and they were quite hectic times. But it was back to the school buses. I love them. I was part of the country school again. We did refer to [our daughter] but we were being parents. We were managing them. And finally we had to ease them back to her.

When a son and daughter-in-law separated, and each had with them one child of the marriage, Mary and Tom assumed a role where:

We were the common ground where [our granddaughters] could be together. But we never had any input into what they should do or not do. Well, you mind your own business don't you...

These phases of grandparent life accord with Mary's answer to my question whether closeness to a grandchild varied with the grandchild's age – the case for a grandparent 'career':

It's happened a lot. We've seen them get very close and then...[but] I don't think anywhere along the line we noticed any grandchildren falling off in any affection for us...[Tom adding] what did bring a closeness with any was when they had troubles. We drew them in and for a period they became closer till they sorted out.

Mary's and Tom's accounts of their family interventions together with this exchange on related role transitions bring to mind Joy's metaphor above, 'Yep, the safety net.'⁴

Additionally, Mary saw their relationships with grandchildren fortuitously mediated through their physical environments, which had provided spaces for shared pleasures, 'Both our homes the children were part of'. Although she speaks of 'plenty of family crises' Mary's words suggest the privilege of grandparents who are materially able to express the centrality of their family in their way of life:

We had a big place with six acres with all the goodies that you do have and they just loved coming there...we had treasure hunts round our garden. When we made our garden, the whole thing was, it was a children's garden. Unexpected little places. You can imagine how sad they were when we left it.

⁴ Kornhaber and Woodward (1981, p. 179) use the same phrase as a metaphor for the grandparent role. Alongside (ibid p. 178) they debate the nature of the grandparent 'career', also addressed by Cherlin and Furstenburg (1986) and Dench and Ogg (2003).

But in her view it proved a happy move:

I think we were very blessed in where we lived. It was such a holiday area on the shore...that right through their teens they came, and all I had to do was feed them and Popa took them fishing, he taught them to fish, he taught them to tramp, he taught them all those things...we could sleep about 20 in the place. Which Tom confirmed: We always had lots of adventures together...And we've got lovely records in photographs. So there's a wonderful history recorded of our links with all our grandkids.

Mary was aware that her 'blessed' grandparenting is not a norm and that changes in the role for younger grandparents are associated with external social and financial pressures:

I think the grandparents of today don't make the effort of the grandparents of [my childhood] because life is a totally differently run set-up. Grandparents are now working, grandparents are now busy, grandparents are now... 'ooooohhh'...it's the children's holidays'...and they come. And you know it wasn't like that, because in the 20s and 30s you went for a long time because, wherever you went...it was an effort to get there.

Asked how she managed 16 grandchildren's individualities Mary replied:

You know each one's what they are doing and where they are...and we really do stay in touch with them and they with us...We have wonderful reunions. They all come from all over the world.

(ii) Hetty's grandparenting

Visiting and reunions are part of Hetty's story too as she attempts to tease out the contribution of mode and context to the varied nature of her grandparenting. She considers the difference between everyday familiarity with nearby grandchildren and the means of relationship building that can bring more distant children close. For those of her own grandchildren, and those of her husband, who are relatively local she explains:

We quite often do things in sort of clumps of things that are around the various ages of the grandchildren. Like this time of the year there's a series of school concerts and dances...a whole cluster of things at the end of year – the graduations and school concerts.

Whereas she captures some of Mary's thoughts of togetherness when grandchildren come from overseas and visits last:

They come for at least ten days or a fortnight so you have very close, full-on, one-on-one stuff with the kids and babies being here, and the family loves the babies so everyone clusters the minute the little ones arrive from overseas...then you see a lot more of everyone in the family because they've come to see this one person.

On a son's local family, with three teenage daughters, Hetty has a sequence of entries:

Firstly...I have done lots of babysitting over the years and taken part in all the birthdays, school fairs, plays etc. Secondly there is a major illness and death sequence in the family. My daughter-in-law was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago – it is a genetic form. There is no cure. The fact that it is a genetic cancer is a worry with three daughters in the family.

Hetty explains she had been a close friend of her daughter-in-law's mother who had recently died of the same cancer, and for whom the family is still grieving. The entry

brings to mind Tom's words, '*...when they had troubles. We drew them in...and they became closer.*'

Yet Hetty's dilemma is just how to be close. She feels a classic grandparent tension between the need to share intimately the sadness and anxiety of her three granddaughters while yet remaining sensitive to the privacy and independence of her son's family:

[My daughter-in-law] will not accept a lot of help...The children know the situation but the whole subject is taboo unless [their mother] brings it up...the discussions are becoming more superficial...Has my relationship with the girls changed? the ease and love in a comfortable relationship has gone – I don't know if this is a stage or god forbid – a permanent pattern.

However soon Hetty writes more positively:

My daughter-in-law wanted the family (her father, my partner and me – her brother, and twin girls) to have Christmas at their place...There were lots of cuddles and laughter and enjoyment of Christmas – a special day.

Hetty uses telephone, internet, e-mail and texting to keep in touch with her extensive family. Christmas day she fits in telephone calls to several overseas grandchildren as well as calls across New Zealand. At one entry a young adult grandson passes en route and telephones to be '*collected at roundabout at 4.30 am!*'

Finally Hetty reflects:

There are times when holding your tongue is difficult – usually when it's about discipline. There are times when you are yearning to intervene when you can see what an end result will be – but you have to stay quiet...I feel very privileged to have played a role in so many lives.

(iii) Ruby's grandparenting

Ruby, like Hetty, had seven grandchildren, but with a son marrying over the course of my two interviews, she saw the likelihood of more grandchildren. It was regarding her older grandchildren Ruby felt concern. Her oldest grandchild was about to enter the teens and she considered how changes might follow:

When I said about finding young children easier, I think this generation has moved so far past and I think for me there is some nervousness in the teenagers who are just moving ahead in leaps and bounds.

But for the present Ruby showed herself closely in touch with what her grandchildren were encountering in their lives. Having moved home to be near her adult children Ruby said:

I definitely made a choice. When I came here there were people who made comments like, 'It's not a good idea to follow your family, what are you going to do if they move?'...And I said, all I knew was that this seemed right for me for the next five years...And I've loved that I've made this choice...I just knew that this five years was going to be "a goody grandparenting place for me."

Later she adds, *'When you live on your own it's lovely to have grandchild hugs.'*

Initially, being close had allowed Ruby to play a regular grandparent role, supporting two working daughters by collecting her granddaughters from 'Kindy':

I was able to pick them both up and perhaps go to the park and have a picnic lunch and it was really lovely. I'm so glad I had that time before they started school. [And now] I still have grandchildren who love to come and have a sleep-over at Granny's, as a treat. And that's a fun thing we do...they love having me to themselves for that

time. And we choose to do the play things. And that's really good. As good as it gets...

Here she emphasizes the voluntary nature of her grandparenting:

I haven't had to make great changes for my grandchildren. If I'm going to do things with other people in term time I'll say, "I'm free between 9 and 3". And I do go away, not just the big trips, but I'll have a week here or there. And my family can manage quite adequately without me.

Understanding from Ruby that her's had been an active church-going family I asked how she saw religious faith passing on to her grandchildren. She replied that her different children's families had different practices. *'But there's still some sort of a faith there...it pops into conversation or not perhaps...It's not an issue for me.*

The two oldest of Ruby's grandchildren were beginning secondary school. She voiced uncertainty for both. Of her granddaughter she said, *'I'm a little nervous that the school won't work but I hope it will. It's a big school'*, and of her grandson:

the second day he had sports and found that he's a very good high jumper so for him who's nervous of the whole type of new schooling, to find something that is positive, that was good.

Ruby spoke a lot about her grandchildren's education and earlier she had shared with pride:

Probably everybody tells you this. We can't believe how bright all our grandchildren are...and they've all got parents who are interested in their education – and grandparents who delight in their achievements...

But when I asked if she had dreams for her grandchildren Ruby apparently interpreted my question in monetary terms, and she remarked that some grandparents put trust

funds away for their grandchildren's education, which she isn't able to do. She added that she believed *'my families have all got that under control. They've looked ahead...'* Financially she did contribute, *'in a lot of ways, some dental work next year, which I've offered to help...so small things.'*

Ruby's words show her to be absorbed with pride and delight in her grandchildren yet more than once, as though scanning beyond the visible horizon, she expresses a protective anxiety about their future, wondering *'whether there's [an extra stress] ahead through teen age years, I don't know'*.

(iv) Clark's grandparenting

Clark could remember the moments, and his surroundings, *'sort of etched like a photo'*, when he first learnt he was to become a grandfather. He describes his feelings then, *'I was just absolutely thrilled. I was delighted.'* He continued, describing this granddaughter's birth:

In our house, here. I was doing things like boiling kettles and getting bundles of newspapers, which I thought that traditionally you were supposed to do...It was totally exciting. To me, because we are so much part of this house and have been so long here it was very important that it happened here...There was my grandfather, before my mother. All those things added up. I'm sure that if we were a typically mobile New Zealand family...it wouldn't have been the same, but when something really significant like that happens in a house you are reminded of all the other things that have happened. You can feel the peoples' presence who have been around. I love it. Most New Zealanders miss out on this. Sadly.

Clark puts forward the child/grandparent relationship, defining the quality of grandparenting, as where grandparent rights belong. *'You don't just have a good grandparent or a bad grandparent.'* He gives as an example his Nana, *'to me...the most marvellous grandmother...for my brother she was a really bad grandparent.'*

In telling how he builds his own relationship with his grandchildren Clark again expresses his sensibility to the association of place and persons, quite purposefully linking grandchildren to their physical surroundings:

I like “indoctrinating” the kids in my way really. I take them out when they are little as little, and show them things. I try to awaken sensitivity by showing them to particular paintings, allowing them to touch the paintings and things like that, the door bell and then the connection between pulling the cord and seeing the light come on. I believe this excites them to colours and things...I just carry them around...And very early on they learnt to pull the chord to make the bell ring in the clock...

Clark inserted the inverted commas around ‘indoctrinating’ in the transcript after I had returned it for his confirmation. He clearly had some discomfort with the word as elsewhere he says, ‘*I certainly wouldn’t indoctrinate them to be sort of Englishy family-forever-in-the-same-house department. I think that would be immoral.*’ I wonder here if he is fully recognizing his grandchildren’s ability to create their own ‘castles’ from the materials and values their grandfather is introducing them to.

Later he is talking about in-laws joining the three-generation family Christmas dinner:

One thing I was unreasonable about was...like I had expectations...like they’d always have Christmas here for example. It was unreasonable I realize now. [My son and his family] were down at his wife’s this year. It didn’t worry me but it did before. The most crucial things happen here.

Similarly again Clark says:

Certainly with our children, if anything happened to any of the parents, we would be absolutely expecting to have them, without any question. That is our situation here.

‘Here’ becomes a powerful place, a *tūrangawaewae*⁵; although Clark immediately qualifies the expectation with, ‘*But it shouldn’t be automatic. One of the other affection sources could be much better.*’ Themes around boundaries of nuclear and extended families, the continuity and separation of generations, come to mind. I reflect on Clark’s growing-up cared for in an extended three-generation family.

Clark introduced to our talk a grandparent concern of his own:

I may be a bit paranoid about this, is the very strange, bizarre thing of prejudice against men and their relationship with children. I think it is really, really sad. Lots of men are actually frightened now...The male having been the ‘breadwinner’ (inverted commas) means he has much, much less time with the child, the grandchildren.

Gender in grandparenting came up again, from a different angle, when I asked Clark if he had noticed a change of relationship with his children, since their children had been born. He responded with, ‘*They’re dependent on us, and M. [his wife] particularly.*’ Later he elaborates about the time grandchildren are with them:

I feel a bit guilty. [M] will tend to stop work for the children more than I do. If I’m working down the creek or I’m working on something, I’ll tend to keep going whereas she will stop. That’s with the little ones. The other ones will come out and be with me.

Yet it is with ‘*little ones*’ Clark claims special delight, ‘*I like them when they are just getting to talk. It seems ultimately exciting.*’ Though elsewhere he speaks with a common ambivalence felt for ‘*little ones*’, when he cannot walk away:

If we get tired, and we had one grandson down the other night, and I’ve been extremely tired lately, and he hopped into our bed and he just screamed. He’s two. He was very upset and after a while I just felt very, very tired and I just wanted to sleep and I couldn’t.

⁵

From Māori: a place with which a person feels spiritual bonding and identity.

(v) Galodali's grandparenting

When he was talking about his mother Galodali mentioned her '30 odd grandchildren', highlighting the changes in his family over one generation. Of his three adult children only one has had children. This daughter had moved into his locality since the fourth of her sons, a four year old, had been born. Speaking of this Galodali, who described himself as having, 'a strong sense of family, said:

It was good. Again in my personal philosophy I did not get involved. I never encouraged them one iota to move here. But it's a much more manageable situation to be able to just pop around. And you have the joy of knowing your grandchildren rather than just seeing them now and again.

For Galodali, as for Clark, the visiting of grandchildren was frequent. And like Clark, Galodali notices his daughter's change to a more dependent relationship now she has children, 'Perhaps as the years have gone on her drive to independence has got subjugated to the usefulness of grandparents.'

Striking in Galodali's diary and talk of grandparenting is the place of food. Food appears as a medium to transmit his caring, nurturing, and treating. There is an associated concern for his grandsons' health. A diary reflection records, 'Always concerned about the health of our grandchildren – two critically affected by asthma/allergy (life threatening) – other two suffer from asthma (less severe).'

Galodali grows an ample supply of fruit and vegetables. He delivers these regularly for his grandsons. Entries record:

Wednesday March 23rd.

Stewed windfall peaches for children...large pot.

Friday March 25th

Called to see family – took fruits (fresh and stewed).

Then, with the management of his older grandsons passing to him for the subsequent weekend, Galodali is in a position to treat them with food to his and their taste:

Saturday March 26th.

[Older grandsons] visit – helped with bonfire – helped clear up grass.

‘Mouse Power’ – work in one hour stints.

Lamb chops for dinner, and roast veg. – children love all meat but lamb esp.

[Two younger] grandchildren unwell.

Sunday March 27th.

[Older grandsons] here again. Firewood and clean up again but highlight was lunch cooked over the bonfire, spuds in ashes – sweet chestnuts – sausages and marshmallows on sticks. Children helped pick up nuts. Here for dinner. Home late.

I read into this Galodali’s enjoyment in these activities shared with grandchildren, and speculate his own grandfather likewise had enjoyment in the company of his grandson helper.

Galodali several times indicates cautiousness over intruding into ‘grown children’s lives’. He chooses his grandchildren’s education, presumably as an issue of significance, to illustrate his point, musing on his financial means to benefit them:

I have toyed with views on education. I don’t have much income but I have a lot of wealth and I toy with whether we should be dismantling some of our wealth so our grandchildren could be having some of it, in terms of education, life experience or...betterment in life.

Already he and his wife help towards, ‘school camp and things like that... piano lessons or whatever the heck.’

When I asked Galodali if there was a grandchild age he preferred he said, ‘No, personalities more...to be totally honest, I’m not very keen on babies. I’d rather have someone I can talk to.’

(vi) Hine's grandparenting

Like Clark, Hine could recall first learning she was to become a grandparent, but she speaks with more ambivalence and an appreciation of arriving at a new life stage:

We were absolutely ecstatic, but we thought we're far too young to be grandparents. Do we really want to be? Are we old enough? It was very selfish. Until the moment of birth, and then we just went 'doooolambee'.

Although her daughter had requested Hine be present at her delivery this was not possible for medical reasons; her loaded comment, '*the interference of outsiders was huge*'. However at her next grandchild's birth Hine was able to stay through delivery and said of the experience:

It was amazing and an event I'll never forget...We were left alone, we had midwives, it felt great. There were women there and yes, it does matter. There are ways of doing things...very good midwives, really, really good. One was Māori, one Pacific Island. And the doctor was a woman.

But when subsequent grandbabies came Hine's role changed to support for the existing grandchildren and, '*that was pretty marvellous*'.

I asked Hine if she had a relationship with her grandchildren's other grandparents. She replied, '*Absolutely. With each of my daughters we have a relationship with the other grandparents and it's a very positive one.*' Hine sketched word pictures of the other grandparents. Notably, one grandmother displayed a sharply contrasting response to grandparenting from any expressed by the grandparent participants of this study. Different too is the grandchild response of Hine's ten-year-old grandson:

She's really clear that she's not interested in any of that 'stuff grandchildren'. She doesn't send the grandchildren presents, forgets

their birthdays...[My grandson] does not have a good relationship with [that] grandmother...

Hine's description of the activities that she and her husband share very purposefully with their grandchildren, is sweeping:

My husband's a 'hunter/gatherer' is the way we describe it...My mother was very involved in horticulture so we're very interested in plants and birds and all...So we, from a really early age, take them into the bush and get involved with them in that way, and the same in fishing and the same with sport. We take it upon ourselves to help them in those areas, in those learning things...We buy books as presents, read to them a lot. Also tell them a lot about the families.

There are similarities here with Clark's 'indoctrination' of his grandchildren. Hine argues, 'We see those things are our role. I think it's about shaping values. Some might call it interference'; elsewhere saying, 'We want our grandchildren to know very clearly where they belong...and to have our value system rather than somebody else's.' She recounts too the messages of caution and self-preservation she feels called to instil:

We've taught him how to unload a gun and how to take a bullet out. They absolutely kill...And the other thing is cars...

While Hine speaks positively about the interfamily relationships between in-laws she also nicely catches the sensitivity which can exist at the junction of even the most cordial examples of such involuntary partnerings, saying of another daughter's in-laws:

We get on fine...Our value systems are similar which is good. But we are two influential sets of grandparents. Things like names in that family became quite an issue...There is a little politicking goes on...In their [Irish/Catholic] family for him to marry a Māori was quite a big step.

Names - Hine says, *'I think naming is a huge thing'* - and religion are likely spheres for tension. For the Irish/Catholic grandparents, that the grandchildren are not baptised *'has created tension'*. For herself, Hine says, *'What I am clear about though is that the ethics, the values are practised, and they are'*.

When Hine's first grandchild was born both his parents were in employment and there was a period when Hine and her husband were able to look after him daily: *'He was the love of our life...We really believe we had a real hand in shaping that child.'* That daughter has continued to combine motherhood with a career. The mother of Hine's other two grandchildren has made her career looking after her children. Speaking of these contrasting scenarios Hine alludes to existing conflicting socio-political expectations about what mothers of young children should do. They should be contributing to the work force and they should be mothering their children. In Hine's words: *'[My daughters] have made a deliberate choice, and I support them entirely...They both feel guilty...and that's really sad for a woman.'* She then adds:

That's the other difficulty for grandparents. Grandparents are often still working. And I feel guilty about that because I should really be grandparenting. My children's grandparents were free to be grandparents and I am not.

Hine tries to sum up her feelings about having grandchildren:

I think it is some really inner thing about seeing yourself reflected forever. It's this immortality. I know if there's immortality it's in your grandchildren.

(vii) Flora's grandparenting

With her only grandchild born and living overseas Flora has a grandparent script of separation replayed continuously since New Zealand's European settlement. The difference now is that Flora can communicate through the Internet directly, one to one, to build a relationship with her less than two-year-old granddaughter. Mary's letter writing, or Hetty's phone calls are out of reach for a preverbal child. Flora can talk, smile, laugh and play games, and be recognized doing it, again and again. This is the

magic of twenty-first century communication technology for grandparents at a distance. Flora describes what they do together:

We do share with her in terms that we are part of her life...she certainly recognizes us now when we turn the computer on...She waves to us. We blow each other kisses. We do peek-a-boo...She offers us grapes and we pretend to eat the grapes ...Sometimes she doesn't want to know us at all...That's fine.

For all the magic of technology the quality of Flora's contact with her granddaughter is still dependent on the intervention of her son and his wife, and their sympathetic purpose to build the grandparent/grandchild bond. Important too has been the family's ability, in expenditure of time and money, to make long distance visits. Flora's granddaughter stayed with her grandparents at about age six months, and Flora, who had travelled to be present at the time of her birth, had visited again. Regular video-conferencing since has allowed continuity and development in the relationship built during the occasional, tangible, 'flesh and blood' time, shared together.

Flora was very committed to work at the time she learnt of the expected grandchild, with a request to be at its arrival; and her immediate response was ambivalent, 'Well, not this year!' But she went, and she said:

I used to worry about if I had a grandchild what I'd be like...would you look at it and think, 'oooooh...what a horrible baby'. She was just gorgeous. And I was surprised, and you love them, and they can do anything.

Apart from the challenge of distance that grandparenting posed for her, Flora faced a call to adjust to cultural difference. Her granddaughter was being raised in a small apartment in a high-density urban setting, looked after by a nanny while her parents worked in high-pressured jobs. She describes her feelings on her second visit:

To be honest the first couple of days I thought, 'Oh god! There's so much of her.' I thought 'I'm not used to this small person.' After a couple of days I got used to her. Like she was lovely.

Flora then turns to her views of the nanny:

I wasn't at all keen on this idea of a nanny...I was thinking I would prefer that they were both looking after her. But I've come back thinking the nanny was a really good idea. The nanny was lovely...They regard her as a third parent and I can see that she provides a lot more structure in her life than her parents do...So it's different, but it's a lot more positive than I would have thought.

