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**Negotiating grandmothering, paid employment and regular
childcare in urban Aotearoa New Zealand**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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Abstract

Grandmothers are increasingly called upon to provide regular childcare to enable parents to engage in paid employment. Many of these grandmothers are in paid employment themselves. Combining paid employment and regular childcare is managed in the context of their lives, which includes family relationships and broader societal expectations for older women. This thesis examined the experience of grandmothers living in Auckland City, who were in paid employment at least twenty hours a week and who provided regular weekly childcare of at least ten hours a week to their grandchildren. This research was based on feminist poststructuralism. Poststructuralism focusses on multiplicity and subjectivity, attending to the wider contexts in which language is located. Feminist poststructuralism focusses on gender and how gendered norms describe and establish the 'right' ways of behaving. These expectations contribute to assumptions that the accommodation of childcare and paid work is normal and natural for women. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen grandmothers and their accounts were analysed using narrative analysis. Narrative analysis focusses on the importance of stories as the primary way in which people make sense of their lives. These stories draw on wider social, cultural, political and gendered narratives. The analysis found that paid employment was particularly important in the participants' lives, allowing for the construction of an identity which was different to a grandmother-focussed identity. This importance of paid employment also shaped participants' understandings of the importance of paid employment in the lives of mothers; maternal paid employment was constructed as important for wellbeing and for enabling an identity different to that of 'mother'. Two clear intentions for providing childcare were storied: supporting maternal paid employment, and childcare as a response to concerns about grandchildren's wellbeing. Finally, holding multiple roles and balancing paid employment and childcare were storied as the juggling of identities rather than the juggling of the tasks involved in combining paid work and childcare. The research findings have contributed to how grandmothering is understood; it has contextualised participants' experiences in wider societal expectations for how women can and should combine their paid employment and family lives in later life.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background to this study

My interest in studying the experiences of grandmothers arose initially in conversation with a colleague. She is a grandmother; I too am a grandmother and together we wondered about how much had been written about grandmothering experiences. I followed this up, at first from idle curiosity which soon developed into active interest. Early on in this process, I noted the use of the word ‘grandparent’ was dominant, even in studies which purported to focus on grandmothering. I read further, deepening my search and discovered that grandmothers and grandmothering experiences were frequently subsumed within the terms ‘grandparent’ and ‘grandparenting’. My initial idea of an article morphed into considering the possibility of a complete study; as I read more intensively I was also reading about the prevalence of older women remaining in paid employment. A further pivotal moment came when I discovered Meyer’s book *‘Grandmothers at work: Juggling families and jobs’* published in the United States in 2014. There was nothing equivalent in Aotearoa New Zealand. I felt an imperative to endeavour to highlight the childcaring work grandmothers are undertaking within their families.

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I became increasingly aware of the place that grandmothers had occupied in my own life. My maternal grandmother came to live with me and my family when I was twelve years old, until her death when I was eighteen. This seemed uncommon; none of my contemporaries had their grandmothers living with them. I remember feeling delight, a sense of bewilderment that she was there, and then a taken-for-granted acceptance that she was now a much larger part of our lives than she had previously occupied. I believe that her presence in our household for those six years shaped and changed the relationships we had with each other in ways that my mother and I still wonder and talk about. My father, as a result of his family circumstances, lived for years with his sternly protective paternal grandmother, from the age of nine until he married my mother at the age of twenty-five. I did not ever meet my paternal grandmother; however I do have childhood memories of my father’s grandmother, limited to visits as she was by then living in what was commonly known as an ‘old folks’ home’.

I now also have my own experiences as a grandmother to draw upon and the importance I attach to the presence of grandchildren in my life has also undoubtedly been a major influence, and contributed to my interest in the role grandmothers have in their families.

Within the current body of academic literature, there is a notable lack of research focussed solely on the experience of contemporary grandmothering and how grandmothering has changed over the last fifty years. Also, much of the current literature is focussed on *grandparenting* (Janicki et.al, 2000; Hayslip et. al, 2013; Backhouse & Graham, 2012; Marken & Howard, 2014), rather than the specifics of grandmothering. Literature suggests that grandparents (more commonly grandmothers) have historically played an important role in providing ancillary care (Craig & Jenkins, 2016; Finch & Mason, 1990; Uhlmann, 2006), useful not only for childcare but assisting parents to manage their time. Recent research acknowledges their increasing activity in providing childcare while parents are engaged in paid work (Craig & Jenkins, 2016; Condon et al., 2013; Goodfellow & Lavery, 2003; Jenkins, 2013; Whelan, 2012). This study will therefore address the gap that exists in literature, by seeking to draw attention to how grandmothers who are in paid work and providing childcare narrate their experiences.

This thesis is about grandmothering and specifically about grandmothers who are in part-time paid employment at least twenty hours a week and providing regular, informal childcare to a grandchild or grandchildren at least ten hours a week. One of the central aims was to examine the ways in which grandmothers narrate their experiences; enquiring about the balancing of paid work and childcare. In Aotearoa New Zealand, there has been also been no research to date which has focussed solely on grandmothers who are in paid employment and providing grandchild care. Current research has also predominantly centred on grandparenting, and grandparents rather than grandmothers.

1.2 Grandmothers and older women in paid employment

A number of overseas studies have highlighted increasing numbers of grandmothers remaining in paid employment (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Craig & Jenkins, 2016; Geurts et al., 2015; Meyer, 2014). These same groups of grandmothers are also providing regular childcare to grandchildren. More than twenty-five years ago, Glezer (1991) noted that most of the childcare of grandchildren was undertaken by grandmothers, and this was

despite increased participation in the workforce. The absence of New Zealand studies specific to grandmothers providing childcare whilst at the same time being in paid employment mean it is difficult to ascertain whether overseas studies are reflective of what is happening in Aotearoa New Zealand. Statistics regarding the number of grandmothers who are in paid employment in Aotearoa New Zealand are not available, however figures from the 2018 census state that the number of women in paid employment between the ages of 50-69 was 400,100 with a further 28,000 women from the age of 70-plus in paid work (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). This represents a significant number of older women; the total number of women for the age group 50-69 in 2018 was 564,225; therefore, those in paid work constituted almost 71% of the total number of women in this age group. Paid employment has become increasingly important in the lives of women; the period from 1986 to 2012 resulted in women's paid employment participation increasing by fifty percent, a figure above the OECD average (Ministry of Women, n.d) and women are more likely to be in part-time employment because it is women who take time away from paid work to care for children.

1.3 Changing patterns of family childcare arrangements

There can be a tendency to think that women's juggling of paid work and childcare is a recent phenomenon, however poor and working-class women have been managing care for their children and paid work for generations. As early as the late 1800s voluntary organisations set up the first childcare centres or crèches as they were known, which offered care for babies from six weeks of age whose mothers were in paid work from necessity (Read, 2010). In 1941, when the need for women in the paid workforce increased, day-care services for two to five-year-old children were reported as being commonly used and women were described as needing to juggle childcare and paid work (Brookes, 2016). As the employment market grew between the 1970s and 1980s, and women, many of whom were mothers, were employed in increasing numbers to meet market demands, formal childcare centres became more established (Pool et al., 2007).

Although many mothers are in part-time paid employment to accommodate the needs of their children, many are in full-time paid employment (Pool et al., 2007). The 'two-income' family has become more common and necessary in many developed countries and where once it was expected that mothers would stay home to look after children, this is no longer the case

(Arber & Timonen, 2012). It has therefore become vital to consider how childcare arrangements are managed. Although expectations for paid work have changed for women today, the role of men in childcare and domestic work has not equally shifted. Men are still not participating equally in both childcare and domestic chores given the numbers of women engaged in part-time or full-time work (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015). A study based in the United Kingdom on grandparents, childcare and employment for the years 1998-2009 found that grandmothers were providing most of the informal childcare upon which families depend and that they are also under pressure to combine paid work and childcare (Wellard, 2011).

There has been a steady increase in grandmothers providing childcare to their grandchildren (Gray, 2005). One of the commonly cited reasons for this increase in grandmothers' childcare is maternal paid employment; data from the United Kingdom's Time Use Survey on 6,414 households found that 39.5 percent of mothers in paid employment received childcare assistance from grandparents, in contrast to 20.1 percent of mothers not in paid employment (Gray, 2005). Grandmothers are also more available than they once were; improvements in health have led to increased longevity, however at the same time older women are more likely to be in paid employment themselves. This increase in both maternal and grand-maternal paid employment rates has led to a concern being noted in some studies that it could result in a decrease in grandmothers' availability for childcare (Arthur et al., 2003; Dench et al., 2000; Gray, 2005; Wheelock & Jones, 2002).

1.4 Changing nature of the family

Up until the mid-1970s, the construct of family was based on an idealised White, middle-class structure, despite the diversity of family groups present over generations and across Aotearoa New Zealand. Commonly held notions of family, represented in media and literature were based on the so-called 'nuclear' family consisting of a mother, a father and their children (Pool et al., 2007). This family configuration which was once the firm foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand society has been, or is in the process of being reconfigured. No longer the preserve of heterosexual relationships, families are now characterised by a diversity including 'chosen' families (those who choose to form a family such as friends) (Pahl & Spencer, 2010) and blended, step, single-parent, same-sex parents, and child-free households. In Aotearoa New Zealand, by the 1980s and 1990s, step, reconstituted and blended families also became more common and are noted as one of the

most significant changes to the nuclear family during this period of time (Pool et al. 2007). The boundaries of what constitutes family in the 21st century could best be described as fluid with a variety of activities and participants that shape, maintain and redefine traditional notions of family boundaries (Schadler, 2016). Women who were born as part of the baby-boomer generation which encompasses the years 1946 through to 1964 have witnessed significant changes in the structure of the family. Fewer women married – in 1971 the marriage rate was 45.5 marriages for every 1,000 people over the age of sixteen, and by the end of 1999 this had dropped to 16.2 marriages (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). Additionally, close to a third of the total marriages in 1999 were remarriages (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). It should be noted that the early baby-boomer years differed in their patterns to the later years; for instance, from those people born between 1946 and into the early 1950s, 47 percent had married by the age of 25; for women born in the early 1960s, this had dropped to 20 percent and more women were in what was known as ‘de facto’ relationships (Pool et al., 2007). By the end of 2019, there were 8,388 divorces with 3,468 involving 6,201 children (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). Latest census statistics from 2018 show 197,946 households were single-parents with dependent children (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). This matters because the rise in single-parent families has meant that maternal paid employment is as important if not more important than paid employment for partnered mothers. Some studies on grandparenting have discussed how divorce affects levels of grandparental engagement (Chan & Elder, 2000; Hetherington & Kelly, 2003; Uhlenberg, 2005) with some literature finding that grandparental involvement in childcare increased when parents separated (Buchanan, 2017; Hank & Buber, 2009; Tan, et al., 2010). This is attributed to day-to-day care of children being granted primarily to mothers (shared parenting arrangements notwithstanding), who subsequently may need to establish, or re-establish, childcare arrangements (Douglas & Ferguson, 2003; Uhlenberg, 2005).

A further change which has consequences for grandmothering is the age at which a woman has her first child. This has increased by almost five years in the 38 years between 1976 and 2018. The median age for giving birth to a first child in 1976 was 25 years when some baby-boomer women might have had their first child, and had increased to 30.5 years in 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). It is important to note that these figures are based on Pākehā fertility patterns; the median age for Māori women having their first child has slowly moved from 25.8 years in 2013 to 27 in 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Rarere (2018) notes however that a closer examination of these patterns uncovers a similarity in Māori and

Pākehā fertility trends – women in both groups are giving birth to their first child later - denoting a mix of corresponding as well as diverging trends (Didham & Boddington, 2011). This produces an effect on grandmothing as women today are therefore likely to wait longer to become grandmothers than their own mothers, although the age at which women become grandmothers for the first time can vary from thirty years of age to over seventy years and older. In the United States for instance, women are likely to become first-time grandmothers between the ages of 48 and 52 and in Europe the average age is 53 (Meyer, 2014).

Another change in the structure of family groupings in Western societies has been the rise of multigenerational households. Statistics New Zealand (2020) includes numbers of three or more generations living in the same dwelling. In 2006 43,638 households were in this category, this had increased to 58,530 by 2013, and in 2018 the last census indicated that 64,836 households were occupied by three or more generations of the same family. In twelve years, multigenerational households have increased by almost fifty percent. A study was undertaken on multigenerational households in 2015 in Aotearoa New Zealand, based on census data from 2013 and in-depth interviews with people residing in multigenerational households. It found that the most commonly cited reasons for living multigenerationally were care for older people (often grandparents) who in turn are available to assist with childcare, financial advantages, younger adults returning home, and convenience, companionship and support (Lysnar & Dupuis, 2015). As families in Aotearoa New Zealand have become more ethnically diverse, increased migration has reshaped the term “family” as different cultures, family compositions, values and beliefs are introduced. This has also contributed to an increase in the incidence of multigenerational households as Asian and Pacific cultures place an emphasis on particular forms of family. This includes familism (for instance Chinese families value ideas of patriarchy) and collectivism (Pacific cultures’ emphasis on the collective and not the individual) (Pool et al., 2007).

These changes in family structure have all contributed to an increase in grandmother involvement in childcare, along with the limited availability of formal childcare and its associated costs (Gray, 2005; Buchanan & Rotkirch, 2018; Hunt & Waterhouse, 2013; Jamieson et al., 2018; Leeson, 2018). Statistics New Zealand’s latest figures on informal childcare in their Time Use survey found that grandparents provide the most informal

childcare with grandmothers comprising the majority of this care (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Grandmothers are not only providing childcare, they have been found to be acting as ‘stand-in parents’: attending meetings at school, assemblies, and school camps (Tan et al., 2010). The ways in which families have shifted and changed, as outlined in this section, are demonstrative of the ways in which changing demographics have influenced grandmother involvement in families.

1.5 The socio-political context regarding childcare within Aotearoa New Zealand

Globalisation has influenced many of the societal changes that have shaped grandmothers, including changing paid employment patterns, increased geographical mobility and migration and rapid development in the ways in which people communicate (Arber & Timonen, 2012). These have also contributed to changing social policies. In Aotearoa New Zealand, changes followed from the introduction in 1938 of the Social Security Act which allowed for a means-tested family benefit payment to those mothers who met the eligibility criteria (Read, 2010). By the mid-1940s, this was paid to all mothers irrespective of their financial means, and kindergarten, playcentre and daycare centres began to develop even though most mothers at this time were homemakers (Labrum, 2000). Grandparents were not usually called upon for childcare; they were viewed as an adjunct to family life rather than central to it (Pool et al., 2007). By the early 1970s, a payment scheme was introduced to support single parents - the Domestic Purposes Benefit - in recognition of increasing numbers of single-parent households. However, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, state welfare provision declined to the point where poverty rose in single-parent households. Previously full employment rates for men diminished leaving more and more women seeking paid work outside the home (Read, 2010).

This decline in welfare provision and associated rise in single-household poverty coincided with a shift in policy direction in the mid-1980s. The previous relatively high levels of State support that had prevailed since the mid-1940s changed in favour of policy based on assumptions that childcare should be provided within families, and this shaped how childcare was understood, how people should act and who should provide care (Read, 2010). A neo-liberal political framework prevailed, underpinned by the assumption that childcare is either managed as a private concern and is therefore unpaid, or it is provided by the market, leading

to increased privatisation and expense (Lynch, 2007). At the same time, increasing numbers of women were encouraged to enter the paid workforce; their participation impacts favourably on Gross Domestic Product, it reduces poverty and inequality and it reduces government spending on welfare (Borkin, 2011; Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014).

Commensurate with this however, is the need for government support in funding childcare services so that parents - particularly mothers - can seek paid work. Aotearoa New Zealand, along with other countries including Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom has a relative gap in institutional and governmental support for full-time working parents (Craig & Mullan, 2010).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, legislation was introduced in 2002 allowing twelve weeks of paid parental leave, which was lengthened to fourteen weeks in 2004 and extended in 2006 to include those women in self-employment (Forbes, 2009). Whilst there is this provision for paid parental leave, if a woman who has a child or children under the age of three returns to paid employment there are significant shortfalls in formal childcare funding. Subsidised formal care provided by childcare providers currently includes twenty hours of funded childcare (limited to daylight weekday working hours) available to children over the age of three. For women working in full-time paid employment this leaves twenty hours which are not subsidised and no funding for any child under three years of age. This leaves some significant shortfalls. There is also a complete lack of formal childcare for those parents who work outside 'normal' working hours. Therefore, although formal childcare provision has increased, it often cannot fully accommodate parental paid work commitments whether through lack of flexibility or availability of spaces for children. At the same time, childcare has been found to be the single most important consideration in allowing mothers to remain in, return to, or take up paid employment (Morrissey, 2015). Grandmothers are therefore viewed as ideal carers as their care is likely to be free, reliable and predicated on an existing familial relationship (Goodfellow, 2001; Morrissey, 2015). Their care is also regarded as reliable and trustworthy (Vincent & Ball, 2001) and high quality (Boyd et al., 2013; Craig, 2007; Harris, 2008).

1.6 Legislation

There are two legislative Acts which also shape childcare in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (1989) makes provision for those children

whose parents are deemed inadequate whether through mental health issues, addiction, incarceration or death. The Act was influenced by traditional Māori tikanga (practices) regarding children being the responsibility of all whānau and not just the parents'. This was translated in the Act as extended family being preferred carers for those children deemed to be at risk (Worrall, 2009). The extended family most likely to provide childcare are grandparents and often it is grandmothers who take on responsibility for grandchildren (Schofield, 2005). The Care of Children Act (2004) is now primarily responsible for formal childcare arrangements with its focus on the rights of children (Henaghan, 2014). It should be noted that neither Act entitles grandparents to legal rights regarding the children in their care (Davey & Smith, 2016).

1.7 Conceptualising grandmothering

The term 'grandmother' is both a social role and an identity and, as evident, is situated within cultural, political, social and gender contexts. For instance, within the current context of the 21st century it is not regarded as an imperative to have given birth to become a grandmother or to perform grandmothing. 'Grandmother' can apply to the biological mothers of mothers and fathers, and it can equally apply to older women with no biological relationship, as in step-families, or adoptive families. It can also be used as an honorary term to denote a woman of importance in the family. However, literature notes that biological grandmothers are the most commonly understood form of grandmother (Gray & Brogdon, 2017).

The term 'grandmothering' describes the actions derived from the identity construction of 'grandmother' and includes taking care of grandchildren and the actions which constitute the activities involved with being a grandmother (Doucet, 2006). Just as the family has undergone significant change over the last fifty years, so too has grandmothing. Many more grandmothers are now in full-time caregiving roles than at any other time during the latter half of the 20th century (Kier & Fung, 2014; Ludwig et.al, 2007). This is due to factors including parental difficulties, family disruption and grandmothers living longer potentially increasing their availability (Mander, 2007). Grandmothers are not only providing more childcare than grandfathers, they are doing so in a context of increased workforce participation (Glezer, 1991; Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Millward, 1997; Wellard, 2011). Grandmothers are also providing

childcare for longer periods, and at higher levels of involvement than grandfathers (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Meyer, 2014).

Children today have more living grandparents than at any other time in history; in 1998 it was noted that seventy-five percent of Americans in their thirties had at least one grandparent still alive, in 1898 only twenty percent of people in their thirties did (Uhlenberg & Kirby, 1998). It is now expected that three, four and even five generations will be alive at the same time, providing opportunities for grandparents to be a significant presence in the lives of their grandchildren (Bengtson, 2001; Villar et al., 2012; McPherson, 2003). Grandparents now play an increasing role in raising the next generation, they are living longer and are therefore more available (their own paid employment notwithstanding). Increases in single motherhood and paid maternal employment along with the globalisation of paid work have all changed the nature of what it means to be a grandparent.

In this study, the terms ‘grandparenting’ and ‘grandmothering’ will be the focus, rather than ‘grandparenthood’ and ‘grandmotherhood’. This distinction is based on a recognition that the term grandmothering is emblematic of an active engagement with the role, as distinct from grandmotherhood which implies static-ness, a status one arrives at which may or may not include the doing of grandmothering.

1.8 Significance of this study

Grandmothers make an important and significant contribution to the lives of families around the world, through their availability to provide regular childcare to their grandchildren. Statistics from Europe indicate that 40 to 65 percent of grandparents are providing care to grandchildren. It is not clear how much of this care is being undertaken by grandmothers (Silverstein & Giarusso, 2010). At the same time, studies from around the world find that grandmothers are far more engaged in grandchild care than grandfathers, and that their level of involvement is considerably higher (Geurts et al., 2015; Guzman, 2004; Luo et al., 2012).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, there has been little research conducted in the area of grandmothering. Available research has also predominantly centred on grandparenting, and grandparents rather than grandmothers. Despite this focus in the literature, it is mainly grandmothers who have been found to make an important and significant contribution to the

lives of families around the world (Arber & Timonen, 2012). While there have been some contributions from overseas, there has not been any local research to date which focusses on understanding the experiences of those grandmothers who are currently in paid employment and providing childcare to a grandchild or grandchildren. This study examines the stories participants tell about their grandmothering in the context of caring for grandchildren whilst in paid employment. This examination and discussion is important in order to both highlight and acknowledge the caring work that grandmothers are engaged in. Calling attention to this will make a significant contribution to an under-researched area both here, in Aotearoa New Zealand, and overseas.

1.9 Key research aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to explore and discuss the experience of grandmothers who provide informal childcare to their grandchild or grandchildren whilst in paid employment.

The questions informing this research are:

What is important in the narrated experience of grandmothers who are in paid work and engaged in grandchild care?

How do grandmothers construct their identity in the context of their paid work and grandchild care?

What wider narratives do grandmothers draw on in their constructions of identity?

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a background to this study through its discussion of the demographic changes that have resulted in an increased need for grandmothers to provide childcare to their grandchildren. These changes include increases in maternal paid employment, changes in family composition, changes in social policies regarding childcare provision, and increasing globalisation. At the same time, these increased levels of participation in paid employment among women have meant it is likely that both mothers and grandmothers will be in paid employment simultaneously and for longer

periods of time. Despite the increased participation of mothers in the paid workforce, there remains a shortfall in government-funded formal childcare provision and grandmothers are the people most frequently called upon to provide childcare so that mothers can remain in paid employment.

Gendered constructions regarding the responsibilities of combining childcare and paid work continue to allocate the management of these primarily with women and this shapes expectations for grandmothering. Although there is a body on literature on grandparents, grandmothering has been under-researched and/or subsumed within the body of literature on grandparenting. This is despite international studies consistently reporting that grandmothers provide higher levels of engagement and involvement with their grandchildren. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by highlighting the experiences of grandmother childcare in the context of their own paid employment.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines and critiques the current body of international and New Zealand literature on grandmothering. To do this, it is necessary to include relevant research on grandparenting, as there has been, and continues to be, a predominant focus on grandparents rather than grandmothers in gerontological and social science research. The terms ‘grandparent’ and ‘grandmother’ are often used interchangeably denoting a lack of delineation between the roles suggesting gender is irrelevant to the experiences of grandmothering. Although this study is based on the experiences of grandmothers who are in paid employment and providing childcare within Aotearoa New Zealand, it is also necessary to include international literature as to date there is an insufficient body of locally published studies in this area.

Existing literature suggests that grandparents play increasingly important roles in contemporary Western society and that while traditionally grandparenting has been understood as oriented toward pleasure and not responsibility, studies acknowledge this has changed as grandparents take on increased levels of childcare (Fisher & Hutton-Baas, 2017; Sandberg, 2016). This is due in part to increased life expectancies, a tendency for people to have fewer children and many parents working in paid employment. The first part of this chapter will therefore present an overview of the available international and local literature on grandparenting and will be followed by a section on gender. Part two will focus on the international and local literature on grandmothering. The chapter concludes with an overall assessment of the current body of literature on grandmothering, discussing the gaps in knowledge that this thesis intends to address.

Part One: Grandparenting

2.2 International Literature

2.2.1 Grandparenting childcare to enable parental and maternal paid employment

International research on grandparenting largely emerged in the decade between 1960 and 1970, with an increase in the decade between 1980 and 1990. In 1990s Europe (including the United Kingdom), a significant body of research emerged on those grandparents providing childcare to their grandchildren while their parents were in paid employment (Dimova &

Wolff, 2011; Gray, 2005; Hank & Buber, 2009; Kanji, 2018; Sear & Coall, 2011). Studies suggest that grandparents were seen as a natural choice for childcare, cost-effective (mostly unpaid), willing, and accessible (Wheelock & Jones, 2002). Formal childcare provision was either not readily available, accessible or affordable (Attias-Donfut & Wolff, 2000; Del Boca & Vuri, 2007; McClure, 1998; Read, 2010). The ways in which paid employment has influenced the prevalence of grandparent childcare has also been attributed to increased maternal (as distinct from parental) paid employment (Dimova & Wolff, 2011; Kanji, 2018). There is an important theme from this literature to note. In the descriptions of grandparents' support of maternal paid employment, the employment status of fathers, if they are present, is not mentioned. It is not made explicit whether this is as a result of an assumption that men's paid employment does not require childcare support because caring is constructed as an activity that mothers naturally engage in or because men's paid employment is ubiquitous and women's is not.

Studies have also focussed on a range of other factors including socio-political and cultural context. These include a connection between a complete lack of formal childcare provision necessitating grandparents to provide childcare in southern European countries such as Italy (Gattai & Musatti, 1999; Kanji, 2018). In Asian countries such as China the role of grandparents is described as 'family maximisers'; grandparents take on considerable responsibility for grandchildren (often in rural areas) while parents move to an urban centre for paid employment opportunities (Baker & Silverstein, 2012; Uhlenberg & Cheuk, 2010).

These studies all demonstrate the importance of grandparents' childcare in the context of parental and maternal paid employment and whilst grandmothers are frequently mentioned as the main carers throughout all these studies, they are not the focus. Because maternal paid employment is an important feature in the literature, it is also discussed further in the section on grandmothering.

2.2.2 Changes in family structure

The international research on grandparenting includes literature on changes in the nuclear family structure and its effects on grandparenting. These range from the effects of divorce on grandparents (Ferguson et al., 2004; Johnson, 1998) to the impacts of divorce on grandchildren (Ahrons, 2006; Amato & Cheadle, 2005; Cooney & Smith, 1996), and includes the impact divorce/separation has on the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Drew & Smith, 1999; King, 2003). Parental divorce can result in a loss of contact between grandparents and their

grandchildren and this has been reported as producing adverse effects on the wellbeing of both (Bridges et al., 2007; Doyle et al., 2010; Drew & Silverstein, 2007). Paternal grandparents have been found to be particularly disadvantaged because of weakened ties with their grandchildren which is attributed to custodial arrangements favouring children living with their mother (Jappens & van Bavel, 2016; Westphal et al., 2015). Other studies describe increased closeness between grandchildren and grandparents following parental divorce, and emphasise the importance of maternal grandparents as a support to their daughter/s and grandchildren (Ferguson et al., 2004).

The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is not dyadic; studies have shown that it is a mediated one, with parents acting as a ‘bridge’ (Fingerman, 2004; Johnson, 1998; King & Elder, 1995; Monserud, 2008). This has been attributed to the prevalence of ideas such as the autonomy and privacy of the nuclear family, resulting in grandparents being constrained in their contact with grandchildren (Arber & Timonen, 2012). Within Western family discourse, grandparents are positioned to acknowledge parental authority and this requires waiting for an invitation from the mother and/or father to be involved in their grandchildren’s lives (May et al., 2012). The term ‘gatekeeper’ is one that has been applied to parents as it is they who determine the terms upon which contact between grandparents and grandchildren takes place (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Tan et al., 2010). Exceptions to this are young mothers with young babies who are described as needing hands-on support from their own parents (Sadler & Clemmens, 2004). This support is characterised in the literature as grandmothers who ‘take over’ caring for the baby so that the mother can adjust to the demands of motherhood (SmithBattle, 1996; Sjöberg & Bertilsdotter-Rosqvist, 2017).

The studies cited above are based on heterosexual couples for both the grandparent and parent generation. Recent publications which include chapters or sections on the sexuality of grandparents have all agreed that parental mediation of the grandparent-grandchild relationship is more prevalent (or watchful) when grandparents are in non-heterosexual relationships (Biblarz et al., 2014; Fruhauf et al., 2009; Hayslip & Fruhauf, 2019). Grandparents were found to work tirelessly to maintain relationships with their adult children because the quality of the grandparent-grandchild relationship set “the terms of engagement” with grandchildren including the rules about disclosing sexual identity (Tasker & Lavender-Stott, 2020, p.12).

Multigenerational living is reportedly on the increase; factors such as financial constraints and shared models of home ownership, as well as migration have all contributed to its rise

(Ko, 2012). This produces consequences for grandparents (Livingstone & Parker, 2010; Mann et al., 2009). These consequences include shifts in responsibility with grandparents reportedly taking on a parental responsibility for grandchildren because of proximity and their increased availability (Gray, 2005; Jenkins, 2013; Wellard, 2011). Earlier research from the 1990s and early 2000s had signalled this phenomenon and accentuated the increasing importance of multigenerational relationships by foreseeing a shift beyond locating responsibility for childcare with the nuclear family to include grandparents (Attias-Donfut et al., 2005; Bengtson, 2001; Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Hagestad, 2006; Kemp, 2007; Monserud, 2008). Other consequences for grandparents who are living in multigenerational households include taking on more of the household chores (Ko, 2012), increased levels of childcare (Albuquerque, 2008), and the increased likelihood of intergenerational conflict which is attributed to negotiating responsibilities (Pilkauskas & Cross, 2018). Despite grandparents sharing living accommodation with the parents and their children, studies note that parents continue to mediate the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, acting as a pivot (King & Elder, 1995). That is, the relationship that develops between grandparents and their grandchildren is undertaken within the context of the parent-child relationship (Read, 2010).

2.2.3 Geographic proximity

Those studies which focus on the profile of grandparents who provide childcare include the influence of factors such as geographic proximity. Parents and grandparents who live in the same neighbourhood are, unsurprisingly, able to offer sustained regular childcare (Elder & Conger, 2000; Gray, 2005; Guzman, 2004; Mueller et al., 2002). According to one study based in the United Kingdom, any journey between grandparent and grandchild that is longer than fifteen minutes is likely to mean that childcare is almost unfeasible (Arthur et al., 2003; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1992; Meltzer, 1994). Proximity is important for facilitating regular childcare, however it is not vital in terms of the grandparent-grandchild relationship. It has been suggested that whilst geographic proximity is a reliable indicator for frequency of face-to-face contact it might not influence the quality of the relationship between grandparent and grandchild (Ferguson, 2004; Hurme et al., 2010; Arber & Timonen, 2012). The quality of the grandparent-grandchild relationship can also be measured by other forms of contact such as emails, letter-writing and technology-assisted contact (Hurme et al., 2010).

2.2.4 Expectations

How the grandparental role is understood in any given context arises from societal expectations, including notions of responsibility, obligation, levels of involvement and boundaries. These notions are informed by two ideas which feature predominantly in studies, described as ‘normative’ expectations for grandparents. These normative expectations are ‘non-interference’ and ‘being there’ and are noted in some studies as paradoxical. On the one hand grandparents are positioned to not interfere in the parents’ parenting of their children as to do so is regarded as undermining their authority (Bates, 2009; Mann, 2007; May et al., 2012). On the other hand, grandparents are expected to be there when and if needed, particularly for ‘emergency’ childcare typified by short notice, whether due to parental work commitments or other unusual events (Gray, 2005; Wheelock & Jones, 2002). Studies suggest there are various challenges with grandparents navigating these expectations; however there is some agreement that grandparents know that non-interference is important (Celdrán & Triadó, 2012; Kemp, 2004; Marhánková, 2018; May et al., 2012). One study attributed the difficulties that grandparents have with non-interference to the simultaneous grandparenting and parenting they are engaged in (May et al., 2012). That is, as the role of parent to adult children changes to include being a grandparent, interference is constructed as undesirable. It should be noted that these expectations are based on White, Western values regarding parenting and grandparenting and should not be regarded as the norm for all parents and grandparents.

2.2.5 Two differences between grandfathering and grandmothering

There are two key differences between grandfathering and grandmothering outlined in the international literature. These include the level of involvement and the types of involvement. These differences are important to this study because both level and type of involvement are further indicative of the work that grandmothers and not grandfathers are engaged in.

The level of involvement is one of the key differences between grandmothering and grandfathering. Grandfathers have been consistently portrayed and discussed in the literature as providing significantly less childcare for their grandchildren (Hank & Buber, 2009; Reitzes & Mutran, 2004; Smith & Drew, 2002) and their care as negligible across other studies (Gattai & Musatti, 1999; Gray, 2005). One study based on an analysis of panel data from ten European countries, stated that ‘grandmothers provide far more childcare than grandfathers do’ (Leopold

& Skopek, 2015, p. 63). Whilst some studies do acknowledge that some grandfathers are involved in grandchild care, it is noted that grandmothers are more frequently involved, and they provide grandchild care for disproportionately longer periods of time than grandfathers (Geurts et al., 2015; Guzman, 2004; Hank & Buber, 2009). A survey conducted on more than 13,000 grandparents in the United States asked about their patterns of involvement in childcare. It found that grandmothers spent an average of twenty-three hours a week providing care whereas grandfathers spent an average of sixteen hours a week; moreover grandmothers were more likely to remain engaged in childcare over time (Luo et al., 2012).

Although such studies on grandparents have been scarce – for instance, in Australia there were only seven published studies in the twenty years between 1989 and 2009 – all have supported the predominance of grandmothers being the primary care providers of grandchildren. Grandmother care constituted 44 percent of the childcare for two parent families, while grandfathers provided approximately eleven percent of care (Jenkins, 2010; 2013). In Great Britain, almost twice as many grandmothers are providing at least ten hours of care to grandchildren compared with grandfathers - from data comprising 3,243 adult participants in two surveys from 1998 and 2009 (Wellard, 2012).

Grandmothers undertake not only the caring of grandchildren, but also the domestic chores associated with providing childcare while grandfathers generally do not. These chores include preparations involved in caring for grandchildren - cleaning, cooking, tidying - and chores associated during and after care (Whelan, 2012). An Australian study on 3,277 grandparents, of which 1,934 were grandmothers, examined the types of duties grandparents engaged in. It found that the role of grandfathers was to entertain grandchildren rather than engage in any of the practical tasks associated with caring for grandchildren. Fully half of the grandmothers in this study reported spending an average of twenty-six hours every week doing domestic chores in addition to providing grandchild care which contrasted with an average of eight hours a week for the grandfathers in the study (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015). These findings are consistent with research conducted in the 1990s where grandmothers also reported undertaking the practical aspects of grandchild care along with taking primary responsibility for the caring, even if their husbands - the grandfathers - were present (Millward, 1997; Wearing & Wearing, 1996). Other studies suggest that approximately 75 percent of grandparental childcare is provided by grandmothers (Condon et al., 2013; Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Whelan, 2012). A study conducted in Australia surveyed eighty-four grandparents who provided childcare for

their preschool grandchildren; seventy-four were grandmothers - 88 percent - and ten were grandfathers (Materne & Luszcz, 2010).

These studies all indicate that it is highly likely that not only are grandmothers engaging in more care of their grandchildren than grandfathers, they are also spending significant amounts of time providing supplementary practical support. This highlights the significance of grandmothers' contribution to all aspects of childcare provision. Gender inequalities regarding grandparenting childcare have been noted; grandmothers are described as the grandparent undertaking much of the childcare and associated tasks (Condon et al., 2013; Connell, 2002; Hank & Buber, 2009; Hank & Jürges, 2007; Leopold & Skopek, 2014; Bittman & Wajcman, 2004). These studies all indicate that there are significant differences in the level and type of grandchild care provided by grandmothers and grandfathers.

In terms of levels and types of involvement, it is important to note that there is a significant body of literature on custodial grandparenting both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Whilst custodial childcare is not included in this study, it is nonetheless a rapidly increasing area of grandparenting and therefore deserves mention. Custodial grandparenting is on the rise across the Western world and is invariably in response to parental challenges including addiction, poor mental health and incarceration (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002; Herlofson & Hagestad, 2012). It therefore often occurs within a legal context whether as a result of statutory decision-making or a court-imposed order. Studies highlight the complex issues associated with parenting grandchildren; complexities which include navigating difficult relationships with parents (Smith et al., 1999; Worrall, 2001, 2005, 2009).

2.3 Aotearoa New Zealand literature on grandparenting

In Aotearoa New Zealand, research on grandparenting began in the mid-1990s, although as recently as 2003 Statistics New Zealand described grandparenting as an area which was only just developing (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). In 2010 it was observed that despite a significant body of literature on grandparenting in the United States, there remained a relative dearth of academic studies on this topic in New Zealand (Read, 2010). Whilst Statistics New Zealand does not include a figure for the numbers of grandparents in New Zealand, a Families Commission study in 2010 on grandparenting in New Zealand estimated there to be approximately 700,000 grandparents of grandchildren under the age of eighteen. The study focussed on the pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in Aotearoa New Zealand and

was based on an online poll, focus groups and a nationwide telephone survey totalling 1178 grandparents. Foci ranged from the age of grandparents, to living with grandchildren in households consisting of three or more generations and grandparents' balancing of family needs and responsibilities. Participants included Pākehā, Māori, Samoan, Cook Islands, and Korean grandparents and the study noted that 69 percent of grandparents cared for one or more grandchildren either regularly or irregularly (Hendricks, 2010). This figure is considerably higher than statistics from 2013 which noted that 24 percent of grandparents cared for a non-custodial grandchild from time to time, which was almost triple the next largest category of 'another family member' at 8.2 percent (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

There is a small range of studies conducted on grandparenting in Aotearoa New Zealand which all broadly concern themselves with roles and styles of grandparenting. In terms of their role grandparents have been found to be the family members most often called upon to provide childcare from a study of 500 participants (McPherson, 2003) and another study on 24 participants (Read, 2010). This childcare provision included the circumstances in which grandparents provided care whether custodial, regular or voluntary with the latter category denoting no childcare arrangements. The role of grandparents can determine the level of involvement grandparents have with their grandchildren. This varies across studies from the custodial, full-time grandparent participants (Read, 2010) to those whose experience of grandparenting is described as limited to visits by grandchildren (Kerr, 2002).

Grandparental roles are also constructed in terms of styles of grandparenting rather than in terms of childcare provision and include how grandparents understand their role in the family: from the keeper of family traditions to being confidants, negotiators and stress buffers (Keeling, 2007; Missen, 2002). Others draw attention to the importance of the grandparental role in the lives of their families (Breheny & Stephens, 2007; Missen, 2002; Read, 2010). Breheny and Stephens note that grandparents are not always regarded as occupying a role of importance as evidenced by describing grandparents who were distanced from their families (2007). Studies suggest that grandparents can both experience stress and can help ameliorate stress in families by negotiating between parental and child generations and being a confidant to their grandchildren (Missen, 2002; Read, 2010). Intergenerational expectations including the importance of grandparents being there for support including childcare, practical and financial support also shapes the role and experience of grandparenting (Breheny et al., 2013).

The nature of the grandparent-grandchild relationship was found to be facilitated more easily when grandparents lived in close geographic proximity to grandchildren (Bulic, 2003), and mothers have been noted as the family members most likely to mediate the contact between their children and the grandparents (Missen, 2002), both themes that have been supported in international literature. In terms of the gender of the grandparents, two studies include a discussion on the difference gender contributes to grandparenting (Bulic, 2003; Read, 2010). It is noted in both that maternal grandmothers are the group most in contact with their grandchildren, reflecting gendered differences in levels of grandparental involvement. Read's work, in common with others, describes a greater involvement of grandmothers, in particular maternal grandmothers' grandchild care but at the same time she notes that many studies on grandparents include a disproportional representation of grandmothers (2010). Demographic factors including women having a longer life expectancy than men, and becoming grandmothers before men become grandfathers, are also offered as an explanation to the greater involvement by grandmothers (Read, 2010). It could be argued however that the gender of the participants in these studies is reflective of the gendered levels of grandparental involvement. In the matter of parental divorce Read's study supports findings from overseas studies; maternal grandparents are more likely to play a large role in the lives of their grandchildren whereas paternal grandparents do not (Read, 2010).

In sum, the literature on grandparenting in Aotearoa New Zealand is reflective of international studies with similarities including the role that grandparents have in families, and how geographical distance enables greater face-to-face contact between grandparents and grandchildren. The role that maternal grandmothers have in families is also noted, mostly in terms of their greater levels of involvement in the lives of their grandchildren.

2.4 Gender

Within much of the research available on grandparenting, it is the masculine pronoun that is continually used; thereby constituting male as the norm, and female as other. Research which purports to focus on grandmothers and grandmothering, can and often does slip into the generic 'grandparent'. The term 'grandparent' taken as a universal term could be regarded by some as gender neutral. However, the literature suggests that it is in fact a male reference evidenced by the continued use of the pronoun 'he'. The effect of this is that grandmother experiences remain unaccounted for; "the term 'grandparenting' often in reality reflects care and support provided by grandmothers" (Arber & Timonen, 2012, p.1). Wilton and Davey's

(2006) report on Aotearoa New Zealand grandfathers suggest that it is grandfathers who are presented generically within the notion of grandparenthood; however, although some grandfathers are also providing childcare they usually do so in the presence of the grandmother (Hank & Buber, 2009; Lakomy & Kriedl, 2015; Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015).

Grandparent childcare is highly gendered across the Western world although many studies do not make this explicit (Craig & Jenkins, 2016; Guzman, 2004; Hank & Buber, 2009; Sear & Coall, 2011). It is clear that despite the term ‘grandparenting’ and ‘grandparents’ being in use in much of the published literature, it is in fact grandmothers and grandmothers who are providing childcare. It appears that gender is a relatively unexamined aspect of grandparenting, and the following provides some reasons as to why this might be so. Firstly, the term grandparenting, as the descriptive norm in many studies, may carry more credibility and legitimacy than the term grandmothers. This legitimacy is supported by the vast majority of studies, including those which purport to focus on grandmothers - for example through the study’s title - but which then refer to ‘grandparents’ throughout as if the terms are synonymous and therefore interchangeable (Armstrong, 2007; Hanks, 2001; LeFebvre & Rasner, 2017; Musil & Ahmad, 2002). It is entirely possible that much of the research to date on grandparenting has been affected by the same assumption and that the term ‘grandparent’ carries more weight and is more recognisable, while appearing to be inclusive of all grandparents. In practise however, this obscures the significant differences in experiences between grandmothers and grandfathers. It has been argued that an androcentric perspective has influenced much of the available research on retirement (including grandparents’ retirement) and with it an assumption that male perspectives and experiences are the measure for everyone (Sugar, 2007). Therefore, whilst grandparenting, as the predominant term in the literature, could both legitimise and privilege grandparenting practises and experiences, it could at the same time, both diminish and marginalise grandmothers (Nicholson, 1998; Read, 2010; Stelle et al., 2010). Subsuming grandmothers’ experiences under or within grandparenting experiences does not provide an accurate reflection of the caring work that grandmothers engage in with their grandchildren. Nor is it adequately reflective of a lifetime of caring that women inevitably undertake.

A second reason for subsuming grandmothers’ experiences under grandparenting in the literature could be a taken-for-granted assumption that the term ‘grandparent’ in the context of caring for grandchildren will in fact denote ‘grandmother’. Arber and Timonen (2012) suggest

that grandparent is a euphemism for grandmother in many contexts and express their surprise that gender has not been readily visible in grandparent research. Gender defines social roles, including the grandparenting role, and the expectations which are fixed to these roles, are necessarily different according to one's gender. While it is therefore safe to assume that the experience of grandmothers will differ to that of grandfathers and that the expectations will be different, the description 'grandparent' becomes a generalising term that risks minimising and obfuscating the caring work that grandmothers do.

In sum, the literature on grandparenting has been relatively well established internationally and has grown to include recent areas of interest such as multigenerational households and custodial grandparenting. Much of this research is based on Western societies' version of grandparenting, although there is a growing body of research on the well-established importance of grandparents in Asian societies. The predominant use of the term 'grandparent' remains however, and more work is needed to make explicit grandmothers' contributions.

2.5 Part Two: Grandmothering

This section of the chapter will include the themes particularly pertinent to this study including international studies on grandmothers in paid employment; the impact of multiple roles; grandmothers' support for maternal paid employment and grandmothering within the context of family. A summary of the grandmother research available to date from Aotearoa New Zealand and the socio-political context of childcare in Aotearoa New Zealand will follow. The section concludes with an examination of the wider literature pertaining to grandmother childcare with a focus on caring, kin-keeping and cultural norms and values.

International studies on grandmothering

2.5.1 The portrayal of grandmothers

Historically, grandmothers have been viewed and described in various ways, including delicate and reliant on others (Rosenthal & Moore, 2012); aged and ineffectual (Henneburg, 2010); insignificant and passé (Angier, 2002), and bespectacled, good-humoured, snowy haired, and a bestower of treats on grandchildren (Robertson, 1977). These descriptions portray grandmothers as harmless, benevolent women; women who are not quite connected with the world. In a study from 1984 on older women (including grandmothers) and their portrayal on daytime television, it was found they were depicted as out of shape, frumpy and boring (Ward, 1984). These representations are now being challenged by studies which increasingly describe

older women juggling a multiplicity of roles including paid employment, mothering, grandmothing, other meaningful relationships and leisure pursuits (Meyer, 2014; Rosenthal & Moore, 2012). Whilst this could be regarded as a more positive description of grandmothers, it is important to remember it is only one description which could equally obscure the range of grandmother experiences and contexts.

Some of the literature on grandmothing includes either a focus on chronological age or reference to it (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Marhánková, 2018; Meyer, 2014) and appears contradictory. Chronological age has been associated with what is possible when grandmothing; not simply a matter of health and/or physical ability, but also connected with the generational ideas which exert their influence and which shape ideas and experiences for grandmothers (Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2000). These ideas and experiences position grandmothers in particular ways and influence their attitudes and expectations toward grandmothing. For example, it is possible and even probable that grandmothing in the 21st century positions Western grandmothers as no longer constrained by cultural expectations including passivity (Arber & Timonen, 2012). This is connected with ideas of ageing successfully, or active ageing where the assumption is that people should continue to fully participate in paid employment and contribute to society and is counter to the ‘age as decline’ construct. These two conflicting ideas produce potentially incompatible positions for grandmothers; caught in an active ageing discourse could conflict with expectations to provide care (Arber & Timonen, 2012). Both gender and age remain “troublesome dichotomies” which structure each other discursively and ideologically in ways affecting of both (Anderson, 2019, p.56).

2.5.2 Grandmothers’ paid employment

Despite an increase in the prevalence of grandmothers (as distinct from grandparents) providing care for grandchildren, studies report there has been insufficient attention paid to grandmothers who provide childcare (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Lee & Bauer, 2013; Lumsdaine & Vermeer, 2015; Meyer, 2014; Rosenthal & Moore, 2015).

Two early studies from the United States, one from the late 1980s and another from the late 1990s, examined grandmothing and both included grandmother participants who were in paid employment. The earlier 1989 study centred on the economic complexities of childcare undertaken by grandmothers with more than one-third of participants (78 grandmothers) in

paid employment (Presser, 1989). Those grandmothers in paid employment who provided childcare to grandchildren were reported as experiencing a considerable amount of juggling of time and other demands. The later study, conducted in 1998, also included grandmothers who were in paid employment and caring for grandchildren. These were part of a group identified in the study as ‘young and connected grandmothers’. Constituting 23 percent of the total sample, half were under 55 years of age, all were in paid employment and most (83 percent) provided grandchild care regularly. It was not stipulated what ‘regularly’ was, however the authors state this was one of the study’s limitations (Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1998).

Demands on grandmothers to provide care for grandchildren, many of whom are in paid employment themselves, have increased relatively recently, in large part due to mothers either entering or re-entering the paid workforce. This applies across the thirty-four OECD countries; grandchild care is being undertaken increasingly regularly (Craig & Jenkins, 2016; Geurts et al., 2015). This is also affected by the gendered expectation that grandmothers in particular should always be available and grandfathers, unless absolutely necessary, do not and need not engage in the same level of care, particularly when paid employment might be at stake (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Millward, 1997). There are expectations that grandmothers will manage their own paid employment and undertake the majority of grandchild care and associated tasks (Glezer, 1991).

Grandmothers who provide childcare do so regardless of whether they are in paid employment or not (Lumsdaine & Vermeer, 2015; Meyer, 2014; Millward, 1997), and some studies have found that employed grandmothers provide *more* grandchild care than those grandmothers who are not employed (Dench et.al, 2000; Guzman, 2004; Meyer, 2014; Arber & Timonen, 2012). This latter finding was also supported in an analysis of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA), on 7,000 households, which found little evidence to suggest that caring for grandchildren produces any impact on employment (Whelan, 2012). These findings were echoed in a 2009 study conducted in Great Britain where it was found that proportionally fewer retired grandmothers – 57 percent - provided grandchild care compared to 73 percent of working grandmothers (Wellard, 2012). One of the direct influences on whether or not grandmothers provide childcare is their age, which has a corresponding relationship with their paid employment status. Increasing numbers of grandmothers between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-four are remaining in paid employment and this also coincides with the need for grandchild care (Meyer, 2014).

Meyer's study was not the first study in the United States to posit that grandmothers also juggle paid work and childcare, Presser's study preceded hers by some 25 years (Presser, 1989). However, Meyer (2014) offers an in-depth examination and draws similarities between mothers who juggle paid work and childcare with grandmothers who now find themselves in the same position. She introduces the notion of 'intensive grandmothering' as an extension of 'intensive mothering' which she attributes to her participants' descriptions of levels of grandmothering care akin to the levels of childcare more commonly associated with mothering (Meyer, 2014). The study did not stipulate the numbers of hours spent in paid employment or in childcare provision in order to participate; hours spent doing both range from very few, to almost full-time. It is therefore difficult to gain a nuanced understanding of the experiences of balancing paid work and childcare across the study's participants given this disparity in weekly hours.

It was not the purpose of Meyer's study to examine the reasons grandmothers were providing care and so the findings in this regard are limited; it is not clear for example how many grandmothers are providing childcare in order to support maternal employment. Despite this, the stipulated intention of Meyer's study was to highlight the impacts that grandmothers experience as they balance paid work and childcare. These include rewards such as the joy grandmothers described when caring for their grandchildren, and many also liked the diversity of the mixed responsibilities of paid work and childcare. The impacts on women varied according to their resources, their age and their physical health, and included women remortgaging their properties in order to assist the parent generation. Some participants managed their levels of childcare through their paid employment, even if this meant working longer hours over longer periods of time than they envisaged. Other partnered grandmothers prioritised their relationship and limited their childcare provision because their husbands or partners either did not, would not and/or could not assist in childcare (Meyer, 2014).

2.5.3 Multiple roles

Establishing a balance between work and care has been found to be important for grandmothers across studies (Goodfellow, 2001; Goodfellow & Lavery, 2003; Millward, 1997; Wearing & Wearing, 1996). The tension and sense of juggling experienced by grandmothers who are in paid employment and providing childcare has been attributed to their holding of multiple roles. Studies from the early 1990s suggest that grandmothers have felt a tension in their caring obligations (Bengston, 1993; Jonsson, 2003; Mooney & Statham,

2002). This has occurred at the same time as two other phenomena: their adult children are living at home for longer periods of time, and their parents are living longer, both of which place extra demands on older women, many of whom are also grandmothers (Craig & Jenkins, 2016). Women in the over-50 age group who are in this position have been described as belonging to a different version of a 'sandwich generation'. This description originally applied to women in their 30s and 40s who were faced with parenting their children along with caring for their increasingly frail parents (Leopold & Skopek, 2015; Meyer, 2014). Due to an increase in life expectancy, it is increasingly likely that women in their 50s and 60s will not only still have adult children at home but will also have a parent or parents who are alive, and who need some degree of support (Muhlbauer, 2007; Smethers, 2015). As a result, the original sandwich generation has now been revised to include women in their 50s and older who are working in paid employment, *and* who are also caring for frail parents, *as well as* providing childcare for grandchildren (Meyer, 2014; Miller, 1986).