While she is away Flora is struck by how child-unfriendly the dense urban environment is:

I was surprised how incredibly difficult it often was to get around with her...You always have to up stairs and down stairs.

Flora went on to weigh up the hazards of this 'alien' environment, along with its opportunities, with the relative security of New Zealand, '*I think New Zealand is a safer, cleaner, better environment, a saner environment here*'.

Less directly, much of the content of Flora's talk suggests her watchfulness over the long-term welfare of her granddaughter. More broadly, on the responsibilities of grandparents, she says:

If you have children...I think you have responsibility to children for the rest of your life, once you've had them. If that responsibility means that in some circumstances you may have to care for their children, then so be it.

(viii) Joy's grandparenting

During my time of contact with Joy her grandmother role with one grandchild was changing. The grandson for whom she had been acting as a parent was to return to the home of his mother. While declaring herself always a 'voluntary, varied' grandparent Joy had responded for my study as a parenting grandparent.

Joy, a mother of five children, had become a grandmother early, aged 36. She commented on being a grandmother, '*I've been lucky to have four out of five [children] allow me to be a grandparent*'. But she is outspoken on the limits she places around her role as a grandparent, and her need to stay in control of it:

I'm not ever going to be a baby-sitting grandmother. For a special occasion, but not if it became regular, no way. I'm not here at their beck and call. I'm only young myself. I consider middle age is young...I've still got a life to lead.

As Joy told her story of grandparenting twelve grandchildren, with a thirteenth expected, her grandparenting interest and activity appeared to embrace all the children:

I just go with them as they come...I love the lot of them...The biggest thing that is awesome for me is that I go to every child's birthday.

But the particular circumstances of a grandson's family separated him out. This twelve-year-old had lived with her for nearly a year. She emphasized, '*That's by choice. That was my choice because I didn't want to see his life ruined.*' She explained: '*His mother couldn't handle him...This daughter is suffering from post-traumatic stress, also bi-polar. She's just had a new baby.*'

Joy's grandson had suffered a disrupted childhood, especially since his mother separated from his Samoan father. When his Samoan grandmother made accusations against Joy's daughter, CYF and the Police became involved. Referring to CYF, Joy said:

I went up there myself. I did what I had to do...I said I would have [my grandson]. Anyway I couldn't see any of my kids go through [a formal removal from home]. [It was] all informal.

During the time Joy's grandson had been in her care she had seen him change till he was ready to return to his mother. '*He's made exceptional progress.*' She described the efforts she had made, liaising with his school and doctors, to manage his originally disturbed behaviour without medication. While working as '*a team*' with his mother, she had also opened up his relationship with his father. Her recipe for change included, '*cuddles*', '*routine*', '*talking*' and '*keeping [him] doing*'. Further she explained:

I'm one of the lucky ones that I haven't had to fight for money. My husband's got a good job. [My daughter] has given me what ever she's been able to whenever I've needed it. I don't have to buy his clothes. She buys them.

III. Grandparents Providing Regular Supplementary Care

(i) Helen's grandparenting

Helen's introduction to grandparenting came when a pregnant daughter returned home, escaping from an abusive marriage: '*So she came home at five months...and then till long after that.*' Until recently Helen, working herself, had played a major role in her granddaughter's care whenever her single mother was working. She described those years:

Not easy ones. And I walked for miles with the baby getting it to sleep and things like that...[Then] I would be there when she came back from school...And it's all a joy really, isn't it? You do what you can for your kids and you work for the grandchildren in the same way as you would for their mothers. Later on I felt I ought to have made her more dependent [on my daughter]. To some extent you are fulfilling your own needs. And I did that. I did have that need in my life to fill my life...And it's probably now that it's worse than ever because that's all gone.

Helen's daughter began a relationship with another woman and Helen became largely excluded from the family they formed. There was a new baby. Of her granddaughter then she said, *'She was 10. It was very hard for her.'* And of herself, *'I was now another 10 years older. And I couldn't very well get into things for me...or make relationships with others.'* Elsewhere Helen reviews her involvement with her granddaughter, *'I don't think I managed it well. I think I did too much for too long.'* She adds, *'I think with hindsight one can always do better.'*

While hurt by the enforced loss of the previous ongoing relationship Helen realizes her granddaughter is entering adolescence and some drawing away could have been expected:

that's normal. Now we're getting into the hard stuff...and I think that's more difficult. We're almost at the stage when I can't go on insisting that she does anything. She's her own person now.

Helen retains one regular contact, an 'ace card'. She has encouraged her granddaughter's piano playing, so after school, *'she will come one day a week to practise the piano. I've got the piano here.'* Helen has also looked ahead to leave, *'some small inheritance that will be for her education...I think I've protected her as much as I can.'* She says, *'my own health is going'*.

(ii) Ann's grandparenting

In response to my introduction of my research Ann began talking about the cost of paid child-care:

It is a problem because it infringes on the reasons why both parents are working...and it's only a certain type of salary that can cope with that...[For my daughter] the costs are saved with our help.

A little later Ann continued further:

The rapport you have with your own child, in our case our eldest daughter, maybe such that you fall over backwards to help them. Fine, but if it goes one step further, or more, it can become a problem and then it can become an issue over which you can stumble.

Ann explained that for more than a year she has been looking after her daughter's three children, on three afternoons, from after-school till one or other of their parents is returned from work. This has entailed circuitous travel besides the three hours being with and cooking for the children, extending from early afternoon till seven in the evening. She says, *'it's a long, long...'* and fades.

Until two years past Ann had been living, with her often absent husband and elderly mother, overseas. Keeping contact with her New Zealand based grandchildren had entailed *'a lot of to-ing and fro-ing.'* Therefore, leaving a teaching career, she had moved their home to be relatively close to one family of grandchildren, and within closer visiting of the other.

To her pleasure, after her arrival, Ann's daughter had a third child, *'the only one...that we have seen since he was a tiny baby.'* Then her daughter decided:

she had to get another job for financial reasons...because of their life-style...So, OK I had agreed to help...Would I help till the end of year? Oh, yes sure.

Ann said, *'I found it quite demanding.'*

A new arrangement was proposed for the New Year but it fell through and Ann told, *'I really didn't know what to say. I had **not** understood that she expected this arrangement to carry on.'* Ann's husband noted the cost of petrol, *'We've got this big car. You have to have a big car for three children and a dog.'* Payment for the petrol was to be made *'once she got her money sorted out ...[but] that has never happened.'* Ann lists other things that have never happened. When I guess her daughter is very pressured, Ann responds, *'Oh, yes, very. There's no wilful neglect. But because she's pressured.'* She describes a complicated and tight system of weekly care involving her

daughter, son-in-law, school and child-care centre, car, train and back-up helpers, 'It's adjusting logistics and who's doing what.'

Ann reflects on the situation:

It's a recycling in a way of your giving. You gave as a mother naturally. "Naturally" is the word to emphasize there. You did what was expected of you without any query. You had those children therefore those children were yours to look after, to care for...To what extent is this expected to continue...My son-in-law and daughter have good salaries now. They have a life-style, a ten-acre property with a high mortgage. Fine, but...at whose expense? From the point of view of grandparents, because they take it on it becomes an accepted thing...by the parents and by the state I think.

There's not much understanding or awareness of the amount of effort, financial and physical effort required to do that as you're in your 60s or 70s.

Ann mentions the accord she can feel with other grandmothers:

We talk about our nannying. You get this kind of lovely reward from the children and you feel this "high" ...You feel ashamed of yourself if you're the least bit grudging...vis a vis the tremendous privilege of being able to be involved with the children physically.

But speaking of her children's in-laws Ann said:

I had always hoped that when the children got married the parents of their spouse might be people with who we could identify...In all the whole situation that is not the case. And it's a strange feeling of loss, that that's never going to happen.

She continued, describing the ‘other’ grandmothers in warm and appreciative terms but concluding, *‘apart from their children, our children and the grandchildren, there’s nothing in common.’*

(iii) Judith’s grandparenting

Judith introduces herself:

I’m a grandparent and I stopped teaching last year and I’d said all along that I would look after my grandchildren on a once a week basis to help [the children] if they were living in the same city. It was something I’d always thought I could do.

Judith is part of the care ‘team’ for her 14-month-old granddaughter while Judith’s daughter works a five-day week. Judith travels to the family’s home one day a week at 7 am and can expect to be free to leave at 5.30 in the evening. Her son-in-law has concentrated his work hours to four days, allowing him to be home with his daughter one day a week, and for three days she attends a crèche.

Judith is clear she is doing this childcare for her granddaughter, but concern for her daughter is there too:

because I offered. I personally don’t approve of childcare and it really concerned me when she talked about going back to work...this wee baby in a crèche...they keep talking about the student loan. And I do think there are pressures...She says, ‘Oh, we can’t manage on one income. How did you do it?’...I think it’s sad and she’s found it hard trying to work.

Several times Judith returns to stress her regular input of childcare as ‘offered’, as though needing to remind herself where it fits in her, as she understands it, chosen grandmothering role, *‘I don’t know...Sometimes I think, “Oh, not another grandmother day.” Not quite that because I offered. I wasn’t pressured.’* And again, *‘It’s a long day and slightly boring but as my Dad said “it’s the life I choose” and I offered and I’m not complaining.’*

There are three occasions on which Judith is asked to do extra minding of her granddaughter when out-of-the-ordinary events crop up for the parents. She responds with satisfaction, *'this is the sort of thing I always thought I would be used for [and] what I stopped teaching for.'*

Throughout her diary Judith expresses delight in being a grandparent and in being with her granddaughter. She lovingly notes and reports on details of developmental progress in the little girl; yet there is a repeating ambivalence about aspects of her role as she finds it. On the first page of her diary the word *'washing'* occurs six times and in the first three pages has occurred twelve times. It continues to recur regularly throughout. She expresses concerns about the hygiene and management of her granddaughter's home. She explains to the diary:

When I first went to [my daughter] I said I would do the washing – and I do – I do 'moan' to [husband] that now they save it all up till I come...I do all [my granddaughter's] washing and theirs including personal, sheets and towels. Can't complain as I offered and I prefer that to doing housework and it does help them. When Mum visited she always hung out and brought in the washing.

Another recurrent theme from this 65-year-old grandmother is her desire for a *'quiet time'* when her 14-month-old granddaughter will lie down for an afternoon rest. She celebrates when it happens and regrets when it does not, *'alas no rest after lunch'* and *'it is a long long day – wish she'd sleep'*.

As a diary writer Judith was not questioned about whether she based her grandparenting on any model but in the course of her diary account she makes a number of references to her mother and even more to her own memories of mothering. She has retained, for her grandchildren's use, toys and clothes from her own children. There is a sense that for Judith there is a lineal flow from family to family to family. She sees her *'Mum'* in her granddaughter's *'silly looks'*. She says of her mother, *'She was good and helpful (mostly) to me and the kids so what I do is "payback".'* Having found a *'photo of my*

Gran, Mum, and me on the beach Judith is planning to 'stage a similar photo' in company with her daughter and granddaughter. And elsewhere she writes:

I wonder if I am becoming like my Mother who must have been of a similar age when she became a grandmother. I can see many of her attitudes and being 'naughty' giving [my granddaughter] ice-creams.

Robinson found, in her interviews with provincial Pakeha women, that when family members died they did not stop belonging, but were 'retained in the present internalised family configuration' (Robinson, 2005, p. 112).

(iv) Sandy's grandparenting

Sandy said, 'having two daughters [we always] hoped, expected to have grandchildren eventually' adding, 'I must say they didn't hurry about it.' Now they have two grandchildren from each daughter.

While Sandy and his wife have travelled to England to see both babies born to one daughter living there, with local grandchildren, very differently, Sandy has a hands-on management role on two days weekly. He travels to their home in a nearby township. He explained his assumption of this role, 'I'm mostly retired and...I've got time to look after them. [My wife] has less time'. Their daughter had wanted to return to part-time work, 'back into a career...with all professions you don't want to be out of them too long'. Sandy disclaims any idea his daughter was drawn back to work for direct financial reasons, but conscious of the cost and commitment in achieving her career, she is keen to return for her own satisfaction. His daughter pays for the petrol used in Sandy's travelling to his grandchildren and he sees no reason for other recognition:

I don't see why grandparents shouldn't look after their grandchildren, and not expect to be paid for it...I'm not suffering any financial loss.

He acknowledges there is a financial saving for his daughter in that she is not paying for childcare when he is providing it, but of the arrangement from his point of view, he comfortably states, 'We're just happy to help.'

When I asked Sandy if he had realized how difficult looking after two pre-school children could be, he replied:

Not really but I'm learning. When you're at work you can have a coffee break and it's a real break and you can sit and natter. But when you're looking after little ones...you really can't leave them alone...You can't just ignore them.

The younger child had just started to walk, 'so now you have to worry...we barricade the steps.' Discussing time, Sandy says it is not a problem in that the days are available, but, 'it discounts other things. I'm just busier than I was before...I can't take long coffee breaks.' The younger of the grandchildren still 'sleeps for an hour or so and that gives a little bit of a break'. Sandy usually takes the grandchildren out each day, to a park, to the library, 'we walk everywhere', followed when back with a children's video or reading or toy playing.

I asked if after two daughters, Sandy was looking forward to doing 'boy things' with his grandson. He 'admits' to taking him to some Field Days and describes his grandson 'tear[ing] around looking at all the machinery...from the word "go" [he]'s been interested in anything with an engine.' Sandy then ponders the question of stereotypically gendered behaviour in children, without resolution. He explains his approach as:

I want to encourage them if they show an interest in something...I'm not a great believer in trying to push one's descendents to do something.

Sandy thinks that having grandchildren has helped their children understand better, 'what it was like for us' and has 'made a somewhat closer relationship.' But he adds a lot of shared family time is focussed on the grandchildren. 'Children are like that. They tend to soak up the attention.'

(v) Violet's grandparenting

Violet's one grandchild had lived with her since she was born. Providing a home for their pregnant daughter had seemed the best way Violet and her husband could support their young, single daughter. Violet's husband had died unexpectedly shortly after, and at age five-years Violet's granddaughter, together with her mother, was still living with her. *'I offered it to her. It was an offer'*, Violet says. But there was an expectation daughter and granddaughter would eventually leave. Looking ahead Violet said:

There's going to be a time that is going to be difficult for me in the future. I know that...and I'll just meet that when it comes...but you do what you do with what you've got, and how it is at the time.

Further considering her household, and the interlacing of roles, she reflected:

It's been easy too. I think there are a lot of young women who wouldn't want to live with their mothers. It's give and take on both sides. It's sometimes hard to let go my mother role of her. So I try to let that go.

On the other hand there have been times when she has called on her mother role:

I remember teaching her how to sing to her and rock her to sleep...how to talk to her. And she said, "Mum I wouldn't know. I know how to do that now. How do you know?" I said, "My mother taught me."

Similarly aware Violet had been careful not to adopt a mother role to her granddaughter, *'You could take over. Her primary attachment is very much to her mother.'* She believed her working life has helped her maintain a separate grandmother role:

I've removed myself from this household every day...and I've had this other life...[My daughter] was free to manage her day and to learn

and let other people come in...PAFT and Plunket and I wasn't involved and I didn't want to be...she had the responsibility, not me.

Violet had been present at her granddaughter's birth and said of it, *'I thought it was an amazing experience'*, adding, *'It was wonderful to be asked to be there.'* Now she talks of her granddaughter's maturing since she has been at school, *'all the stuff she's learning about. I love that.'* She encourages their relationship:

She and I are early birds she tells me and "Can I snuggle into your bed for a while?" And I said, "Oh I do like that word snuggle."...When she comes into me in the morning that's a special time and she's very chatty and we talk about all sorts of things...And she'll come with me to do things.

Violet's granddaughter's father has, *'always, always'* kept in touch with her, but his relationship with her mother had been slight and Violet has played a facilitating role in contact between the parents, *'I think I've been able to diffuse it – any of the tension.'* As she explains, *'He is very casual. And he loves her dearly but he has a totally different outlook.'* Eventually some regular exchange of visits has been established and Violet views her granddaughter, *'as really benefiting...[and] she has a very good relationship with her dad.'* Of his parents who are Māori, Violet says, *'I wouldn't have a lot in common but we get on fine. We've got the same sort of goal.'* They live at a distance and have travelled to their granddaughter's birthday and she has stayed, together with her father, with them post-Christmas. For Christmas, which Violet described, *'with all our family traditions and values'* he came to join his daughter's family.

(vi) Jack's grandparenting

When Jack's student daughter became pregnant she came to live in a self-contained flat underneath his home. As he said, *'this is partly why I have such an intense relationship with [my granddaughter].'* Jack had been at his granddaughter's birth, *'It was fabulous. It was very emotional for me.'* And subsequently, living in the same property, *'I was very much a presence...when I came in she would come up, or I went down.'*

Now his daughter lives away Jack still is in constant touch, *'perhaps not every day, but it wouldn't go past two days'* and *'probably one weekend in two, sometimes three [she] would stay over.'* Jack remarks on this, *'I don't feel [my daughter] uses me...it's not regular...there's no obligation on my part.'* But there is a regular arrangement for childcare:

Every Thursday I take [my granddaughter] to school in the morning. I go and pick her up and usually either drop [her mother] at the bus or at work. I don't have to do that. That's to do with my wanting to do it. And I pick [my granddaughter] up after school and that's because I want to do it. I've negotiated with my board...[Then] she goes to after-school care. And two days a week [my wife] picks her up.

Jack says of his daughter, *'I believe she's a very good mother. It is lovely.'* He finds with her, *'a much more adult relationship developing...a pretty open relationship'*. He notes however, *'a certain amount of dependence...particularly financial...she's hopeless with money.'*

Describing what he and his granddaughter do together he says:

probably I'm seen, and I do, involve her in more sport-type, physical activities...mini-golf...this week we went swimming...she's keen for me to go in with her...she's very keen for me to be involved in what she's doing.

Jack expands on this:

I used to think, "I can get [her] and do something else." I can't. If I'm caring for [her], I'm caring for her...I know it's a time for her. And I enjoy it. Parents don't have that luxury. They've got to do the housework at that time. I see that she goes home and I can do whatever.

Jack tells of:

a lovely thing we did last school holidays, we went to the snow, just she and I. We stayed there and it was a magic time...we did all sorts of things...roller-blading...we went to the hot pools four or five times. And had wonderful conversations.

While there Jack, who is a committed Catholic, read his granddaughter some bible stories. She asked if the stories were true and Jack explained the importance he felt lay in *'that real unique moment'* and how carefully he responded to her, *'beginning to think about concepts'* and not wanting to *'tell her something I didn't believe myself.'* More important to him was *'some kind of theoretical base for some values.'*

Jack showed me a photo of his granddaughter, *'She's actually rather beautiful...The colouring, the part Samoan, is actually amazingly beautiful.'* Although his granddaughter's father had shown little interest in his daughter, her Samoan grandparents, especially the other grandfather, had kept contact. Jack had encouraged the inter-family relationship, even to his visiting Samoa, *'partly to increase my understanding of the culture and so on'*, but he talks of the difficulties of establishing a completely easy understanding across the cultural differences. The Samoan grandparents were wanting their granddaughter to travel to them for a family reunion, *'One of us will come and pick her up and bring her back'*. Jack's response had been, *'Hey, hang on, it doesn't work like that...you're strangers.'* Jack sees it, *'[not thought] through in our terms...a different attitude about children as I've observed. Children are just there and they get on with it.'* Once already his granddaughter had visited with her mother and then her [Samoan] grandfather was *'very involved and took her out and she still talks about it – taking her fishing and taking her to see the church.'* On crossing the cultural divide Jack says, *'we've got to be really careful whatever you think about it.'*

(vii) Dorothy's grandparenting

When Dorothy gave her questionnaire back to me she said:

I would have started Art School five years ago if it hadn't been for [my grandson]. And now because he's at school from 9 till 3 so am I...

Dorothy's grandson was five and had begun school. On Mondays and Tuesdays she had responsibility for looking after him outside school hours. She has provided a lot of support to her son and daughter-in-law since their marriage. Her daughter-in-law had moved to New Zealand to be with Dorothy's son. After she became pregnant the pair married and only then did it become apparent how disabled she was with bipolar disorder which was exacerbated by a post-natal depression. Dorothy had been close to the birth:

they asked me to come into the room. And this child...was so wide eyed and bushy tailed...I found it hard to let him go. I just fell in love with these big brown eyes.

To give stability in her grandson's life Dorothy became closely involved in caring for him, supporting her daughter-in-law and relieving her son. Dorothy says of her daughter-in-law, 'She's a very good mother and always tries to do the very best.' When her grandson was 'about two...[Dorothy] took him over for three months.' She still had two of her own children at home. Then his mother took him back but Dorothy explained, 'I was probably at that time really determined that I needed to keep a close eye on him...I'm on alert.' Now her son and daughter-in-law are separated but the daughter-in-law lives 'next door'. At the time we were talking Dorothy said her grandson spent a:

lot of his time with me, and the rest of the time he will probably spend 70% with his father, my son. He comes home to his mother a couple of days a week.