One of the effects of this is that this group of women are especially pressured to perform the tasks of working and caring, with expectations from family and society to do so (Wellard, 2011). These pressures include feeling a sense of obligation from the parent generation to provide childcare, financial pressures on older grandmothers who are not working but providing childcare, family pressures arising from parents being still alive and needing care, and children and grandchildren also requiring support (Meyer, 2014). These pressures are also influenced by holding the simultaneous roles of mother, grandmother and increasingly, great-grandmother, and the different expectations for each (Kulik, 2007). It has also been noted that grandmothers, in addition to their multiple family roles, have a range of social roles including being in paid employment, retraining, and volunteering all of which result in grandmothering being characterised by complexity (Kulik, 2007).

2.5.4 Grandmother support for maternal employment

Supporting maternal employment through grandchild care provides a compelling justification in accounting for the role of grandmothers in families. Existing research notes how paid employment and providing childcare are two major activities in the lives of older women and grandchild care is becoming increasingly important as stay-at-home mothers are now rare (Lee & Tang, 2015; Saunders, 2010). Grandmothers account for a large percentage of pre-school informal childcare, *specifically* to support mothers to return to paid employment

(Celdrán & Triadó, 2012; Danielsbacka et al., 2016; Herlofson & Hagestad, 2012; Igel & Szydlik, 2011). It is uncommon in the literature to focus on the reasons for maternal paid employment apart from financial necessity or contributing to household finances, however one study has linked paid employment to maternal wellbeing (Lee & Bauer, 2013). It was noted there was a strong relationship between mothers' psychological wellbeing and their ability to progress their careers which grandmothers wanted to support. This support was attributed to the culture of 'familism' and traditional gender role ideology which resulted in grandmothers being positioned to *have* to take on childcare for employed mothers. It is female family members who are expected to take care of children; childcare outside the family is not encouraged. There is however a difference between a cultural imperative to take on caring for grandchildren, and grandmothers' support of maternal career progression, as that does not necessarily result from either 'familism' or traditional gendered ideals.

Whilst literature on both grandparents and grandmothers finds that maternal paid employment is supported and that this is a justification for grandparental childcare, the opposite has also been found. An Australian study from 1996 contradicts the support of maternal paid employment as a primary reason for grandmothers to provide childcare (Wearing & Wearing, 1996). The authors interviewed 20 grandmothers all of whom voiced their disapproval of maternal paid employment. The only exception or circumstance in which childcare would be provided was in the case of severe financial hardship. This disapproval extended to refusals to care for children to enable paid employment for mothers. Although this finding is in stark contrast to other studies it should be noted that all grandmother participants were described as homogenous and well-resourced with the implication that paid employment was constructed as unnecessary for women.

Literature on grandparents who provide childcare often emphasise that one of the advantages to parents is that the care is inevitably free (Meyer, 2014; Reschke et al., 2007; Zanella, 2017). An early study on grandmothers examined the economic complexities for grandmothers providing childcare and found that almost one third of grandmothers were reported to have been paid in cash by the mothers for their childcare. Payment depended on whether or not the grandmother was in paid employment (one-third of grandmothers were reported to be in paid employment) (Presser, 1989). This is the exception to current literature however.

2.5.5 Grandmothering and the family

Research on the family has tended to focus on parent-child relationships within the traditional Western nuclear family structure (Brown et al., 2015). This family configuration suggests that parents are the most relevant and central figures of the family tasked with the responsibility to devote time and energy to their children, shaping their development and wellbeing (Kalil & DeLeire, 2004). This neglects the presence of extended family and the importance of grandmothers' contributions to their families. Although relationships between grandmothers, the mothers and their children have been constructed as a complex mix of obligation, love and connection (Roberto et al., 1999), researchers in Europe, the United States, Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia have described maternal grandmothers as occupying a position of priority in family relationships (Barnett et al., 2010; Jamieson et al., 2018; Reschke et al., 2007). Explanations for this include parental separation and relationship difficulties, mothers seeking support from their own mothers, and a likelihood that mothers and their daughters will have close contact with each other (Chan & Elder, 2000; Hilton & Koperafrye, 2007; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Maternal grandmothers have also been described as being in the "front line of a reserved army of childcarers" because they provide flexible childcare for mothers in paid employment (Jamieson et al., 2018, p.263).

A further explanation attributes the prioritising of grandmothers to the legacy of inequalities in gendered divisions in childcare and parenting support (Jamieson et al., 2018). Whilst there has been a recent increase in interest in grandfathering (Buchanan & Rotkirch, 2018; Mann et al., 2016), it has at the same time been suggested that grandfathers are more likely to be engaged with grandchildren if there is a grandmother present (Hagestad & Herlofson, 2009; Knudsen, 2016). Other studies construct the relationships between grandchildren and their grandparents as characterised by the 'doing' of gender through the reinforcement of 'typical' male and female activities such as playing with grandchildren for the former and nurturing care for the latter (Jamieson et al., 2018; Mann et al., 2016). Grandmothers are expected to be nurturers, carers and kin-keepers (Johnson, 1992; Chapman et al., 2017).

One of the few studies focussed on grandmothers within the family examined grandchild care within a context of family power and family relationships and drew attention to the complexities and contradictions of care (Jenkins, 2013). Drawing on a number of theories including family power theories and care theories, both custodial and non-custodial

grandmothers were interviewed about their grandchild care experiences. Although there was not an emphasis on gender *per se* the findings reflected other studies; there are strong links between childcare and gender, and care in general is understood to be primarily a family responsibility which mainly rests with women. Not only do women and men perform care differently (Calasanti & King, 2007), but grandmothers might regard their contact with grandchildren as expected and a ‘right’ whereas grandfathers may hold fewer expectations for their involvement (Reitzes & Mutran, 2004).

There is a small body of research which examines the grandmothering role as it shifts and changes according to family circumstances but which is distinct from full-time custodial grandmothering. Such temporary shifts in role are characterised by grandmothers taking on more responsibility for grandchildren than regular childcare requires. This has been constructed as transitioning in and out of childcare across contexts including multi-generational households, informal childcare, and in the temporary full-time care of children when parents were unable to parent (LeFebvre & Rasner, 2017). Reports suggest that those grandmothers undertaking full-time childcare were the ‘worst off’, citing significant stress, tension and financial concerns and fewer ‘rewards’ from their care in contrast to other groups of grandmothers (Meyer, 2014; Musil et al., 2010).

2.5.6. The role of parents as mediators

The description of parents as mediators, found in the grandparenting literature, has been echoed in a small number of studies on grandmothering. These studies suggest that the relationship between mothers and grandmothers is critical in decisions about childcare (Gattai & Musatti, 1999; Orel & Fruhauf, 2006). In the context of intergenerational connections the mother occupies the pivotal middle position (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Hagestad, 2006; Jamieson et al., 2018). The mother is therefore the person who orchestrates and manages the network of childcare which includes being the bridge and mediator of access to grandchildren (Jamieson et al., 2018). It was reported that a close and supportive mother-grandmother relationship results in the likelihood that the grandmother-grandchild relationship will be similarly close and that a distant mother-grandmother relationship will foster a less close grandmother-grandchild relationship (Orel & Fruhauf, 2006). Whilst this could be regarded as making logical sense, it does not follow that this will always be the case. It could be speculated however

that a level of closeness and support is necessary if grandmothers are to be considered as an option for childcare.

The expectations that mothers might have regarding grandmothers contribute to understandings about ‘good grandmothering’. Some studies have described good grandmothering in terms of readiness, availability and willingness to provide childcare (Marhánková, 2018; Meyer, 2014). At the same time, studies also highlight the importance of grandmothers remaining active with independent interests; a potential challenge to the imperative that ‘good’ grandmothers provide childcare to grandchildren. This highlights a conundrum for grandmothers; how to develop and maintain independent interests whilst at the same time provide childcare when required.

2.6 Aotearoa New Zealand Literature on grandmothering

To date, and as distinct from the research in grandparenting in New Zealand cited earlier, the published research pertaining specifically to grandmothering in New Zealand is limited to three reports which have all focussed on grandmothers and ageing. Published across a period of six years they are all by the same author, a visiting academic from the United States (Armstrong, 2002, 2003, 2007). The first two studies focussed on the connection between grandmothering and old age comparing Chinese, Māori and European grandmothers in the first study and Māori and Pākehā grandmothers in the second. All participants agreed that being a grandmother is a usual part of old age, however there were some differences in participants’ understandings. Māori women described becoming a grandmother as central to ageing whereas the European women were reported as experiencing it as part of a wide range of other activities; not central to their lives as older women. The author concluded that the notion of kinship, or *whakawhanaungatanga*, is more important to Māori than other women. For Chinese grandmothers, becoming a grandmother was seen as a connection to extended family and included how the role was accorded respect as an older member of their families. The third study introduced the term ‘social ageing’ to describe movement from the role of mother to grandmother, rather than using the construct of ‘transition’ described in some international studies previously cited. Findings included agreement from all 40 participants that becoming a grandmother is regarded by society as being socially old. Chronological age was regarded of less importance because the change in role took precedence. That is, becoming a grandmother is a marker of being “socially old” irrespective of one’s age in years (Armstrong, 2007, p.22). It is of interest that there was no mention of mothering and grandmothering occurring

simultaneously; as women are both mothers and grandmothers at the same time, rather than leaving one role behind in favour of the next.

While these three studies have made a valuable contribution addressing the lack of research on grandmothers in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly in the inclusion of Māori participants, there are some considerable gaps. The focus on ageing assumes that women become grandmothers at a certain age and does not allow for those women who become grandmothers in their 30s and 40s. It could therefore unwittingly reinforce ageist stereotypes about grandmothers. The first study which asked whether becoming a grandmother was a usual part of old age could potentially reify gendered prescriptions for women; to be a mother and a grandmother could be constructed as more valid than other life choices (Armstrong, 2002). The average age at which women become grandmothers for the first time is variable, as noted earlier (Meyer, 2014). This challenges the ‘grandmother equals old’ construct, also given prominence within the concept of social ageing where Armstrong (2003) found that the most common marker for being ‘socially old’ was a change in social and/or economic roles. Becoming a grandmother often gives rise to these changes and yet the age ranges do not indicate being ‘socially old’. Challenging ideas such as these is important to ‘trouble’ what constitutes ‘age’ and the assumption that in order to be a grandmother a woman must be ‘old’.

In sum, the research on grandmothers is limited, particularly so in Aotearoa New Zealand. Literature that focusses on the grandmother experience as distinct from the grandparent experience is especially scarce. What is available internationally, focusses on various aspects of grandchild care including the grandmother-mother relationship and grandmother support of maternal paid employment.

2.7 The literature on care, kin-keeping and cultural norms and values

This section presents the international and local literature on the theoretical constructs relevant to this study, including care, kin-keeping, cultural norms and values.

2.7.1 Care

Care is a construct which shapes the childcare that grandmothers provide and it is therefore pertinent to examine how this informs this study. The literature on caring recognises that care is a contested concept (Cockburn, 2005; Tronto, 1993) and the emotional aspect of care has been described in one study as “double-edged and deeply paradoxical” (Bondi, 2008, p.250). Whilst there is now a large body of literature on the subject of care and caring, it has proved

difficult to describe consistently, except broadly. One of the difficulties has been the generic nature of the descriptions of the concepts of care, when in fact caring is specific to particular domains, either public or private (Thomas, 1995). Caring is central to how humans perceive themselves in relation to others, and it is one of the ways in which Western society manages itself, whether through its social policies or through legislation. Unpaid family childcare work has been understood *entirely* in terms of gender within White, Western literature (Cockburn, 2005). Within this body of work, the caring work that older women such as grandmothers engage in has been largely neglected as a focus for investigation (Altschuler, 2001) while other studies point to factors such as an increased likelihood that at least one grandmother will be available for childcare (Attias-Donfut & Segalen, 2002). However, it should be noted that these characteristics are not reflective of all grandmothers across all cultures and contexts and therefore need to be approached with caution lest they become a taken-for-granted measure for childcare in families. It should also be noted that even if these demographic factors are applicable, it is still not a 'given' that grandmothers will provide childcare.

In the early 1990s feminist writers began to voice objections about the ways in which care had been conceptualised including the dearth of literature which highlighted, critiqued and challenged gender norms regarding care practises. Feminist understandings have since shaped caring in various ways. Firstly, the idea that caring is women's work has been critiqued and it has been suggested that women are positioned with no choice regarding whether or not to care. This positioning is as a result of caring activities continuing to be regarded by society as something women do despite many more women working in full-time paid employment (Romero & Perez, 2016). Secondly, caring has been critiqued as undervalued. As caring goes largely unrecognised by society it limits the choices women have. These limits on life choices arise not only because caring is seen as women's work, but it is also devalued, resulting in gender inequity. The framing of care work as a 'labour of love' resulted in calls from feminists demanding that work in the home be recognised as 'real' work in order that caring was seen as valuable to society (Hochschild, 1991). Thirdly, caring has been critiqued as exploitative and oppressive as women are routinely recruited into caring roles, which can result in subordination (DeVault, 1991; Romero & Perez, 2016; Scheyett, 1990). Caring is given to women by societal norms and expectations, while at the same time it is taken from men; caring and not caring become defining characteristics for each gender (Graham, 1983).

It is well documented in the literature that women are positioned within social and cultural contexts to be in lifelong caring roles; caring for children can be followed by caring for parents, partners and grandchildren as well as friends and neighbours (Altschuler, 2001; Cancian & Oliker, 2000; Millward, 1997). In spite of, or in response to this, feminist-based literature has challenged the notion that women are inherently predisposed or suited to providing care and instead point to the ways in which social and public policy reinforce gendered patterns of care (Arber & Ginn, 1995; Graham, 1983; Ungerson, 1983). Traditional understandings of care and the organising of small children has historically been seen as an inherent part of the female gender role with women and girls socialised to perform gender accordingly. As childcare is a gendered activity, along with domestic labour and family relationship work, grandmothers are typically regarded as proficient, knowledgeable and trusted regarding caring for grandchildren (Chambers, 2012).

2.7.2 Kin-keeping

Closely related to caring, the notion of women as kin-keepers positions women with obligations to maintain close connections within familial relationships. This notion is based on the idea that women are naturally more involved in kin relationships than men (Hagestad, 1985). The nurturing of family networks is something that women have been socialised into valuing (Dubas, 2001). Women living in Western societies become socialised into kin-keeping; described as a range of actions which include the regular monitoring and maintenance of contact with family, the keeper of important dates, and the planner and organiser of family events - in sum, the emotional labour associated with family (Marhánková, 2015). Thus, through kin-keeping acts, familial bonds are perpetuated by women across generations. When the construct of kin-keeping is applied to grandmothering, there is an implication that it is more likely that grandmothers will play a more central role in grandparenting than grandfathers and that childcare arrangements will be negotiated between grandmothers and mothers (Arber & Timonen, 2012).

Those grandfathers who *are* involved with caring for grandchildren are more often than not included through the grandmother's kin-keeping actions (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015). In fact, partnership status is a significant predictor of the frequency of contact between grandfathers and their grandchildren (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Knudsen, 2012; Marhánková & Stípková, 2015). Grandfathers' contributions are contingent on grandmothers' provision of childcare; that is their wives or partners are the main providers of grandchild care and the grandfather is

there almost by default (Dench & Ogg 2002; Hank & Buber 2009). In contrast, whether grandmothers are partnered or not has no bearing on the provision of grandchild care borne out in several overseas studies (Meyer, 2014; Triadó et al., 2014). Partnered or unpartnered, caring and kin-keeping is women's work, and without a female spouse or partner men are even less likely to care for grandchildren.

2.7.3 Cultural norms and values

International literature relevant to this research has tended to focus exclusively on European/Pākehā constructions of grandmothering (Horsfall & Dempsey, 2015; Keeling 2007; Mander, 2007; Thiele & Whelan, 2006). Many of the articles do not even mention ethnicity and it could therefore be assumed that cultural differences are either irrelevant, do not exist, or are simply ignored. One exception to this is the growing literature on Black grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren in the United States (Janicki et al., 2000; Hunter, 1997; Minkler & Roe, 1993). Whilst grandchildren who are parented by grandparents is a growing phenomenon per se, Black grandmothers are more likely to provide custodial care to grandchildren affected by parental incarceration, substance abuse, or parental abuse due to structural racism (Stevenson et al., 2007).

A focus on cultural beliefs was part of a Families Commission Study in Aotearoa New Zealand, based upon 1176 respondents to a telephone survey to provide a picture of grandparents' lives (Hill et al., 2010). Participants were asked about how their cultural beliefs influence them in their relationship with their grandchildren. Most, but not all participants agreed on the importance of imparting cultural values. For Māori participants in the study, passing on knowledge including tikanga (cultural practises) and te reo (language) was important, particularly in the context of increasing urbanisation and alienation from traditional Māori practises and values. Traditional Māori society valued the role of grandparents for the knowledge they held and their place of importance with mokopuna, within extended whānau life on the marae. Mentoring was highly regarded and accordingly grandparents held an authority, which was much respected (Read, 2010). While Māori grandparents continue to be important in the lives of their mokopuna, increasing urbanisation has resulted in changes to whānau structure. Figures from the 2013 census reveal that over 84 percent of Māori now live in urban areas. Despite this increasing urbanisation, the Families Commission study cited earlier on the changing roles of grandparents in Aotearoa New Zealand found that 25 percent of Māori lived with one or more of their mokopuna (Hendricks, 2010).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an examination and critique of the international and local literature published to date on grandparenting and grandmothering, including constructs of caring, kin-keeping and cultural values and beliefs. There are increasing numbers of grandparents providing informal childcare to their grandchildren, due in part to an increase in female participation in paid employment. Maternal paid employment provides a clear rationale for grandparents' and grandmothers' childcare. This, along with increased life expectancy, has meant there are more grandparents available to provide childcare, and this is often the preferred option for parents. Grandparental childcare is often seen as a natural choice; they are part of the family, known and trusted, willing and available. Their care is also often provided free of charge, although this is not always so. An increased need for maternal paid employment in single and two-parent households has resulted in many mothers returning to paid work before their child or children are three years old when the government subsidy of 20 hours of paid childcare is available. This shortfall in childcare funding provision also influences the prevalence of grandparental childcare along with changes to the family structure including divorce and increases in multigenerational households. Grandmothers are also living longer, healthier lives and this can impact on childcare provision particularly when undertaken in the context of their own paid employment. Increasing numbers of grandmothers are remaining in paid employment and juggling multiple roles including caring for ageing parents, adult children living at home, and grandchildren.

Whilst much of the literature focusses on grandparents, it has been found that it is grandmothers who provide much more childcare than grandfathers. Not only are grandmothers providing more childcare, they are also taking responsibility for the chores and tasks associated with looking after children, while grandfathers are not. Those grandfathers who are involved with grandchild care tend to be partnered with the grandmother. Constructs such as kin-keeping, caring and cultural norms and values influence grandmothering, contributing to societal and personal expectations of grandmothers. Caring has been studied within gerontological, geographical, psychological and feminist contexts; feminist studies shape how caring is constructed as a gendered activity. This positions grandmothers as the group who are then expected to provide care to grandchildren. Grandmothers are therefore not only preferred (and preferences will be shaped by wider ideas about care) but are also expected to be available for grandchild care. Kin-keeping duties are also subject to gendered ideas about who should undertake the emotional work of maintaining family relationships,

including activities such as organising family events and gift-giving. Again, grandmothers are positioned as a central person within families to whom kin-keeping comes naturally, engaged as they likely have been, in caring activities across a lifetime.

Other important factors which contribute to the likelihood that grandmothers will provide childcare include higher levels of participation in paid employment for all females. This has resulted in mothers of children seeking childcare options and grandmothers as a group are often a preferred choice, even though many are in paid employment themselves. In fact, more grandmothers who provide some informal grandchild care are in paid employment than those who are not. Although part-time work is viewed as ideal for mothers, many women require full-time employment and grandmothers, in increasing numbers, are providing this childcare.

While some studies have focussed on the experience of grandmothers, there are no local studies describing the experience of grandmothers who are in paid employment and providing regular childcare to their grandchild/ren. There has been a tendency to subsume grandmothering within grandparenting literature and this is arguably not representative of the caring work that grandmothers engage in with their grandchildren. The gendered nature of social roles and the impact and influence this has on caring relationships such as those characterised by grandmothers providing childcare to grandchildren warrant closer examination. This is primarily to render grandmothers' experiences as visible, or more visible, and to highlight the ways in which these experiences of grandmothers are shaped by wider societal and cultural expectations. This study therefore addresses this considerable gap in grandmothering literature.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Foundations

Enabling particular understandings

Some poststructuralist lenses reveal structures up close, some far and distant, but each lens makes visible a range of constructs (Dillet, Porter & Mackenzie, 2013, p.353).

Three main theoretical foundations underpin this research: poststructuralism, feminist poststructuralism and narrative approaches. These three theoretical approaches recognise the social construction of reality and have been chosen because they provide a framework which allows for a multiplicity of experiences to be storied, and the acknowledgement of the importance of social/political/cultural and gender contexts in shaping those stories.

3.1 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralist ideas began to take hold in the middle of the 20th century, developing on the work of prominent and diverse French theorists such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, among others. Through their writings, poststructuralism developed, and became characteristic of the ‘linguistic turn’, itself a major development in Western philosophy, centring on the importance of language in making sense of the world (Rorty, 1967). Poststructuralist scholars moved away from a focus on binaries towards more diverse understandings characterised by a focus on multiplicity, and a both/and way of thinking rather than either/or (Gergen & Gergen, 2003). Poststructuralism as an ontology does not believe in a world which can be independently observed and measured, or a reality which is separate from the constructions people make through language and other forms of social text; hence there is a focus on multiple and situated viewpoints. As a theoretical approach, it is distinguished from structuralism with its focus on universality to focus on the local and the particular, not universally applicable generalisations (Combs & Freedman, 2012).

Poststructuralism is understood to include four key analytical concepts: language, discourse, subjectivity and power (Weedon, 1987) and all are inextricably linked. These are outlined briefly below.

3.1.1. Language

Poststructuralism's preoccupation with language and the ways in which language is used to constitute reality is an important organising principle underpinning its ontology (what is possible to know) and its epistemology (how we come to understand the world and how we know what we know). Poststructuralism rejects ideas about reality as being singular, knowable, objective and 'out there' in favour of multiple truths and realities. No single reality is privileged as the truth over any other and realities are understood to be constructed in specific time and place contexts including historical, social, political and cultural contexts. People construct their realities as they go about their daily lives, through their interactions and habits, over time. Language is therefore a key medium through which these realities and truths are constructed and is central in meaning-making. Meaning is not inherent to any particular word but rather conveyed by the context in which it is spoken and for this reason will always be situated (Freedman & Combs, 1998). These contexts include the relationship between the speaker and listener, the language which is used and the understandings and meanings of those who hear, read and interpret it.

Language therefore cannot be neutral and is neither objective nor able to be universally applied. Rather, it is reflective of a society's norms and is the site where our sense of self is socially constructed. The ways in which women perform grandmothering, and the varied contexts in which grandmothering is performed are shaped by cultural, historical and social changes and these in turn shape and influence the gendered experience of being a grandmother. Grandmothers are situated within diverse societal norms, which in contemporary society may revolve around expectations of older women remaining in paid employment, and mothers of young children either entering or re-entering the workforce (Craig & Jenkins, 2016).

Individuals construct their identity through the language which is available to them, reflective and contingent upon other factors including social, spatial, political and historical contexts. All descriptions, including descriptions of the self, reflect and reinforce a particular version of reality and context. These descriptions are expressed through discourse and narrative which positions people relative to a particular moral order which is then used to evaluate people. People are both subject *to* and subjects *of* discourse and we reproduce and challenge these through language.

3.1.2. Discourse

According to Weedon (2004), discourses are sets of beliefs and understandings, reinforced through daily practises which structure particular understandings of the ways we are in the world. Scott (1988) includes the importance of context; discourses comprise structures of statements, beliefs and categories that are historically, socially and institutionally specific. Discourses contain shared assumptions about ‘reality’ that can both overlap and complement or compete and contradict one another. Particular points of view and values can be put forward at the expense of others and in so doing construct “a reality according to a particular set of interests” (Anderson, 2019, p.7). As discourse is the mechanism through which cultural norms and expectations are communicated they become taken for granted sets of knowledge and unless people look for them, they are invisible (Freedman & Combs, 2012). Poststructuralism highlights those discourses that exclude and/or marginalise by exposing and questioning the taken for granted ideas informing them.

Foucault’s theorising about discourses as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” alludes to the constitutive nature of discourses; through which subjects, subjectivities and meanings are constructed (1972, p.49). People draw on discourses in their speaking, and in so doing position themselves and others in particular ways. His term ‘discursive fields’ was used to describe and organise institutions and practises, examples of which include political systems, legal systems, the church, media and the family. Discourses are therefore reflective of dominant institutional and organisational structures and are produced and reproduced by micro level interactions at an individual level. One of the wider discourses available to women and hence grandmothers within a Western cultural context is a caring discourse. This discourse locates caring for children primarily within the female domain; gendered expectations position women as natural providers of childcare and grandmothers are no exception. This may inform how grandmothers think and talk about grandmothering and affects their subsequent actions. Although there is some evidence which suggests the pressure on women to perform care has been lessened in recent times, many women continue to view their role as mothers and grandmothers in terms of the provision of childcare because of dominant ideas about the role of women and what is viewed as the “proper care of families” (Meyer, 2014, p.20). This can create an imperative to care in order to be ‘good and proper mothers and grandmothers’ and illustrates the link between language and practise.