Of how she sees her role, Dorothy says:

I feel I've got to be a link...just to keep the sanity and maybe to protect [my grandson]...I can protect him a lot. And I try to bring

into his life lots of things when she's under pressure so he doesn't see her reactions. We try to take him away a bit till he's a bit older.

Although separated from her husband Dorothy and he agree, *'that us grandparents do things with him that are consistent...because it promotes memories.'* She adds, *'I'm thinking of getting him a fishing rod for Christmas. I've said to my husband, "You should take him fishing."'*

She sketches the activities they engage in:

He's taken him swimming...I do painting with him...I always read with him. That's what all four of us do. Some things are very consistent in his life that I have probably promoted because other things are unstable.

When I asked if Dorothy felt she had lost any of the traditional grandmother/grandchild relationship in providing so much parenting to her grandson she replied:

I don't know if I've lost anything. I just think I'm more fortunate than some of my friends that are now grandparents, who don't see their grandchildren very much...I try to remain a grandma role. I am juggling them...I enjoy my role as a grandma with him because I enjoy not having to do a lot of the discipline. I want to really do all of the fun stuff...the role is probably changing back to grandma.

And she goes on to review her situation:

If I hadn't gone to school this year I would have been there 24/7...I had to try and be strong and say, "I love doing this but now I'm getting the feeling that I'm being used." It was, "Oh, Mum doesn't work. Mum wasn't doing anything. Mum can do it...Mum can drive to the city in the rush hour in the morning and drop him at pre-school"...I'm learning to say "No"...I feel then I won't be taken advantage of...communication has to happen.

She then adds, *'you see Mum has got rheumatoid arthritis and Mum has her own limitations and a very painful body.'*

Dorothy acknowledged a financial strain arising from her grandmother role. She speaks of the cost of pre-school fees and reflects that a government subsidy would have helped. She reflects further on the 'now-a-days' life-style:

Now with all the young ones working, they don't stay home and look after children...it's such a consumer, throw-away society...they both have to work to get the material things that they need...I do think mothers as first care-givers is a good one. But having said that I've seen a lot of mothers who are better care-givers if they work. They can't cope with it all day.

Of her enjoyment in having her grandson come to her she says, *'I don't think I have the stresses in our relationship that parents come home with after work...I absolutely enjoy having him.'*

(vii) Victoria's grandparenting

At thirty-seven years old, the youngest grandparent participating and youngest when she became a grandmother, Victoria was a close part of her 3-year-old granddaughter's life. She regularly minded her at weekends to enable her single teenage daughter to work. Her daughter lives independently but Victoria has a teenage son living at home with her and her husband. Victoria additionally looks after her granddaughter on occasions to give her daughter some 'teenager' freedom for social mixing. However as she is herself working she sets boundaries as to when the transfer of responsibility occurs. There is an impression of a very full life, *'Loaded up car. Went to gas up car, rushed home to hang load of washing out before driving to P.'*

A measured tension is discernable in some of Victoria's responses to her daughter's requests for extra help beyond the regular weekends:

[My daughter] asked if I could take [my granddaughter] with me. Wanted to say 'No' – Not sure why – sometimes feel [my daughter] 'dumps' [my granddaughter] off at the drop of a hat. Ended up saying yes.

Although Victoria is incorporating her granddaughter into her weekend life, making cakes, joining family activities and celebrations, sharing her with shopping, expressing her pride, '*[one shop attendant] wanted to take her home for Xmas*', and pleasure in her, '*[she] and I bounced on the trampoline*', she also '*like[s] to wave bye-bye to them*' when her daughter collects [her granddaughter]. Victoria refers to [her granddaughter], on one occasion when she is demanding attention, as a '*dam nuisance*' and elsewhere writes, '*Ended up carrying her (again).*'

While it is Victoria who has the regular responsibility for her granddaughter at weekends this is in the context of her extended family. Victoria reports the pleasure her granddaughter gives her grandfather, keeping him company doing chores, and that he gets '*a real buzz when he knows she's coming over*'. There is time spent with a great-grandmother, great aunts and cousins. Victoria relays in a neutral tone, '*She has met her biological father and he is keen to have contact with her when he comes [here]. [She] has a half-brother who is about 7 months old.*'

IV. Grandparents with Full-care Parental Responsibilities

(i) Alice's grandparenting

In listening to and reflecting on Alice's grandparenting story, I was struck by how strongly her bond with her grandson was associated with the circumstances of her taking on a parenting role for him. The tragedies of a family road accident which had killed her son and injured her two grandsons, and the death from cancer of her daughter-in-law within two years, seemed constantly present in the responsibility, care and commitment Alice devoted to the younger grandson in her care. Although Alice was well informed of the grandparenting focus of my interview visit our early conversation was filled with the story of the two deaths, told as an essential element of her grandparenting.

Later Alice identified peculiarities of her role. She reminisced her delight when her son and daughter-in-law went with their older son to visit in Australia, leaving with her their younger infant son:

So it was wonderful for me to have him on my own and that was a grandmother's role. I was being a grandmother. Whereas now I have to be a grandmother, a mother, a disciplinarian...I don't know how many more relationships...If only I could be the one who's doing the good things all the time like grandmothers should do.

She speaks of a sense of confusion of roles:

Sometimes I think maybe I am being too grandmotherly rather than motherly, but I try not to be. I say to myself, 'Chill out a bit Alice. He wants to explore the world.'...I know I have to let him go to make the mistakes to learn. So what happens to me is you flip from a mum to a grandmum. You juggle it...

And as a way of reassurance:

I've had to say to myself, "What would my son or daughter-in-law do in this situation?" I call it going into my grandmother role and getting advice from the parents. The mother and father each side of me. And it was like, "It's OK Mum, you're doing the best you can and you're doing it right".

In her first years as a grandmother Alice had felt:

I had to stay in the background as often the mother of a male has to. It's not quite the same as being the mother of a daughter. It's not expected. But you still feel the same. They are still your children.

Then, with their parents' deaths, Alice's two grandsons were split between their two sets of grandparents:

...because they both had head injuries, they were both difficult to deal with...Two sets of grandparents, maternal and paternal, losing a child each and having two grandchildren, one went to the maternal and one to the paternal - us - it was like a broken home, a divorce, and we had to compromise...and sometimes it was difficult...There's no way we would have been friends had our children not married. So it can be done, but you have to work on it.

Alice told how holidays and special occasions such as Christmas had to be negotiated and organized and shared, to the benefit of the grandsons. She talked about a rewardingly happy Christmas Day with the brothers together; yet she felt a further complication to her grandparenting on these occasions:

It's difficult because you're aware maybe [the other grandson] may think I favour the younger one more...but I've always reassured him I hope, and he does treat me in a different way. He treats me as a grandmother... And it's a different relationship.

Because of his early injuries Alice's grandson's behaviour had proved very difficult to manage. She related a history of persistent struggle to get the specialist support services she needed to aid his recovery, *'I gathered all this stuff together. I have folders...about children with disabilities etc'*. However, she was aware of the privileged financial position she was in through her grandson's eligibility for Accident Compensation Cover (ACC). It eventually paid for his counselling.

The problems Alice and her husband have striven against have been exacerbated by their ill health, and their rural location. Travel to essential services is an excessive drain on their time and money. Regarding her age and health, combined with her responsibility for a minor, she said, *'You can't get sick.'*

(ii) Carol's grandparenting

Of her entry to grandparenting Carol said, *'I didn't think I'd be greatly affected...Yes, I knew it was coming 'cos her mother was very young...I just thought, "I'll just take it or leave it".'*

Carol's daughter went to Bethany, the residential institution for unattached pregnant women. She went by her own considered choice, not because her family did not support her. Carol spoke with emotion of the circumstances associated with her daughter's unintended pregnancy. Relationships with the baby's father were *'fraught'*:

I was devastated. It was the worst thing that – had – ever – happened to me. It was my first crisis basically. I'd lived quite a sheltered life up till then.

In retrospect Carol believed that while intending to leave decisions about the baby to her daughter:

when it came to the crunch I enabled her to keep [her]...When I saw she was a girl...So I remember the thought just slipping through my head at the time, "she won't be going far."...Now, how I see her, is the best example of the gifts of the darkness that I've ever had – out of that incredibly dark time for me – and that will be revealed when I tell you my story.

Carol's daughter and baby returned from Bethany to live at the family home. She managed her life and her baby fairly independently. Carol had a grandparent role:

We had a very close relationship. She lived with us. So when people talk of handing their grandchildren back, I never had that.

When Carol's granddaughter was two-and-a-half her daughter became ill. When her granddaughter was six, her daughter died:

And that's when I took over. What I wanted to say – the thing is – the loss is – the loss is from before she died to after she died, moving

*from being a 'grandparent' to caregiver, for me not being able to focus on the OK-ness of this child. The shift meant I then had to go into 'brush your teeth, mind your manners' and all of that, and she lost the person that never said anything other than that she was OK. That was the **huge** loss. For both.*

Carol explained that as a mother she had found the application of boundaries and discipline a '*struggle*'. For six years being a grandmother was different:

to have this child that all you have to do was show her love and acceptance...You lose it all. When she was just a grandchild I'd be off doing things, taking her to the park, taking her to plays, taking her to musicals...So there is that creative, it is a creative activity I think...

Then she put the other side:

The other side is, these have been the best years of my life. That was the loss and it has been compensated a hundred fold.

Three years after her older daughter's death, Carol's younger daughter died. Then her husband left and went overseas. Her circumstances allowed her to successfully argue a special case for eligibility for the DPB. Of these losses and transitions she said

Each time it took me the full two years to grieve. I think it would have been harder if I'd stayed married...being a single woman...I'm queen of my own world and I didn't have someone else to consider. I couldn't work...I had nothing left by the end of the day to give [my granddaughter], which she needed, whereas when my husband was there, he was there...Going on the DPB enabled me to just be with it...all I had to do was look after her.

While Carol experienced her granddaughter as a compensatory gift of light arising out of the darkness of her losses she was mindful of what those losses might mean for her granddaughter:

I've always made clear, my role is to be absolutely solid, reliable...to try to counteract some of the abandonment and loss in her life.

So, in spite of wide differences in values from her granddaughter's father and his family, Carol had worked to maintain an open relationship:

That's what she gets from the other family, social gatherings which I don't provide...I did encourage that because they have a large family and if I go that's all she's got.

Faced with an attempt by the father to reorganise her granddaughter's education Carol got mediation, which supported her and the *modus vivendi*. Carol said, *'He wouldn't have had a hope because he's never paid in...I'm her testamentary guardian, so she was left in the will.'*

Carol raised the difficulty which the 'two-generation gap' presents to grandparents who act in the parent role, *'particularly sexual mores, music and mode of dress...the bare midriff and other expanses of flesh!!!.'*

(iii) Flossie's grandparenting

Flossie begins her diary with, *'a little background. Our grandson's just on 13 and we have had him living with us for the 8 ½ months.'* She went on to explain that she and her husband had been close to her grandson since his birth. His mother had then been very young and when he was only one year old she had left him with his father, Flossie's son. He had lived locally, settled with his father who had taken custody, until his father began another relationship with a woman with three children. By then his mother had established a new family, with two children with a new partner. Flossie's grandson didn't seem to fit happily into either parent's family:

he would ring us crying that in the end, between what was happening in his mother's house and then his father's, we decided that it would be better for him to come and live with us. I will be honest that I really feel disappointed with both his parents...because we have just

come to the time in our life when we should be able to relax and enjoy life instead of having to go to parent interviews, worry about what college to send him to plus all the extra financial costs that are involved...We are both on an Invalids' Benefit (IB) and we do get the Unsupported Child Benefit (UCB) for our grandson, but feel that the amount is not enough to keep a teenage boy.

Flossie's diary entries go on to repeat these themes of anxiety and disappointment. One entry is timed at 2.55am when Flossie says her mind is racing. Amongst other thoughts:

I'm annoyed with how [our son] has just cut him off, specially after the fact that he was a solo dad for 7 years and since he married it seems that his wife and her kids are more important to him than his own son.

Flossie describes her grandson waiting, futilely, for his father to call, 'Wants to go to stock-cars with his dad':

He wants to ring him, but I put him off because I think if his father makes promises and doesn't keep them it will only upset him more.

Flossie expresses frustration at the impotence and irregularity of her situation. Unlike Joy she does not feel herself in the parent role by choice but perforce, through faults she finds in her son:

I get angry with our son for shirking his responsibilities...I would never make [our grandson] a ward of the state or put him in a foster home when we are here...what can you do when it is one of your own?

And while unlike Alice and Carol's grandparenting stories, Flossie's grandparenting account does not make an explicit comparison of a grandparent role lost to a parent role, the tension of establishing authority while holding onto affection and respect flows

throughout Flossie's diary. Some of Flossie's entries show the demands of her situation to be a stressor on her relationship with her husband. He seems able to retain a grandparent role, *'he's a bit of a softy...let's [our grandson] twist him around his little finger'*, and she reflects, *'I suppose a lot of it is my fault because I expect a standard, plus my age.'* She has complaints about her grandson's slowness to complete chores, eating fads and, *'the untidy bedroom...when I want things done I want them done when I want them done.'*

But several entries show her grandmother bed continues a favourite place for a grandson's comfort, and her grandmother role:

He wanted to sleep with me (Nana) so his Grandpop said OK because he felt that he was a bit down also over his father and stockcars.

Flossie ended her diary with, *'things are going along quite well at the moment.'*

Coda: When I called to thank Flossie for her diary account I found an abruptly changed situation. After difficulties regarding her grandson's schooling, without consultation, their son had that day removed their grandson from the one school and enrolled him in another school. Flossie reported, *'I packed up everything and said, "Here you are"'*. She went on, *'He's had a year out of our life. Financial stress, emotional stress and every thing else - that's it'*. Her husband, who was present, said, *'We're still grandparents...but not for days and days on. This might actually be the best thing that ever happened.'*

(iv) Briar's grandparenting

Briar quotes the grandparent adage, *'Friends say they love their grandchildren because they can spoil them and hand them back!'* Adding, *'Of course that's not the case with our [grandson]'*. Briar's diary evokes the tension between her own needs and her dedicated focus on her grandson's needs over the nine years of parenting him, *'Am realizing how much time and effort we have put into [our grandson] to the detriment of enjoying our own lives.'* Explicitly she mentions a void of activities – *'movies, trips and visiting friends'* - shared with her husband. She notes on the occasion of her *'best friend's 60th birthday'*:

She says she doesn't envy my position. They take a 2 week holiday every yr. together and recently did 3 months in Europe. We seldom get/take (habit now?) time for just the 2 of us and when I consider it we have v. few interests in common now. We got out of the habit of using a baby sitter because [our grandson] was in such a state...that we just stayed home. Some of our friends didn't appreciate having kids around again.

Briar's husband is more than 10 years her senior and she remarks on multiple aspects of generation gap, *'that influence how we all get along and understand each other'*. Alongside her husband, in comparison with current mores, she notices difference in their approach to *'discipline methods, language usage, manners and expectations'*. He however, *'has even more old-fashioned ideas and tends to 'go off'...whereas I try to reason and discuss consequences'...* Additionally, as a separate aspect of generation gap, she mentions the difficulties of, *'sustaining [friendships] with [her grandson's] friends' parents as they are much younger – have different interest etc'*. Then, along with thoughts of *'life insurance and wills not up to date'*, she has to think of, *'a video about puberty etc. I feel when I talk about it with [our grandson] I hardly know enough these days. This will be fun.'*

Briar reports talks with her grandson about values relating to race, sharing and materialism. Many of her entries are about her concern for her grandson's management of himself, especially at school:

He's pretty impulsive and can explode @⁶ times unnecessarily quickly...I do have concerns about him in the future, he should be with younger people – real parents – and I'm concerned how we'll all cope...

Briar works in a support role to schools which frees her conveniently for the oversight of her grandson's holidays but which puts her under added work pressure just as school

⁶ When citing diarists I have replicated the writer's script.

pressures rise for him: final school year events and the next year's entry. She is exposed to the stresses of the 'working mum' but a generation on, with some of the health problems which cumulate with age – post-operative bowel cancer and a malfunctioning knee:

29/11

[Grandson] in trouble at school today...Says he doesn't want to go to school tomorrow.

30/11

Tuesday = frantic day. V. busy @ work. Swimming after school then athletics for grandson. He lost his whole togs bag somewhere in the rush – new speedos, beach towel and goggles. Athletics finished @ 7.15pm. Makes a long day.

1/12

Went as a 'parent-help' on his school 'rewards outing' (he'd been a road patroller for two years). I mainly stood in the drizzle looking after their packs....

Her reward, '*He loved it all.*' Briar expresses her pleasure at such times when she shares in her grandson's enjoyments such as bed-time stories, shared games with her, with his friends, with cousins, and a successful sleep-over birthday party.

Adding to time related stresses either side of the summer holiday period are a sequence of extraordinary costs of school excursions, her grandson's birthday, Christmas, and 'hefty' transition costs to a new school. Briar writes that they receive no state allowance, '*We haven't asked for financial help though our son contributes (irregularly).*'

Briar's son became a father at 18. After attempting for a year to make a family life with the mother of his baby son, he brought him 'home' to Briar and her husband. Briar described the mother as having a personality disorder. She had several times tried to give her son away, '*[a] sick baby...hospitalised too many times to count*'. In time Briar's son '*fell out*' with his father and left home. Of this she says, '*very difficult for me*'. His son he left with his parents. His fathering role dwindled and eventually he

left for overseas, now keeping contact through 'phone calls and presents, with a promise to return. About her son Briar writes:

Some family members criticize – say he should be here...I'm disappointed that [he] is not taking care of his own son, missing such wonderful times and the difficulties too. Certainly not the way he was brought up!

These circumstances weigh on Briar's sensibilities. Additionally the regular contact which is maintained with her grandson's mother's family is experienced with ambivalence, as a disturbance to her and her husband's attempts to establish stability, and their own values, in their grandson's life. Briar's account suggests the other 'Nana' makes a consistent and committed effort to maintain contact with their shared grandson. Occasionally, through his Nana, he has contact with his mother. While Briar and her husband hold legal guardianship they work to support the relationship but are irked by the popular and materialist culture to which they see their grandson exposed:

Reflecting again on the difficulty of shielding children from all the unnecessary nasties that abound in our communities...and of course they need support and information to keep them safe.

Of her future, of her grandson, of his mother, and of her son, Briar writes, '*Who knows. I can't plan. We can't plan. We can't even do what we really wanted to do.*' She reflects, '*My dream – Big OE/work and see the places I've read about. Maybe I'll still do it – will be a bit older.*'

(v) Rose's grandparenting

When I interviewed her Rose had three grandchildren, '*and a fourth on the way*'. Our talk centred on the five-year-old granddaughter who had lived with Rose and her husband since she was a baby, and who had recently left to again live primarily with her mother. Initially, when Rose's granddaughter was moved to live with her grandparents, her mother moved with her. Supporting her daughter to parent is intertwined with Rose's story of parenting her grandchild, '*the aim was always for [our granddaughter] to go back to her mother.*'

Her mother, Rose's older daughter, was born with a disabling palsy. Although wheelchair bound, as an adult she had independence of living, training and working as a teacher. As well, as Rose put it, '*[she] wanted to have what everybody else had, a relationship and children.*' This she had achieved; but within months of her daughter's birth it became evident to her parents that her partner was dangerously abusive, both to their daughter and their granddaughter. Working with the Family Court, they guided their daughter to obtain legal protection from her partner, and took her and their granddaughter back to their home. Rose told:

We said to [our daughter], "You will always be her mother. She won't call me mother. I shall always be Nana and Dad will always be Granddad." What we had to do was to provide a stable environment for [our granddaughter] who hadn't had that...And she was quite a disturbed child...And at the same time [I had] to be a mother as well to [our daughter].

Rose's daughter stayed with her parents for six months:

I took over being her hands, providing the physical needs for our [granddaughter], and [our daughter] did everything else. So she would choose what she would wear, what she would eat, when she would go to bed...[She] would be the disciplining voice.

Eventually Rose and her husband helped their daughter to re-establish herself in her own home, '*We forced her to go back*'. They explored the availability of social services which could support their daughter's independence of living, at the same time as suitable child-care was set in place for their granddaughter, '*There was nothing*'. So their granddaughter remained with Rose and her husband, while their daughter did further study, and spent weekends together with her daughter and parents.

'And that became our life', Rose explained:

On Friday night I would step back. And all the rest of the week I would be the mother figure...If there was a big decision we'd say, "Well we'll ask mummy on Friday." ...[Our daughter] and I had to have lots of discussion about [boundaries]...We'd decided right from the beginning that there'd be no smacking. I saw no issue with smacking my children on the bottom or on the leg, and that of course has changed.

Rose's granddaughter initially needed bottle-feeding and was wearing nappies, *'It was big – looking after a house, full-time work, and looking after a child – and having her mother over the weekend.'*

Rose, who had suffered several strokes, leaving a legacy of fatigue, said, *'I had to wake up and suddenly be ten years younger.'* She paid for her granddaughter to attend child-care, partly she said, for the, *'interaction with people around her age.'* She noted that in contrast to the role of occasional grandparent:

when a child lives with you...all the time, they have to fit a certain regime...I had to be very, very organized.