3.1.3 Subjectivity

Humanistic understandings suggest identity is stable and fixed; part of an essential, knowable self. Poststructuralism refutes humanistic ideas about personhood, including the idea of an individual, autonomous self and speaks of people as being constituted through dialogue, language and discourse (Parker, 1992). Subjectivity is therefore “constituted through those discourses in which the person is being positioned at any one point in time, both through their own and others’ acts of speaking/writing” (Davies, 1991, p.43). Poststructuralism’s decentering of the subject suggests a subjectivity which is always in process, precarious and contradictory (Weedon, 1987) and allows for a plurality and diversity of subjectivities and identities. This presents possibilities and offers alternatives for identity construction and multiple ways in which grandmothers might make meaning from experiences. For instance, being in paid employment and providing childcare each separately shape identity and subjectivity. Identity is constructed in the relational network in which people live their lives and the many bisecting storylines within which people locate themselves (Somers, 1994).

Subjectivity is not regarded as a person’s expression of their ‘truth’, but rather as the way in which they have been shaped to respond, through public organisations and institutions such as schools, prisons and medical systems. As subjects, people are constantly both positioned within particular discourses and practises as well as being produced by these (Henriques et al., 2002). Both subjectivity and identity are produced through discourse and discursive practises and these make particular subject positions available. For instance, subject positions available through family discourse include mother, father, child, grandmother and so on. These positions are “differentially available” – that is dependent on factors such as gender and age (Harman, 2009, p.2). A grandmother position is therefore made available to women whose daughter or son has had a child; however this is variable and in the case of biological family relationships, is dependent on children being of an age where they in turn can produce children. In taking up the position of grandmother, a particular subjectivity is produced, enabling a specific understanding of self which shapes thoughts, speech and actions. A grandmother self is not fixed or static; it is produced through available discourses and is always negotiable and in process.

3.1.4 Power

Poststructuralism concerns itself with how power is distributed among people and disrupts ideas that power is only directed downwards and only experienced as oppressive. Instead, power is everywhere, distributed through discourses in the ways they constitute subjects and therefore the complexity of power relations extends into every aspect of a person's life. Power is productive and relational, and has a capillary action, inscribed in social structures, in language, in our ways of being and the spaces we inhabit (Paechter, 2003). Foucault (1979) used the term 'regimes of truth' to describe a system which determines what is accepted as the truth in discourses and institutions such as medicine and the family (p.18). These are further reinforced through public structures such as the media that act to legitimise some forms of knowledge while de-legitimising others. These structures ensure "that the judges of normality are everywhere" (Horrocks & Jevtic, 2000, p. 120) and as subjects, people are recruited into internalising that which is constructed as legitimate and therefore the culturally produced 'norm'. In sum, power is not something people have or do not have, it is both generated by, and served by knowledge which itself reinforces and supports already existing power relations (Richardson et al., 2018).

The power people have in a society is in direct relationship with "their ability to participate in the various discourses that shape that society" (Freedman & Combs, 1998, p.38). As mentioned previously discourses about grandmothering may situate grandmothers in relation to discourses of gender, among others. Gender is constituted through language and social practises which are situated within wider organisational and institutional structures including patriarchy. Patriarchal constructions of gender are therefore reflected and perpetuated in the language women use, and this can reinforce a powerlessness (Lakoff, 2004).

3.2 Feminist poststructuralism

The ontological assumption this study takes vis-à-vis gender, is that gender is constituted socially and performatively. That is, gender is performed through the use of words and actions that shape and are shaped by people. A further assumption concerning feminist poststructuralism is that constructions of gender have legitimised structural differences and inequalities. For example, women have been positioned as suited to the private domain of the home, while men have been seen as suited to the public domain of

employment and career; these distinctions have been maintained and reproduced by discourses and practises which serve to keep these understandings in place (Shepherd, 2010). Feminist poststructuralism seeks to examine how discourses construct subjects, how this prescribes and legitimises certain actions and how particular subject positions are taken up (or not) (Kronsell, 2006).

Feminist poststructuralism applies the tenets of poststructuralism to explore constructions of gender, power and subjectivity. Feminist poststructuralism seeks to challenge and disrupt patriarchal power imbalances experienced by women by enabling an examination of power through the lens of gender (Young, 1990). Not simply confined to gender, it also aims to critique power relations which are both socially and organisationally constructed (Aston, 2016). Cassidy et.al (2016) argue that feminist poststructuralist concepts of power are particularly concerned with how people are positioned within negotiations of power and how these are experienced in multiple ways in all areas of life. Weedon (1987) also notes that power relations structure and determine who does what and for whom in family life, education and welfare, work and politics, culture and leisure. Research based on feminist poststructuralist ideas provides insight into the types of gendered subjectivities which are available within particular discourses (Davies & Gannon, 2005). This is particularly relevant to this research topic, enabling an examination of how particular expectations of grandmothing are perpetuated within discourses of the family.

Feminist poststructuralism interrogates singular universal gender categories. For example, it critiques traditional Western thinking with its systematic hierarchical constructions of the universal masculine and engages with “the specificity of female diversity and women’s experiences” (Scott, 1988, p.45). This is not to insist on gender differences as this would reinforce gender as an inherent biological characteristic and reiterate normative gender-based practises. Poststructuralist feminist theory aims to deconstruct the binaried male/female and challenge totalising practises which categorise individuals and situate them in particular subject positions (Davies, et al., 2006). Thus, accounts of the gendered ways in which grandmothing is constituted, will not reveal any gendered truths but rather how gender is made sense of within a particular language and context.

An underlying implication of a feminist application to research is that participants are viewed as located and interacting within a context influenced by gender and societal, ideological and

political influences (Pitre et al., 2013). Feminist writers who situate their work within poststructuralist ideas describe gender as something that is constantly being created and re-created through discourse; learned through daily acts and a society's norms and values (Lorber, 1994). West and Zimmerman suggest that to do gender appropriately is to '...sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements' (1987, p.146). The ways in which people think about gender is constitutive of gender: wider understandings about gender form responses and these responses then both effect and affect wider social and political understandings. What we think and the way we think it shapes our [daily] responses and this is why gender is an important construct to examine (Shepherd, 2010). As West and Zimmerman note, gender is a powerful, ideological construct, producing, reproducing and legitimising the choices and limits available, predicated on the category of gender (1987). This disrupts taken-for-granted and accepted social and cultural understandings that individuals are either male or female as clear and distinct categories of being. Poststructuralist feminist ideas undermine these binaried pre-existing categories to suggest that gender is constituted by its use.

3.2.1. Doing gender

A number of feminist theorists have discussed gender in terms of doing rather than being (Butler, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Judith Butler understands the category of 'women' as both "produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought" (1990, p.2). This forms the basis for Butler's critique of the category of women, and her critique of the gender norms that shape the production of gender identity. Constructing gender as something which is 'done' undermines dominant constructions of gender as a pre-existing generalisable category and suggests instead that gender is an accomplishment: recurring methodically and routinely (West & Zimmerman, 1987). It is through language that gendered norms are established and then maintained; femaleness is constituted through the discourse of gender rather than through any pre-existing reality (Lechte, 2008). More recent understandings about gender have added to this, by including the importance of how individual gender performances are situated in wider structures which have their own gendered practises. These wider structures inform and shape gendered identities (Ferree, 2010). One of the main preoccupations of the approach of 'doing gender' has been to examine how 'doing gender' reproduces normative gender constructions (Sullivan, 2004).

Grandmothering is located within wider gender, social and cultural narratives which shape understanding; it is also shaped by gendered narratives about family life. The language that is used by participants can be opened up to show the ways in which participants have constructed grandmothering. This can be illustrated through the use of gender binaries as well as through repeated storylines and explanations (Davies & Gannon, 2005). The home, a site where mothering and grandmothering often occurs, is a context which can replicate the binaried performance of gender inherent in societal structures. These structures, including the patriarchal structure, determine roles and differences in power and status to determine gender stereotypes and these provide a script for how gender is performed. Repeated performances of binaried gender categories enables two distinct genders to be plausible. People who do not then perform their gender in the ‘right’ ways are marginalised – positioned as outsiders, risking unintelligibility and/or sanction (Bell, 2006).

3.2.2. *Gender as performative*

Performativity encourages gendered behaviour to be understood and seen as *representative* of gender, not as the product of a fixed and stable essentialised gender category. Gender is a term which is constituted by the ways in which it is used and is therefore defined, and defines itself further through the doing rather than the being (Meyerhoff & Ehrlich, 2019). The performance of gender produces (and is produced) and legitimises (and is legitimised) by wider social, political and cultural constructs (Shepherd, 2010). To not partake in the “cultural fiction” is to risk being unintelligible and marginalised (Bell, 2006, p.216). In order to be recognisable to others (and ourselves) people are compelled to perform gender within these boundaries; these act to both legitimise and de-legitimise that which is possible in terms of how gender is performed. This is relevant to this study because gendered performances may be consistent (or inconsistent) with gendered understandings of grandmothering. Consequently, it is important to examine the ways in which participant stories are consistent with, or contest dominant constructions of grandmothering.

Judith Butler progressed and developed the concept of doing gender through her theory of the performativity of gender, drawing on Austin’s (1962) theorising of acts of speech or behaviours which create that which they describe. A commonly cited example of this includes the statement *I now pronounce you husband and wife* which describes what the

person is doing; pronouncing something, whilst at the same time creating that which is being pronounced: the marriage (Austin, 1962; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018; Morison & MacLeod, 2013). As Butler progressed her ideas of the performativity of gender she drew on both poststructuralist and feminist ideas to examine the ways in which gendered expectations produce that which it anticipates (Butler, 2004). She used the term performative to describe the enactment of gender, suggesting that gender comprises various acts which constitute its reality; both gender and subjectivity are produced through repeated discursive practises (Butler, 1990). This has implications which are far-reaching – as gender is most often understood in structural terms as a stable and essential category, performativity demands that gender is seen as a behaviour, a performance, liable to change depending on context.

A number of other feminist poststructuralists have described both opportunities and challenges in how gender is understood in terms of performativity (Jackson, 2004; Jagger, 2008; Jenkins & Finneman, 2017; Morison & MacLeod, 2013). These include the importance of not conflating performativity with performance. The latter suggests that gender can be turned on and off at will, however performativity is not a choice. Gender is a mandatory performance and is situated in a context of a “regulatory network of penalties, sanctions and taboos” which need to be adhered to in order to be intelligible and to be experienced as ‘real’ (Dudová, 2018, p.6). There are consequences for people if they do not do gender in the right and expected ways, including being ostracised and punished. Maintaining clear gender binaries is an important part of the reproduction and sustaining of the patriarchal system where there are clear roles for women as mothers, wives and grandmothers (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). These understandings contribute a meaningful framework in which to examine how gender is performed through grandmothers.

Research that draws on the performativity of gender shifts from gender as an explanation of behaviour, to an examination of gender as the result of wider social forces (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). This captures the details and nuances of how gender is performed. Combining performativity and a narrative approach to research can provide a context in which to move beyond individual implications of performativity to include interactional attributes and how these are shaped by wider social and cultural understandings. This can also allow for identifying behaviours which challenge or exceed gender assumptions; and

the ways in which restrictive and regulatory norms and discourses might become unsettled or changed (Kenny et al., 2011).

Performativity is important in relation to exploring the ways in which participants construct grandmother identities because they are performing what it means to be a woman and a grandmother through their talk. The ways in which grandmothers are described reproduces grandmothering in particular ways and these have implications for identity construction. There is no essential grandmother, no doer behind the deed but rather a subject who is constructed in and through the deed (Jenkins & Finneman, 2017). This gendered 'grandmother' subject exists at an intersection of many discursive practices and as such is not fixed at any one point (Davies & Gannon, 2005).

3.3 A narrative approach

A narrative approach has been chosen as the analytical methodology within the wider poststructuralist and poststructuralist feminist theoretical frameworks underpinning this study because they share similar epistemological understandings. Whilst poststructuralism focusses on the importance of discourses as powerful shapers of what and how life experiences should be storied, a narrative approach to research sees narratives as the "primary scheme by which human existence is rendered meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.1). Narratives are the wider structures and shared understandings which influence how stories are told and why they are told; shaping what is available to be told and for what purpose. Accordingly, research undertaken using a narrative approach contends it is important to attend to the politics of narratives to allow for the uncovering of the underlying ideologies inherent in wider social and cultural narratives and conveyed in the stories people tell (Rodriguez, 2016). Dominant wider social and cultural narratives become the taken-for-granted ways of knowing and specify the preferred beliefs and practices which shape accounts of life (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Research conducted within these frameworks produces multiple and divergent subjectivities rather than single, coherent accounts (Squire et al., 2008) and includes a preoccupation with how language captures, constructs and mediates experience as well as how knowledge and identity are constructed (Bell, 2003; Moen, 2006).

Narratives operate at a number of levels including the wider macro level; the grand totalising narratives that tell people what and how to think about wider institutions and structures, for example, the family (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Sometimes referred to as meta-narratives, these are the all-embracing big explanatory stories about the world. These powerful wider narratives structure what has come to be regarded as ‘common-sense’ ways of understanding the world, informing what is widely regarded as the ‘truth’. Narratives also work on the micro personal level; the stories of everyday life that are informed and shaped by the wider social, cultural, political and gender narratives.

One of the ontological understandings about narrative is the belief that at a very basic level, life is a story (Randall & McKim, 2008). That is, the nature of being or of reality is predicated on the centrality of stories to existence. Epistemological understandings build on this to add that what we know and how we know it is conveyed through stories (Atkinson, 2007). Narrative uses the centrality of stories to examine how people construct their accounts, to make sense of their lives within wider social, historic and political contexts. Experience is therefore always conveyed through the stories people tell in order to make meaning of their lives. Analysing the stories people tell reveals how they make meaning of their experiences using wider structures of gendered social expectations and allows for an examination of how people understand their lives through the stories they tell (Riessman, 2008). It examines what has happened, the meaning attributed to events and the ways in which the stories are then told (Thomas, 2012).

3.3.1 The importance of stories

Whilst there are a variety of ways to conduct research using narrative approaches, all are underpinned by how individuals apportion meaning to their experiences through the telling of stories (Moen, 2006). Stories are always partial, situated, contradictory and contextual; dependent also on who is telling what to whom; it is through stories that reality is shaped and interpreted. That is, stories are the product of the contexts in which they are produced: the immediate interpersonal context, the social context in which they were developed, and the wider cultural public narratives that are drawn on to provide meaning to particular stories (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Although people might draw on stories from the past or story projections about the future, stories are only ever told from the present – from the participant’s current context. Polkinghorne (1995) describes the significance of

temporality as stories being a verbal representation of ‘reality’, shaping and configuring time. That is, stories, always told in the present, also make meaning retrospectively – shaping and ordering past events (Chase, 2005). Mair (1981) observed that individuals are “locations” where stories of time and place are able to be told (p.127).

Telling stories has not only been described as a universal experience, it is something learnt as children and used throughout life across cultures and time (Riessman, 1993). People therefore understand and explain their lives through stories and in so doing reaffirm, modify them and create new ones (Hones, 1998). Stories carry and convey that which is significant for people and are also reflective and reinforcing of identities and contexts (Wong & Breheny, 2018); the person telling the story does not so much tell it as be told by it and individuals reproduce their personal experiences through the wider available social narratives. Because stories are regarded as central to understanding experience, the stories told in interviews become the material for analysis. Research conducted using a narrative approach understands people as creating identities through narrative; as storied selves. This approach provides a way to make sense of language including that which is not spoken (Riessman, 1990). Several authors note that more importantly, it provides a framework in which the ordinary stories that people tell can be authorised (Fraser, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2005). People tell stories in order to make sense of their lives and a narrative approach seeks to understand the stories people tell as reflective of personal, interpersonal and wider sociocultural contexts, attending to how culture is spoken and represented through the telling of individual stories (Riessman, 1993).

Stories are the data, not a conduit to the data: the stories told during a research interview did not previously exist. They are created for the research interview and are therefore influenced by the researcher. Analysing data using narrative as the organising principle means recognising that personal accounts are social productions, that in telling stories about experience people are constructing identity and that wider public narratives will influence personal and interpersonal accounts. People produce stories in a social context – a person tells a story as a version of their life, not their life itself, and it is told to someone (a researcher, an interviewer) who is actively involved in its production, and the story reflects wider public narratives (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). A narrative approach to this study allowed participants to tell a story about grandmothering and through their storytelling reveal the socially situated narratives of family life and gender.

Some writers do not distinguish between ‘story’ and ‘narrative’ and use the two interchangeably (Freedman & Combs, 1996). I make a distinction in this study however. ‘Narrative’ is reserved for the wider social and cultural ‘stories’ which shape personal stories; the ways in which people make sense of their experiences. The choice to utilise narrative analysis for the analysis of participant interviews was based on a desire to understand what wider narratives were informing participants’ construction of their personal stories and the subsequent implications this had for identity.

3.3.2 Levels of analysis

Just as narratives work on a number of levels, there are a number of levels of analysis that have been used in the examination of stories, particularly within the field of health psychology (Murray, 2000). This study utilises a variation of Murray’s four levels of analysis (personal, interpersonal, positional and ideological) to include three. These are the personal level, the interpersonal level and the ideological (described as public or wider narratives for the purposes of this study). These levels occur all the time, simultaneously, in the stories people tell. People tell their stories to themselves or another and they tell it within a particular social/political/cultural context – all are interconnected (Murray, 2000). The analysis therefore concerns itself with how these levels intersect in individual stories, as well as how these inform and contribute to wider understandings across all participant interviews (Stephens & Breheny, 2013). Although the particularities of the model of narrative approach I have applied to this study is also discussed further in the next chapter, a brief theoretical discussion of the three levels used in the analysis of participant stories is included here.

3.3.3 Personal stories

The personal level of narrative analysis focusses on the stories of everyday life people tell. These stories are powerfully shaped by discourses: they shape the choices people have about what events and experiences can be storied, and the ways in which they should be storied (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Stories are not random and incoherent tales but are characterised by a beginning, a middle and an end, they have a purpose, characters and a plot (Maines, 1993). They have a social role; it is important to examine the ways in which they are produced and read, and the work they do in the wider context, for example, the

implications for change in the construction of identity. Poststructuralist narrative recognises that the stories a person tells are not told by her; rather she is told by it (Squire et al., 2008). That is, personal stories are always and already shaped from the wider social and cultural narratives, and the discursive possibilities in the particular context from which a story is told (Gannon, 2009).

An analysis of personal stories is not simply a re-telling of their account of events. It involves making explicit the connections between the personal, interpersonal and the wider social, cultural and political narratives people draw on in their personal constructions of their life and identity. As people story their experiences they describe events not only in terms of what happened and when, but also in terms of what actions they took, the effects of those on their self, and the meaning they ascribed to the events. Stories sometimes convey how people were, and how they now are, situating stories across time and contexts.

Personal stories also draw on wider shared public narratives in ways that reproduce shared understandings and/or in ways which resist or reject them. Personal stories are never just an individual's; although personal to them, they are situated within particular conditions (social, historical, political and cultural) which shape what is available to be told (Silver, 2013). Although there is a freedom in choosing what to story, there are constraints, not only of contexts. They are also limited by the celebrated and honourable stories prevalent at the time and also by an individual's own context – socio-economic, age, gender, ethnicity and health (Chase, 2005). Rather than a random telling of events and experiences, stories are told not simply to recount events, but to provide explanations of their importance in peoples' lives and what this means for identity (Riessman, 2008).

A narrative approach to research attends to how individual stories reveal social/cultural/political ideas; how the personal construction interacts with a "community of life stories" (Riessman, 1993, p.4). Interpreting personal stories to uncover the wider narratives shaping them has implications for how grandmothers construct grandmothing and the wider ideas they draw on their constructions. Through the process of telling stories, people both convey meaning to themselves and the world and also construct personal identity (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Identity is not something which can be deliberately chosen; positions available to people within the available social and cultural

narratives shape the personal stories people develop. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this as inhabiting a storied landscape which facilitates both the transmission of knowledge and its constitution. Participant stories – at a personal level – are never just simply reflective of them as individuals. A narrative approach offers the opportunity to connect the personal to wider human and social understandings.

3.3.4 Interpersonal stories

Analysis at the interpersonal level is focused on interactions between people within a particular situation (Doise, 1986). Although Mishler (1986) is commonly credited with arguing the importance of this level and the ways in which it shapes participant accounts, he drew on the ideas of Paget (1983). She described the research interview as a reflexive process – the responses from the participant (and I would add, the interviewer), continually inform how the interview evolves. A story analysed at the interpersonal level infers that the self is being conceptualised dialogically; the person telling the story is continually constructing identity through the interactional process through telling a story to others (Murray, 2000). Stories are told in a context, not in a vacuum.

In a research interview the researcher is asking questions, not just the pre-prepared questions but questions arising from the participant's story – asking for more detail, or the reasons for thinking a particular way, acting the way she did, and so on. The researcher is actively shaping the interview and the story which emerges from it. Mishler (1986) defined this as a co-construction between researcher and participant. Frank (2002) points to the interpersonal story as arising out of relationship and suggests that the researcher has an ethical and intellectual responsibility to enter into the relationship of storytelling. In other words, it is not only inevitable, but desirable that the researcher is engaged with the participant in a meaningful way. Jacobsson and Åkerström (2013) describe interviews as a site where participants are engaged in identity work, storying preferred identities through sacrifices made, their strengths and abilities and so on – achieved in collaboration with the interviewer.

Lastly, the interpersonal level of analysis acknowledges both the influence of the researcher as well as wider social and cultural contexts and how these shape the story that is produced. The co-construction is also shaped by the wider socio-political

understandings each person brings to the research encounter (Miller, 1996). Individuals are not only individuals as they are always in relationship with others and always in a wider social and cultural context; the self is socially produced, a social phenomenon (Church, 1995). The interpersonal level reproduces dominant understandings about knowledge, in interaction with others. Although the result, for the purposes of research, is a co-constructed account, it is shaped by discursive understandings, conveyed through language.

3.3.5 Public narratives

Referred to as grand narratives, master narratives and ideological narratives, public or wider narratives are all-embracing explanatory stories about the world which are developed and circulated within cultures and used (unknowingly) by individuals in their construction of their personal stories (Breheny & Stephens, 2015). They are the grand totalising narratives or dominant cultural narratives that tell people what and how to think about wider institutions and structures, for example, religion and the family. These shape what is available to be spoken, experienced and acknowledged (Burck, 2002). As such they are reflective of a society's view about the people and places within that society and this produces an effect on how people experience themselves. For example, the socially constructed narrative of good grandmothering includes the idea that grandmothers should be there for support. This produces implications for personal identity construction and shapes the stories that grandmothers tell about their grandmothering. A society's public narratives inform people about what a worthy life is, what people should aspire to (and not), and what is sanctioned (and what is not).

The stories people tell are embedded in wider systems and structures which offer ways to explain experiences such as grandmothering. These become part of the shared public narrative and shape understandings and beliefs (Somers, 1994). They are also used to construct identity, providing subject positions for individuals and those within their social context (Somers, 1994). Thus, public narratives (from culture, gender, history, politics, the media and literature) about the family inform shared understandings about the role of grandmothers and these contribute to how individuals construct their personal stories and their identity as grandmothers. Other wider narratives occur through the media and literature and these too inform and shape what is available publicly to people.

The above three levels are discrete, yet they are all interconnected and intersect with each other. A central premise in narrative analysis is that “narrative is an ontological condition of social life” (Somers, 1994, p.614). It is therefore understood that the stories people tell do a number of things. Firstly, they allow for identity construction at a personal level through subjective positioning in available discourses, and through drawing on wider publicly available narratives. Secondly, they allow for acknowledging the importance of the interactional: stories are produced within dialogue and as such take into account the purpose and context of the dialogue and the ways in which these influence the stories. Thirdly, personal and interactional stories are shaped by available public narratives.

Narrative analysis and the telling of stories are informed by poststructuralist understandings about language and how it is used. That is, in the relationship between the individual and the wider social context, language is central; not only defining institutional, organisational and cultural practises but it is through these that identity is constructed (Weedon, 2004). In sum, personal stories will always contain the interpersonal, and the wider cultural, social and structural narratives. The stories that people tell are told in ways which do not clearly delineate the levels of narrative, but nevertheless people draw on all of them all of the time in telling their personal stories. Reading for all these levels recognises connections between the personal and the political and how dominant discourses might be represented in meaning-making (Fraser, 2004).

3.4 Conclusion

Applying the epistemological understandings of poststructuralism, feminist poststructuralism and narrative approaches to this study have enabled an understanding of how each participant’s experience is shaped and mediated through cultural, socio-political, historical and gendered contexts. Poststructuralism allows for multiple realities, challenges universal truths and recognises the importance of discourse and context in meaning-making. Feminist poststructuralism builds on this by examining relationships; exploring constructions of gender, subjectivity and power. The performativity of gender allows for an examination of how gendered expectations of grandmothers produce and affect the narrations of grandmothers’ identities and as such builds on the poststructuralist lens to examine grandmothering. A study drawing on a feminist poststructural framework will necessarily examine relationships, cultural and socio-political contexts and power relations

between people. This enables an exploration of how language, beliefs and values, practises and relationships contribute to and influence how grandmothers and grandmothering are socially constructed. Narrative approaches to analysis are based on the premise that telling stories is fundamental to the ways in which people understand and make sense of their experience. Stories are located in personal, interpersonal and wider social and cultural contexts and these are drawn on to assist people to make sense of their lives. Combining performativity with a narrative approach to research can result in moving beyond the implications for the individual and consider how interactional performances are shaped by wider social understandings (Morison & Macleod, 2013). Within the frameworks of poststructuralism feminist poststructuralism and a narrative approach, consideration can be given to how gender is constructed in interactions, reflecting wider narratives with regard to gender norms and practises.

Chapter Four: Methods

This chapter focusses on the methodological choices which have contributed to the development of this research study. The chapter begins with a discussion centred on subjectivity, reflexivity and journalling, followed by ethics, participant recruitment and data collection methods. The transcribing process is then outlined. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the analytic framework within which the interview data has been interpreted.

4.1. Subjectivity and reflexivity

4.1.1. Subjectivity

Within qualitative research methodologies, the researcher is regarded as playing an important role in the research process. The researcher brings their own worldview, assumptions, biases and prejudices, preferences and life experience to the research. These inform every stage of the research process from the planning, the processes of reading, thinking and reflection in order to refine the research question, the interviews, and the analysis and writing up of the research. A researcher's worldview and experience influence the ways in which they conceptualise the research, the ways in which language is used, and the choice of lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and the sense made of it (Berger, 2015). The researcher's interpretations are also influenced by the social, cultural, political, gendered and socio-economic contexts in which the research takes place (Creswell, 2007). It is therefore important that a researcher makes explicit the factors influencing their interest in, and engagement with, the research topic. An important part of the research process was therefore being transparent with the participants about how my interest in this study originated right from the beginning.

My interest in the topic of grandmothing arose in two contexts. The first of these was my working life. Working as a teacher in the tertiary sector led to an interest in research, and my professional identity as a counsellor and supervisor influenced my choice of topic. The second context, my personal life, was instrumental in defining the focus. I had become a grandmother in 2008, and although I was (and am) a grandmother who is in paid employment I am not in the demographic sought in this study. Some of the conversations I had with female colleagues over the period of time I was considering and refining the research topic included an acknowledgement and bemoaning of the lack of research on

working grandmothers. These all contributed to my interest in pursuing this research. My experience being with people in a therapeutic context undoubtedly assisted in building rapport and positioning myself as a curious listener during the interviews.

Subject positions made available within research discourse include researcher-researched, researcher-subject and researcher-participant. I prefer to use the term participant, as it speaks of taking part, of contributing, of activity. By contrast both terms ‘researched’ and ‘subject’ denote passivity, someone to whom something is being ‘done’. Situating myself within the subject position of researcher, rather than an objective third-person narrator is important in acknowledging how my subjectivities have influenced and informed my understandings from the very beginnings of this study to the conclusion. However, subject positions can be taken up, and they can be resisted; they are not fixed. For example, my researcher-self, produced through the available discourses in research, at times shifted and changed through the research process. As one example, during the interviews, the subject position of grandmother was made available to me at times as participants invited me to reflect on my own experiences. I noticed this at the time and wrote about this later in my journal. I recalled the tension I experienced at times between a desire to speak of my own experiences as a grandmother (and perhaps normalise participants’ experiences) yet knowing that was not the purpose of the interview.

My position in this study was, therefore, not limited to ‘researcher’. My life experience as a woman, and my personal identity as a mother and a grandmother have all contributed to the multiple positions I have held throughout the research process. Those participants who did not already know I was a grandmother found out at the beginning of the interview process; the effects of this, and my other positions, are discussed in the ‘reflexivity’ section below. My reading of the literature on ~~grandparenting~~¹ resulted in strengthening my interest in grandmothers, showing as it did a paucity of examination of grandmother experiences in the specific area I chose to study.

¹ I use grandparenting under erasure to denote the dominance of the term grandparent over grandmother in literature

4.1.2. Reflexivity

Overlapping with subjectivity, the ‘reflexive turn’ described in the field of social sciences enabled clearer understandings about knowledge including its partiality, provisionality and subjectivity. Reflexivity has been described as both a practice and a state of awareness and includes the researcher being aware of the ways in which she influences the research process as a co-producer of knowledge (Orr & Bennett, 2009). One of the aims of reflexivity is to monitor any effects that the researcher produces on the research process through, for example, their particular worldview. Engaging in reflexivity can enhance “the credibility of the findings by accounting for researcher values, beliefs, knowledge and biases” (Cutcliffe, 2003, p.137). Turning the “researcher lens” onto myself required me to both recognise and take responsibility for my “situatedness within the research” and the effect this might have on the participants, the questions I chose to ask, the method for gathering data and its subsequent interpretation (Berger, 2015, p.220). Reflexivity therefore disrupts traditional views of the production of knowledge being independent of the researcher and instead views the researcher as active in the construction of knowledge within the research context; as an insider I am influential in the process.

The combination of insider and outsider positions in qualitative research allows for stories to be contextual and for the researcher to address subjectivity and reflexivity, or those aspects that may impact on the study, avoiding judgements about participant stories and making explicit any biases or assumptions (Yilmaz, 2013). The ‘insider-ness’ I have in the topic is through my own experience as a grandmother. This has undoubtedly affected this study and influenced participants’ accounts of grandmothing. In my examination and analysis of their stories I noticed signs which demonstrated an assumed shared knowledge between both participant and me. Sometimes this was subtle and other times more overt. For example, many participants often left sentences unfinished, or trailed off with ‘you know’. Although this is a commonly used pattern of speech, in this context I often thought it was a signal demonstrative of a shared understanding of grandmothing.

I found I paid careful attention to those times during the interviews when participants alluded to their male partners helping out with the care of grandchildren. An example of my reflection after one such interview resulted in my scepticism that the participant’s husband, the grandfather, had been storied by the participant as doing the same amount of caring work,

in the same way, as the participant. I maintained vigilance toward those times during interviews when I was vulnerable to ‘putting words into participant mouths’, and/or expressing surprise at anything that seemed counter to my knowledge and experience. Later, I remained alert to the ways in which my thinking could shape the transcript extracts I chose to analyse – what I might give a particular weight to, what I might have a preference for. In the early stages of this research I identified I might have a bias toward participant stories that highlighted the *challenges* of grandmothering within a context of paid employment and regular childcare. This bias was possibly evident in the initial title for the study ‘grandmothers juggling paid work and childcare’ with the inference that this might be a negative experience. Juggling to me speaks of managing something which might be difficult although it needn’t be so. The combination of experience and the reading of academic texts cannot help but influence the ways in which the interviews and analysis are conducted, however, robust reflexivity can provide ways to mitigate and explicate the effects of this.

4.1.3 Journalling

Journalling is included here as it provided a site for me to reflect immediately on each interview and to describe my thoughts, as well as identify a tentative overall feeling I had following each interview. For example, after one interview, I had a sense there was so much more that could have been storied had I asked questions that followed more closely the participant’s account. I endeavoured to write a reflection in my journal as soon as I arrived back to my car, lest I forgot an important detail. This also helped to crystallise in writing any moments that occurred during the interview where I had noticed myself acting on assumptions or generalisations. The process of journalling as a means to capture the researcher’s thoughts, is an important part of rigour and accountability; both important components in research ethics. There is a responsibility to ensure that the researcher reflects on their assumptions and experience that are inevitably imposed on the research process, along with an ability to reflect on moments in the research when this has either occurred or been at risk of occurring (Burns, 2006).

There were many resonances throughout the research process which gave me pause to consider my own stance. I managed this primarily through the notes I made in my journal following each interview. I used both a handwritten journal and an electronic journal throughout the study, in order to capture immediate responses to interviews, and my thoughts

following reading, supervision and discussion with colleagues. I found that the reflections I posted in my journal immediately, or as soon as practicable after each interview, took on a greater nuance with temporal distance and hindsight. For example, I remember the second interview with participant Amy, and my experience of her talk as ‘distant’ from herself which I wondered about during the interview. Amy was careful to not mention any names, referring to herself at times in the third-person, and her daughter, granddaughter, husband and son-in-law were all referred to in respect to their relationship to her rather than by name. As this was only my second interview, I wondered whether any future interviews would be similar. Later on, after discussion in supervision, I came to understand that the nature of Amy’s paid employment positioned her to be vigilant toward the protection of personal identity, and thus my interpretation shifted.

My notes included a reminder to avoid comparisons between my situation and that of each participant, and to notice when such comparisons could adversely affect the shaping of my questions. Envy of participants’ time with their grandchildren was something I noticed from time to time and which I managed through journaling and debriefing with friends and colleagues. Journaling continued to be a source of reflection throughout the research process as I interacted with the interview material. For example, the transcribing process highlighted those times I had missed opportunities to explore something important, and my journal reflections subsequently described these. An example of this occurred during my interview with Sandra. We had been discussing the tension experienced between giving advice to parents and holding back. Sandra said that she had learnt to wait to be asked for advice, and that if she was asked she would say to her daughter ‘this is what I found that works’. I missed an opportunity to explore this further and instead my response was: ‘Yes. Do you have other children?’ I described this as a ‘lurch’ – something that occurred across most interviews.

4.2 Ethics

One of the formal ethical requirements for this study was the submission of a low risk notification to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee which resulted in the statement "This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk" (Ethics Notification Number: 4000017535). This process included submitting documentation including the Participant Information Sheet and the Informed Consent Form (see Appendices

A, C and D respectively). These outline the purpose of the study, the criteria for participation, and how confidentiality and anonymity will be met and maintained. As well as this formal process, there are a number of important ethical principles which govern research including respecting participant autonomy, minimising harm and maintaining confidentiality. These serve as guidelines for the conduct of research relationships (Ramcharan & Cutcliffe, 2001). I outline how these and other ethical principles guided my research process below.

4.2.1. Informed consent

The first step in the process of obtaining consent to participate in this research was the distribution of an Information Sheet (see Appendix C). This is vital in order to facilitate fully informed consent and is therefore separate to the consent form that participants signed. The Information Sheet I distributed to potential research participants contained the following information necessary for making an informed decision about whether or not to participate in this study. A summary of participant rights was also detailed including the right to withdraw from the study and the right to decline to answer any question.

This Information Sheet functioned as an invitation to participate and was sent to all interested women. These initial contacts represented an exciting part of the process: there were women who wanted to participate, it was a turning point. This research was not simply of interest to me, but also now to others who would hopefully experience potential value in contributing, and to whom I felt a responsibility as well as gratitude. My initial meeting with each participant involved answering any questions that had arisen as a result of the Information Sheet and I found that explaining the process helped to build rapport.

The Consent Form (see Appendix D) was given to participants to sign once there was an agreement to participate and this was signed prior to each interview. Although a research context positions the researcher as someone who is learning something, I was aware that researchers could still be perceived as ‘experts’ (Josselson, 2007). It was therefore important that I raised this and provided an opportunity for potential participants to discuss any concerns and ask any questions they may have had. Framing consent forms as a necessary and protective requirement that institutions such as universities have for the conducting of research assisted with this, as did reiterating the importance of the voluntary nature of

participation. Even though it was likely participants and potential participants knew this already, I felt it helped establish a collaborative spirit from the outset.

4.2.2. Participant confidentiality

In accordance with the above requirements, the protection of participant identities has been maintained at all times, including not identifying geographical locations, workplaces and other people including family members named in the interviews. Participants were invited to choose their own pseudonym however no one took me up on my invitation; names were therefore assigned. The signed forms and other written material relating to participants were kept in a secure, locked cabinet at my home. All transcriptions and soft copy computer files were stored on my home computer which is password protected. These practises are important for participant privacy and confidentiality and are a vital part of ethical principles underpinning qualitative research.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a small country and it is possible that a study focussed on a specific and detailed area such as this will attract people who either know one another or that I may have known or known of. Snowball sampling, described in a further section, relies on this very phenomenon; people who know one another and who are in a similar situation. For this reason, when participants I had interviewed informed me they knew someone who could be interested in participating, I asked that each potential participant contact me directly rather than through an existing participant. This meant that relationships between participants was protected.

4.2.3. Minimising harm

Although this study was deemed to be ‘low risk’ that does not preclude the possibility of inadvertent distress during the interview. Before each interview I suggested to participants to let me know if they became either uncomfortable or upset during the interview and I would stop the recorder. There was only one occasion that recording was paused as a participant described having an epiphanic moment during our interview, leading her to rethink how she had mothered her children [in ways she was replicating with her grandson]. There is also the possibility that participants could have experienced distress or felt unsettled after the interview, once I had left. I was cognisant that people process things in different ways, and

that later reflections can result in unease as well as questions. I therefore suggested to each participant that I was available by telephone and/or email should they have anything they would like to discuss, questions they would like answered or anything needing clarification. Only one participant contacted me and this was to clarify the order in which events in her story had occurred.

There is potential for great capacity for harm by not ensuring participant anonymity to the best of my ability. The writing up and selection of participant extracts can identify participants to others who may know them. This is compounded through the use of snowball sampling (see below for a discussion). Minimising harm in my writing meant the use of pseudonyms for all persons named by participants, changing any identifying data such as workplaces, specific geographical locations of not only participants but also schools, daycare centres and the like and references to personal information such as place of birth. I have summarised participant details accordingly, in table 4.1 further in this chapter.

4.2.4. Cultural inclusivity

An important ethical consideration when conducting research in Aotearoa New Zealand is to do so within Te Tiriti o Waitangi² obligations, honouring principles such as partnership, protection and participation. If participants identify as Māori, then research should be undertaken within a Māori practice framework (Davidson & Tolich, 2001; Durie, 2002; Robinson, 2006). I did not have any participants who identified as Māori; one of my participants had Māori children and grandchildren although this did not significantly feature during our interview. There were participants who were representative of cultures other than Pākehā³, summarised in table 4.1. Whilst I had hoped that participants would be representative of a diversity of age, ethnicity and socio-economic status, the final sample was not particularly diverse.

Ethical considerations are not limited to the above; just as important to me was for the research to be undertaken within an ethic of care. This extends to endeavouring to understand and incorporate other cultural understandings and worldviews; demonstrated through a not

² The Treaty of Waitangi, Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document from 1840

³ A commonly used term to denote a non-Māori New Zealander

knowing stance. It also means acknowledging the relational context in which this study was undertaken and acting from a position of accountability, respect and transparency. Described by Rossman and Rallis (2010) as treating participants not as a means to an end, but rather as “an end in herself”, this allows for an acknowledgement of the importance and value of each interview, and the uniqueness of the contribution each makes to the overall study (p.383). Accountability within an ethic of care means that I am answerable to my participants, to their stories, and their representation and to the purpose of this research study.

4.3. Participant recruitment

The research aim – to highlight the experiences of grandmothers who are in paid employment and providing some childcare to one or more grandchildren – provided the broad parameters for the selection of participants. I thought it was more likely that women who were in part-time paid employment would be providing childcare rather than those in full-time employment for whom fewer hours were available. This thinking contributed to the criteria for inclusion in the study: at least twenty hours of paid employment per week and at least ten hours of childcare a week were defined as necessary in order to participate. Additionally, a decision was made to limit the geographical boundary. This study took place in Auckland; a city encompassing 4,894 square kilometres in the Greater Auckland area. To facilitate ease of meeting for both the participants and me, a radius of no more than fifty kilometres from the CBD was also included in the study criteria. This area encompasses some high-density dwellings, included all inner-city suburbs, as well as those suburbs further out but within a comfortable commute to paid work.

Purposive sampling was appropriate as it is a recruitment method which selects individuals “because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem” (Creswell, 2007, p.125). According to Yilmaz (2013), purposeful sampling is key in qualitative research, enabling a selection and study of a group of people in order to gain an in-depth understanding. I posted advertisements outlining my criteria for participants, in various places including universities, local community newspapers, not-for-profit organisations, schools, and childcare centres, libraries and Citizens Advice noticeboards (see Appendix B). A total of six participants from the overall fifteen included in this study were found as a result of these advertisements. Despite this, I had fewer responses to my advertisements than I had hoped for. Accessing fewer participants than I thought I might come as a surprise, as people

who knew of my study had indicated there would be wide levels of interest in participating; several promising potential participants did not make contact after initially expressing interest. Although I advertised in a wide variety of places, I think the parameters of the study also contributed to fewer participants. That is, women who are in paid employment and providing childcare are already busy and there may not have been much time available for people to participate. This busyness was borne out during the interviews; participating in a research study is perhaps viewed as 'one more thing' to accommodate.

Because I had fewer responses to my advertisements than I had expected, I also decided to use snowball sampling to invite further participants. This method relies on some people knowing other people who might be willing to participate and who meet the requirements for the study (Check & Schutt, 2012). I asked participants whether they knew of anyone among their acquaintances who could be appropriate for my study and if so to pass my contact details on. This resulted in several potential participants contacting me that I may otherwise not have had access to.

Rather than give potentially identifying participant information I have summarised demographic characteristics in the following table 4.1 in order to protect participants' identities.

Table 4.3.1: Summary of participants

Age	Ethnicity	Partner Status	Hours of paid work	Hours of childcare	Age of grandchild	Time/distance by car
55-72 <i>Note:</i> 9 out of 15 between 60-65	11 Pākehā or NZ European 4 born overseas	11 married 2 divorced 1 widowed 1 partnered (not counted as married)	20-40 <i>Note:</i> 9 out of 15 doing 30-35 hours	Minimum of 12 and a maximum of four overnights a week <i>Note:</i> 11 out of 15 participants doing 15-25 hours	Youngest 1 year to oldest 9 years old. <i>Note:</i> 10 out of 15 participants had grandchildren 18mths- 3 years	Two lived in same household. Longest distance 45mins by car in traffic Average ten minutes

In total I interviewed sixteen participants between September 2017 and June 2018. Of the sixteen women who were interviewed, one regrettably could not be included in this study as she was a full-time custodial grandmother. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the characteristics of the 15 grandmothers included in the research.

4.4 Data collection

The intention of this study was to explore the experiences of grandmothering within the context of paid work and childcare and as such there was a need for some structure when interviewing. However there also needed to be opportunities for participants to elaborate on their responses for further discussion of particular areas of interest as they arose. A semi-structured interview offered a balance between these two; a provision for some prepared questions as well as space for further exploration. Graham (1992) notes that semi-structured interviews are the favoured method in feminist-based research because they allow for active involvement of participants in constructing data. Semi structured interviews can help address uneven power relations in research as fewer pre-determined questions create more opportunities for reciprocity. Semi-structured interviews not only allow for more space to explore participants' responses in depth, they also allow space for the interviewer to focus on meaning-making and this can help facilitate greater understanding of participant experiences.

The questions asked in the context of semi-structured interviews are based on open-endedness, active listening and attention to the participants' use of language (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). It is also important to assume a 'not knowing' and curious stance in order to create an environment where participants can talk freely (Charmaz, 2002). Because I had made a decision to outline briefly at the start of each interview my personal situatedness vis-à-vis grandmothering, I was mindful of maintaining a balance between self-disclosing and limiting my responses lest the focus shift to my experience of grandmothering. Blum (2003) writes that deciding how much to say, and what might be appropriate (or not) is difficult. One participant asked me what I thought about grandmothers who do not wish to have contact with their grandchildren after stating that she knew some women who felt like that and that it "wasn't natural". This is illustrative of an opportunity to explore an uncomfortable moment, however I responded with "I guess it's complex" rather than enquiring into this further.

Each interview began with an open-ended question inviting participants to tell me how they came to be caring for a grandchild or grandchildren. There were a number of key areas I wanted to enquire about including how each participant learned to become a grandmother; how they came to be involved in providing childcare; the experience of their paid employment and how this influenced their childcare; their thoughts about any differences between maternal and paternal grandmothing and likewise differences between grandmothing and grandfathering. I also enquired about the differences and similarities between mothering and grandmothing and any hopes they might hold for their grandchildren. See Appendix E for a list of questions I used to shape the interviews.

Other questions followed participants' responses and were intended to provide opportunities for storying of experiences, including details around paid employment and childcare and the reasons they were providing care. Some interviews included participant thoughts on current social policy and funding for childcare including commentary on the need for two-parent families to have both parents in paid employment. Others spoke about their relationship with the parent or parents and the challenges that some participants experienced in the navigation of these relational boundaries. Some participants wanted me to know that they had other adult children with grandchildren for whom they had never provided care for, or for whom they had provided care for in the past but were no longer.

Interviews varied in duration from 55 minutes for the shortest interview and almost two hours for the longest. In the interests of collaborative practise, I asked participants to choose a location from a range of options including their workplace, their home, or my home. All (except one interview) were recorded by audio device; one was conducted and recorded using Skype at the participant's request due to her time constraints and the challenges we had trying to find a place and time to meet. From the full sixteen interviews, five were conducted in the participant's home, two were conducted in homes which also served as places where participants ran their businesses, seven were undertaken in participant workplaces and one was conducted in my home at the participant's request. The Skype interview was conducted in our respective homes. The use of Skype as a recording mechanism influenced the establishment of a free-flowing interview and I found it more challenging to develop rapport. In contrast, those interviews that took place in participants' homes felt very different. I was entering their space; a place of unfamiliarity to me but entirely familiar to them. Participants offered me cups of tea, and two participants took the time to show me family photos. These

acts would not have taken place in any other location and as such revealed aspects of their lives (Sinding & Aronson, 2003).

The space in which an interview takes place is an important consideration although who selects and what is chosen has received relatively little attention in literature (Elwood & Martin, 2000; Herzog, 2005). Home environments are generally regarded as private spaces and workplaces are inevitably public spaces (Purkarthofer, 2019) and each produces effects as power relations are constituted by the locations in which the interviews take place (Elwood & Martin, 2000). Space is therefore an important consideration when planning research interviews. Interviewing in participants' homes can disrupt but not erase power differences (Oberhauser, 1997) and I was conscious of the difference I experienced when entering participant homes. The language I used reflected a tentativeness (is it all right with you if I put the recorder here?) whereas the interview undertaken in my own home reflected more certainty (we'll go through to this room and use this table). These spatial differences resulted in a journal entry later where I noted how physical space and location produced their own effects including shaping effects on participants' talk. Homes are familiar spaces and on reflection those interviews conducted in participant homes facilitated an ease for participants that my home facilitated for me. One participant told me she chose her workplace as the site for the interview as she was used to recording devices being in that environment and this felt familiar and 'normal' to her.

The presence of a recorder produces an effect on both interviewer and participant, highlighting the importance of the event and positioning the participant as someone who has something important to say (Rapley, 2012). I explained my recording protocol to participants, suggesting to each participant that if the interview strayed into areas that produced discomfort for them that we could stop recording. Participants all spoke freely about their experiences, and did not seem deterred by the presence of the recorder. Participants also introduced new lines of enquiry and made decisions as to how and when the interviews ended. As an example, the interview conducted using Skype came to an abrupt finish when Sylvie's sister came into the frame and announced it was time for Sylvie to have dinner. An interview with another participant could have extended longer than the time I had allocated; in the words of the participant "I could have spent hours talking to you about this". Most interviews however seemed to come to an end at a point when a story had concluded, and upon mutual agreement.

4.5 The transcribing process – a situated act

Transcribing represents the beginnings of engaging with the material and starting the process of familiarity. There were a number of choices which needed to be made around transcription. These included decisions such as who will transcribe the interviews, whether non-verbal communication should be included such as pauses, sighs, laughter, tone and emphasis and, if so, how these should be represented (Bailey, 2008). It is highly probable that mistakes and errors are made, either in hearing, or transcribing (Easton et al., 2000). For this reason, and as a way to bring rigour into the research study, it was important to read, listen, re-read and re-listen, for accuracy. I transcribed all interviews myself, as soon as possible following each interview, as this allowed me to become familiar in a different way with the data. That is, the interviewing process itself begins a familiarity and transcribing furthers it; this also lessens the chance for errors. The non-verbal aspects of the transcripts were noted consistently and these were limited to short pauses [...], longer pauses by the words in brackets [long pause], minimal encouragers as ‘mmm’ or ‘mmm hmm’ and participants’ emphasis on words in italics.

Transcripts were then placed in a word processor table with three columns, the first for the person’s initials, the second for the talk and the third for my comments and reflections. Once all transcribing was complete, I began the task of reading and re-reading each transcript. The first reading of each transcript was followed by a re-listening to each interview, and correcting any errors, inserting anything I had missed and deleting anything I had added. I then emailed each participant to offer a copy of the transcript to check. Five participants said yes. Of these five, three made some minor changes. These included specific details of parental situations and workplace hours; none of which were vital to my analysis.

4.6 Analysis

This section discusses in further detail the levels of narrative analysis used to analyse participant accounts.

4.6.1. *The framework*

All forms of narrative analysis acknowledge stories (or narratives if using these terms interchangeably) as the central organising metaphor which people use to make sense of experience. For the purposes of this study, I do not use these terms interchangeably but instead refer to Wong & Breheny's (2018) distinction between a story and a narrative. Stories are accounts of events told by people; narratives are the wider social cultural accounts that are drawn on as people tell their stories. People tell stories and in so doing use the wider narratives available to them in their construction. Stories then, for the purposes of this study, are the accounts participants told about particular events, drawing on narratives to make sense of their experiences and to construct identity (Somers, 1994). The stories people tell in the context of research are not fixed and true accounts of their lives but rather are "a particular version of events produced in a specific context" for a specific purpose (Breheny & Stephens, 2011, p.35).

The application of a narrative approach to the analysis of participant interviews in this study involves examining not only the personal stories participants have told, but also includes locating these in interpersonal, social and cultural contexts. This allows for a more nuanced and detailed analysis of how both identity and experience are constructed (Stephens & Breheny, 2013). The purpose of the study and its theoretical underpinnings shape what appears as significant stories within participant accounts. The process of identifying stories is at times not as straightforward as it might seem. Riessman (2008) states that stories that are told within the context of a research interview are rarely clearly demarcated and that there can be false starts, interruptions and deviations. Sometimes though, it *is* clear: a participant will signal that they are beginning a story, with what Jefferson described as entrance talk and exit talk (1979). This can include 'for example' as a beginning, and statements such as 'so that's what I did' to indicate an ending. In the interviews I often started with the question "can you tell me a story of how you came to be looking after your grandchild" which elicited responses shaped by particular narratives.

Narrative analysis therefore identifies the story as the analytical focus. The analysis is not simply the content of what is told, but it asks questions of the story such as 'what made this story possible', 'why and how has the story been told in this way' and 'what are the wider narratives that have been drawn on in order to produce this particular account'. There are

levels of narrative which influence and shape the stories that people tell. Stephens and Breheny (2013) write that separating the levels can facilitate greater understanding of the ways in which individual stories are located within available social narratives. They suggest three levels which include the personal (the stories participants tell about their experience), the interpersonal (the co-construction of the interview between interviewer and participant) and the social (the wider social, cultural and political narratives which shape the personal and interpersonal stories). These levels are used interchangeably, all the time, as participants story their experiences. I used these as my guide and my analytical process is described in the sections below.