However this tight weekly routine had another side and Rose described, *'special times together...we are very close...She'll come into my bed in the morning and she'll snuggle up with me.'*

Early after Rose's daughter had moved with her baby to her parents, the Family Court, on the father's appeal, had approved supervised access for Rose's granddaughter to meet with her father. Rose said, *'We all made a decision that we would not make it negative.* But over time the access appointments dwindled and she added, *'The father thing doesn't come into it at all [now].'* The paternal grandparents do however have contact with their granddaughter. Rose reflected, *'Why should they have to be punished for something their son's done. They don't have any rights. Allow them a relationship.'* Now photos, email, letters, Christmas and birthday cards are exchanged.

Throughout the four-and-a-half years Rose had this major caring role for her granddaughter she was part of negotiations with agencies and government to set in place a system of support that could maintain her daughter as a safe, independent, single mother. A total ‘*package*’ of psychological, personal over-night, and domestic help for her daughter, and psychological help for her granddaughter was being sought. The funding of support hours for her daughter was in place before her granddaughter moved to live with her mother⁷, shortly before the granddaughter began school.

And then she was gone. Rose’s reaction was, ‘*I was absolutely bereft and I thought, “This is ridiculous. I’ve wanted this. I’ve pushed for this”.*’ But it was not for long. Conditions of the government funded support ‘*package*’ required that granddaughter and mother return to Rose and her husband fortnightly, so that the restricted allocation of ‘*package*’ hours was not exceeded.

(vi) Annie’s grandparenting

Interviewing Annie: **Me**, ‘*Is he your first grandchild?*’ **Annie**, ‘*Only one - that I know of.*’ **Me**, ‘*So you are quite lucky to have him?*’ **Annie**, ‘*That’s a matter of opinion.*’

Aged thirteen, Annie’s second of four children left home following a row with Annie, and moved away to her father. She appeared back five years later, ‘*and we were sort of thrilled.*’ However soon the family began to be disturbed by this ‘prodigal’ child’s return:

She moved out and we wouldn’t see her...She would say she was coming but never turn up and then turn up. She would come asking for money quite a lot...I was getting more and more concerned.

Eventually the daughter came home pregnant to Annie. Annie knew she was drinking heavily. She arranged for counselling. The daughter had an abortion:

⁷ When Rose returned her interview transcript nearly a year later counselling was in place for her granddaughter. She wrote, ‘We know it will be an ongoing struggle to...retain funding.’ The following year the media reported the Ministry of Health had agreed to extend the support package.

But she was very angry with me. And she got an infection and the hospital thing began, where she was ill and I always had to look after her, and I felt as though I was being punished. It was all my fault.

When this daughter was again pregnant Annie had learnt enough of her gang associations, and the violence of her partner, ‘*all sorts of shocking things*’, to resist her daughter returning home, while supporting her otherwise. Yet:

she finally arrived, hollus-bollus, in November, for Christmas...She had the baby...[She] was in and out of hospital for the first year...She was like a mother that never woke up at night. He would be sleeping beside the bed and she never woke, so we did everything. And she breast-fed him. We would lift it up, put the baby on. We did everything for this child.

Annie continued describing how, in her grandson’s second year:

[his mother] would disappear for periods and take the baby, whom we knew she couldn’t look after properly...Sometime over the second year...she beat me up and nearly killed me. Then took the baby and disappeared...It was terrible and he [the grandson] witnessed that. It did a lot of damage to him.

After re-establishing minimal contact with her daughter, Annie and her husband began regular care of her grandson from Monday to Thursday:

I was trying to work full-time⁸. My husband was working full-time...And we would get him and he was a mess. He was uncontrollable and [my husband] snapped...one day, and went, gone. So I took him back to his mother and said, “I can’t have him right now”...

⁸ Before I interviewed her Annie had decided to give up regular work to devote more time to her grandson.

After that it took Annie three months to trace her grandson. She called, *'every single day, sometimes three times a day'* at an address for her daughter, *'He wasn't there but I managed to track him down at the baby-sitters.'* There Annie found a woman who had been looking after her grandson the entire time he had not been with Annie:

She was a lovely woman but...she wasn't well educated and didn't see that this was a very disturbed child. I was appalled...So when I saw this child I thought, "I have to do something." So when I went to try and get him help, [Parentline] went to CYF. And the next thing I knew CYF was involved.

Annie described an FGC where she felt she and her husband had been manipulated into taking on the care of her grandson:

[It had been] so emotionally taxing...and then [my husband] leaving, and then trying to fix the marriage again and trying to find my grandson. It was a bit of a shock...I didn't see it coming...We were hoping after six years of hell, that we would have a break, that we would go away...We just wanted some peace. And instead we got this child who was incredibly disturbed. I can't begin to tell you how disturbed he was.

At the same time Annie was coming to terms with a fuller comprehension of her daughter's disintegration into prostitution, P addiction, and violence, *'She does dreadful things apparently...I never, ever, thought this would happen to my family. Never.'*

Of outcomes from the FGC Annie said:

[CYF] never supported us. It's been incredibly difficult. We never received the help the courts ordered. We went to Parentline. They never followed through.

After about a year of complying with CYF requirements, *'do this and do that'*, socially isolated in a rural community because of restrictions on leaving her grandson with

anyone not police vetted by CYF, trying to retain a career and a marriage, paying fees for day-care, Annie was asked to, *'take him into town to see somebody.'* She responded in anger with expletives. *'Well, they were out here 8 o'clock next morning...we were in our pyjamas.'* Subsequently, after many promises – unfulfilled - weekly payments began for under \$100 00. Costs for day-care and counselling did not happen (day-care payments were \$160.00 weekly). Annie's rumination:

It's because, I think, you're a grandparent, so it's your job. The pressure on us was: no one else seems interested. What we are looking at here is a child...These people don't seem to know what they are doing. Nobody is looking at the impact on him.'

Yet Annie and her husband (who was present for the latter part of my interview) want the custodial role for their grandson to stay with CYF, as a *'buffer'* between them and his parents, *'because he's so freaky, and my daughter, she's so violent.'* The father had visited his son and Annie appeared reassured that the police, having said, *'Be very careful'*, had also said, *'While you have control of his son we guess that you will be safe.'*

Annie reflected on a lost personal community of belonging; and with it she referred to two levels of social isolation - her and her grandson's - arising from her *'off-time'* parenting role:

We've had to change our entire life... We don't go to parties. People our age don't want a four year old...And yet the younger people I can't be bothered with. I've never been so lonely in my life. I don't have friends any more...I look at the difference when my children grew up when we all had children the same age and we did lots of things together. And we don't have that with him. He's very lonely.

Annie said of her grandson, *'I nearly killed him several times because he's...oh, such a difficult child. He's a beautiful child. He's fabulous.'* As I was leaving, Annie's husband described, with enthusiasm, the enjoyment he was getting from taking his (step-)grandson out in a fishing boat. Annie had said, *'We're fishers.'*

(vii) Pansy's grandparenting.

In my interview with Pansy she began by saying, *'I don't think I've been grandparenting. I've been more of a mother for my granddaughter because of the way things have transpired'*. Later she said, *'90% of people at school thought I was her mother.'*

As Pansy led into her story I learnt how much of her life was passed in caring for, not only her granddaughter, but also her granddaughter's mother. In contrast Pansy's son, her granddaughter's father, had a peripheral part in the account.

When I asked Pansy if she thought her manner of parenting had influenced her son, or her granddaughter's mother, she replied:

He hasn't but she has. She quite often says, "You've taught me a lot"...She tells every one I'm her daughter's grandmother but says I'm the mother she'd like⁹. Which is nice in a way, but I think, "Do I really want this?" No, because my family don't like it when she says that. I suppose they think I'm their mum.

After Pansy's son and his girl friend, her granddaughter's mother, had ended their relationship, the girl friend found she was pregnant. Pansy said, *'Her family dumped her on my doorstep and said she was my problem.'* Because, in Pansy's words, this girl had been a *'working girl'* her son didn't know whether he was the father. Pansy said, *'Nobody wanted her.'* She came to live with Pansy's family, *'but she caused so many problems with the rest of my family that we really couldn't cope as a family.'* Then a neighbouring house became available for rent and she moved there. When she had her baby Pansy was with her:

And then [my granddaughter] was born. And I was there from then...and it's just carried on...So that's how I started to get involve

⁹ Pansy's granddaughter's mother's biological mother had died when she was aged three.

with [my granddaughter's] life...I did everything. I bathed her. I fed her...

After 16 months the mother moved away with Pansy's granddaughter, 'and then all these different men came along'. When, about this time, her granddaughter's mother made a suicide attempt, Pansy:

made her an offer that I, we as a family...would take [my granddaughter] for six months, give her time to get her life sorted out, emotionally, physically, financially...I said, "It's an offer." ...So she agreed and we took [my granddaughter] in for six months. And she just totally lost it. She started working again on the street....

Pansy recounted a conflictive period entailing Family Court mediations, during which she had interim custody of her granddaughter. It coincided with Pansy having surgery for a brain tumour and her granddaughter's mother having the second of her three children. Subsequently, Pansy said, her family, 'talked me into letting my granddaughter go back'. But attempts to settle the granddaughter back with her mother continued to fail. Eventually, Pansy's granddaughter had come back to Pansy one mid-week, and 'stayed here permanently ever since.'

Pansy still held guardianship but no longer had custody of her granddaughter. There were financial as well as legal implications. She explained, 'When I had interim custody, I was getting the UCB. It's something.' With the change of legal status Pansy no longer received government money. Her granddaughter's mother provided nothing and continued to draw the government payment for Pansy's granddaughter:

The only reason no one will dub her in, is because they know [my granddaughter] is in the best place. If anyone dubs her in she'll just want [my granddaughter] back for the money...But this does annoy everyone here and our extended family...It's not that we need it but it's the principle...every little helps...

Pansy expresses disappointment, *'from my point of view, being his mum'*, that her son's contribution to his fatherhood is limited to payment, as a 'liable parent', of Child Support to government's Inland Revenue Department (IRD). *'He's not interested in being a father.'* She goes on to explain a web of interventions she makes in attempting to compensate for both parents' fragile bonds to their daughter:

He does occasionally give her a Christmas present but that's usually because I've bought it and made him give it to her. I buy him a present for Father's Day from [my granddaughter]. So the same with Easter...But I do them for her mother too...I even do it for her other two children to see they have presents to give Mum. I think she's had such a sad life.

When I asked Pansy how securely settled with her, she felt her granddaughter to be she replied, speaking of her granddaughter's mother:

My granddaughter is the one thing that I have that she can take away from me at any time that she feels like it. I feel that I'm walking on eggshells a lot of the time. Every day when I pick [my granddaughter] up from school I call in and see her...but the rest of my family won't let me do too much...My husband sees what a hold she has over me to make me do things, to make me feel guilty.

Pansy repeats:

"Give the boy till he's seven and I'll show you the man". And that's how I see [my granddaughter]. She's seven in March...And I've tried really hard to show her all the right...She's such a loving, caring child...I'm not trying to take her away as such but I just feel she is better.

Pansy knows guardianship ensures she will have the ongoing *'right to discuss religion and school. Guidance shall we say.'*

(viii) Resa's grandparenting

At one point in interviewing Resa she said:

The other day we were washing the car and [my grandson] said, "How come I came to live with you, Nana, with you and Popa?" "Oh, your mummy got sick and she couldn't look after you and once you'd been with us a while we didn't want you to go back. We just loved you so much. And it was OK with Mummy and that's why you're still here." I just keep it simple for now and as he grows he'll want to know more.

Resa's daughter had 'mental health issues and was in an abusive relationship' when her son was born. Before the daughter's relationship 'crumbled away', she had a second son who was still living with his mother but regularly joining his brother, with Resa and her husband, at weekends.

Resa talked of the 'protectiveness' that is owed to children by adults. Of the grandson living with her she said, 'Children have special needs in life...I was just so concerned for the future for that little kid'. And, 'We are always thinking, "What can we do to help them?"'

After the initial shock of suddenly having the care of a young baby when aged 43, with, 'no cot, no pram, nothing...really to have the whole picture to change...I thought I was drowning', Resa came across publicity about the support network, GRG. She talked appreciatively about it as a resource:

Isolation was the worst thing because I didn't know anyone my age who had a six month old baby. The main thing is someone, whoever you are going to ring, is in exactly the same position as you.

It was from GRG that Resa found she was entitled to draw the UCA; though she reflected, 'I suppose it was never really about money.' She then went, 'on a little tangent', to relate with delight that her grandson's school had just rung with a commendation of his progress, adding:

they know we're grandparents not his parents ...Like we've come such a long way from where we first started...and we've actually got an ordinary, normal, nice child...I thought, "Wow! It was all worth it."

Resa had celebrated this pleasure with her husband and she talked as 'we' often, 'Yes, yes, because it definitely has been a two person job...[my husband] felt as strongly as I did.' She saw it as especially important when she and her husband had full-time work that a team routine was in place. They had carefully chosen a family-style day-care for her grandson in his pre-school years:

We wanted that family bit. Because we were both working and we were busy, we didn't want him to miss out on the experience of other siblings and how other children interact with each other.

The family's week is divided into workdays and weekend, a three-member family and a four-member family respectively:

[There are] definitely weekend things and we're very reliant on a calendar to explain to a six year old and a three year old what a week is and how it breaks down...I'm always on the search and change things that we can all do together...We sit down and we have a meeting...So we try to incorporate them into it as well.

In the thoughtfully managed – 'I am so analytic about it' – system of care she had constructed for her grandsons, Resa had included their father's parents:

Once a year I send them a photo and school report. But nothing...But I can say, "Well, once a year I did something and they knew our address and telephone number".

With her daughter Resa had limited rapport. Her second son had been the subject of a CYF FGC which had endorsed the arrangements in place when I interviewed Resa.

She believed her grandson remained at risk. In hindsight she expressed regret CYF intervention had not occurred when her older grandson had come to her:

*We would have had a better forum to conduct our family differences.
Because when a mother and a daughter are at odds I think that you
need intermediary people, the likes of CYPS and the social workers.*

Resa's husband is not her daughter's father and is Māori, while she is New Zealand/European. She related her older grandson's puzzlements as he attempted to understand his unconventional family's relationships. Watching her husband's bleeding finger her grandson asked, "So why isn't your blood brown?" ... Then there are several surnames to learn about... 'It's quite fun.' Oh dear!' said Resa.

CHAPTER IX: DISCUSSION OF DATA

*I am the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.*

Heredity, Thomas Hardy (Wright, 1980).

I. Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore in depth, selected themes emerging from data presented in the previous chapter. Three sections in sequence review, firstly, data relating to participants' memories of their own grandparents, then participants remembering their parents as grandparents and thirdly participants reporting on their experience of being grandparents. The first two sections examine factors which have contributed to the participants' personal understanding of what it is to grandparent. With these histories in mind the third section examines what further factors have shaped the experience of actual grandparenting the participants find themselves engaged in. Reference is made back to the grandparenting literature and to the themes selected from it, which are reviewed in Chapter V.

II. Grandparents as Grandparents

(i) Grandchildren with grandparents: doing together

Twelve grandparents in this study, some from each grandparenting category¹, could reflect back to a strong attachment formed in their childhood to at least one grandparent. The strength of affectionate feeling for their remembered grandparents

¹ See Methodology chapter. The three categories being: full-time care grandparents with parental responsibilities, grandparents providing regular supplementary care to assist their children's parenting, and grandparents with a voluntary and varied role.

emerges in the telling of anecdotes about shared activities, doings, what Cesare (2000) would interpret as a grandchild's and a grandparent's mutual participation in a relationship. All seem to celebrate the memories as fun. Mary told of her maternal grandmother in remembering the details of the tea parties she laid on, with best dressings up, dolls, and '*the dolls' tea set*'. Alice talked of country bicycling together with her maternal grandfather on work errands, and then of '*stories by the fire, drinking hot black-current juice made out of jam*'. For Ann there were memories of picking and sharing – and stealing – the various fruits from her grandfather's garden. For Galodali there was the '*doing and doing and participating*', and naughtinesses. Annie tells of her maternal grandfather, '*a very loving man*' who used to wash and dry her hair. '*He used to walk me round the garden. I'm sure my love of roses and of growing things has come from him.*' Both Hetty and Violet have a memory, with other things, of being taught to knit by a grandmother.

(ii) Specials

Often, together with the vignettes associated with the grandparents selected for salience, was the identification of a specialness, something out of the ordinary belonging to the relationship (cf. Keeling et al, 2008). Mary believed '*we were Nana and Grandad's specials*' and the tea-parties are spoken of as '*exciting*' treats. Alice recalled '*special times*' with her grandparents, with her grandfather '*treating me as a special person. I wasn't treated like that at home*'. Hetty's '*Mum's mum...was a special lady*' and '*you knew you were special*'. Ann's grandfather made '*a big fuss of me*' and she understood him '*as a special person*', with status in his village. Violet's paternal grandmother held a '*special*' meaning for her, having some quality with which Violet herself identified. Similarly Clark as regards his maternal grandmother, and Galodali regarding his maternal grandfather, suggest they were made to feel personally valued, uniquely important to their respective grandparent, in what Kahana and Kahana (1971) and Szinovacz (1998) refer to as a dyadic relationship. In Young and Willmott's words, with grandparents, '*children are supplied with another model of what adults are like*' (1964, p58).

(iii) Links to theory

To accord with attachment theory it can be assumed that all these grandparents had, in early childhood, found a sense of security and comfort in the person of their special grandparents (Bowlby 1995; Howes, 1999). The experience of the grandparent/grandchild relationship was internalised by the young child to be long retained in memory, and to direct anew future behaviour (see also Rappaport, 1958) or, in sociological terms, as anticipatory socialization for their own grandparent role (Riley et al, 1969; Cottrell, 1969).

Developmental and social psychologists argue an importance for the child, beyond simply pleasure, in the establishment of such meaningful early attachments. From these opportunities for intimate interpersonal engagement the young child tests the experience of self, 'I', in her/his exchanges with a safe and responsive 'Other', building towards the maturing child's attainment of selfhood (Cottrell, 1969; Erikson, 1998). Whereas for most children born to good-enough parents the parent/child bonding will offer an environment for this process to more or less evolve, grandparents offer a bonus and an insurance.

In Erikson's (1998) interpretation, these grandparents, as children, were interacting with their grandparents through the childhood developmental stages of establishing trust and autonomy, towards the later-life capacity for generativity and care when they in turn would replicate the grandparenting role.

(iv) Putting lessons into practice

Some grandparents recognized a connectedness from their experience of being grandparented to their behaviour as grandparents. Mary had noted, *'I learnt a tremendous lot from them on how to be a grandmother...little things that I did with my grandchildren I had definitely picked up from my grandparents.'* Helen was certain her grandparenting was modelled on her *'kindly and gentle'* maternal grandparents with whom she initially lived and who later followed to live with her family. *'I'm sure it was.'* Hetty's maternal grandmother gave her *'a model of grandmother that was special – it is still with me today.'* For Hine, that her consciousness of her Māori grandparents, dead in her infancy, *'exists today...hugely [affecting] how I am grandparenting'* illustrates King and Elder's (1997) finding, that knowledge of a

grandparent is, in itself, sufficient to influence certain active engagement with one's grandchildren. Galodali and Violet too, speak of carrying something over from their experience of being part of a close grandchild/grandparent relationship into the expression of their own grandparenting. Annie, whose three adult children, apart from the deviant mother of her grandson, promise her no grandchildren, is left holding onto a model she feels thwarted in fully expressing, while Rose, judgemental of her past family's patriarchal values, is strongly directed away from any model passed to her.

(v) How significance happened

In these accounts of grandparenting no common feature appears to explain why a particular grandparent had greater significance than others. They suggest rather personal idiosyncrasies and opportunity contribute to the forging of a mutual and active relationship (see Johnson, 1985). Consider here Clark's view of his '*marvellous*' grandmother as a '*bad*' grandmother to his brother whom she overlooked in preference of Clark. Mary thinks her closeness to her more geographically distant maternal grandparents was '*because it's the maternal line*', elsewhere repeating, '*A daughter's a daughter all of her life*'. Galodali thought his mother's dislike for her in-laws' religion encouraged his closeness to his maternal grandfather. Hetty valued both grandmothers above her grandfathers, though differently. Ann and Annie chose a grandfather for fondest memories, Ann a paternal grandfather, Annie a maternal grandfather. It was a paternal grandmother, living at some distance, with whom Violet felt a special affinity, rather than the grandmother with whom she lived.

So proximity offered no simple explanation as to why attachment had formed more strongly with one grandparent than with another. While Helen, Ann, Clark, Jack and Annie were for some time, as children, co-resident with favoured grandparents, and that intimacy could account for their felt fondness, Mary, Alice, Sandy and Violet all travelled, some far, to see their favoured grandparents. Hine affectionately and respectfully remembered her only living grandparents, who '*lived away*', for the fun of school holidays spent together and with cousins. Travel, holidays and distant visiting are common to these latter grandparents' stories. They are special and out of the ordinary occurrences. Mary's, Alice's and Sandy's stories especially hint of a physical adventure within the security of the extended family. For Galodali the adventure was existential.