4.6.2 Identifying personal stories

Personal stories were identified as those times when participants recalled an experience and described it to me; stories in which individual understandings of their everyday grandmothering experience were constructed. After incorporating any minor transcript changes, each transcript was then re-read and a [very] initial identification of areas of interest were highlighted within each individual transcript. I moved between individual transcripts and the entire data set, highlighting personal stories that seemed to have something in common with other stories and by contrast, stories that were different from others, which either contradicted other participant stories or which appeared inconsistent. I highlighted particular quotes within stories that seemed particularly pertinent or poignant and began to cautiously define areas of importance. This was the most extensive part of the process, literally ‘pawing through’ the transcribed material (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p.88). I drew diagrams, drawing on mind-mapping techniques to encapsulate significant stories, and used participant initials to identify which story belonged to whom. This also helped with identifying stories-in-common (more initials denoted the degree of commonality) and conversely those stories which were not shared but which highlighted something of significance.

4.6.3. Identifying interpersonal stories

The interactional interview context shaped how participants constructed grandmothering and how they storied their care and their constructions of identity. I looked for how our interpersonal interactions contributed to meaning-making and in particular the times when

my questions actively produced an effect on the participant's account. I studied how participants, in interaction with me, constructed grandmothering and their identity through producing and reproducing normative gendered understandings regarding childcare.

Although the whole of the interview is conducted in interaction between interviewer and participant, the analysis involved identifying key moments in the transcripts when participants constructed identity through our talk, the times in which gender was spoken about in ways that were used to explain the enactment (performance) of grandmothering, and also the times where participants drew on wider constructions and understandings of grandmothering in order to account for their actions, and the ways in which the provision of childcare was framed.

4.6.4. Wider sociocultural and political narratives

Wider social and cultural narratives are drawn on in the construction of personal stories. Identifying these was easier once I thought about these as the 'shoulds' – the common understandings and assumptions people share about life and how people should act and what they should do (Wong & Breheny, 2018). For example, the idea that grandmothers would (should) naturally want to spend time with their grandchildren was a concept commonly drawn on by participants in this study to help explain their involvement in their care. As one participant said, "what kind of grandmother doesn't want to spend time with her grandchildren?" This storyline has implications; it provides particular positions, within a moral framework, for grandmothers. Within this construct the moral position of 'good grandmother' is available to those who enjoy spending time with their grandchildren and this can be drawn on in identity construction. Conversely a 'bad grandmother' must be a woman who does not and as such has no entitlement to draw on a good grandmother construct in identity construction. These produce an effect on what is available to be told; what is regarded as legitimate and what is not. As people tell stories they also reveal how wider structures and narratives influenced and shaped their stories, and those which were drawn on in order to account for themselves in a particular way.

4.7. *Writing*

As I developed my reading and thinking about how to write a coherent account, I realised that some of my first writing and interpretive attempts were clumsy, situating each level as a discrete, unconnected representation of a participant's story. Moreover, early attempts at analysis had a tendency to reflect meaning rather than construct it: what Mansvelt and Berg (2016) refer to as writing in, rather than writing up. Doise (1986) states that the connection of explanations across various levels of analysis is a challenge. Although it is important to make distinctions among the three levels, participant stories were told in ways that included all three, all of the time. I then revisited the transcripts, looking for connections, noticing the ways in which each story could be understood as reflecting all three levels; as a particular account of an event, situated within the interpersonal context of a research interview, and as reflective of wider social and cultural understandings (Wong & Breheny, 2018).

The writing up was therefore not one in which the three levels were delineated as separate and discrete entities. From my sifting and re-sifting, and subsequent identification of stories that appeared meaningful and which offered ways in which participants constructed their grandmothering, I shaped draft analysis chapters. I was also aware that it was vital not to simply reflect meaning, or repeat the content of what participants said, but rather to ensure I was constructing meaning in my writing. Each chapter has a clear structure: extracts from transcripts illustrate how participants account for their grandmothering role, how this story is co-constructed in the interview and how wider social, cultural, political and gendered narratives are drawn on in the construction of identity and in the provision of care. The first chapter to be written, and which drew on some key participant accounts, concerned itself with identity construction. I looked for the times when taken-for-granted ways of doing gender were reinforced and conversely times when they were not; when participants' actions undermined these ideas (Risman, 2009). I chose those participant stories which best exemplified the narratives I identified from the analysis across the fifteen interviews and this included those stories that highlighted the importance of paid work in the construction of identity, and the role that maternal and family support played in influencing decisions to provide childcare. These personal stories demonstrated the ways in which identity construction draws on shared, gendered normative understandings of what a grandmother is, how these are replicated in the interviews and then how identity construction is linked to

wider narratives which are both “simultaneously the causes and the consequences” of how women perform gender in their grandchild care (Dudová, 2018, p.12).

The second analytical chapter was based on two accounts which were contradictory to the whole data set: the provision of childcare through concern. I felt these two accounts were important to include as they highlighted a number of points, some of which connected me to the literature informing my literature review chapter. Grandmothers who are providing care through the holding of concern for grandchildren is not an uncommon phenomenon throughout the Western world. This was also an important consideration in my decision to include the particularities that the provision of care through concern creates, and the wider narratives each participant drew on in their storying of their experiences.

The third and final analysis chapter concerned itself with how grandmothers in this study balance paid work and care and the ideas participants drew on to situate their provision of care in this context. Some participants drew on their memories and experiences of their mothers and their grandmothers and what they noted as a template for their grandmothering. Others drew on wider ideas such as “it’s what grandmothers do” which I unpacked in this chapter. One participant who described herself as “not really a grandmother” nevertheless described the importance of supporting her adopted daughter as best as she could within the limits of paid employment. For some participants paid work was constructed as an unwelcome intrusion into care; a necessity. For others, it was a welcome and legitimate excuse to not provide more care if asked. The analytical work of these three chapters illustrated those areas of the transcripts that I identified as offering important understandings in how gendered identity is constructed and how social structures such as patriarchy inform such constructions.

4.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the choice of research methods is informed by both the research question and the theoretical foundations of the study. An acknowledgement of subjectivity is critical in the research process, making overt the researcher’s biases and assumptions and how these have influenced every stage of the research process from the beginning to the final writing up. Reflexivity, closely connected with subjectivity, includes the researcher’s awareness as to how she has influenced the research; including the co-construction of knowledge. Utilising

journalling as a site to record reflections after each interview can be a useful method to story subjective and reflexive noticings. All these can assist with the research being regarded as credible and rigorous. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, protecting participant confidentiality, minimising harm and cultural inclusivity are vital in accountability to both participants and the research study.

The recruitment of participants was based on specific parameters including geographical location, hours of paid employment and hours of childcare undertaken each week. A number of advertisements were placed in a wide variety of sites, and purposive sampling was utilised in order to gain an understanding of grandmothers' storied experiences. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured framework which encouraged open questions inviting participants to story their experiences without adhering to a pre-determined set of questions. The analysis of participant accounts was undertaken using three levels of narrative analysis from the personal through the interpersonal to the wider socio-political narratives which shape personal accounts. These provided the framework in which the analysis has been conducted.

Chapter Five: Analysis

Accounting for identity

Parental support, maternal support, and the importance of paid employment

5.1 Introduction

The participant accounts discussed in this chapter centre upon the ways in which grandmothers account for their identity. Identity construction draws on three key activities: support for parents, support for mothers, and the importance of paid employment for mothers as well as for themselves. One of the questions I asked participants was “what do you think the role of a grandmother is?” As this question was generally one of the first to be asked after preliminary introductions, it shaped the interview, positioning both interviewer and participant in the research context. The question provided an opportunity for participants to story their understanding of what being a grandmother meant to them and hence its role in identity construction. The participants often responded to this prompt by drawing upon three different narratives, one of support for parents, one of support for mothers and one of support for maternal employment. Participants distinguished between parental support centred on what parents (the adult children of participants) and families with young children need and support for mothers related to the specific needs of mothers in caring for their children. The support of maternal paid employment and the participants’ own paid employment drew from narratives emphasising the importance of paid employment in the lives of mothers and grandmothers.

5.2 Grandmothers as a support for parents and family

The following extract demonstrates the ways in which a parental support narrative is drawn on and its role in shaping the identity of grandmothers and their place in the lives of their family.

5.2.1 Elizabeth’s story

“It wasn’t something I’d been sitting around waiting for”

Elizabeth is a married woman of sixty years of age with two adult children, Rose and James. Her son James is married and lives in Canada with his wife and son who is five years old.

Elizabeth's daughter has two sons, aged one and seven years. Elizabeth typically provides care for her grandsons ten hours a week although this varies according to need, and she works 30 hours a week as a manager, a job she "loves". Elizabeth and her daughter live six kilometres apart.

In answer to my question "what do you think the role of a grandmother is?" Elizabeth begins by questioning some of the normative assumptions about grandmothering and then positions herself within a storyline of parental support:

- E: It wasn't something I'd been sitting around waiting for. What is that need? It's never been something I've aimed for or thought about. You just become [pause]. I guess be supportive of the parents. That's what I'm there for, to support them and not be judgemental, only do that with your girlfriends [laughs] not with them [laughs]
- C: So the role of a grandmother is primarily to support the parent generation?
- E: [pause 5 secs] and the children, but the children are being looked after. The children, but I guess in lots of cases they may not, but yeah I do, I very much see that as my role, to support Rose and James. Cos they're at the busiest point of their lives
- C: What kind of importance do you place on it, that kind of being there, supporting
- E: I place a lot of importance on it cos I think they would not manage as well, and then you know it's all very good now, you can have your family and things but if you don't have that help it is going to get rough around the edges and that's when it's going to get hard for Rose and James as a couple and things like that. And that, all that support helps. If you support your family everybody wins, gets ahead.

Right at the start Elizabeth positions herself outside a normative narrative of grandmothering, one which suggests that older women cannot wait to 'turn into grandmothers'; this typical narrative suggests that grandmothering is a highly anticipated event. She lets me know she has not been idly waiting around and that contrary to societal expectations about what older women might 'need', she has neither aimed for, nor thought about grandmothering. Elizabeth

states “you just become” a grandmother and once you have ‘become’ then the role of a grandmother is to support. Whilst Elizabeth guesses that her role is to be supportive of the parents, this does not necessarily extend to agreeing with them: she infers there are judgements she could make about the parents. However, making judgements does not easily align with ideas of support; they are more easily accommodated within friend relationships. These kinds of observations are shared only with her girlfriends and her interactions with her adult children are characterised in terms of support only.

After pausing a full five seconds to consider how she regards her role, Elizabeth then accounts for it within a parental support narrative and this shapes her story of who provides support for whom, suggesting it is the parents and not their children that are her primary focus. There is an implication that if the children were not being looked after by their parents that Elizabeth’s support would also extend to them; however, she narrates that this is not necessary. She describes where she thinks responsibility lies; it is the responsibility of parents to care for their children, however they need support in order that their parental relationship stays strong. Elizabeth describes a demarcation of boundaries: she parents her daughter and son-in-law into adult life and they in turn parent their children. There is a suggestion that in properly functioning families, children are the parents’ immediate responsibility and grandmothers support parents to raise their children well.

Elizabeth’s description of the parents being “at the busiest point in their lives” provides further justification for her support, as she believes that without her support, family life would be more difficult. She describes the parents as being fortunate to have her support and predicts that there would be challenges for them as a couple and perhaps as a family if she were not there to support them. She completes this story by situating herself within a familial narrative where ‘everybody wins’ as a consequence of her parental support, demonstrating her intervention has benefits for all the family. Supporting family equates to everyone winning and getting ahead and there is an idea that support is what families need to get ahead these days. Winning in the context of Elizabeth’s account appears to mean that challenges and rough times are able to be averted and in a wider societal context could equate to being able to have it all – family, paid employment, and success. There is an implication that if you do not support your family they will lose out, and not be able to get ahead and may in fact go backwards. The provision of support allows adult children to be shaped in particular ways;

oriented toward success which has been storied as families working together. Being in paid employment is seen as key in this success.

5.3 Grandmothers as a support for mothers

The extracts in this section are illustrative of the importance of maternal support in the construction of participants' grandmother identity.

5.3.1 Annie's story

"I could not have stayed away"

Annie also narrated the importance of support in her accounting for her role; however this was primarily her support of her daughter-in-law. Annie is married to the father of their three sons and one of her sons is married with a daughter, aged two years old. Annie is self-employed twenty hours a week and takes care of Florence for twenty-four hours a week.

I asked Annie how she viewed her role:

A: Well that's a good question [pause 5 secs]. She had a really rough beginning, this little baby and mum, a lot of trauma around the birth and the baby wouldn't sleep and it was really tough so I was doing a lot of non-organised care, you know going round there and supporting mostly the mother for the first maybe six months

C: Right, gosh

A: I sort of put myself on call really intentionally because we had no grandparents, neither of our parents here when we had our kids and I was really aware of what difference it would have made. Then at the beginning of the year we structured the arrangement, you know, she got settled and her mum was shifting a bit in how she was coping. So we then structured, it was an intentional conversation

C: Your being there, on call, what were you doing, what did that look like?

A: It was often actually cooking meals, taking the baby out walking, giving Lisa, the mum, a break, doing washing [laughs]. Just those, you know, in the chaos of those first difficult months, whatever was necessary. And I mean the other

thing that Lisa kept saying to me was ‘it’s so nice to have somebody else in the house’

C: yeah

A: I mean even if I was making a cup of tea and sitting down talking to her then it was just being there. Also, there’s a closeness there and I could not have stayed away

The extract above includes Annie’s description of the difference it would have made had she had readily available sets of parents when she was at home with a young baby, a factor which motivated her to offer care. Not only has this shaped her ideas about what mothers with babies need, it has informed an intentional decision-making to offer herself firstly as being on-call and secondly, to formalise the care through a structured arrangement. Her use of the term ‘intentional conversation’ is a narration of her choice as a grandmother and her desire to position herself as willingly supporting her daughter-in-law. This notion of intentionality suggests it is important to Annie that her relationship with her daughter-in-law is not left to chance, or that her caring is constructed as ‘ad-hoc’. The structured arrangement Annie describes also speaks of an agreement on the demarcations of roles, negotiating the borders of care. Accounting for her role as an intentional one allows for grandmothing to be viewed as important to the functioning of the family.

The notion of ‘being there’ first named by me, is picked up by Annie at the end of this extract. ‘Being there’ is narrated by Annie as undertaking some of the practical tasks, but possibly more significantly, being there with her daughter-in-law, as another presence in the house. Following a difficult birth, and as a first-time new mother, Annie stories Lisa’s appreciation of her presence. She narrates this as not being intrusive by telling me how her daughter-in-law appreciated her presence and as being ‘on-call’ for whatever is necessary. Annie’s story is also shaped by her own experience of being a mother:

C: Do you recall what it was like to be home

A: Oh god

C: With your first

A: Oh absolutely! I mean I just remember that feeling of you know ‘oh they won’t stop crying and my god what do I do’ and none of our friends had babies at that stage and it was just you know I remember how awful it was

Annie's experience as a mother without the availability of friends or parents contributed to her sense of feeling at a loss for how to cope with young babies. At the same time her daughter-in-law Lisa, positioned in Annie's account as in need of support, provides further justification for Annie's accounting for her role as necessary for her daughter-in-law's wellbeing. Annie's remembrance of the awfulness of not knowing what to do as a mother and an absence of her own parental support, which she constructs as a lack, has influenced her decision that her daughter-in-law should not have a similar experience. Annie draws on her own sense of uncertainty as a new mother to provide an imperative to care and to be involved. Annie's experience of mothering and not knowing what to do contradicts a narrative of natural motherhood, which positions mothers as knowing what to do with their babies. This natural mother narrative also implies that ongoing regular support of the type described by Annie, is unnecessary. However, Annie's account enables her to construct support as essential and potentially longstanding. Situating grandmothing within a construct of helping new mothers learn can enable the support to be ongoing and without finite end. This also allows Annie to construct her identity as a grandmother within a construct of responsibility; a responsibility to support her daughter-in-law as a new mother. This helps her in her accounting of her relationship with her daughter-in-law.

5.3.2. *Amy's story*

"I think she needed to work again"

The extract below is also located within a maternal support narrative; and although there are links to maternal employment, the story is centred primarily on support. Amy is the mother of a 30-year-old daughter who has a daughter, aged two. Amy works three-and-a-half days a week and has her granddaughter every Sunday night and all of Monday. One of the characteristics of the interview was that Amy did not refer to her daughter or granddaughter by name; she later said she was 'very protective of their identity'. I have kept to these descriptions rather than use pseudonyms. Amy outlines how her offer to look after her granddaughter came to take place:

A: My daughter got a job and when she was looking I said to her that if she needed I could look after the granddaughter on my day off which is Monday so my daughter then got a job that's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday so the

granddaughter's going to daycare the other two days and I have her from Sunday night to Tuesday morning

C: Right, ok. So the offer, was it primarily out of a desire to help your daughter

A: Yes

C: Work?

A: Yeah, a whole lot of reasons in there, I think she needed to work again

C: mmmm

A: And once the granddaughter got to two I thought she needed to go to daycare a bit

C: Ok

A: So I'm actually funding that, cos she's on a low income so to try and make her life a bit easier

C: uh-huh

A: So it was mainly to help my daughter. And to help the granddaughter as well to give her some more experiences

Amy's offer of grandchild care is framed within two parameters. It is based firstly on an acceptance of an offer, if needed, dependent on her daughter's days of work and secondly on specified days Amy has available. These parameters shape Amy's grandmother role; confining childcare to her day off work suggests Amy is either unable or unwilling to accommodate further childcare should it be required. She does however describe the importance of daycare, locating its importance in ideas about children needing exposure to new experiences. She accounts for her role as something that enables her daughter's employment, through both her direct care of her granddaughter and through paying for her daycare costs. Amy carefully narrates her role, through statements such as 'I think she needed to work again' regarding her daughter, and 'I thought she needed to go to daycare a bit' regarding her granddaughter. Amy enables this return to work through time and financial help. Her offer of care is primarily intended to help her daughter gain employment and once employment was secured, daycare was then narrated as necessary. Amy's account is a story about the grandmother as primarily a mother and the central role mothering plays when grandmothering.

Within maternal support narratives, grandmothers as mothers of adult children can be viewed as in the background; being there if needed while recognising the importance of

independence. On the one hand Amy's provision of limited childcare suggests an awareness of her daughter as an adult; on the other she expresses worry, regarding her daughter's relationship with her partner, storied later in our interview:

- A: I worry for my daughter, and that. I don't express that to her cos she's thirty
C: Yeah
A: Yeah! She has her own life! I mean, but you swing on that don't you? I worry about her but she's 30, she should take care of herself, it's none of my business, it's her life, it's her relationship but, you know
C: Mmm mmm
A: Looking in, you go oooh

This portion of the interview occurred after Amy had narrated difficulties in the relationship between her daughter and herself. Amy suggests there are compelling reasons for her not to express her worry, based on normative ideas of how adult children should live their lives. These are age-related – at thirty you should be able to take care of yourself – and boundary related, “it's none of my business”. Amy stories on the one hand her worry about her daughter and what she has noticed “looking in”. On the other hand, there is a storyline focussed on her daughter's age that being thirty means having your own life, away from your mother, an age where you take care of yourself. Amy describes this as a swing between ideas of autonomy and responsibility in her navigation of the relationship between herself and her daughter.

The above three participants have demonstrated the importance of support in their narration of their identity as grandmothers. There are three main analytic points this section has explicated. Firstly, supporting parents: every family needs support in order to ‘get ahead’. Secondly, supporting mothers: mothering is hard and isolating and all mothers need support and thirdly, support to thrive: some mothers have struggles even though they are adults running their own lives. The role of a grandmother therefore is to provide special support to parents and mothers. For Elizabeth, support was located within a generic parental support narrative, based on her ideas about what parents and families with young children need. In her account all families need support from other family members in order to have successful, good lives. Annie and Amy's accounts were centred specifically on what they saw their respective daughter-in-law and daughter in need of, supporting mothers who are struggling in

their specific life contexts as different from the kind of support that anyone might need. As a result, the gendered nature of relationships between mothers and grandmothers is highlighted. Maternal support is different from parental support; whilst both are influenced by wider gendered narratives, Elizabeth, Annie and Amy drew on different ideas in their construction of identity. Elizabeth did not distinguish between her daughter as a mother and her son-in-law as a father; they were parents and as such there are some implications that can be drawn. These include an idea that support might be viewed as the same for both mothers and fathers and/or that support is given to parents as a couple, a collective and that within this support could vary. In contrast, Annie and Amy highlighted the role of mothers and in so doing drew on wider narratives about what mothers need; the terms father and parent were absent from their stories. In the excerpts from their interviews the terms ‘parents’ and ‘mothers’ were not interchangeable and included ideas of what mothers might need when mothering new babies. As their accounts demonstrate, Annie and Amy also drew on their mothering experiences in accounting for their decision to focus support on mothers. This is also demonstrated in the following section, which focuses on grandmothers providing childcare in order to enable maternal employment.

5.4 Grandmother support of maternal employment

One of the consistent ideas that grandmothers used to explain the provision of regular care of grandchildren was directly related to their daughter’s, or their daughter-in-law’s employment. Of fifteen participants, only one did not have either a daughter or a daughter-in-law in some form of paid employment. One of the clearest examples demonstrating the centrality of maternal employment is illustrated below. Lucille is the mother of Stella and the grandmother of Chloe who was nine months old at the time of the interview. Lucille works anything from thirty to forty hours a week and looks after Chloe two full days a week.

5.4.1. Lucille’s story

“I’ll have the baby while you get your business up and running”

C: So where I’d like to start Lucille is if you could tell me the story of how you came to be looking after your grandchild, your granddaughter

L: Okay, so when [pause] before the baby was even born, I, we all knew that they were going to struggle on one salary because Stella’s husband doesn’t earn a

whole lot of money and they've got a mortgage and she was going to get maternity leave obviously you know for whatever amount of time it was but then she was going to have to go back to work part-time and I said to her probably after the baby, I can't remember if I said it before or after the baby was born but I said 'what about if I give you 20k and you set up a business' a little side business that she already had 'and I'll come with you to dad's' cos that's where the big room is set up for a studio 'and I'll have the baby while you get your business up and running and then after a year when your maternity leave's over you can then make a decision about whether you want to go back to work or keep doing it depending on whether the business has taken off or not'

C: So this, so you offered, do you think, would they have asked you?

L: [pause]. No, probably [pause], don't know, didn't them give them a chance to. They would never have, they might have asked me [pause]. A lot of this stuff was bandied around toward the end of the pregnancy and that was when I said 'what about doing' cos the idea of working on her business, it had never occurred to her to do that.

C: oh okay

The story above outlines the considerations informing Lucille's decision to provide some childcare. It includes some implicit assumptions regarding work and finances including the following: that women may need to return to work after having children because of financial constraints, that if men earned enough money women would stay home and raise their babies, and that doing so is the preferable state of affairs. Lucille's use of the word *we* positions her in particular ways to this family and suggests some shared assumptions within the family about what the birth of this baby was going to mean financially. It also signals an intention to convey shared familial understandings about how difficult it would be financially after the birth. Lucille is setting the scene which accounts for her role as an involved and resourced grandmother. In her account above, she describes her role as vital to the way in which Stella's working and mothering life would be organised. My second question, shaped by these ideas, invited Lucille to speculate on whether her daughter would have asked her for help had she not offered. I wanted to understand the negotiation of childcare in this family and this question causes Lucille to pause for thought. She acknowledges she didn't give them a chance to ask; constructing her care as an offer implies there would be no cause for her to be asked.

Lucille's illustration of how finances influenced her suggestion and subsequent offer to her daughter and son-in-law encouraged me during the interview to characterise Lucille as resourced and therefore necessary to this family's functioning. Financial security is one way people can account for power relations within familial relationships. Financial security is not only viewed as important to a family's wellbeing; the people who are financially resourced are located within social narratives as holding more decision-making power and authority. In the context of family this can be experienced as an increased ability to exercise choice within a wider variety of choices available. This was also supported by Lucille's comment that it would not have occurred to her daughter to work on her business as the arrangement is based on Lucille's suggestion. Lucille's financial support shapes the way in which Lucille accounts for her role and provides further reason for her place in her daughter's life, along with her capacity to give what is needed as a parent. The financial resources Lucille has enabled the imperative to offer care. It also enabled her to show her care as a mother and a grandmother in multiple ways through the giving of financial help.

As Lucille continues to explain her daughter's trajectory from running her own business to helping out her former employer, she shifts her emphasis on the financial aspect of paid employment as she now accounts for her daughter's return to paid employment by narrating it as necessary for her wellbeing. Working outside the home is storied as beneficial and not only because of finances. Staying at home full-time with a baby, is now described through Lucille's own experience of staying at home with a young baby, an experience she calls "deadly":

- L: We don't go to dad's anymore because her old boss offered her, well, asked for help, had a crisis, so Stella went one day to [Auckland suburb] and one day to dad's and then the boss said 'could we make this permanent' so her own little business has been put on hold and we're now doing two, she's doing two full days and she's working from home as well so I have the baby for those two days. She benefits from going to work, she benefits from going out and getting dressed up and going to work and thinking about something else
- C: How can you tell?
- L: Well because she says it and because she looks it and because I, that was my sense when I was a young mum too. So it was my experience too. I know that

staying at home with a baby, with one baby all the time is deadly, it's deadly so

C: So it could have looked quite different if you hadn't offered? Do you foresee carrying on with this for a while, this particular two-day thing?

L: I don't think the days, no the days will never increase. I'll never do more than two. I'm imagining when she's a bit older, maybe I won't need to even do two days.

C: Oh, okay, how come?

L: Well she could go into daycare and Stella do the other days, at the moment I do two days and Stella does three working from home. I mean Stella's still breastfeeding, she wouldn't be able to, I don't see how they'd manage, I think you know it's just, it's only money and I've got it, why shouldn't I make it easier for her to have

Lucille's description of staying at home with a young baby all the time as "deadly" is used to explain the advantages of paid work for mothers with young babies. Moreover, Lucille has evidence to prove that being in paid employment is beneficial for Stella: Stella looks well and tells her she is well. Lucille's use of this narrative situates her as a caring mother whose daughter benefits in terms of her own wellbeing through employment. Lucille's account of her decision to care includes having the financial means to help her daughter and her daughter's husband, but is based on an act to care.