Thompson et al (1991) note from their study of English elderly that grandparents were often remembered for the '*occasion*' of visits, the special quality of the experience that went with the company and place of grandparents and that, '*Most often these memories are positive*' (1991, p. 57; see also Tyszkowa, 1991). Something of the importance of place is present in the contextual settings sketched alongside grandparent memories such as Violet's recall of her grandparents' '*wonderful old house that was all sort of spooky...with big gardens...[to which] I loved going*'. (Place also assumes significance for some participants in their reports on their grandparenting below.)

(vi) More about the three-generation households

'I maintain that 'the family' is a construction, created socially and likely to be changed as circumstances alter

(Toynbee, 1995).'

Given the norm of nuclear families in New Zealand, the number of grandparents who remember living with grandparents when children is surprising. Toynbee (1995) from early in the 20th century, and Koopman-Boyden (1978) from its last quarter, found little evidence from their New Zealand studies of three-generation households. The explanations the grandparents give indicate that the extended family living of these former grandchildren was in response to a stress on their families, from without – Depression and the War – or within – parental separation and sickness. They bear witness to Szinovacz's (1998) call for grandparent/grandchild relationships to be viewed within the context of their times and to Troll's reference to systemic socio-economic conditions which '*push people together... or enable them to spread out*' (1985, p. 148). They provide examples of exchanges of caring obligation between primary kin reported on by Rossi (1993; see also Erikson, 1964 on generativity; French and Mason, 1993) and, with it, examples of what Bengtson (2001, p.6) refers to as '*cosurvivorship between generations*' or, according to another interpretation from Erikson (1986, p. 306), '*the culmination of the parenting role*'.

Helen and Violet refer to the Depression as a factor in parents moving to live with maternal grandparents. For Ann it was the War that took her to live alternately with maternal and paternal grandparents. Annie's family moved to her maternal

grandparents following her parents' separation. In these cases grandchildren lived, for lengthy periods, with parents in grandparents' homes, leaving the grandchildren with uniformly warm grandparent memories to tell. Poor health was an additional factor in Helen's mother taking her children to live with her parents, and it was because of his mother's TB that Clark was '*farmed out*' to her family, and it was because she was '*meant to be a delicate child*' Mary was sent on her Far North winterings.

(vii) Sickness, age and grandparents

Failing health accounted for a reversed generational response when Ruby's and Jack's parents took in, as '*part of the family*', a diabetic maternal grandmother and a maternal grandfather respectively. Flora's '*flamboyant*' grandmother too, also diabetic, once stayed with Flora's family for an extended convalescence. It is only Ruby and Flora who, in mentioning their grandparents' poor health, appear, as children, to have found it, and their grandparents' age, difficult to appreciate. Jack's resident grandfather, also in poor health and as Jack even as a child was aware, demanding on his mother, was yet depicted positively, physically loving, singing songs and playing games. Perhaps most importantly, Jack remembers him as '*always there*' and '*he certainly cared about us*', unlike, it would seem, Ruby's grandmother whom she felt '*never...particularly liked me.*' The contribution of time additional to geographic closeness, understood by Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) and Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) as basic to a good grandparent/grandchild relationship, is yet negated without an overlay of compatibility and a sense for the child that the grandparent relates to her/him, with what Kobak, calling on attachment theory (1999) terms '*responsiveness*'².

Writing early and mid-twentieth century, from a US and European setting, adherents of psychoanalytic theory such as Jones and Rapaport understood both living together with a grandparent, and the sickness and death of a grandparent, as potential threats to a child's healthy social development. More recent grandparenting studies present within-family familiarity with the physiological aspects of ageing and the occasion of death in the person of a grandparent as potentially beneficial life-course learning for grandchildren (Attias-Donfut and Segalin, 1998; Kahana and Kahana 1970; Kornhaber

² Just that quality which Dib's grandmother provided for him when it was lacking from his mother and father (Axline, 1973).

and Woodward, 1985). These studies also see the grandchild's positive experiences of ageing grandparents transferring to later positive attitudes to society's elderly.

(viii) Death and absence

Clark and Violet both retained powerful memories of a grandmother's death. Yet while they grieved at the loss of their loved grandmothers their greater distress apparently arose with their exclusion from their adult family's grieving, felt as an affront, belittling the depth of their attachment for their grandparent; being in Violet's words, '*very, very left out*' and leading Clark to say, '*So kids have to be brought into the trauma of grandparents dying.*'

Other grandparents' deaths were reported on with less emotion, including Violet's consideration of her other grandmother's death:

...we never went to the funeral... because you didn't do that with children³. She didn't die in our home... She was very ill... My mother said, "I don't want to go and see her because I want to remember as she was." That sort of instilled in me being nervous about seeing dead people. It was the sort of attitude in those days. I remember my mother saying that and puzzling over it.

Violet then reflecting, '*You know how you don't understand things and yet you keep them there until you make sense of them.*'

Initially after her grandfather's death, Mary, aged '*seven or eight*', couldn't understand her mother's and sister's weeping, until she '*realized that Granddad would never come again.*' Hetty, at 14 years, felt death '*cheated*' her of her maternal grandmother's love and wisdom. For Jack at 12 years his grandfather's death was remembered as '*a huge gap in our lives*'. All feel something is lost from their lives.

³ Townsend (1977) notes this custom in East End London in the 1950s. Clark is supported by Johnson's case that family rituals and institutions associated with death serve to sooth the disturbance of death (Johnson, 1998) and children's exclusion is contraindicated. See Dorothy's account of her children's attendance at their Māori grandfather's funeral.

For Rose and Pansy the “something” was always absent. They spoke of childhoods without grandparents, feeling their condition with a sense of deprivation, unlike other children, and from their child’s perspective seeing their families as disadvantaged. In Rose’s words it was, “*“something”... you didn’t have, and you couldn’t go out and buy... a family thing which we just didn’t have.*”

(ix) Tokens of continuity

There remained grandparents who reported no strong personal attachment to any grandparent, nor identified any formative grandparent model, but whose consciousness of family extended to a grandparent generation, and carried with it what McCready (1985) refers to as a sense of continuity and belonging. Judith was committed to replicating the three-generation photo of her grandmother, mother, and herself as a child, with one of herself as grandmother, with daughter and granddaughter. Briar’s grandfather, ‘*to this day*’ is brought to mind in her love of blue vein cheese and dry white wine. For Flora the smell of roses brings to mind her paternal grandfather. She now makes claim to her ‘*flamboyant*’ maternal grandmother with pride, and tells of seeking replacement pieces to complete a remnant dinner set inherited from her. Dorothy, who ‘*because of Second World War issues*’ described herself never having grandparents, yet had ‘*learned about*’ her grandparents (see King and Elder, 1997, p. 852).

(x) Gatekeepers

It was Dorothy’s parents who opened to her a knowledge of her grandparents and their lives and deaths. Dorothy in turn acts to ensure grandparents are a part of her children’s lives. Similarly Hine’s powerful consciousness of her influential Māori grandparents was dependent on accounts her parents conveyed. Frequent mention occurs in the grandparenting literature (Attias-Donfut and Segalin, 1998; Chan and Elder, 2000; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986; Fingerman, 2004; Missen, 2002) of the parents’ role, especially mothers, as ‘gatekeepers’, positioned to control the quality and timing of grandparent and grandchild relationships⁴. Parents can enable or block grandchild/grandparent rapport. Any positive understanding of her maternal grandfather Rose might have held was filtered through her mother’s feelings for the

⁴ As is exemplified in Section III below.

person who, *'used to come and visit and drive my mother mad.'*⁵ A similar 'gatekeeper' affect apparently applied to limit Galodali's association with his father's parents. Though described as only *'two minutes walk [away] ... we didn't have so much to do with them...My mother's relationship with [them] wasn't that good. I could sense that.'*⁶

III. Parents as Grandparents

(i) Observer learning

Cesare (2000) labels the learning of grandparenting that arises through a relationship with grandparents 'participant', and the learning which occurs in watching parents establish a grandparent relationship with one's children, 'observer' learning. In giving instances of the latter, participants here bring into focus the duality of the grandparent role: relating directly with grandchildren, and continuing the late-stage parenting role to adult children when they are parents.

Grandparents as parent help

For some amongst the grandparents much of their appreciation of their parents' grandparenting arose from the help they had received as parents. There appeared an unspoken message, 'This is what good grandparents do.'⁷ Mary and Tom were given *'time out as they call it now'* by their six children's *'wonderful grandmothers'*. Hetty held in gratitude her mother, another *'wonderful grandmother'*, for the clothes she made for her grandchildren, and for the holiday care she provided when Hetty, then a single mother, was earning. Similarly it was Alice's mother, coming to keep house and care for her two sons, which enabled Alice to earn. Ann's mother's arrival from overseas was an answer to her stressed daughter's wish for help. Twice Sandy's parents took over their grandchildren's care when Sandy and his wife needed to be away. Sandy now a grandparent wants to repeat such support, applying inclusively to children and to grandchildren. Ruby describes her mother as *'a very caring mother to*

⁵ Conversely, Rose and her husband moved home to enable their children to know her parents. She said about her children then, *'I would have hated for them to have missed that experience.'*

⁶ Fingerman (2004) suggests parents influence grandchild/grandparent relationships by modelling behaviours, through expressions of their own attitudes, and controlling contact.

⁷ As Pahl (2002, p. 110) endorses: *'the first responsibility of a grandmother is to support the parents.'*

me having babies’, travelling inter-island to be with her at each birth. For Carol, also a working mother, the care her parents provided her children, ‘*when they were sick and I was working*’, and on school excursions, was ‘*incredibly supportive*’. Fingerman (2004) advances the case that by maintaining ties with children into adulthood parents help secure their past investment in raising those children.

Parents being grandparents

But additionally participants had observed much affection pass directly from their parents to their children. Alice’s mother, ‘*absolutely adored [her sons] and they adored her.*’ Ann’s mother ‘*desperately wanted to see the children.*’ Hine watched her mother become a ‘*touchy feely*’, ‘*hugging kissing*’ grandmother to her grandchildren. Ruby, Flora and Rose singled out their fathers for the warmth of their relationships with their grandchildren though none were said to contribute childcare.

Two mothers are observed to spoil their grandchildren, and a father to slip his grandchildren ‘*sly money*’. Cunningham-Burley (1986 pp. 428/9) identifies ‘*not spoiling*’, along with ‘*not interfering*’ as one of what she calls the ‘*rules*’ of grandparenting. However, in attempting to clarify the boundaries of spoiling, she found her respondents’ definitions were vague. The overall intention of the rule appeared to be not to intrude into the parent’s role of child management. Material indulgence was seen as more acceptable than emotional indulgence. In this study the observing grandmothers, Flora, Pansy and Rose, are tolerant, even approving of the spoiling they witness. Flora and Pansy appear ready to emulate it. Their contrasting attitudes likely arise in the culturally sensitive domain of childcare between these middle-class, New Zealand participants and Cunningham-Burley’s mainly working-class, Scottish respondents of some 20years ago. Townsend (1977) and Young and Willmott (1964) found London grandparents’ behaviour towards their grandchildren typically lenient though the latter authors reported a resultant resentment felt by some parents. The much quoted saying from grandparents, ‘*You can spoil them and then send them home...*’ would seem to indicate the ‘*spoiling*’ of grandchildren is strongly associated with how grandparents see their enjoyment of the role (Thompson et al, 1991, p. 179).

IV. Grandparents being Grandparents

The twenty-four participants of this study together shared grandparent status but differently, selected according to their experiences as full-time carers, regular supplementary carers and voluntary and varied carers of grandchildren. In discussing data this section will cover elements common across the three grandparent categories and will also examine in what manner the three categories diverge. It will look at what participants are saying grandparenting means to them and how their individual circumstances and contextual factors have shaped their performance in the grandparent role.

The 'amoeboid' grandparent

Coming to grandparenting with existing understandings of what it is to be a grandparent, but confronted with unexpected surrounding circumstances grandparents struggle to accommodate to the reality the role demands. In their interviews Alice and Carol, both grandmothers parenting a grandchild as the consequence of a mother's death, referred to an identity shift as they moved from a grandmother role to a parent role, the one for a grandson, the other for a granddaughter. As Alice puts it, *'I've really been denied being a grandmother to a certain extent.'* She spoke of how when the parents of *'this grandson'*, then a baby, had to go away he stayed with her and *'it was wonderful for me to have him on my own...I was being a grandmother.'* Now there is painful ambiguity in her role. The grandparent/grandchild relationship has gone, replaced by feelings of mothering a son not rightfully hers, whose ever-present mother she may be usurping. Usually she is called Granny but:

He wants to call me "Mother" sometimes... I'm not his mother. "I'm your grandmother". "Oh but you're more like a mother to me." And that's so nice that he says that. But part of me... still grieves that his mother is not here to do the things for him.

She reports others have said, *'We've never thought of him as your grandson. We've thought of him as your own child.'* At times Alice finds herself measuring

what attributes of her caring are too grandmotherly and how to be his mother, *'to let him go to make the mistakes to learn'*. *'Flipping'* as she puts it between her grandparenting template, and an assumed parenting role.

Carol, like Alice, had initially joyed in the role of grandmother to an infant grandchild. She describes her understanding of that role as one of unconditional love. She had joined with her granddaughter in non-essential, fun, expressive activities, *'All you had to do is show her love and acceptance... it is a creative activity I think...'*⁸. Then after her daughter's death, when her granddaughter was six, Carol took over parenting, *'So when people talk of handing their grandchildren back I never did that.'* Of her *'creative'* grandparenting she said, *'You lose it all... by the time I've done the caring there's nothing left to do that... because of the boundaries, because of the discipline.'* Yet Carol qualified her sense of deep loss by describing her time parenting her granddaughter from age six to 10 as amongst the most pleasurable of her life, and by stressing the continuing richness she had found in life as a parenting grandmother.⁹

The protective being

In role confusion Alice attempts to draw back from what she feels is an inappropriately protective grandmother persona to a more robust mother approach, *'Chill out a bit Alice. He wants to explore the world.'* Her grandson is beginning to drive. Behind Alice's fear is the road accident that killed his father, her son. *'Deep down is a fear, but I've got to overcome that fear.'* Protectiveness is common amongst the grandparents. For her granddaughter Carol has to be, *'solid, reliable...a container for her, to try to counteract some of the abandonment and loss in her life.'* Reference to attachment theory and Erikson's theory of generativity offers theoretical bases for such protective grandparent behaviour and the distinctions between parenting and grandparenting roles that Alice and Carol make (see Approaches and Attitudes, The Psychoanalytic Legacy above). As a responsive protective being, a grandparent, subject to a successful attachment history, becomes a source of secure base caring.

⁸ See Erikson, 1964.

⁹ Alice's and Carol's accounts agree with interpretations of grandparenting by Rappaport (1956), Jones (1948) and Deutsch (1991) in their identification of dissonance between discipline and grandparenting.

While the detail of their protectiveness differs, protectively orientated behaviour is pervasive through each category of grandparents' data. Briar, parenting a 10 year old and conscious of her husband's advancing age, worries about her grandson's future, *'he should be with younger people – real parents – and I'm concerned how we'll all cope.'* Galodali's worry, *'Always concerned about the health of our grandchildren'*, leads him purposefully to deliver 'healthy' food to their home. Hine is attuned to her grandson's physical safety, *'We've taught him how to unload a gun and to take a bullet out. They absolutely kill...And the other thing is cars.'* Helen, concludes her account of her years dedicated to her granddaughter's care, mentioning *'some small inheritance for education'* and ending with the words, *'I think I've protected her as much as I can in the interval. I do all I can for her while I'm alive but I could stop being alive tomorrow.'* Flora ponders the security of her granddaughter's future in the contrasting environment of a metropolitan city or urban New Zealand.

Reflecting data back to theory

A quantity of academic interest addresses the significance of this grandparent alertness to future-proofing their grandchildren. Under the title Grandparenting and Family Preservation, Connealy and De Roos (2000, p. 32) suggest grandparents actively engage in their role *'[to] nurture family legacies and traditions through the lives of grandchildren'*, promising continuity of family and the self's culture, Erikson's *'cogwheeling'* (1964, p. 114) of generations and Hagestad's bridging of cohorts (1985). They refer back to Neugarten and Weinstein's study where most grandparents selected *'biological renewal and/or biological continuity with the future'*¹⁰ (1964, p. 201) as carrying primary significance for them in their role. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986, p. 50) similarly propose that grandparenting is understood as a *'hedge against death'* and *'immortality through the chain of generations'* (see also Toledo et al, 2000). Kornhaber and Woodward (1985) characterize grandparenting as, like parenting, instinctive, and so of biological origin, thus connecting it to the attachment theorists' protective being and further with socio-biology's concept of reproductive fitness: that grandparents are programmed to care and protect *'in order to reproduce vicariously through the efforts of their offspring'* (Leek and Smith, 2000, p. 179). While this theory begs many questions Leek and Smith argue that *'the potential gains to be made by*

¹⁰ Nearly twice as many grandmothers as grandfathers made the selection.

linking cultural and biological explanations are sufficiently great to justify exploring socio-biological reasoning further' (ibid, p. 177). They liken working with the two rationales as employing two perspectives, a foreground culture imposed on a background biology. The grandparents are primed to protect but how they do so, even if they do so, will depend on their socio-cultural environment.

Responsibility

Alice and Carol had become parenting grandparents through parent death. Worrall's 2009 report on grandparents¹¹ raising grandchildren in New Zealand records this as the least frequent cause of grandparents assuming care of grandchildren, and outcomes are the most likely to be positive. The loss and grief of an adult child's death will generally arouse emotions of positive support dissociated from blame and judgement. Worrall found most grandparents assume the care of their grandchildren as a result of drug addiction, a behaviour likely to attract social opprobrium. Annie was the only grandparent who identified with certainty the drug culture of her daughter, but Briar knew that drug misuse contributed to the mental instability of her daughter-in-law. That was probably true also for Pansy and Dorothy's daughters-in-law and for Resa's daughter. Both Annie and Briar expressed incredulity as they grappled with the reality of their changed lives and faced family dysfunction previously beyond their imagination. They agonized the failed parenting of their children and reflected on what blame lay with them as parents. Annie: *'I felt as though I was being punished. It was my fault'* and Briar: *'it may be our own jolly fault because the way we brought them up just wasn't good enough.'* Minkler and Roe (1993, p. 26) refer to similar anxieties expressed by the mothers of crack cocaine addicts they interviewed, *'somehow this could have been prevented if I'd raised my own children better.'*

The 'other family',¹²

Given the level of stress and danger Annie associates with her grandson's *'freaky'* and criminal father, and the lack of confidence Briar has in her grandson's mother, both grandmothers put remarkable effort into maintaining a workable contact with the 'other

¹¹ 84% of participants were grandparents, the remainder were other kin.

¹² For a discussion of the changes in family linkages and relationships which follow marriage and child-birth in the younger generation of a 'nuclear' family see Townsend (1977) *The Family Life of Old People* (pp. 246, 247).

side' (cf. Missen, 2000). Smith et al (1999) and Worrall (1996) show they were not alone.

Across the three grandparenting categories some contact occurring between in-laws is mentioned more often than not, strikingly so when grandchildren's parents are not together. Alice says of her in-laws, '*There's no way we would have been friends had our children not married*', but she ensures the relationship is managed to the benefit of her grandsons. With her daughter-in-law she had had a warm, intimate relationship. Carol too maintains a relationship with her granddaughter's other family '*[for] what she gets from [them], social gatherings...cousins, the aunties and uncles... if I go that's all she's got.*' In some part Pansy, picking up a responsibility her son had abdicated, has taken on a role of parenting her granddaughter's mother alongside her granddaughter, with the mother describing Pansy as '*the mother [I'd] like.*' Dorothy likewise provides a mother-type care and support for her grandson's mother. Johnson (1985) remarks of the US, that a special kinship relationship sometimes existed, woman to woman, from grandmothers to former daughters-in-law (see also Smith, 1991), and Cotterill (1992) found daughters-in-law valuing their mothers-in-laws' grandmothering role even when personal relationships were poor.

So Alice and Briar, Pansy and Dorothy are mothers of sons purposefully expending effort to keep biological links alive. On the other hand maternal grandparents Rose and Resa, when stepping into their parenting roles, acted to separate their grandchildren from abusive men. However they both made moves to connect with their grandchildren's paternal grandparents. They offer similar rationales for doing so, keeping the gate open to the other side. Rose's daughter's in-laws came from Australia and asked to see their granddaughter. '*They brought gifts galore and this child had a ball unwrapping them.*' Rose was about to have her grandchild tested for hyperactivity and was helped to learn her granddaughter's father, when young, had been tested too and that stopping sugar had controlled his hyper-activity. Rose and her grandchild benefited from this sharing of familial knowledge. Rose talked with her daughter:

‘I put myself in their place and thought, “Why should they have to be punished for something their son’s done?”... Allow them a relationship...Then no one can say to you later, “You stopped this.”’

Resa said she had traced the other grandparents:

‘once a year I send them a photo and school report. But nothing...mmm...very strange. But I’ll keep doing it because I want [him] to understand as an adult and not...think, “Well Nana you could have done something a bit more.”’

Crossing cultures: separate parents

Joy gave an impression of difficulty in mending bonds with her grandson’s Samoan family and in disregarding a hostile relationship that had arisen with his Samoan grandmother. When the father turned up unannounced she responded by opening the way to his son, *‘He needs you. You’re his father’*. But she explained that, while for the future the gate is open, *‘I’ve left it up to [his father] to be in touch. I’m not in touch.’* Joy did not mention her grandson’s Samoan heritage. Jack was more active in establishing family and cultural links on behalf of his granddaughter, visiting Samoa himself; and *‘we talk about Samoa’*. He worked to maintain cordial social relations with the Samoan grandparents. But he was protective of his granddaughter and sensitive to cultural differences in attitudes to children, which in his view, needed delicate negotiation.

Joy and Jack’s daughters were not in easy communication with their children’s fathers and it was the grandparents who enabled contact, Joy with the father, Jack with the family. Violet too, by facilitating contact between her granddaughter and her Māori father, had enabled a beneficial relationship to develop which might not have happened without her intervention. Significantly it is the father who joined his daughter’s family at their Christmas, *‘he came here and had Christmas dinner with us’*, exposed to the cultural values and traditions of their family.

Crossing cultures: intact families

All Hine and Ann's grandchildren were living in intact marriages. Hine has one son-in-law whose parents have a strong Irish/Catholic identity. Ann's daughter has a husband who, with his mother, is actively engaged in Māori marae trust business. Hine, who has insight of cultural intermarriage from her personal history, says of her in-laws, *'We get along fine. We meet probably twice a year, we have coffee.'* But she emphasizes too, *'In their family to marry a Māori was quite a big step'*. She observes of the relationship, *'There is a little politicking goes on. Grandparenting is strong on both sides.'*

Ann, whose daughter has a Māori husband and her son a part-Fijian wife, also gives a picture of active grandparenting by her daughter's and her son's mothers-in-law, and easy social exchanges with them. She carefully sketches favourable profiles of them. Elsewhere she eloquently reveals what the relationships mean for her:

I had always hoped that when the children got married the parents of their spouse might be people with whom we could identify. How nice it would be to have...new people with whom we could enjoy activities, social interactions. In all the whole situation that is not the case. And it's a strange feeling of loss that that's never going to happen... Apart from their children, our children and the grandchildren, there's nothing in common.

Wondering at her naivety she reflects, *'you cannot choose their partners in life.'* Other grandparents do mention the establishment of friendships: Mary reveals of her and Tom's parents, *'And of course the two lots of parents became very close friends'*, and Hetty had a close friend in a daughter-in-law's mother.

Sharing

Until fairly recent historic time, in all the cultures of the study, some authority lay with family, predominantly fathers, to select a child's partner, the other parent of grandchildren-to-be. It represented an important social mechanism for plotting the well-being and resourcing of descendants. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981, p. 188)

depict an ideal, three-generation triangle, with a four-grandparent base supporting two parents supporting a child. In their model, grandparents act to reinforce the parent generation, in order to secure the child (cf. Aldous, 1985). The effort that study grandparents expend in maintaining interfamily links can be recognized as a further attempt at future-proofing their grandchildren. As Carol puts it, *'if I go that's all she's got.'* At the same time some of Hine's 'politicking' applies to the management of the links, and grandparents with 'possession' of a grandchild of separated parents use their position to control the nature of sharing; so the father of Violet's granddaughter comes to Violet's family Christmas, Jack carefully decides how his granddaughter is shared with her Samoan family, Dorothy monitors the health of her daughter-in-law before her grandson goes to his mother.¹³

Cunningham-Burley (1986) finds her grandparents, while respecting the norm of sharing grandchildren between in-law grandparents, feel it as a constraint on their grandparenting behaviour, and Cotterill (1992) sees, in the management of competing grandparent claims on grandchild contact, the potential for conflict. Clark speaks of this:

Like one thing I was unreasonable about...I had expectations that the kids...like they'd always have Christmas here. It was unreasonable I realize now. [They] were down at [the others] this year. It didn't worry me but it did before.

From her study of grandparents' ties to the middle, parent generation Fingerman (2004) suggests that research on in-law relationships is worthy of greater attention. Intergenerationally she found that the qualities of grandparents' ties to children-in-law were significantly positively related to the quality and enjoyment of the relationship with their grandchild.

Lineal difference

Also examining the three-generation family from the middle parent/parent-in-law generation in USA intact rural families, Chan and Elder (2000) examined the effect of

¹³ Counts (2007, p.11) records that in some Pacific Island cultures hostility between a grandmother and her son's spouse can lead to *'dire results for the woman who has less power.'*

matrilineal and patrilineal bonds on grandparenting, and the source of the frequently claimed, though sometimes contested, matrilineal advantage in grandparent/grandchild relations. Their findings confirm a trend in matrilineal bias but record that where better relations occur between fathers and paternal grandparents a patrilineal bias can occur if offsetting a weaker maternal advantage. It is the '*differential*' between maternal and paternal ties in a particular family which will determine the bias direction, if any¹⁴, '*[E]ither parent can create advantages and disadvantages favoring maternal and paternal grandparents*' (p. 180).

Of note in my study are the paternal grandmothers who were playing the dominant grandparenting role for a grandchild. Of these Alice, Flossie, Briar and Pansy had assumed parenting responsibility and Dorothy had taken the major role in her grandson's care. All but Pansy were doing so for grandsons. Ann and Flora too were paternal grandmothers who played ascendant roles vis a vis their grandchildren's other grandparents. Overall it is a deficit in a matrilineal link as much as strength in the paternal tie which determines why these paternal grandparents are taking the dominant interest in their grandchildren. Conversely maternal grandparents, Carol, Rose, Resa, who carry a markedly biased maternal grandparenting responsibility relate to mothers attached to a weak or null father identity. Sometimes a grandparent's death introduced a negative weighting to that line. The origin of differentials in lineal ties appear variously and are contingent: Rose's son-in law was apparently attitudinally unable to be a 'safe' parent, Violet's grandparenting was shaped by providing accommodation for her daughter, Flora's daughter-in-law's mother was deceased, as was the mother of Sandy's son-in-law, Dorothy's immigrant daughter-in-law had bipolar syndrome, Helen's daughter had custodial rights limiting father access, Galodali lived close by, with in-law grandparents at a distance.

Sample grandfathers

I especially sought some grandfathers amongst my participants, sharing Wilton and Davey's (2006) curiosity in grandfathers' family roles as they adjust to changes in today's socio-economic environment post the appearance of feminism, and to the expansion of women's work roles.

¹⁴ Chan and Elder (2000) refer to '*equanimous*' relations in families where no bias is apparent (p. 181).

To my regret I recruited only four grandfathers. I interviewed them on their own, unlike Cunningham-Burley (1984), who interviewed grandparent couples. She suggested a mannered difference she discerned between grandmothers and grandfathers derived from a superficial gendered 'display'. I believe my grandfathers spoke directly of their own grandparenting experience, in the absence of grandmothers, with little 'display' overlay. All had some good memories of their grandparents. All had tertiary education and were aged within five years of one another. Sandy and Jack were providing day care twice weekly to help working daughters. Clark and Galodali had varied grandparenting roles. Both grandfathers with daughters, they had very active ties to their locally living families. Also locally, Clark had two sons whose wives' family ties were more distant, and to them too he was a closely engaged grandfather. Sandy, Clark and Galodali depicted their wives, and Jack his former wife, as also giving substantial time to their grandchildren.

Jack, Clark, and Sandy had played a part in the birthing of grandchildren; Sandy and Clark describing it as '*exciting*', Jack as '*fabulous*', with all giving the impression it was an initiation into a significant personal grandfather identity.

Gendered grandparenting

Where grandmothers I interviewed were living with a grandfather the indications were that the grandmothers were differently and more engaged with childcare, but often reliant on complementary input from grandfathers. Mary said of Tom '*he taught them to fish, he taught them to tramp*'. Annie's husband too enthused about the pleasure of taking her grandson fishing, and Flossie's grandson is part of his grandfather's prize winning darts team. Several studies conclude grandmothers and grandfathers share different types of activities with their grandchildren (Baranowski, 1990; Hurme, 1991; Spitze and Ward, 1998; Thompson et al, 1991). These allocate behaviour in line with parenting norms: to grandmothers an emotional and interpersonal focus to their shared time, while grandfathers are described as involved in instrumental or doing activities. Taking his grandson to Field Days Sandy relishes his excitement over engines. Jack speaks of '*sport-type, physical activities*' with his granddaughter and his account of his magical snow holiday with her fits the same doing norm. But breaking away from that

norm he goes on to describe conversations rich in feeling and personal concern for his granddaughter, conforming to stereotypical expectations of grandmothering.

Self schedule/child schedule

There is the alternative view proposing similarities in the responses grandmothers and grandfathers have to their grandchildren: aging men display the nurturing behaviour characteristically associated with women, suggesting a 'unisex' of post-parental families (Thomas, 1989; Drew et al, 1998; see also Spitze and Ward, 1998). Galodali's attention to his grandson's nourishment and health accords with this. Clark encourages his grandchildren's sensual awareness. Yet Clark draws attention to a difference between his and his wife's grandparenting:

I feel a bit guilty. [M] will tend to stop work for the children more than I do. If I'm working...on something, I'll tend to keep going whereas she will stop.

Minkler and Roe (1993, p. 101) refer to men's caring '*as things that can be done on their schedules.*'

When Jack and Sandy take on the role of twice weekly child-carers this appears to change. Jack, managing his granddaughter alone after school finds:

I used to think, "I can get [her] and do something else." I can't. If I'm caring for [her]...I know it's a time for her.

And Sandy, similarly alone, says:

When you're at work you can have a coffee break and it's a real break and you can sit and natter. But when you're looking after little ones...you really can't leave them alone...Every now and then [the older one], he'll give his sister a passing 'bop'. You can't just ignore them.

These examples suggest it is the 'responsible caring schedule' on which he or she is employed rather than the gender or age of the grandparent, which colours the totality of engagement between grandparent and grandchild. With responsible caring, 'me' thinking is subjugated by child focussed thinking.

Freedom to grandparent

Furthermore Jack emphasizes his 'wanting' to look after his granddaughter, '*I don't have to do that. That's to do with my wanting to do it.*' And he has been able to negotiate some leave from work to do it. Sandy appears to have taken on his caregiving role partly out of a desire, shared with his wife, to offer support to their children and grandchildren, '*as much as possible*'. But his ability to respond according to the wish is because, '*mostly retired*', he has '*got time to look after them.*' Both men have time freed to them, outside paid employment, to use in caring for their grandchildren. This freeing of older men from the constraints imposed by the traditional social expectations of full-time male employment, allows them a life choice to be with children that was denied them as working fathers (Thomas, 1986a, 1986b; Strauss, 1996; Wilton and Davey, 2006). Kivnick's (1982) 'deprivation compensation' theory of grandparenting can be moved beyond its mental health context and reapplied here. Jack and Sandy are making up for something they are conscious of previously missing out on, and are now 'playing on a new field' (see Mason and French, 1993, p. 79 below).

Giving and getting

The same does not apply to the grandmothers, once mothers, who were providing regular supplementary care. Full parenting by grandparents arises primarily from their grandchildren's needs; supplementary care is largely in place to help adult children manage their families, often in combination with paid employment. In this Ann and Judith's care contributions have superficial similarity to Jack and Sandy's but their responses to their roles are more ambivalent¹⁵. While Jack and Sandy convey a sense of free choice in their grandfathering, Ann and Judith appear to be performing a

¹⁵ Katz et al (2005, p. 398) argue that in contemporary society, characterized by rapid social change, individuals are unsure about their roles in family life, especially those associated with intergenerational relations. '*Lücher proposed a term "intergenerational ambivalence" to reflect the contradictions in relationships between older parents and their adult children along two dimensions: contradictions at the level of the macro-social structure in terms of roles and norm, and contradictions at the psychological subjective level in terms of cognition, emotions, and motivation.*'

sometimes-burdensome obligation, albeit coincidentally pleasuring in their grandchildren. Freed from mothering their children these grandmothers are now mothering again, but as older women. Ann says, *'it's a recycling in a way of your giving. You gave as a mother naturally. "Naturally" is the word to emphasize there.'* Mason and Finch (1993, p. 79) propose that women and men may negotiate family exchanges differently, *'especially around the issues of caring'*, and that this is *'tied into women's and men's biographies...and into commitments which develop over time...putting women in a position where they can be regarded as an obvious carer'*.

Finch and Mason (1993) further note that in childcare there is, *'a real potential for the exchange to become unbalanced'* (p. 41) and note as well, *'calculation of balance relies on both material value and symbolic value'* (p. 37). For Ann and Judith their care work makes a material contribution, practically and financially, to their children's daily living costs. For them it results, at times, in what they both refer to as an effortful, *'long, long'* day and to some financial cost. They are repaid in symbolic currency with opportunities to figure in their grandchildren's lives.

Both grandmothers observe their daughters as *'pressured'* by societal expectations to be mothers and to have remunerative careers (cf. Missen, 2002), and each has reservations about her child's life-style, overshadowed by borrowed money. Basis for their concerns comes from Cheyne et al (2008), who find the consequences of policy attempts at establishing a "work-life balance" has too often been a siphoning away of quality time from family life. Ann questions, *'at whose expense?'*, finding in answer, that parents and State are relying on grandparents' time and money to bolster two-earning-parent families. Judith writes in her diary, *'I do not say how much I worry about [my granddaughter] – or how I worry about [my daughter] working.'* Negotiating their own personal transitions from careers to committed grandparenting roles in the context of the rapidly changing environment of family and work, Ann and Judith are at just such a life situation that is encompassed by the construct of *'ambivalence'* in the family solidarity model. The work ideology of their children's generation is in conflict with their personal assumptions of an ideal family life. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) refer to grandparents' exposure to *'changing social structures and changing values.'*

The heavy emphasis Ann and Judith give to the joy of grandmothering seems required to balance the heaviness of their childcare tasks, and limit their sense of dissatisfaction¹⁶.

About boundaries

Dorothy and Victoria, younger women, reveal similar, if lesser, tensions between their own expectation of the childcare task and what is asked of them, and why. Dorothy said, *'I love doing this but now I'm getting the feeling that I'm being used...they don't stay at home and look after children...it's such a consumerist, throw away society.'* Victoria, when asked to mind her granddaughter, *'Wanted to say "No" – Not sure why – sometimes feel [my daughter] "dumps" [my granddaughter] off at the drop of a hat.'*

My interview with Violet revealed no comparable tensions. She understands her daily work, outside the home she shares with her daughter and granddaughter, has helped her maintain essential boundaries in their shared living, *'I've had this other life'* and *'I've made a conscious decision there are some things I just walk away from. I just have to...she had the responsibility, not me'*. Violet's support of her daughter is strong but finite. Importantly, in common with the grandfathers, Violet is approving of her daughter's way of life, seeing her deserving of help, free of the censure for life-style which emerges from the grandmothers above (cf. Mason and French, 1993).

Helen's 'biography' is different again. She gives an account of care commitments which have developed over time from her children to her grandchildren – *'To some extent...fulfilling [my] own needs...I did too much for too long'* – till the meaning of her life is dependent on her granddaughter. Her negotiating power with her granddaughter's mother, where need was previously balanced by need, has almost disappeared. It is retained only by the ownership of the piano for her granddaughter's practice. Her grief comes from the loss of caring work focussed on her granddaughter, giving, and the threatened loss of relationship, getting.

¹⁶ It should be noted that, whereas Sandy was reimbursed by his daughter to travel to his grandchildren's home to provide care, neither Ann nor Judith are paid, although they too travel to their grandchildren's homes.

Work-life balance

The often ill fit between parents' commitments to paid work and to their children's care, which surfaces in the accounts of Ann and Judith above, impacts directly on parenting grandmothers who are themselves employed (see Dench, 2002; Smith et al, 1999). For Briar, her responsible job saps energy she needs to manage care of a latency grandson. Rose, also working, says, '*It was big – looking after a house, full-time work, and looking after a child*'. Annie, who found she could not sustain the stress of career, and give her disturbed grandson the focussed attention his care required, had left her paid work. Resa relied on tight organization, childcare services, and a supportive husband to help her carry the double task of parenting and earning. No grandmother had parents to give her help. Conversely Briar, whose aged mother required some oversight, fell under the 'sandwich generation' burden (Dench, 2002). She had responsibilities for earning, and for care of family generations above and below her, and for a retired husband.

Voluntary grandparents are not immune from conflictive feelings arising from expectations on women to participate in paid work and carry responsibility for children. Sceats (2003, p. 16) writes of New Zealand:

Women are expected to be good mothers and to be there for their children, especially when they are very young, but women who work often feel that they are judged negatively and women who choose to stay home with their children feel they are devalued.

In 2001, in the US, Rossi (p.456) similarly found women's source of esteem and respect had shifted to the work place, '*being a woman homemaker has become devalued in contemporary society*'.

Hine's observations of her and her daughters' unease as they each follow their chosen role in the changing work/childcare setting encapsulate Sceats' case. Her one daughter, she reports, feels guilty in her choice to remain a full-time mother at home, a position Pool et al (2007) perceive as becoming the preserve of a wealthier minority of families. Hine's other daughter feels guilty at continuing her career alongside parenting

responsibilities. There is present a Janus type expectation on women to respond to workplace and to childcare obligations. Pool et al (2007, p. 389) write:

You can never be the best mother you want to be and you can never be the best employee you would like to be.

But Hine, still employed, finds herself in the same double bind, *'I feel guilty about that...My children's grandparents were free to be grandparents and I am not.'*

Fun

The surfacing of tension and effort in grandparenting stories should stand beside, but not overshadow the pleasures that grandparents tell about.

Erikson et al (1986, p. 185) argue for the appropriateness of *'playfulness and curiosity'* grandparents share with grandchildren. Huisinga (1966) makes a celebration of play. He writes, *'Really to play [an adult] must play like a child (p. 199).'* He also *'distinguishes two modes of mental life as play and seriousness'*, as though in line with the leniency associated with grandparenting and the socializing role required of parenting (p. 111; see Townsend, 1977).

Being with their grandchildren grandparents play. Ann, a choir member, talks of what she does with her grandchildren:

'They sing beautifully. So we sing in the car when we are driving. And the car has cruise control and those things so, "Come on Nana, put the cruise control on, come on Gran." And when we get on the motorway, "OK, it's on." "Take your hands off the wheel, Nana." "No, but"...claps. We play lots of games in the car too, like I Spy and Knock, Knock and all that silly stuff. I think I identify closely with their age group.'

Here Ann has transformed the ferrying of her grandchildren, at times a burden, into shared fun.

Victoria bounces on a trampoline with her granddaughter.

Jack characterizes his play with his granddaughter as *'sport type, physical activities...things that I enjoy...And I certainly get involved in childish things, like childlike things...she's very keen for me to be involved.'*

Ruby talks of the sleep-overs at Granny's:

as a treat. And that's a fun thing we do...And we choose to do the play things. And that's really good. As good as it gets.

On assuming the mothering of her granddaughter Carol mourns the loss of grandparental leniency for parental seriousness. She describes the leniency as *'creative activity'*. It is something which steps outside age boundaries and helps older people join with children at a child's level, alongside.

Touch

A similarly special feature of the relationship grandparents have with grandchildren relates to the often mutually rewarding physical intimacy expressed between them¹⁷. For some grandchildren a grandparent's bed offers unique comfort, and sometimes can be a comfort to the grandparent also. Flossie tells that her 12-year-old grandson has just returned from a school camp and is disappointed his father has not taken him to stockcars. He is, in her words:

a bit hung over. He wanted to sleep with me (Nana) so his Grandpop said OK because he felt he was a bit down, also over his father and stockcars.

And again when she has gone to bed early because stressed over discipline:

¹⁷ Myerhoff (1978, p. 27) highlights the loss of a touching intimacy which may accompany aging, typically as one partner of a couple predeceases the other. *'I slept soundly through the night warmed by my husband's body, knowing the [the institutionalised] old people were sleeping alone in cold rooms.'* Myerhoff refers to African tribes where children are lent to sleep with the elderly so providing warmth and companionship. This gives added meaning to the Māori custom of passing the care of mokopuna to grandparents.

He realized that I was upset...so came and gave me a cuddle and asked his Granddad if he could sleep with me, which he said was OK. I forgave him...

Flossie explains that her grandson asks to sleep with her usually one night in a weekend:

I don't advertise the fact to friends because during conversations they think that children of that age shouldn't be sleeping with their parents. I don't see anything wrong with it.

Briar's 10-year-old grandson also joins his grandparents' bed for comfort, '*He still has nightmares @ times – jumps into our bed crying but often can't talk about them.*' But Briar describes him as a '*mobile*' sleeper and difficult to sleep with so that, like Clark whose grandchild '*hopped into our bed and just screamed*', the comforted grandchild may be tolerated with reservation, at the sacrifice of sleep for the grandparent.

Rose says of her granddaughter:

She'll come into my bed in the morning and she'll snuggle up with me and I'll tell her a story and I'll rub her back. She loves me to rub her back.

Together with her granddaughter Violet has the same word, 'snuggle':

She and I are early birds she tells me and, "Can I snuggle into your bed for a while?" And I said, "Oh I do like that word snuggle."

Conventions

Given the pulchritude of children grandparents seem surprisingly reticent about the beauty of their grandchildren but some exude their pleasure. Flora said:

And I used to worry about if I had a grandchild what I'd be like...would you look at it and think, 'oooooh...what a horrible baby.' She was just gorgeous.