A second social narrative shaping Lucille's story is that of natural motherhood. Within this narrative, a natural mother is one who stays at home and looks after her children. The extract above includes breastfeeding as a factor contributing to how childcare is structured. Lucille's offer of money and childcare therefore provides a way for her daughter to remain with the baby and work on her business. Running a business enables more flexibility in order to accommodate a baby's needs and to be responsive to family needs and Lucille's care allows for breastfeeding and employment to happen simultaneously. While this situates her daughter within the natural mother narrative it also shapes Lucille's narration of her grandmother identity; as someone who supports her daughter to not only fulfil the expectations of natural motherhood, but to have the best of both worlds by also being able to work from home. Having the best of both worlds assumes importance as Lucille's description of staying at

home full-time with a baby as “deadly” offers an alternative to the idea that that mothers naturally enjoy mothering babies.

There are now two possible narratives that structure mothering and paid employment and two different identity constructions that this sets up. The first is to support family finances and the second to support mothers’ wellbeing. There is now, within Lucille’s story, a story of employment being important for personal development and key to maintaining wellbeing in young mothers. She provides three reasons when my question calls her to provide a description for what she might have noticed Stella doing that spoke to her of working being beneficial. These include her daughter letting her know, her daughter looking as though it is benefitting her, and her own experience as a young mother.

As Lucille has the means to provide financial support this shapes the way in which she constructs her grandmother identity. Money is important, as evidenced by its pivotal position in shaping decisions about employment and childcare but it is also at the same time dismissed; *it’s only money*. There is an inference that family is more important than money; money enables care and it is there to make life easier. Minimising the role of money suggests Lucille situates and subjugates it within a wider narrative of [grand]mothering care. It is also a way for Lucille to account for her role; it is a valid and critical way she can demonstrate her care. It is however not a sufficient reason for Lucille to account for her role. The implication of a decision to care for a grandchild based solely on financial necessity likely holds negative consequences for Lucille in terms of her positioning as a grandmother. The inclusion of decision-making based on wellbeing allows for Lucille to construct an identity within a caring narrative.

Lucille’s description of the necessity of employment to her daughter’s wellbeing is echoed by another participant, Diane. Diane, below, is an example of a grandmother who narrates her decision to offer care not only on the importance of her daughter Emma’s career, but because Diane believes her daughter would not be satisfied being at home looking after children. Financial necessity was not mentioned at all throughout the interview. Diane, who is married to the father of her three children, immigrated to New Zealand in the 1970s. She works four days a week and takes care of her married daughter’s two children Murphy, 5 and Zoe 3, before and after school and daycare for five days a week in an arrangement that accommodates her daughter’s full-time work.

5.4.2. Diane's story

"I can help you in any way I can"

- C1: What were your thoughts about looking after your daughter's two children?
- D1: I know she's very happy in her job, well, she's a career person and I don't think, she won't be happy at home full-time, like a stay-at-home mum, that's what I mean so I said, I actually volunteered you know, 'I can help you in any way I can, so go for it, you know, if you have an opportunity go for it and I will help you' so that's how it started.
- C2: Right. What did it mean for you to be able to do that?
- D2: Well I thought she was taking a day off on Wednesday but ah, increasingly I guess it's the demands of her job, it requires her to be there. She did say to me she can do jobs at home, work from home, but most of the time she has to work until 11 o'clock at night you know once she has finished with the kids, giving them dinner, putting them to bed. So she does quite a lot and I think 'do you think you can sustain that, what about yourself?' you know, 'take care that you don't get burnt out'. I *love* what I'm doing, I really do! I didn't imagine I would be working this late and now I can't imagine not working. I do love it. I want to help [care for grandchildren] but there's a limit. I don't want to be a full-time caregiver because I would hate it. I want to have my freedom as well.
- C3: So you're saying it's good to have a balance?
- D3: Well I had three [children] under three, I had them you know, the three of them. Emma wasn't three by the time the youngest one came. I just came from [overseas] and I didn't have anyone here so I was really so busy, no time. Having been brought up [overseas] we've got a very strict you know, we were told what to do, yes, not having your own freedom, quite routine, quite strict.
- C4: So has your growing-up experience and your experience as a mother with three young children, has it, does it mean
- D4: I really value my freedom, after bringing up the children, then getting a job that was great.

Diane's initial response to my question constructs her daughter's identity as a "career person" and "not a stay-at-home mum" and this has shaped the framing of her offer. The term "career person" connotes a set of traits; a personality type. This suggests that some

women are able to be full-time stay-at-home mothers and some are not. These ideas have shaped Diane's offer and this accounting of her daughter, along with her concern that her daughter does not take on too much provides some of the basis for her offer of care.

There is then a shift from this story of support and concern for her daughter, to Diane describing her love of her own paid work. Diane's initial story describes an offer to help in any way she could, which initially positions her as available to enable her daughter to take up opportunities. She later contradicts this however and imposes some limits; she would not want to care for her grandchildren full-time. This account situates her and her daughter similarly; employment is valued and important and looking after grandchildren (and children) full-time is unappealing. There is therefore a reproduction of career and economic resources across the two generations. Diane's construction of her identity as a grandmother is situated in a storyline of the importance of employment, similar to her construction of her daughter's identity. These identity constructions are however not based on the same ideas – Diane enjoys her freedom and this ability to choose is narrated in her text, however, she narrates that Emma is a career person; it is the type of person she is.

Diane's description of her daughter as a career person implies a trajectory and wields an importance in terms of identity construction beyond simply working or needing to work. This description Diane provides initially positions her daughter outside one of the dominant narratives available to mothers, which includes prioritising the care of young children, being available to their needs and alert to any consequences of employment on home life. However, and in contrast to this, Diane then stories the ways in which Emma fulfils this normative idea. Although Emma's husband is not included in this story of childcare, Diane says it is Emma and not her husband who stays up late in order to see to the needs of her children. As a mother, Diane's daughter is therefore situated within two wider storylines: the narrative where mothers are positioned as carrying the responsibility of caring for the children and seeing to housework, and the idea where financial independence and pursuing a career is important for women.

Diane's love of work acts as a justifying clause for Diane to continue working in paid employment and to impose limits on the amount of care she provides. Diane has already positioned her story within a storyline that working is important for women and this allows her to claim time for herself and not help more. She states she does not want to care for

grandchildren full-time because “I would hate it”. Diane’s use of a strong word such as “hate” is in contrast with traditional views of grandmothering as acts of love – paid employment allows Diane to not put herself in a position where caring for grandchildren might become a burden. She further justifies imposing limits on care by describing the importance of freedom in her narration of identity. She accounts for this importance in two ways, firstly through her experience as a mother, newly arrived from overseas and thrust into mothering three young children which left no time for anything else. Secondly, she describes her childhood overseas as characterised by a lack of freedom and “quite routine, quite strict”. These two things have led to a valuing of freedom, and there is an idea that bringing up three children in quick succession has been influential in her thinking regarding how much time she should make available for caring for her grandchildren. Being a grandmother, as narrated by Diane, includes personal freedom, freedom to work in paid employment and freedom to organise how much care to provide to grandchildren. These all contribute to negotiating expectations and justifying choices to care part-time and support maternal employment.

The above two stories, which are narrated in a context of the importance of maternal employment, have shaped identity construction for Lucille and Diane as grandmothers. These two personal accounts are based on Lucille and Diane helping their respective daughters financially and/or supporting their wellbeing through paid employment and career advancement. Social narratives about economic resources are also being drawn on across these two accounts, and position both Lucille and Diane with a different power that less financially resourced grandmothers might have access to. Social narratives about the ‘caring grandmother’ provide alternative ideas of the importance of grandchildren and the relationship between grandmothers and their grandchildren. These relationships have provided a basis on which grandmothers story their identity. Accounts centred on fulfilling the needs of parents and daughters, and on grandmothers’ entitlement to base childcare choices on freedom and autonomy also shape identity as illustrated by these participant extracts. It is also possible that their own enjoyment of paid work has contributed to their support and valuing of maternal employment. Employment is valued for the ways in which it contributes to the lives of mothers and this extends into the lives of grandmothers; five out of the six grandmothers presented in this chapter expressed their love for their own paid work. There is an idea of paid work being enjoyed and an acknowledgement that it contributes to a full and complete life.

The extracts above, centred on grandmothers supporting maternal employment, suggest a valuing of its importance beyond simply financially contributing to the parental household. Diane's love of paid employment and the freedom it offers is an important part of her identity construction. The following section includes three further extracts which demonstrate the ways in which paid employment is valued by grandmothers.

5.5 The importance of employment in the lives of grandmothers

The importance of paid employment for grandmothers draws on similar constructs that participants used in their accounts of supporting maternal paid employment, illustrated by the following extracts.

5.5.1. Elizabeth's story

"I can have some independence"

Elizabeth, below, speaks about her paid work as a way to be present in the world and its importance in her life. This portion of the interview occurred as Elizabeth was remembering back to when her daughter was pregnant with her first child and Elizabeth was considering whether she would give up working one day a week [from five days of paid employment] so she could have her grandchild at home:

- E: But I realised that's probably not where I want to be. I didn't want to be that person
- C: So for you there were some bottom lines?
- E: Work is important to me
- C: Important in what ways?
- E: I like to work, I like to earn money. And also a funny little thing is sometimes when you stay at home you just go invisible. You know it's like when you're a mother you know, which is really sad but you do, you become a bit invisible and it's the same being a grandmother, you'd become a little doormat
- C: So being a working woman is important for your own identity and sense of self, earning money and feeling more visible?
- E: Yes and I can have some independence

Elizabeth stories how giving up one day of paid work would have had implications for the ways in which she constructs her identity. “That person” is someone who might not value work as important; employment offers not only money but contributes to a way of being including visibility and independence. Becoming a “little doormat” speaks of her caring being taken-for-granted; a convenience for others and as someone to be walked all over. Paid employment enables Elizabeth to have a sense of her own life; it contributes to her identity construction as someone other than (or more than) a mother and grandmother. Two other short extracts from participants echo Elizabeth’s thoughts and also refer to the ways in which paid employment contributes to the construction of identity. The first extract is from my interview with Sandra, the maternal grandmother of Tessa, aged two at the time of our interview. Sandra cares for Tessa every Friday, picking her up at 6.30am and returning her to her parents at 7pm. Sandra had been speaking about the importance of having her ‘own time’.

5.5.2 Sandra’s story

“I need that stimulation”

C: So you have your own preferences for your life as well?

S: Yep, that’s important too, it’s important to have your own life. I think you can’t be totally altruistic and devote all your time to being a grandma, work is important too

C: Paid work?

S: Yeah, the sense of, I actually think that intellectually I need to, I need that stimulation you know, it’s quite a demanding job and I enjoy it. I enjoy the relationships I have at work so that’s a part of my life that’s important to me

Sandra’s account shares similarities with Elizabeth’s above and includes the importance of paid work in storying her identity. Caring for her granddaughter is constructed as an act of altruism which is tenable if it is not a full-time altruism, but would undermine the ability to “have your own life” if it took up all the time available. Paid employment offers Sandra an important opportunity to construct an identity based on a need for intellectual stimulation and collegueship neither of which are met through childcare.

5.5.3. Annie’s story

“I’m not prepared to give up my working life”

Annie, below, who currently cares for her granddaughter twenty-four hours a week, imagined a time in the near future when her second grandchild would be born. Her youngest son and his partner live overseas and were expecting their first child in a few months' time. Annie expressed concern about what this would mean in terms of her paid employment and being able to be there soon after the birth and beyond:

- A: I've said I'll go over there for ten days when the baby's born and then [pause] I've thought about this really carefully because if it is a struggle, *if* it is a struggle and I mean let's face it in those first few months it's very hard for it not to be then the temptation for me to go over there and help is going to be really strong. But I would want to find a way of just doing it over four-day weekends cos I'm not prepared to give up my working life ongoingly
- C: So you've thought about it, and there's some non-negotiables?
- A: Yep, I'm not prepared to give up my working life
- C: It's important?
- A: Yeah, hugely, I want multiple sites for experience and identity. Maybe a little like keeping on working when the children were little – for me I wanted a sense of purpose beyond being a mother – so perhaps this is a little like that

Annie's commitment to being there for her son and daughter-in-law in the first ten days following the birth suggests she is prepared to put her paid work temporarily on hold in order to prioritise grandmothing. She then introduces a dilemma: storied as the pull toward family and the pull toward her paid work. Her solution draws on her need for other experiences and the ways these contribute to an identity other than grandmother. Family and being a grandmother is important; however paid work is equally important, and grandmothing can and possibly should be contained within the parameters of her paid work. Paid work offers a legitimate way to limit her visits as a grandmother as well as offering an alternative identity to that of mother and grandmother. She stories the place that paid work had in her life as a young mother and suggests that mothering and grandmothing are similar; both roles require the presence of paid work as neither grandmothing nor mothering are sufficient on their own.

All three of the participants above have drawn on the importance of paid employment in their construction of grandmother identity. Employment is vitally important because it allows for an identity which is apart and different from a grandmother identity. It allows for

independence, visibility, purpose, and a sense of being a part of something which is wider; in this space a grandmother identity does not need to be enacted at all. There are similarities in the storyline used to construct maternal employment: employment is storied as important in the construction of mothers' identities; it is necessary for wellbeing and for independence. For the mothers, paid employment also offers a trajectory into a career, which in turn offers a future construction of identity apart and different to, that of mother. Annie drew parallels with her mothering experience, locating working outside the home being important to her sense of identity as both a mother and a grandmother. Neither mothering nor grandmothereing is storied as sufficient in these three accounts.

Grandmothers in this section have illustrated not only the importance of paid employment in their lives but also the ways in which working outside the home contributes to their storying of identity. Being at home, whether mothering or grandmothereing, is storied as insufficient. Drawing on constructs of independence, visibility and a sense of purpose enables an identity construction which is different to a grandmother identity and which has possibly influenced their support of the mothers in their pursuit of paid employment. Basing identity on a single site, whether mother or grandmother is described as undesirable; it would not provide enough of a sense of purpose for either mothers or grandmothers.

5.6 Discussion

Personal accounts strongly inform constructions of grandmothereing and decisions to provide childcare, along with social, political, gender and historical discourses. All are important and all of these shape understandings of grandmothereing. Wearing and Wearing (1996) note that identity as a grandmother is constructed through repeated daily acts, which are discursively and culturally constructed. As grandmothereing is being enacted, identity is being storied and constructed; it is neither fixed nor stable but changing and contradictory. There are some key social narratives which have shaped the construction of participant identities in this chapter and which will be discussed below. They include parental/family support, the interface between mothering and grandmothereing, support for maternal paid employment and the participants' love of their own paid employment

The narrative of parental support includes an emphasis on responsibility for the needs of the parental generation and this is borne out in much of the literature on grandmothers who

provide regular care to grandchildren (see Cotterill, 1992; Meyer, 2014; Villar et al., 2012). Some of the participants in this chapter drew on an idea that parental responsibility and support does not end once children become independent adults. Providing support to parents through caring for grandchildren provides a way for grandmothers to account for their role within the family, and studies from the 1980s suggest that becoming a grandmother provides a way to be legitimately included in the lives of adult children (see Caplan, 1981; Crawford, 1981; Yeandle, 1987). This suggests that once children become adults ongoing parental inclusion requires to be justified.

Within Western nuclear family discourse, there is an idea that a fine line exists between being there and interfering (see Breheny et al., 2013; Mann, 2007). Noted as a key norm in contemporary grandparenting, the idea of being there entails being available when asked for caring support or financial need (see Clarke & Roberts, 2004; Buchanan & Rotkirch, 2018). This exists in contrast with another key norm (at least in Western societies) of non-interference. Grandparents should hold awareness of both and should neither intrude nor interfere yet at the same time be available for support. A ‘good grandmother’ is someone who does not interfere, and who knows where primary responsibility lies (with the parent/s). Elizabeth’s story is illustrative of this as she described the importance of being there to support the parental generation whose job it is to parent. Amy also drew on this idea as she described the tension between her worry for her daughter but at the same not expressing it as to do so would mean overstepping boundaries into her daughter’s life, which she framed as being none of her business.

All grandmothers in this study have firstly been mothers and continue to engage in mothering while simultaneously grandmothering. The stories the participants told in their construction (and reconstruction) of identity are informed by the stories they tell (and told) as mothers. There are traces of each in the other; and it is likely that as women a sense of responsibility shapes grandmothering and helping children and grandchildren forms a part of this. Whilst gender is not explicitly named or discussed in the extracts, it is implicit in participant stories of mothering. At times spoken, but largely unspoken, is the expectation that caring for children is the work of mothers, and hence grandmothers. Notions of mothering that have informed their grandmothering include prioritising their adult child’s wellbeing through support and care. Mothering and grandmothering are both socially situated practises and motherhood is viewed as playing an important part in many women’s identity construction

(see Sjöberg & Bertilsdotter-Rosqvist, 2017). For instance, Lucille's description of being at home with a baby as "deadly" has shaped her grandmothering and the sense she makes of what her daughter might need. Both Lucille's and Annie's accounts featured their own experience of mothering as shaping their stories of grandmothering and their identities as grandmothers.

The ongoing negotiation, establishment, justification and sustaining of boundaries all shape identity construction for grandmothers. Particular understandings about acceptable levels of input as a grandmother and how the boundary between mothering/grandmothering is negotiated shape the storying of identity. The navigation of these requires a vigilance regarding doing too much thereby encroaching into parental territory or doing too little and therefore at risk of being experienced as not caring enough. Support as a grandmother involves simultaneously mothering and grandmothering; the norms of both are not always synonymous. Elizabeth's story clearly outlines her navigation of boundaries – it is the parents' responsibility to bring up their children and Elizabeth's to support them to do this. This situates her role in the family as primarily that of mother, drawing on constructs of mothering in her provision of grandchild care.

Constructs of mothering include gendered ideas about care and support; it is mothers and not fathers who are still regarded as natural carers. Jenkins (2013) describes the undertaking of care as an "implicit commitment" assigned to women by their family, employers and society by virtue of their roles as mothers, wives, partners and grandmothers (p.158). Although narratives of care are discussed in a later chapter, it is important to acknowledge the importance caring has in the construction of identity for both mothering and grandmothering. Grandchild care can be viewed as a continuation of the 'good mother' role; the sacrifice of time and/or money for the good of the family. The mothering relationship does not stop when adult children have children of their own although it does change. Part of this change can be attributed to social narratives regarding the importance of adult children becoming independent and leading their own lives away from the influence of parents. Amy's story in particular illustrated the dilemma she experienced as a mother: it did not feel right for her to worry about her adult daughter, who was supposed to have 'her own life'. Social narratives regarding family relationships suggest it is important that mothers in particular learn the importance of 'letting go' when adult children leave home. It could be taken as a measure of success when a mother is able to develop and/or maintain independence from her children

while at the same time remain connected to them as adults (Roberto et al., 2008). Wider ideas of mothering situate the needs of children as paramount and it would appear this continues into adulthood as adult children have children of their own.

Drawing a line between being a mother and a grandmother is not straightforward and for some grandmothers, the need to intervene is strong. The negotiation of intervention is linked to different roles and normative constructions of grandmothers. Meyer (2014) suggests that although historically the roles of grandmother and mother have been very different from each other in recent years they have become more similar. Whilst grandmothers are usually also mothers, and are still mothering their adult children, the role of grandmother has some distinctions from that of mother and these have implications for identity construction. All of the participants in this chapter confirm this: Elizabeth storied her role drawing on wider ideas of mothering in her support of the parents and locating responsibility for the grandchildren with the parents. Diane and Lucille storied the importance of employment for their daughters, thereby situating their role of mother as important in their grandmothers. Annie storied the importance of supporting both her daughters-in-law through being at home with a young baby and for both Annie and Lucille their experiences of mothering young babies contributed to their approach to their grandmothers support.

All but one of the daughters or daughters-in-law of the grandmothers in this study are in full-time or part-time paid employment and grandmother childcare provides support which enables women to remain in the workforce. This in turn provides financial support for the family. Grandmothers providing regular childcare not only assist with the gap that shortfalls in formal childcare funding create, they also contribute to the wellbeing of the family. This support enables not only paid employment to be either continued or taken up, but also enables emotional, financial and practical support (see Goodfellow & Lavery, 2003; Wheelock & Jones, 2002). Amy alluded to the financial assistance she was providing her daughter through her payment for her granddaughter's daycare. For Lucille, having access to financial resources enabled her to present her daughter with several options including starting and running her own business. Her daughter could choose and did not need to be limited to staying at home full-time with a baby. Lucille's offer of giving her daughter money to set up her business also situated Lucille with the power to shape this family's life. Lucille's son-in-law is absent from her account, however Lucille made the comment he was in a "low paid job". Research suggests that when males are in a family where women are higher earners or

have access to money the final say in decisions, including care decisions, is more commonly located with the woman/women (see Vogler et al., 2008). Lucille's financial resource was able to grant her the kind of power and influence in the decision-making process that has traditionally been associated with men (see Elizabeth, 2001). The decision-making power bestowed on Lucille by virtue of her financial situation allowed her to narrate an important role in supporting the interests of her daughter.

Maternal employment narratives locate the responsibility for organising childcare with the mother who in turn looks to their mother or mother-in-law for childcare support (see Wearing & Wearing, 1996). This can then reinforce gendered stereotypes vis-à-vis the provision and organisation of childcare. Although the grandmother accounts in this chapter situate childcare responsibility with mothers this may be reflective of grandmother expectations as much as the way care is actually arranged.

The importance of paid employment in the lives of mothers also extends to grandmothers. Four out of the six participants represented in this chapter storied the ways in which working outside the home contributed to their sense of identity as grandmothers. That is, paid work offers an important site for identity construction; a site which allows for something other than grandmothership. Paid work also offers enjoyment, independence, visibility, and financial benefit, also described in literature (see Dench 2002). Elizabeth drew on the invisibility she experienced as a mother being at home with young children to suggest that nothing would change as a grandmother. For all four participants, paid work is central; whilst being a grandmother is an important and valued part of identity, it is not sufficient on its own. There are two further contradictory narratives that grandmothers are subject to: to be available to parents and family whenever needed, and to have 'my own life'. 'Having my own life' could be linked to ideas of successful ageing, where being active and engaged is viewed as an imperative to have a successful older life. It could also be linked to neo-liberal imperatives to be self-managing; having adequate financial provision for retirement suggests that paid employment becomes a legitimate sphere of activity for those over sixty-five. Although there is still a normative idea that suggests that the ideal grandmother is constantly available to her adult children and grandchildren, three participants in this chapter – Diane, Amy and Annie - have defined their role as contradictory to the availability concept. They instead present the importance of limits and boundaries. In so doing they have resisted familial narratives centred on ideas which situate older women as principal familial caregivers who are expected

to meet competing demands for care from ageing parents, adult children and grandchildren (see Cotterill, 1992). Whilst it is possible that these participants did not have all of these demands, they did prioritise their own freedom and employment choices.

It could be assumed that due to the nature of paid employment, grandmothers who are in paid employment have less time available for childcare than their counterparts who are not employed outside the home. Somewhat surprisingly, a number of studies have established that grandmothers in paid employment are more likely to provide childcare than non-employed grandmothers (see Guzman, 2004; Hank & Buber, 2009). To an extent it reflects an expectation that paid employment is necessary for women, emotionally, financially and socially across the life course. It is of importance to note that none of the participants discussed the employment needs of their sons or sons-in-law. It is possible that older women in employment are more likely to value and support continued employment for women and this could shape intergenerational expectations including what it means to 'get ahead'. This is borne out by the participant extracts included in this chapter.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how grandmothers have constructed their identity through their support of parents, families and mothers, and the role that their own paid employment has in their lives. The importance of paid work was storied not only in terms of the grandmothers' identities but also in their accounts of maternal paid work, described as vital for the mothers' identities and their wellbeing. Participant extracts in this chapter have called upon descriptions such as a love of paid employment, and 'not waiting around to become a grandmother' and these suggest a distancing from normative age-related grandmother discourses. The idea that a grandmother should also have independence and be active, rather than sit around and wait for grandchildren, or simply be available for childcare could be viewed as a welcome change from traditional constructions of grandmothing.

As grandmothers, supporting parents, families and mothers was central in the storying of a grandmother identity. Influenced by wider ideas about what families and mothers need, participants storied the importance of supporting families to progress, drawing on ideas including families being able to 'have it all' helped by grandmother childcare support. Supporting mothers was also key; mothering young children was narrated as difficult at times

and this provided a clear rationale for grandmothers' involvement in the lives of mothers and their children. Being a grandmother includes being a mother; the two occur simultaneously and are subject to competing wider ideas such as 'being there for support' while at the same time 'not interfering'. This was navigated in various ways by participants through their accounts of the kinds of support they offered and the ideas they drew on in order to do so. The importance of maternal paid employment was constructed mainly in terms of what it offered for maternal wellbeing and in order to do this, participants drew on their own paid employment experiences. Paid employment was described as vital to identity construction, offering grandmothers opportunities not able to be met through grandmothereing alone.

The extracts in this chapter illustrate the importance of grandmother-mother relationships as also central to the narration of identity. Grandmothers in this chapter have also at times spoken and constructed other multiple identity constructions including mother and paid worker. Identity construction is complex, and across all participants there are storylines which intersect with other constructs of grandmothereing including wider ideas of care, employment, expectations and responsibility. These indicate the diversity of ways in which grandmothereing identities can be storied.

Chapter Six: Analysis

Narratives of care based on concern for wellbeing of grandchildren

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focusses on the ways in which participants constructed stories about their grandchild care within a care through concern narrative. From fifteen interviews, two participants narrated how concern had prompted them to intervene and provide intensive regular care. These concerns included separated parents and/or relationship troubles, mental health and addiction issues among parents, and grandchild wellbeing. Holding concerns about parents and/or grandchildren influences how decisions to provide care are made and also shapes the nature of the care. As a consequence, the care that was provided by these grandmothers was more intensive than that provided by other study participants.