Flora showed me a photo, *'She's got beautiful eyebrows though, hasn't she? And gorgeous eyes.'* Annie exclaims of her grandson, whom I saw, blond and blue eyed, *'oh, such a difficult child. He's a beautiful child. He's fabulous.'* Dorothy describes her first sight of her newborn grandson, *'so wide eyed and bushy tailed...I just fell in love with these big brown eyes. He's got big brown eyes.'* When I asked Jack about family likenesses, he said of his granddaughter, showing me a photo, *'She's actually rather beautiful. I'm not biased. The colouring, the part Samoan, is actually amazingly beautiful.'* His granddaughter is given clothes by her Samoan grandfather and initially rejects them, *'That's not my clothes.'* But dressed in them, *'they're long, slim dresses and she looked just smashing in them. She knows she does.'*

Jack's enthusiasm for his granddaughter's beauty and her awareness of it, together with Flossie's circumspection about her grandson sharing her bed, invite thought on the delicate boundaries between grandparental appreciation of children's special appeals, whether they be visual or the warm snuggling of their bodies, current conventional norms, and the (not so) 'bizarre' fears of which Clark speaks. The two 1895 *White Ribbon* stories of grandfathers which were presumably unremarkable then, sit less comfortably within narrower protocols for affectionate grandfatherly behaviour today. They illustrate how sensitive to socio-historic context are the borders of sensuality and sexuality. Most obviously, grandparents in this study reveal a strong protective element embedded in their grandparent to grandchild relationships, contributing to conventionally safe behavioural boundaries.

V. Summary

This discussion chapter has moved from grandparents recalling their relationships and activities with their own grandparents, to reporting on memories of their parents being grandparents to their children, and finally to their talking about the grandparenting of their grandchildren. No aspect of the grandparenting stories is found belonging

exclusively in any one of the three study grandparenting categories.¹⁸ Furthermore it is possible to track common characteristics of grandparenting behaviour through the stories from grandparents in each category.

The study's 24 self-selecting grandparents show a high level of investment in their grandchildren. Their data exemplify grandparenting as a mechanism for the material and emotional preservation of families and for the continuity of family culture. It is done within an awareness of family which incorporates at least four, generally more, generations. Through their interventions the grandparents contribute to the 'creation' of their children's families, incorporating some of the lessons taken from their parents and grandparents before them. This happens through a dual focus in the grandparent role, when they are both supporting their children as parents, and building a meaningful relationship with their grandchildren.

The four participant grandfathers showed no substantive divergence from grandmothers in their behaviour as grandparents. The regular care grandfathers' perceptions of having scheduled time available, and of being solely responsible for grandchildren's care, appeared a decisive factor in how closely they approximated grandmother-type care. Where grandmother participants were living with grandfathers the evidence was that those grandfathers played a subsidiary but complementary grandparenting role.

The ready but various responses the grandparents make in their role is in line with academic theory which proposes that grandparents are 'hard-wired' to feel and act from a protective concern for their grandchildren, as legacies to the future. Just how this occurs is influenced by intra-family issues and by external contextual socio-economic factors impinging on their children's families. Similar factors are operating to limit or enable how the grandparents manage their role.

¹⁸ Those being full-time care grandparents with parental responsibilities, grandparents providing regular supplementary care, or grandparents with a voluntary and varied relationship with grandchildren.

CHAPTER X: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Introduction

Initially faced with curiosity about grandparenting, I found no comprehensive research to answer my questions about grandparents in New Zealand. From observation I believed the role was significant. Being roused to curiosity from a social work setting, I sought leads to answers from examining the external influences which decide how individuals live out family life. By referencing my exploration of grandparenting, to an overview of New Zealand's social, economic, and political development, I have given an expanded understanding on the 'how' and the 'why' of grandparents' contemporary role here, and provided a baseline for further research. In itself, and in its sources, this research has found no great unifying theory. What it has found are numerous insights into how and why grandparents do what they do.

I am viewing grandparenting as a constructed role. My use of an overall, interpretive methodology, comes from my understanding that a person's social reality develops in the course of their life experience, and that in the actions and words by which she or he expresses that experience, is reflected the meaning of that person's reality. While we arrive in life with some definitions of self, our boundaries are shaped over time by an interplay with features of our environment. So, in a case study design, I have relied for my primary data on the word descriptions of my research participants recounting to me what the meaning of grandparenting is to them. This they did through three time intervals: memories of their own grandparents, of their parents as grandparents, and of their grandparenting of their grandchildren. For 18 their accounts were shared in face to face interviews, and for six they were set out in diaries, one an emailed diary. In its valuing of attention to daily life, to interpersonal relationships and to how gender works within families, my approach draws on a Feminist methodology; also in its intention to further the well-being of participants.

Secondary data was sought from New Zealand's history and social policies, letters and auto-biographies, orphanage records, survey reports, New Zealand literary and academic writings, visual depictions and international academic literature.

From my reading of New Zealand history, and of grandparent related academic literature, certain themes stood out for their apparent salience to current New Zealand grandparenting. These were:

- Questions about how grandparenting happens. Is it learnt? From whom and how?
- The influence of proximity on grandparent/grandchild relationships.
- How class ‘colours’ grandparent/grandchild relationships.
- How health and grandparenting relate.
- How gender and grandparenting relate.

In analysing the data from my research interviews and diaries for their own thematic statements, these themes both sensitised me to the data content, and enabled me to make contextual sense of it.

Having selected participants as belonging to three models of grandparenting according to the level of care responsibility held for grandchildren – voluntary and varied care, part-time supplementary care and full-time parenting – my findings related either commonly across all three models, or specifically to grandparents who had supplementary childcare responsibilities, or who had full-time parenting responsibilities.

II. Findings Common Across Grandparenting Categories

Emerging commonly, across accounts, grandparents showed as links between a family’s past and future, an integral part of New Zealand family consciousness, from ego back to grandparents, and ego to grandchildren. Hine refers to it as *‘this immortality’*. While the significance of grandparents is accepted for Māori, their contrastingly stronger identification with an extended genealogical family network should not obscure the salience of grandparents for Pākehā. Simply by ‘being there’, even those grandparents who were not personally known, as Dorothy’s, *‘because of Second World War issues’*, offer a family pathway to the past for their grandchildren. Grandparents point to a familial and a social heritage, and a cultural legacy. Examples

of both heritage and legacy come from the memories Mary recalls from childhood and passes on to grandchildren, and Galodali's lessons from his grandfather are translated into chores and produce for his grandsons. As Hagestad writes, grandparents are, in their stories, gifting to grandchildren, *'bridges to historical times they themselves never knew or have trouble understanding'* (1985, p. 31, Wechsler, 1985).

Importantly the case is made, with convincing evidence, that the grandparenting link is vital in maintaining the stability of families within Western countries of such demographic and socio-economic circumstances as New Zealand. This comes from international research studies, and recently from a growing body of New Zealand research. Furthermore, as Rossi contends (2001), the stability and continuity following on from generational interdependency in families, has repercussions for stability at the macro-societal level (see also Erikson, 1964). Rossi herself (ibid), Finch and Mason (1993) and Millward (1996) all confirm the direction of intrafamily exchange is from older to younger generations. Millward (ibid p. 1) refers to *'older groups in society as a rich resource both for society at large and for individual families.'*

Grandparents also showed in common, from the present and the remembered past, behaviour that was directed at the nurture and protection of their children and grandchildren, what I have termed 'future-proofing'. This too was exemplified in various personal ways and appears as a further expression of the role grandparenting plays in securing continuity of family lineage and culture.

III. Difficulties Arising for Grandparents Who Care for Grandchildren

All the grandparents in this study are playing a major part in maintaining their children's families as productive socio-economic units. But they are doing so with very different levels of personal stress. For most grandparents, although worries attended their family concerns, stress was not an undue part of their grandparenting. But for some grandparents, providing supplementary care was stressful and all grandparents who had a parenting role for a grandchild were under strain on account of it.

Questionnaire returns showed grandparents with full or part-care responsibilities disproportionately suffered poor health. Six full-time care grandmothers had health

issues which affected their ability to grandparent. Three grandmothers who gave regular, supplementary care to grandchildren were similarly troubled. Five of these nine were aged under-60. No grandparent who had a voluntary and varied grandparenting role recorded a health issue. Two of the full-care grandmothers who had poor health, Alice and Flossie, had husbands who also suffered a health problem, but no other partners of interviewees were reported with poor health.

This apparent strong association between a grandparent's level of responsibility for care of a grandchild and poor health is not simply explicable from the data, though stress of the caring responsibility, confounded with age, could be speculated as contributing to the two husbands' health issues (see Goldberg-Glen and Sands, 2000). Six grandmothers had pre-existing conditions before grandchildren came to them, Flossie and Dorothy's chronic rheumatism being examples. However Ann and Annie associated the origin of their weakened health with the demands of their grandparenting duties. Given the hard years Helen had devoted to her granddaughter's care it could well have contributed to her slowly developing debility. Solomon and Marx (2000) find the direction of causation in the health/custodial grandparenting relationship difficult to determine. But while granting an alignment of disadvantage and ill health, common in much custodial care (see Szinovacz et al 1999), such an alignment is not consistent with the moderate socio-economic status of the sample here. Other international literature comment on health and care responsibilities of grandparents is reviewed above in Chapter III¹.

From her 2009 GRG survey Worrall recorded that, over a four-year period, 61% of parenting caregivers had suffered deteriorating health. For 59.6% of partners, health had become worse. Grandparents on the lowest income were most likely to note their parenting responsibilities contributing to worsening health. Worrall found different behaviours of grandchildren, and their different health status when with their grandparents, resulted in different susceptibilities to health problems for the grandparents. It is worth noting that Annie had a severely disturbed grandson she had taken care of under unusually difficult circumstances. Although Ann's grandchildren

¹ Helen and Ann are the only grandparents I know to have died since giving interviews.

were portrayed with normal behaviour she was looking after three, young aged, combined with lengthy travel on three days per week.

Whereas three 'voluntary and varied' category grandparents, Hetty, Ruby and Flora, and Joy, had some costs attached to grandparenting this was apparently accepted without financial stress. Two grandparents who provided regular supplementary care reported financial costs adding to the stresses of their commitments. All full-care grandparents found the costs associated with their parenting responsibilities a financial strain². That so many experience financial strain is indicative of the costs of absorbing child rearing into a household budget, especially if 'off-timed' in the life cycle, and post-earning. Confronted with their grandson's pre-teen expenses Flossie and her husband, both in retirement and ill health, had re-mortgaged their house. Briar, who with a retired husband is sole family earner, has her November diary entries scattered with \$ signs as she worries about school and seasonal expenses.

While both Alice and Carol reported that the costs of their grandparenting role were an issue, each saw herself specially privileged, part cushioned from some money stresses. For Alice this derived from the ACC payments for which her grandson was eligible on account of his father's road accident death. After a prolonged bureaucratic battle, because some of her grandson's disturbed behaviour derived from physiological injuries in the family's car accident, she also obtained ACC funded specialist therapy for him.

Carol's source of relief was different. The deaths and losses she had suffered enabled her, after her husband had left home, to qualify for the DPB. Emotionally drained to the point where she lacked the energy to combine earning, '*I couldn't work*', and caring for her granddaughter, the benefit gave her sufficient income to devote herself to parenting and to her own recovery.

Of the other full-care grandparents, two received the Unsupported Child Benefit (UCB). Briar and her husband had not sought any money beyond what her son paid irregularly. Rose and her husband had chosen not to apply for any money while her granddaughter was with them in case it gave the father cause to intervene. Pansy

² Although the grandparenting sample as a whole is likely to have had an above average income, some grandparents were on very modest incomes.

received no money for her granddaughter. The mother continued to receive the DPB for her. Pansy was anxious not to disturb the status quo, so risking her granddaughter's return to her mother. When I interviewed Annie, she and Chris had belatedly begun to receive regular payments from CYF for board, but proposed money for therapy and day-care had not been forthcoming. Joy had no regular payments over the year she provided full care for her grandson, but was satisfied his mother, *'has given me whatever she's been able to whenever I've needed it.'*

Helen and Ann, the two grandmothers providing supplementary care and registering an associated cost, had by choice deeply committed to their grandchildren. Helen's dedication had already been exploited, and Ann's risked being exploited, if unintentionally, by their daughters.

IV. Grandparenting in Times of Change

Intrinsically grandparents are firstly parents, and this duality calls into question when grandparenting is more rightly interpreted as a late stage parenting, or is rather a direct relationship built between grandparent and grandchild. However, the duality characterizes all grandparenting/grandchild relationships, and parents are primary determiners, present or absent, of how grandparents and grandchildren relate.

The timing of this thesis is such that it well reflects the increased pressures on families, at both the parent and grandparent level, to adjust emotionally and practically, to the demands of a country transitioning from a welfare state, to a growth directed economy. While data indicate common constancies in grandparenting are persistent over time, the grandparents' accounts reveal demographic, life style, and life attitude changes that are altering how parenting is done and how grandparenting is done. The speed of social and economic change is outstripping the flow of generations. Many current grandparents have lived their family life when fathers went out to work and mothers of school age children stayed full-time at home. Many of those women have since welcomed the opportunity to work out of the home and are supportive of daughters who want to work outside home. But the competing demands of earning related work and childcare responsibilities now pressure both parent and grandparent generations. There is poignant comment in my research from grandparents as they observe the pressures

weighing on their working children's families, and the repercussions on their own working and/or caring lives. Ann and Judith's grandmothering accounts exemplify their ambivalence in their 'chosen', I emphasize chosen, grandmothering roles. Bengtson and others' intergenerational solidarity model of family relationships (see chapter V), associates just such feelings of ambivalence, with the uncertainty that arises as family members renegotiate roles, in a context of rapid, social change.

The difficulties women face as they make choices about time committed to caring and time committed to earning to live, and/or to advancing a career, are little different in kind from the choices men must make between their domestic and work commitments. In spite of advances in women's access to well paid work and economic pressures for women to be in the work force, the positions of mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers remain very different, largely because of historic socio-economic expectations on women and men, and what Wilton and Davey, (2006, p. 15) refer to as a '*prototype masculinity*' of the male paid worker. The continuation of a traditional familism still assumes women will be the family carers. Grandfathers are less evident as caregivers because of a conflicting earning imperative rather than because of any lesser innate capacity to care.

Jack and Sandy's caregiving is in place because it doesn't disadvantage either of them monetarily. Other roles and status are not threatened. Also, decisively, they want to do it. They appear as caring men rapt in their grandchildren. With it, they show less tension than is apparent in the accounts of grandmothers, similarly placed. Rather, they are appreciating childcare responsibilities new to them, whereas the grandmothers are apparently dutifully revisiting a role expectation placed on women, to care. I suggest the 'deprivation compensation' theory (see Kivnick, 1982, chapter V) can be lifted from its mental health context, to be reapplied here, accounting for the positive experiences of these grandfathers.

My grandfather participants were regrettably few, but data from their interviews provide a valuable addition to the limited academic field of grandfathering. Jack and Sandy aside, there are indications from accounts by grandmothers that amongst Pākehā New Zealanders, in line with international studies, grandparenting generally displays a gendered division of labour: grandfathers are more involved in activities with

grandchildren, and grandmothers in caring, and building relationships. Especially in view of changes over recent decades, in gender roles and the gendered character of the workforce, these grandfather findings invite further study.

V. Recommendations to Address Needs Arising from Caring for Grandchildren

So how can such an important but ‘contingent’ and ‘derived’ role as grandparenting, be usefully acknowledged at an individual grandparent level? And to what extent can it be more constructively recognized by society and by government?

In seeking solutions to the difficulties grandparents are encountering it is clear ‘*no one size fits all*’ (Bengtson, 2001, p. 10). Pool et al, (2007, p. 286) remark on ‘*the roles, obligations and rights*’ of grandparents (and great-grandparents) as ‘*an underdeveloped legislative area [where] policies that are drafted to meet the needs of some, or most, families may not suit others*’

Awareness is needed in the formulating of future social and economic policies that New Zealand families with dependent children do normally have the support of a grandparent generation for whom the nurture and protection of their grandchildren is a primary concern. Given sympathetic and informed legislation grandparents will continue to act as an established socially and culturally stabilizing factor beyond family, across the public domain. Importantly, grandparent interest groups exist to give direct in-put to policies.

The potential for grandparents to give more than emotional support to the parent generation, is realistically limited by conflicting interests and their recourse to means. Increasingly the grandparenting generation is looking to earning and career advancement into young-old age, as emphasis on the necessity for private savings towards retirement grows stronger, and the age qualification for state superannuation comes into question. When policies and law require financial and life-style adjustments by grandparents to provide safe childcare, resources must be made available to enable the adjustments to be made with least stress and greatest support. Full-time care grandparents with parenting responsibilities share some needs with

supplementary care grandparents who are assisting their children in their parenting. Some of their needs are additional.

An important need common to parents, and grandparents of all categories, is more, quality, lower priced childcare relating to all ages up to 14 years (see Cheyne et al, 2008; Pool et al, 2007). As well, with government backing, the feasibility of more workplace childcare should be explored, together with ways of catering for the challenging childcare needs of rural families. Annie was able to use childcare in the nearest city but in doing so felt distanced from her local community. None of these childcare related concerns sidelines grandparent care. I raise them here because they offer greater flexibility, augmenting quality grandparent care, with reduced stress, in the manner of Wheelock and Jones's (2002) 'jigsaw' of care. Good publicly provided childcare enables parents to better parent, grandparents to better parent, and grandparents to better grandparent, and eventually children to do better (see Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010).

For grandparents who are providing full-care parenting, respite care, when grandchildren have brief breaks in the care of another family, can valuably offer just that, a respite (see Hunter and Taylor, 1998). This is the principle of the new government funded Kidza Cool Camps.

Sympathetic adjustments within the labour market to reconcile workplace responsibilities with domestic responsibilities benefit grandparents who are combining childcare and employment. Jack's apparently stress-free care of his granddaughter exemplifies this, *'I've negotiated with my board...'* Sceats' research (quoted in Pool et al, 2007, p. 301) identifies *'a supportive boss'* alongside a supportive husband or a grandparent, as *'necessary adjuncts'* to a harmonious work/home balance. Rose, when full-care parenting her granddaughter, said, *'I am very lucky the position I have, and the reason I am still there, is the job is flexible. Which is a luxury...'* Should it be a luxury?

Whatever the cause for the association between grandparents' caregiving and poor health, good health is of significant importance for grandparents' caregiving. *'And you can't get sick...there's no one to look after the children'*, said Alice. Grandparents do

not have grandparents to come in and look after the children when they are sick, as had Flora and Sandy's mothers. Policies are required which enable grandparents with caregiving responsibilities to get privileged health care. Vaccinations for influenza, which are free above a certain age, should be extended down to all grandparents who are parenting their grandchildren, along with Community Card benefits of free prescription medicines for all dependent children. Children moving between kindergarten or school and grandparents' home are vectors for numerous infections to which grandparents' age might make them unusually vulnerable.

Alongside physical health, the mental and emotional health of grandparent carers is frequently strained from compounded situations that have given rise to their assuming a parenting role. Coincidentally there is strong likelihood their looked after children are suffering emotional trauma arising from the same situations. It is in just such circumstances that Alice was so appreciative of being able to access free therapy for her orphaned grandson. While therapy for children who have been traumatised is a priority, the grandparents who are doing the parenting may also require counselling help if the new family is to function optimally. Flossie appreciated counselling as a foil to her anxiety over her son and grandson.

Stretching income to include a grandchild, or more, whatever age, whatever the family's income, is challenging. Alice, who eight years ago had a small boy to parent now has a tall young man, *'It's huge, bringing up a child on a superannuation.'* After lengthy advocating of their case, most grandparents who are providing full-care for grandchildren, are now eligible for the UCB at the same rate as the allowance paid to foster parents. For foster parents the costs of making a home, feeding and clothing, and socially integrating children, is recognized in additional payments. Grandparents, justifiably, are still asking for that same financial recognition. Yet it is deceptive to relate grandparents who are parenting to foster parents who are engaged in a freely chosen occupation. Most grandparents are not parenting by free choice and are not set up in preparation for new members to the family. At the point in time grandparents are initially taking up new parenting responsibilities their overall needs require assessment.

Pool et al, (2007) emphasize the influence of housing on the lives of residents and the significance of a government's housing policy on the character of its society. Cheyne et al, (2008) identify the costs of housing as a critical determinant of living standards. When grandparents, or any kin, accept parenting responsibility for children whose parents are unable to parent, the suitability of their accommodation is a matter for consideration and should be an issue for policy to address. This might follow outcomes of a FGC but in the case of illness or death recourse to exceptional grants should be considered.

VI. Where to Now?

All these suggestions, and others, to address some of the difficulties grandparents face in taking on care responsibilities, whether full-care or supplementary care, can be regarded as a 'package of needs'. The management of any such package should reside with a body designated by government. Given the lead taken by the Families Commission, with their recent research and thorough listing of information sources for grandparenting (Kerslake Hendricks, 2010), it would seem well positioned to advance policy recommendations.

The attention now on grandparents arises partly from demographic change. Pool et al (2007, pp. 164-167) caution about the difficulties of predicting shifts in population cohorts. They point out that changes in childbirth rates have implications for all age groups and they continue by describing New Zealand's population as having a '*relatively highly turbulent age structure*'. This creates special problems for policy. Yet the constructive management of demographic variations between cohorts lies with the state, employing substantive research, decrying ideology, in the design of grounded, just legislation.

In telling their stories many grandparents in this study have suggested a strong tradition of grandparenting passing from generation to generation. Some have talked of passing on values. Generally they have spoken and written of generous, committed affection between generations. Today they are caring for and about a generation which is growing up in a consumption oriented world, a 'me-first' world, focussed on self-realization (Layard, 2005). Grandmothers of the Industrial Revolution looked after

grandchildren because economically it made sense for their family, and because that was their role. In the 1920s my grandmother took two of her grandchildren from a back-blocks farm so, living with grandmother and grandfather, they could attend school – because it was her role. How will the career mothers of today, and their children’s fathers, respond should grandchildren need them to become parents? What will they understand as their role? Governments must heed the messages that come from Rossi (2001) in the US, Layard (2005) in Britain, and here in New Zealand from Sceats (2003), to elevate the valuing of domestic life and the place of children within it to a status comparable with workplace advantage, and address the tensions at their interface. Sceats (ibid, pp. 155-156) writes, *‘The harmonisation of work and family life is emerging as a key social policy issue’*...with implications for *‘the effects on human capital.’*

The social morality of a caring society is a matter for government concern.

VII. Recommendations for Future Research

I, as a Pākehā, did not set out to research Māori grandparenting. But in doing this work I did feel the need for corresponding research from Māori. There is little substantive academic literature relating to Māori grandparenting. It is a field in which, for Māori, obvious benefit must arise with more knowledge, but it would additionally give more value to this and other future research on grandparenting in New Zealand.

Regrettably this study had only four grandfather participants. The contributions they make suggest directions for future research.

Most grandparents in this research were part of a couple relationship. Further understanding of the adjustments required of each partner in accommodating to care responsibilities for grandchildren would be useful in helping family stability.

Variations on the topic of grandparenting are wide and reach far beyond this limited middle-class sample. They invite study on grandparents who are institutionalised or otherwise live in dependency, on grandparents who experience a grandchild’s death, step-grandparents, great-grandparents and adoptive grandparents.

APPENDICES

1. DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRES:

- Grandparents with voluntary and varied responsibilities
- Grandparents providing regular supplementary care to assist parent/s to parent
- Full-time care grandparents with parental responsibilities

2. COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS:

1. Initial advertisement
2. Initial letter
3. Information sheet
4. Questionnaire
5. Consent form (to all participants)
6. Diary keeping (information giving)
7. Diarist's letter (voluntary and variable)
8. Diarist's letter (supplementary, regular care)
9. Diarist's letter (full-time, parental care)
10. Diarists consent form
11. Interview schedule
12. Additional questions (for supplementary regular care, and for full-time care)
13. Second advertisement
14. Letter to return abstracts
15. Letter sharing profiles for confirmation

location of gparent	resort town	dormitory town	city suburb	city fringe	provincial city	rural dormitory	town	dormitory town
costs to gparent	No	Yes/No	Yes	No	No	No	travel	yes
distance from gch/ren	NZ, o/seas	NZ, o/seas	2-12 kms	0-4 kms	4 kms	2-60 kms	o/seas	0.5-117kms
contact with gch/ren	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent
age of gch/ren	17-33yrs	15 - 23 yrs	6-12yrs	2-13yrs	4-12yrs	3mths-10yrs	1yr+	12yrs-new born
gender/# of gch/ren	16 F&M	4 F, 3 M	5 F, 2 M	4 F, 4 M	4 M	2 F, 2 M	1 F	8 F, 4 M
is gp with step-gfather?		Yes						Yes
gender/# of ch/ren	1 F, 5 M	1 F, 3 M	3 F, 1 M	2 F, 2 M	1 F, 2M	3 F	3 M	3 F, 2 M

*estimate

GRANDPARENTS PROVIDING REGULAR SUPPLEMENTARY CARE TO ASSIST PARENT/S TO PARENT

Grandparents Names	Helen	Ann	Judith <i>diarist</i>	Sandy	Violet	Jack	Dorothy	Victoria <i>diarist</i>
gp age at interview	75yrs	66yrs	65yrs	63yrs	62yrs	62yrs	49yrs	37yrs
age at 1st gch's birth*	62yrs	58yrs	63yrs	58yrs	56yrs	56yrs	44yrs	34yrs
gender	F	F	F	F	F	M	F	F
ethnicity	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ	NZ Europ	NZ Europ	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ	Māori
education	post sch	degree	degree	degree	post sch	degree	post sch	post sch
m. status	divorced	married	married	married	widowed	separated	separated	married
employed	a little	No	No	a little	Yes	Yes	studying	Yes
health of gp	poor	an issue	no issue	no issue	no issue	no issue	an issue	no issue
location of gparent	provincial city	dormatory town	city suburb	provincial city	provincial city	city suburb	city suburb	provincial city

FULL-TIME CARE GRANDPARENTS WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Grandparents Name	Alice	Carol	Flossie <i>diarist</i>	Briar <i>diarist</i>	Rose	Annie	Pansy	Resa	Joy
gp age at interview	68yrs	64yrs	63yrs	59yrs	56yrs	52yrs	49yrs	48yrs	49yrs
age at 1st gch's birth*	51 yrs	46 yrs	51yrs	49 yrs	48yrs	47.5 yrs	42.5 yrs	42 yrs	36yrs
gender	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
ethnicity	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.	NZ Europ.
education	sec school	post sch	sec school	degree	degree	degree	sec school	sec school	sec school
m. Status	married	separated	married	married	married	married	married	married	married
employment	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes P/T	Yes	voluntary/ unpaid
health of gparent	an issue	no issue	an issue	an issue	an issue	an issue	an issue	no issue	no issue
location of gparent	rural	city suburb	provincial city	city suburb	dormatory town	rural	city suburb	city suburb	dormatory town
cost an issue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes/No	Yes	Yes
parenting care to date	8 years	12 years	6 months	9 years	4.5 years	4.5 years	6.5 years	6 years	1 year
future parenting	till end of school	gchild now 18yrs	indefinitely	unsure	ad infinitum	forever	indefinitely	till 18 yrs	end of yr

age of gchild	15 years	18 years	12 years	10 years	5 ¼ yrs	4.5 yrs	6.5yrs	6 yrs	10 yrs
gender of gchild	M	F	M	M	F	M	F	M	M
gender of parent	M deceased	F deceased	M	M	F	F	M	F	F
other ch/ren:	1 M	none	1 M	1 F	1 F, 1 M	2 F, 1 M	1 F, 1 M	none	2 F, 2 M
is gp with step-gp?	Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
legal status	testamentary guardianship ...guardianship	guardianship	guardian-ship	guardian-ship	informal with mother	guardian-ship understood*	guardian-ship	informal with mother	informal with mother

*estimated

** on return of transcript Annie had found she did not have guardianship

ADVERTISEMENT

Are You A Grandparent?

I am researching the different experiences of grandparents in New Zealand today. This research will be the core component of a PhD study at Massey University in Palmerston North.

For the research I shall consider 3 types of grandparenting:

- Grandparents who have full parental responsibility for their grandchild/ren.
- Grandparents who have regular care of their grandchild/ren whatever age, helping out and supporting their sons and/or daughters.
- Grandparents who have other, diverse roles with their grandchild/ren of any age.

I should like to hear from grandparents who are willing to be interviewed about their experience of any of the above grandparenting roles. My interest covers all situations of grandparents whether working, not working, grandmother or grandfather, living close by or at a distance from their grandchild/ren etc. If you are interested in participating in the research and/or want to know more, please contact Lesley Read at (06) 355 9194, or write to Lesley Read, c/o Sociology, Social Policy & Social Work, Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, or email lesleyread@clear.net.nz

INITIAL LETTER

Address

Date

Dear Name,

Thank you for replying to my advertisement.

If after reading the enclosed 'Grandparent Information Sheet', you still wish to participate in the research, would you please complete the consent form and questionnaire also enclosed, and return them to me in the stamped and addressed envelope provided. It may be that not everyone I receive questionnaires from will be able to be included as participants, but on receipt of replies I shall be in touch with each respondent. This will give an opportunity to talk personally about where and when it will be convenient for your interview to take place, and whether you are willing to make diary entries. Also I would like to know if you want someone with you when I talk with you.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Read

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on the role
in New Zealand.**

Grandparent Information Sheet

Dear Grandparent/s,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research into grandparenting in New Zealand. This research will be the core component in a Ph D study at Massey University in Palmerston North, with a working title '**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on the role in New Zealand**'. Some of the study outcomes may be reported in academic publications.

I am a grandmother myself. My current interest in the topic for study developed during my work as a social worker and counsellor, listening to grandmothers and grandfathers talking about their particular stresses and pleasures in grandparenting. I have now read something about the roles and experiences of grandparenting in countries out side New Zealand but, to date, there has been very little study of the topic here. Statistics NZ has now described grandparenting as an emerging area of interest.

Both my own experience, and the reading I have done, suggest there are distinctive characteristics to grandparenting in three rather different circumstances:

- the full-time care grandparent with parental responsibilities;
- the grandparent providing regular supplementary care to assist parent/s to fulfil the parenting needs of their children (e.g. when parents are in work);
- other grandparent roles characterized as varied and voluntary, outside parent type responsibilities.

I am wanting to explore the common and the different features of grandparenting experiences and some of the influences which have shaped them. From there I hope to be able to make suggestions for the direction of social policies and practice relating to grandparents as family members.

I am intending to interview several grandparents belonging to each of the three categories listed above, seeking information from them about their personal experiences of grandparenting. There will be up to two audio-taped interviews with each participant, totalling approximately three hours. The recorded information will then be referred back to each participant for authenticating. I am also hoping to engage several grandparents who are willing to keep a diary of their grandparenting activities and thoughts over three month period. Further guidelines will be given to them.

All material collected from participants, relating to the research, will be kept private and secured. Confidentiality of the audio-recorded research information and confidentiality of all participants will be assured. I alone will have access to the interview and diary content. To further conceal identity each participant will be invited to select a research code name. Finally, you will be given an option as to whether you wish the information you have contributed destroyed or returned to you following the elapse of a formal retention period. Of course your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

A report of the study results will be sent to everyone from whom consents and questionnaires have been received.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Read.

- For how long have you provided care for your grandchild/ren?
- For how long do you expect to provide care for your grandchild/ren?
- How many grandchildren do you look after, what are their ages and gender, and are these the children of your daughter/s, son/s or of both?

of daughter/s: age:

of son/s: age

gender:

gender:

Only for grandparents giving regular and essential, supplementary care:

- How frequently (on average per week) do you look after your grandchild/ren?
times per week
- How many hours does this average? hours
- How many grandchildren do you look after, what are their ages and gender, and are these the children of your daughter/s, son/s or of both?

of daughter/s: age:

of son/s: age:

gender:

gender:

For grandparents who have other, diverse roles with their grandchild/ren:

- How close do you live to your closest grandchild? kilometres
- And your furthest away grandchild? kilometres
- How do you keep in touch with your grandchildren? eg visiting, holidays, 'phone, letter, email, other...
- And how often?

Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on the role in New Zealand.

Consent Form for Participants in the Research.

I have read and understood the information set out in the 'Grandparent Information Sheet'. I wish to participate in this grandparenting study under the conditions described, together with the 'participants rights' set out below. My participation is entirely voluntary.

Participants' Rights.

In participating in this study I have the right to:

- Ask at any time during the research, any questions arising out of the study and to expect a well-informed response.
- Withdraw from the study at any point.
- Refuse to answer any question.
- Expect that the information I provide is completely confidential to the researcher alone. No personally identifiable information will be revealed in any reports or publications drawn from the research.
- As an interviewee, I can turn off the audio-recorder at any time during the interview.
- I can expect to see and review the material abstracted by the researcher from my interview prior to its use for research analysis. I shall be able to correct it in any way necessary.
- I can expect to receive a summary report when the study is completed.

Signed:-----

Name:-----

Date:-----

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on the role in
New Zealand.**

Diary keeping.

Thankyou for agreeing to keep a diary of your grandparenting experience for the purpose of my research on the topic.

I am hoping it will be possible for your diary to cover approximately a 3 month period including Christmas time. In doing so I hope too it will show what grandparenting means for you. In it, as much as possible (pleasurably, without it becoming an unpleasant chore) can be recorded your own feelings, reflections and observations with your grandchild/ren and the activities you share with him or her or them. **My first interest for the study is on you as a grandparent rather than on the grandchild/ren.** It may include what things you do, why you do them, memories they arouse, whether they are enjoyable or not, how the grandchild responds and how that affects you, where the parent fits in your feelings and activities – and any other grandparenting things you do and feel. It is overall your experience.

Keeping the diary can be talked about more when I bring it to you, if this is not clear.

If a problem should arise after that, please do get in touch with me by 'phone or email.

'phone: (06) 355 9194

email: lesleyread@clear.net.nz

Lesley Read.

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on
the role in New Zealand.**

Cloverlea,
102 No. 1 Line, RD 5
Palmerston North ..

Dear Diarist,

Thankyou for your offer to keep a diary over a three month period, recording thoughts, experiences, activities, and incidents related to your grandparenting.

As a grandparent who has a voluntary, variable role with your grandchild/ren, I am hoping to learn from you what your experience of grandparenting feels like for you.

Enclosed is a further 'consent form' with a stamped and addressed envelope, to cover the particularities of diary keeping. When I have received them back I shall be in touch to meet and give you the blank diary.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Read.

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on
the role in New Zealand.**

Address,

Date.

Dear Name,

Thankyou for your offer to keep a diary over a three month period, recording thoughts, experiences, activities, and incidents related to your grandparenting.

As a grandparent who regularly helps out your child/ren through the part-time care of grandchild/ren, can you please focus your diaries on only those grandchildren for whom you do provide this special care. Though you may have other grandchildren they should not be part of your diary recording.

I am enclosing a further 'consent form' and stamped and addressed envelope, to cover the particularities of diary keeping. When I have received them back I shall be in touch to meet and give you the blank diary.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Read.

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on the
role in New Zealand.**

Cloverlea,
102 No. 1 Line, RD 5,
Palmerston North.
27th October 2004.

Dear ,

Thank you for your offer to keep a diary over a three month period, recording thoughts, experiences, activities, and incidents related to your grandparenting.

As a grandparent who provides full-time care to grandchildren, can you please focus your diaries on only those grandchildren for whom you do provide this special care. Though you may have other grandchildren they should not be part of your diary recording.

I am enclosing a further 'consent form' and stamped and addressed envelope, to cover the particularities of diary keeping. When I have received them back I shall be in touch to meet and give you the blank diary.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Read.

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on
the role in New Zealand**

**Consent Form for Participants in the Research Who Are Writing a
Diary.**

I have read and understood the information set out in the 'Grandparent Information Sheet'. I wish to participate in this grandparenting study under the conditions described there and consented to already under 'Participants' Rights'. Further, as a diarist, I consent under the additional conditions 'Diary Participants' Rights' set out below. My participation is entirely voluntary.

Diary Participants' Rights.

- As a diarist I am free to select and record, according to my choice, thoughts, experiences, activities and incidents relating to my grandparenting, over a three month period which is mutually agreed with the researcher.
- I can expect to see and review the material abstracted by the researcher from my diary prior to its use for research analysis. I shall be able to correct it in any way necessary.

Signed:-----

Name:-----

Date:-----

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on
the role in New Zealand.**

Interview schedule.

- Can you talk about your experience of your own grandparents?
- Did anything or anyone memorable shape your way of grandparenting?
- What were your expectations of being a grandparent prior to becoming one? With the arrival of grandchildren have the experiences conformed to those expectations?
- How did you meet your first grandchild?
- What do your grandchildren call you? Is there any story behind that?
- Do you think your son/daughter, as a parent, has been influenced by the way you parented him/her?
- Can you talk about your relationship with your children and their partners now they have become parents?
- What factors have decided how you know and see your grandchild/ren? eg their parents, your work, other family, how close they live to you.
- Have there been any changes over time in your role and relationship with your grandchild/ren as a result of their family circumstances? eg locality, work, sickness, marriage/partnership.
- Do you know their other grandparents? Is this important?
- Have you found one age more rewarding than another? People speak of a 'grandparent career' as you and your grandchild/ren grow older. Have you noticed changes over time?
- Can you talk about the time you and your grandchild/ren spend together?

- What activities do you share with your grandchild/ren? Can you give some examples of most rewarding and most stressful times in your relationship/s?
- Are some special things done for you by your grandchild/ren? Do you expect help from your grandchild/ren?
- What do you do for them?
- How much do you think you should have a say in your grandchild/ren's life?
- Do you have plans and dreams for your grandchild/ren? Such as?
- How important do you think grandparents are in family life in New Zealand? Should grandparents be given more public recognition?
- Do you have suggestions for policy and/or services to support the contribution of grandparents to family life eg. legislated visiting rights to grandchild/ren, a nationally recognized Grandparent Day?
- If parents are unable to continue parenting their children, do you think grandparents should be 'the first port of call' in seeking alternative parenting?
- Is there anything more you would like to add?

Thankyou so much for answering these questions.

Additional questions to be integrated for grandparents with full-time parental responsibilities.

- What factors persuaded you to take on the full care of your grandchild/ren? Did other wider family members contribute to the decision and do they help?
(When grandparent is one of a couple) Did you feel alike in this? How did you work out the decision between you?
 - How much stress do you believe this has created for you? Have there been health issues for you? And your partner?
 - Can you talk about the changes in your home circumstances and your life-style that having the grandchild/ren with you has entailed? And such things as: how it has affected your relationships with others in your family and with friends?
 - Has your grandparenting relationship with the grandchild/ren changed since they have been with you? How do you manage discipline?
 - Do you get any financial help? From where?
-

Additional questions to be integrated for grandparents who are giving regular and essential supplementary care to grandchildren.

- What factors persuaded you to take on a caregiving role for your grandchild/ren? Was it initially your idea or did it come from your grandchild's mother and/or father? Did you decide it together with your partner? Were other family members consulted?
- What is the experience like for you? And your other family? Do you want to continue? For how long? Has your relationship with your grandchild/ren changed?
- Does your son/daughter contribute financially or in kind for the care you are providing?

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on
the role in New Zealand.**

Are You A Grandparent?

I am researching the different experiences of grandparents in New Zealand today.

This research will be the core component of a PhD study at Massey University in Palmerston North.

For the research I am looking for grandparents who have regular care of their grandchild/ren while **both** the child/ren's parents are employed.

I have already met with a number of grandparents in other diverse situations of grandparenting but I am keen to include in my study several grandparents who fulfil this particular role.

If you are interested in participating in the research and/or want to know more, please contact Lesley Read at (06) 355 9194, or write to Lesley Read, c/o Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, or email lesleyread@clear.net.nz

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on
the role in New Zealand.**

Cloverlea,
102 No. 1 Line, RD 5,
Palmerston North.

Dear

I am returning the abstract of my interview with you on your grandparenting experiences which was done on 4th November last year. I should be grateful if you can read it through and correct any factual errors you find. Sometimes I was not entirely sure that my hearing of the tape was correct and I may have misinterpreted the words in some instances. I have tried to keep very accurately to your use of words. Occasionally I have indicated that I am unable to distinguish some words or meaning, usually with a '??'. You may be able to fill in what is missing.

Having said that, I have been amazed at how clear the results have been, sometimes tracing quite complex and difficult feelings and thoughts. My expectation was that in not fully transcribing the tapes I would be selecting quite rigorously on a limited number of themes as they appeared in the course of the interviews. In the event, as I listened to the first tapes, I realized I would need to consider all the material from all the tapes before I could start to make a well informed selection of themes based on the data itself. Therefore what is here is something between an abstract and a transcription, often with only fill-in and repetitive phrases excluded. I have also omitted some anecdotes when they were not directly related to the grandparenting topic.

Sometimes re-reading sensitive passages may be distressing for you and I do remind you that I have an ethical obligation to find suitable counselling if you want it. However I hope you enjoy reading what you have told me as much as I have enjoyed listening to you a second time – in all sorts of settings around the world. For my needs there is a great deal of interesting, moving and valuable information, time and again.

I have become accustomed to think of you by your pseudonym and, somewhat amusingly, have had some trouble linking back to your name for addressing these to you. Fortunately they are recorded in writing! I have generally used only initials in indicating your family's names throughout the tapes and sometimes have attempted to obscure other names of places and people.

When you have finished reading and confirming this interview material would you please return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope.

I may still need to be in touch in the future to add or clarify a piece of information; in which case I hope you will bear with me.

A very warm thank you for your help and very best wishes for 2006,
Yours sincerely,

**Grandparenting: the social, political and economic influences on the role in
New Zealand**

Cloverlea,
102 No 1 Line, RD 5,
Palmerston North 4475
September 2009.

Dear

It is approximately five years since I visited you and talked with you for my research regarding grandparenting. You will remember that you chose this pseudonym to ensure that what I write about your experiences of grandparenting would not be easily associated with you or your family. I am now sending you a copy of the brief profile I am proposing to use to introduce you to readers of my thesis. Please could you read it through and consider whether you are comfortable for me to use it. If you want some change to provide greater 'camouflage' please let me know what that is.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Read

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