6.2 Claire's story

"I did want to save the wee fella"

This chapter begins with an extract from my interview with Claire. Claire's provision of care is located in a context of concern for her grandson's wellbeing. Claire is in her mid-60s and has two sons, the oldest of whom has a son aged three at the time of the interview. Claire works upwards of thirty hours a week in her own business and has her grandson anywhere from "twelve hours to thirty" a week. Claire's relationship with her son and daughter-in-law is "perfunctory at best" and the cause of "huge amounts of distress". At the start of the interview Claire describes how her son asked her at the end of 2015 whether she would look after his son Kenny on Wednesdays and Sundays, and this has gradually varied over time to encompass more intensive care: overnights on Tuesdays and Sundays and other days and nights often at short notice. From the beginning of the interview, Claire describes her relief at being asked to provide some care:

Ca: When you were asked to help look after your grandson do you remember how you felt about that?

Cl: Yeah, I was relieved

Ca: Oh, relieved, okay

- Cl: I was relieved because I didn't think that the wee one was getting his needs met so it was a relief and then it was a challenge, felt a bit worried about how I was going to do that. But I didn't hesitate, I said yes
- Ca: And up to that time had you done any looking after of him at all?
- Cl: Yes, lots, but not on my own, his mother was always present, well just about always present. I'd have a few hours with him but he was breastfed so it was limited on my own with him. But I'd drive over and take him to the library for wriggle and rhyme, just a few hours at a time then I'd have to take him back
- Ca: Right. So the request from your son came as a bit of a relief cos you'd been witnessing some
- Cl: Yes I was witnessing his, especially as a baby I think he had, there were just some really disturbing things that I saw and witnessed and heard
- Ca: So, would it be fair to say that one of the primary reasons [for providing childcare] was a desire to I suppose contribute, or, I mean, I'm kind of wanting to use the word 'save' because you used the word 'relief', I'm not sure that's accurate
- Cl: Yep I did want to save the wee fella, I was, I absolutely was. The biggest thing for me was contributing to this wee boy's wellbeing and trying to maximise his wellbeing, emotional and psychological wellbeing mmm

Claire starts with situating the request to provide grandchild care within a context of relief. This relief is brought about by Claire's identification of a less than ideal situation in which her grandson was being raised and she draws on normative ideas of what children need to support her account including the primacy of child safety, security, and stability. These ideas shape her account of saving her grandson; being asked to care is a relief as it means she did not need to ask or intrude. Her use of the term "wee one" suggests a vulnerability and provides an additional motive for stepping in. This is strengthened by Claire's concern regarding her grandson's needs not being met. Claire's story illustrates the beginnings of her caring for her grandson and the relief account is shaped around her response to a request from her son and demonstrates Claire's vital role in her grandson's wellbeing.

The care provided within the care through concern narrative is about the importance of ensuring adequacy of care and protection and the provision of safety for children. White Western discourses of the nuclear family, while not static, still tend to position mothers as the

main carers of their children and their care is regarded as crucial for the child's health and wellbeing. Claire's account, in reference to her witnessing disturbing things, suggests her daughter-in-law has provided a less than optimal situation for her grandson's development and as such there is an implication that her daughter-in-law is deficient in her parenting skills. She describes her time with her grandson as being limited to those times when his mother is present and through her reference to breastfeeding, draws on normative ideas of what babies need as a way to account for the mother's presence. These normative ideas include the centrality and importance of a mother's care; at the same time that Claire draws on these ideas she contests them by drawing on a care through concern narrative as the basis on which she provides care.

Later in our interview Claire describes returning her grandson home:

C: It comes time for him to go home and he really doesn't want to go home and I feel enormous guilt and I feel sadness at the time. When I'm with him I help him understand when he doesn't want to go home but he has to go home. But afterwards I'm kind of twisted up with guilt inside especially after I've dropped him off. I'm driving back home and I think 'oh my god I wish I could have kept him or told him he doesn't have to go back home'. That makes me want to cry just thinking about it.

CD: Is there a

C: I haven't got a choice. Even if I think that it's not the best environment for him it's not bad enough, you know in one sense it's not bad, you know how CYFs would call it enough. The guilt is that I'm taking him back to an environment that I know is not the best for him. I have no choice and I have no power to influence his environment and I have to put him back into that environment and that causes me guilt and huge sadness for him and it causes me many nights where I'm lying awake worrying about what is happening to him at times

Claire describes her grandson's sadness as evidence for the inadequacy of his home environment; well-cared for children would generally want to return home. Barely adequate parenting is what is narrated by Claire and this is framed as the worst of both worlds, not bad enough to intervene but not optimal either. Claire frames the parenting as minimally good

enough and compares it to the situation which would be the “best” (implicitly her care). This account situates Claire within a moral imperative to provide care for her grandson and this provides a justification for her role in this family; the safety and wellbeing of children is paramount. This moral imperative acts as a principle which is strongly felt by Claire and which has impelled her to act. Claire describes the end of her grandson’s visits in terms of ‘I’d have to take him back’ and in doing so draws on the power of the nuclear family narrative and its focus on the importance of the parent-child relationship. Despite her storying of maternal inadequacy and her reluctance to return him to the situation she has described as disturbing, she nevertheless understands she has to return him to his home.

Claire locates her guilt within two storylines: returning her grandson to his home is not negotiable and his home environment is inadequate. The parents have briefly entrusted him to the care of his grandmother so there is no choice but to return him to his parents; returning him home is therefore not framed as a dilemma, it is framed as an inevitability despite her misgivings. This is mandatory; within the nuclear family narrative there is no choice but to return the child to where he rightly belongs – with his parents. Claire then draws on statutory measures to support her in her lack of choice and inevitability. Although statutory guidelines are useful to invoke (they provide a justification and remove the need for Claire to make a choice) they do not diminish the guilt or sadness she experiences. When misgivings are placed in the wider context of statutory guidelines they can remain just that; they cannot be acted on and thus the need to make a choice is removed.

Claire’s account of her grandmother role located within a care through concern narrative is also reflected in Jocelyn’s account below.

6.3 Jocelyn’s story

“Family’s family, you do what you have to do”

Jocelyn, who is in her early 70s, cares for her four-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter four nights [overnights] a week. She is the paternal grandmother; the maternal grandmother cares for a two-year-old granddaughter and an eight-and-a-half-year-old grandson from the same family. Jocelyn works 32 hours a week and has been married to the father of her two sons for more than 40 years. She is one of two participants in this study to live in a multigenerational household and although this was intended to be a temporary arrangement it has continued

longer than anticipated. Both sons live at home; the older son [aged 40] who is father to the three grandchildren and the younger one with his fiancée. Her husband is retired.

My opening question below is the very first at the start of our interview:

- C: Where I would like to start is, do you want to tell me how you came to be looking your grandchildren?
- J: Ok, so, four-and-half year old is part of a family where there's also an eight-and-a-half year old and a two year old, and it came to our attention that the school age child was missing a lot of school and my other son, not the father of these children, my other son raised concerns about him missing up to 50 percent of his schooling and why that was happening, contacted the school who then had a meeting with CYFs and then we were called in and there was suspicion there of drug use so they were seen as unsafe parents. We were then working with CADS and other support agencies and everything to put a safety mechanism in place for the children. So informal care was arranged. We waited eight months to get the mother into care so she's in a rehab unit now, has been there a year but during those eight months it was a real struggle and so our daughter-in-law's family and our side of the family joined forces to look after the children between us. So the daughter-in-law's family look after the two year old and the eight-and-a-half year old and I look after the four-and-a half year old four nights a week. The maternal grandmother looks after her on days where she doesn't have kindy and she also picks her up from kindy and minds her until I go over after work and pick her up
- C: Wow. Gosh. So did you have to think about this carefully, what you were taking on?
- J: Well the options were that or foster care, you know, other carers [sigh] I guess I didn't know it was going to be so long but I guess both of us felt family had to step up. There are other mature adults, the siblings of the parents. I have another son who also lives with us downstairs, with his fiancée and he put his hand up and said he'd help but it hasn't really happened much and the same on my daughter-in-law's side, she has a couple of sisters who are in their 20s and childless who also said they would help. Then again they haven't come to the party too much. Occasionally they'll take them if I'm lucky [laughs]. But that, in the family meetings they all said 'well we've got to do something and we'll

help' so we all just came in as a rescue plan to keep it in the family basically and decided it didn't need to go to court we just wanted the actual parents to clean up their act and be safe parents again

C: What has all this been like for you?

J: Terrible. Concerning, the children, me, the parents. Well not so much the parents as they're adults. I guess the impact has been not only the change of minding the children it's also trying to keep them connected with their mother so I have to go out once a week and visit the rehab unit so Saturday visiting time is a very strict regime, so yeah I have to go out there every Saturday. No one else will do it so I have to.

Jocelyn stories an imperative to care, based on concern regarding diminished parental capability and this provides a clear rationale for her intervention as foster carers were not seen as an option. The implementation of what she describes as a "rescue plan" is described as being the result of a consensus amongst both sides of the family in order to keep things within the private realm of family rather than the public and wider court system. This unanimous agreement is contrasted with the level of practical support that Jocelyn reports receiving since this decision was made. Despite earlier offers of help, sustained support has not eventuated, and the majority of the care has been left to Jocelyn and the maternal grandmother. This contradicts the earlier storyline that family work together to sort things out. The shared ideal of family care that all agree on is now contrasted against a daily care that can be achieved by anyone – however it has fallen to the grandmothers. Jocelyn's conclusion that "no one else will do it so I have to" in reference to taking the children to see their mother is the dissenting part of an account of shared decision making and shared care. She stories this as compulsory; drawing on wider ideas prioritising the importance of mother-child relationship to do so.

Jocelyn uses the words "terrible" and "concerning" to describe the impact this level of care has had on her, the grandchildren and the parents, and then qualifies this by removing the grandchildren's parents out of her sphere of concern. The implication is that as they are adults, there is no need for her to concern herself as much with them. She describes the parents as adults who ought to take up their responsibility as parents. This provides justification for her support to be focussed on the grandchildren. However, at the same time as she stories the parents' responsibilities, she justifies why they are not responsible; statutory

intervention and rehabilitation are two primary valid constructs within a good parenting construct as to why the parents are not parenting. This same idea positions Jocelyn and the maternal grandmother as the natural people to provide support.

Later in the interview she describes the impact that caring for her granddaughter is having on her and life at home:

- J: My husband has a hearing loss and has hearing aids and when she [granddaughter] screams it's actually quite painful for him
- C: It would be, yeah
- J: And it just drives him, he says 'get rid of her, I don't want her here, get rid of her' you know and it brings down big barriers for him
- C: Yeah, yeah
- J: So the relationship is not as good. I mean he tries and I say 'look she's a child' and he tries but it's not, I wouldn't say it's the cosiest relationship and he gets quite frustrated. So I'm actually handling *that* for him as well. I'm actually trying to keep that modified
- C: Do you mean modifying the frustration?
- J: Mmm. Yeah. Well he's not a well person, he's not that old, he's 73 but he has a heart condition which slows him down and he's a private person ah, so yeah, this is, he really just wanted to be Darby and Joan. It's wearying, quite tiring [pause]. My son living here and not working and the other son downstairs who's judging his brother. So the two other men – my husband and the younger brother – are quite judgemental on the father of the children for not getting his act together and for even choosing that kind of partner, choosing to do drugs, you know his life falling to bits basically and then not picking himself up. I guess I'm trying to ride the road between yes, I acknowledge I'm an enabler at times cos I empathise with the mental health of what he's gone through living with someone [his partner] who was dysfunctional. They don't empathise with the mental health issues. But now it's been like a year and now I'm at the stage where I need to kick him up the bum and say 'okay you need to move on'.

In the above story, Jocelyn's account of their life as a family describes clearly gendered roles for its members. She describes her husband as a disengaged and rejecting grandfather. This also further contradicts her earlier story of shared decision-making and understandings about how the grandchild care would be undertaken. Her younger son, while initially described as the person who voiced concern, and who supported the decision for family care of his brother's children, is now described as not doing much. Although not actively involved in the childcare arrangements, the men are not invisible in this account. They are described as judgemental; and concepts of appropriate masculinity are enacted in pronouncing these judgements. Appropriate masculinity in this context include the importance of men providing for their family, being practical and making sound decisions. Failure to measure up to these provides the grounds upon which judgements are able to be made. The judgement regarding the father of the children is therefore described in these terms rather than his inability to parent. This acts to absolve him of any insufficiency in direct parenting. The way gender is enacted in this family means that parenting, whether sufficient or insufficient, is not something requiring judgement.

Further evidence of the gendered nature of this account is given as Jocelyn stories the men's lack of empathy. In this extract, empathy is constructed as something she has and the men do not as suggested in her statement "I empathise with the mental health of what he's gone through". Although describing herself as empathic, a positively regarded trait, this is also undermined by her description of herself as an "enabler". This is deployed in her construction of the empathy she has toward her son and undermines the value of empathy. There is an implication that the term 'enabler' has been attributed to her by someone in the family through her use of "I acknowledge I'm an enabler" and this suggests that empathy is not ultimately constructive in this situation. Jocelyn's description of resolution shifts: the careful management of family that she has narrated has taken its toll. She ends her story with a clear resolution: it is time for her to tell her son to move out. A year has passed and this marks an end point for her regarding her older son's inaction. This shift in her story helps in her construction of an autonomous self who sees clearly what is needed and who possesses the capability of resolution even though this has not been acted upon yet.

Jocelyn narrates managing her roles of caring wife, mother and grandmother in a context of familial relationships where caring causes friction and conflict. This causes Jocelyn to struggle with trying to mediate family relationships and she stories her management of the

household, as someone who holds relationships together and takes action when required. She stories herself as a peacemaker and as an empathic, non-judgemental, hardworking family member who is navigating family life, which at times is burdensome. In contrast to Claire's account earlier, this is a different story; the children are mostly invisible. It is a story about Jocelyn's multiple roles, including as a grandmother mediating wider social relationships. Though she describes what everyone else has or has not done, she stories the effects on her and not the grandchildren. This suggests she is vital to the family's functioning; she draws on wider cultural ideas regarding women as natural carers to also justify the importance of her role in her family.

Jocelyn's account includes a reference to an ideal of the later life couple which also contributes to her gendered account of family life. She draws on a traditional older couples' metaphor to describe her husband's preference for his retirement. The Darby and Joan reference is one that is available to people as they age and conjures images of a couple devoted to one another, living out their retirement years quietly and non-eventfully. In Jocelyn's description, it suggests that her husband would have a devoted wife rather than a distracted, busy grandmother as his wife. There is an implication that if you have had a successful life you can look forward to a well-earned peaceful older age, however this has been undermined by the presence of their adult son and granddaughter. This also undermines the earlier story of shared agreement for the provision of childcare.

Claire and Jocelyn, although different in their narrating of the care they provide, share some commonalities. Both account for their decision to care as located within a care through concern narrative. When the provision of care is located in a context of concern it alters how decisions to care are made. Neither of these participants storied their care as optional or optimal; the preferred story is one in which children should be raised by capable parents. Instead there is a shared account of a requirement to care and the extent of the care provided is determined by factors outside their control. Because the caring context is not optimal, none of the situations that arise from it are optimal either. This includes Jocelyn and her husband being unable to enjoy their older years in the way they imagined and their adult son, the father, being neither self-sufficient nor partnered to a sound mother for his children. Claire's relationship with her son and daughter-in-law is described as "perfunctory at best" because of her grandson's home environment. Both Jocelyn's and Claire's care is constructed as obligatory; it cannot be renegotiated if conflict or tension arise and instead must be somehow

managed. This obligation to care is a direct outcome of the care through concern narrative. The care originated out of concern for a grandchild, but the act of caring generated further concerns including the extent of the care and the impact of this on each participant and, in Jocelyn's story, her household. The obligation and requirement to care shapes relationships with other members of their respective families including their adult children.

6.4 Discussion

There are compelling social and cultural narratives which shape grandmothers' provision of care when there are concerns. There are also wider social and political constructs positioning grandmothers to provide care in this context. These will be discussed in this section along with constructs of obligation, choice and expectations, drawing on ideas that childcare is an imperative that falls to grandmothers when parenting is inadequate. When childcare is provided in a context of concern it also influences grandmothers' paid employment, this is also discussed below along with a section on the gendered nature of childcare provision.

Legislation forms a part of wider socio-political narratives and reflects and is reflective of ideologies of the family including assumptions of connectedness and support. In Aotearoa New Zealand there is statutory mandating of family to provide care and this is enshrined in legislation (Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989). The Act states that children should only be placed with non-relatives if serious attempts to locate care with kin have failed. This acts powerfully on individuals and shape expectations and decisions about the provision of care.

Concern for grandchildren has been the primary construct within which both this chapter's participants have located and justified their care and both accounts have been shaped by public narratives including the legislation discussed above. Jocelyn's story was heavily influenced by the formal process arising out of a statutory context as she describes foster carers were not an option for her grandchildren. She also narrates the importance of keeping "it in the family" rather than "go to court". Dominant nuclear family understandings locate responsibility for care primarily within the private realm of the family; a formal and public court process would indicate that the family had 'failed' in its duty to provide care for one or more of its members. Claire's account also draws on statutory guidelines for the wellbeing of children as she described evaluating whether her grandson's environment would measure up.

Her opinion, expressed as his environment not being the best but not being the worst either, is measured on the one hand against the statutory agency's guidelines for good enough parenting and on the other, from her own experience and observations. This middle ground, between best and worst, is deemed by Claire to be manageable through her care (although she still holds significant concerns) without statutory intervention.

Grandmothers can often experience an obligation to adjust their lives in order to accommodate grandchild care which arises out of concern or adverse life events in the parental generation (see Kelley et al., 2010; LeFebvre & Rasner, 2017). Obligatory care is characterised by duty, a sense of responsibility and a diminishment of choice. The two participants featured in this chapter story their individual experiences as a lack of choice; Claire's lack ("I haven't got a choice") is located with having to return her grandson to his home. Despite her misgivings she decides the situation does not warrant statutory involvement, however nor is it possible for her to keep her grandson with her. Jocelyn's lack of choice is storied as a decision needing to be made between foster carers or family caring for her grandchildren. Wider ideas regarding childcare responsibilities being primarily located with families shaped her decision, and the absence of choice is implicit rather than explicit in her account. These extracts are therefore both illustrative of choice being located in wider ideas: the influence of legislation has informed both accounts. Jocelyn just wanted the parents to "clean up their act and be safe parents again" illustrating a sense of autonomy through the implication that her care is temporary; contingent upon improved parenting. The nuance of choice/choicelessness intersects with an imperative where grandmothers are positioned to care. They cannot *not* care as to do so would situate them outside normative good grandmother practice. For both these participants the welfare and wellbeing of their grandchildren was paramount and overrode any considerations for how they might manage the practicalities of their care.

All decision-making is contextual and this includes people making decisions based on the right thing to do within the social and cultural contexts in which they live (see Duncan et al., 2003). Storying the 'right thing' in a context of holding concern for a grandchild's wellbeing necessitates the provision of safety and security, contributing to wellbeing and possibly 'making up' for poor parenting. The wider constructs about the paramount importance of the wellbeing of children position these grandmothers as being obliged to do what they can. This is in contrast to predominant Western nuclear family ideals, which suggest the primary

responsibility for raising children rests with the parent generation thereby positioning grandmothers to be there for support but no more than that. Grandmothers who are providing intensive levels of care, through concern, create a non-normative family constellation as the grandmother is drawn into more of a hands-on role because her own child (or child-in-law) is seen as incapable of parenting. The care through concern narrative offers a position of ‘child-saver’ to both participants. The term child-saver is reserved for an involuntary event, sometimes a crisis, which results in care being provided out of need rather than desire (see Baker & Silverstein, 2012). This care is not out of choice and is undertaken when parents are unavailable, incapable or inadequate.

Jocelyn’s account includes the at-times burdensome nature of how she experiences her caring role. Later in our interview she described how she had taken all three grandchildren to the playground where she met an “older woman” who assumed she was a grandmother out to have fun with her grandchildren before giving them back to the parent/s. Jocelyn remembered saying to her “*no, actually I’m not enjoying this, I’d much rather be at home with my feet up reading a book*” before commenting to me in our interview that “*there are expectations that grandmothers are going to love having their grandchildren*”. In her retelling of her playground experience, Jocelyn linked what she heard the other woman say with normative expectations – that grandmothers naturally want to be with their grandchildren and that they will naturally enjoy it. Rather than agree with her (and in so doing position herself within a good grandmother narrative) she draws on an age-related idea to position herself as deservedly taking time for herself. This notion suggests that once you have brought up your children you can look forward to sitting back; and that if you have been a ‘good parent’ your children will be parenting their children in ways that allow for grandmothering to be occasional and therefore boundaried and voluntary.

Jocelyn described the ways in which she is acting in a parenting or near-parenting role: “*It’s not what you envisage on being a grandparent because it’s not being a grandparent. I’ve actually been dropped into being a parent. When you’re a grandparent you can hand the kids back*”. This ‘acting as parent’ situates her in a non-normative role as it is occurring much later than when a woman would usually parent and is not to a young child. Jocelyn draws on traditional notions of grandmothering (seen as primarily hands-off, limited to occasional visits, fun and treats), to situate herself as a parent. This more intensive version of grandmothering is storied as mothering and includes taking on daily care; feeding, bathing,

dressing, and homework. Even though Jocelyn's son, the father of her grandchildren, is living in the same house, it is Jocelyn who is parenting and in so doing is simultaneously mothering and grandmothering. This could be constructed as almost custodial grandmothering, however the presence of her son and the temporary 'fixed-term' nature of her care means that it does not meet custodial grandmothering criteria.

The consequences that paid employment has on grandmothers who provide care is noted as something which has a mixed impact on health, relationships, family and finances (see Nelson, 2000; Turner, 2005). These are amplified when the caring is provided because of concerns and is therefore more intensive both physically and emotionally. However, and despite this, Jocelyn's paid employment is described by her as a support "*I work in a very supportive environment and three others have got grandchildren, though they're visiting grandparents. They all understand what I'm going through and so it becomes a female support group without it being a support group*". Paid employment can offer a respite from the demands of caring and can also function as a way to set some boundaries on care; Jocelyn still works "*ten- or eleven-hour days*", four days a week, a reduction on her former "*work-a-holic sixty- or seventy-hour weeks*". Her provision of care has legitimate limits imposed through her hours at work and her paid work can be justified through a need to earn money for the household. Claire describes how she would not work if she did not have to; working is not something which acts as a buffer or a limit to her caring responsibilities. She compares herself to her other women she knows: "*my peer group are mostly middle-class who have always had a much better income and it's like I need an income and if I don't work I don't have a house over my head*". Counter to a dominant social construct that older women choose to work, for Claire paid employment is storied as a necessity and she describes this need to work as situating her outside her peer group. In the normal life course, older people who are in paid employment could expect to be accumulating retirement funds and could also expect to not be providing intensive levels of care; however these participants are doing both and are therefore positioned outside normative ideas of ageing.

The caring through concern narrative reveals the gendered nature of care and Claire's and Jocelyn's accounts have been framed in ways which reflect wider social, cultural and political ideas of care. Jocelyn's narration of the judgements her husband and younger son hold toward her older son support a particular version of masculinity. This version of masculinity allows for the men in the family to assert their opinions but at the same time be

absolved from the necessity of acting on them or contributing to a solution. In order to perform gender in the 'right' ways, the men in this family can be exempted from showing care or empathy and are able to be critical and express their negative opinions. The men in the household are also exempted from the provision of care, although the reasons given were not based on gender. Jocelyn's husband was exempted through his age and ill health. Her older son was exempted through the other two men's judgements which also supported a particular version of masculinity, a version characterised by the importance of work, the importance of getting on with life and making good life choices.

Wider social and cultural narratives position women to carry responsibility for the demands of childcare and caring for grandchildren is still widely regarded as work that women do (see Meyer, 2014). Providing care is not something that men are positioned to hold themselves primarily responsible for; widely understood ideals about men and women both contribute to and affirm gendered divisions in childcare. Furthermore, wider narratives include ideas such as women are naturally attuned to both reading and attending to emotions whereas men are not. These narratives and social structures such as patriarchy act on women in ways that shape behaviour; orienting it to gendered ideals, shaping and influencing their life choices. In order to maintain intelligibility to others, wider structural narratives need to be followed (see Dudová, 2018). The provision of grandchild care constitutes the accomplishment of gender through a continuous creation and recreation of actions which adhere to expected behaviours of women (see West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Jocelyn's account also highlights the gendered social role of women as central to family relationships through her storying of the importance of maintaining connection with her grandchildren's mother, described as a function allocated disproportionately to women in traditional gender/family relationships (see Baker, 2016). Jocelyn's storying of her management of family relationships reflects wider gendered narratives – she is positioned to be the obvious person to do this. In a context of concern for grandchildren this is amplified; where parents are unavailable through inadequacy or issues such as mental health or addiction, grandmothers are situated to be the people who will intervene to care for their grandchildren. Both Claire's and Jocelyn's provision of care reflects these identity positions, available to them through the care through concern narrative. Claire's account, which includes terms such as saving her grandson from inadequate parenting, can be viewed as her taking up a watchdog position; alert to and available for stepping in when necessary.

Amongst several identity positions available to her, Jocelyn stories herself as an advocate in her account of the position she takes up vis-à-vis her adult son with the other men in the household.

Feminist theorists have used the terms “emotional capital” and “caringscapes” to describe how the provision of care is implicated in the ordering of gender and structural inequalities (Conlon et al., 2014, p.731). The ‘caringscape’ is constituted by the doing, organising and taking responsibility for care and ‘emotional capital’ the resources which are invested in those that are cared for. It is reflective of individual interests within everyday interactions which at the same time reproduce the wider contexts which such interactions occur in (Erickson & Stacey, 2013). Both terms reflect the gendered ordering of care responsibilities and these shape the lives of women. Jocelyn’s account highlights the production and reproduction of wider gendered understandings about family relationships as she describes the ways in which her mothering and grandmothering intersect through her careful management of family relationships. Her account of the men in her family draws on traditional gendered practises around housework and taking responsibility for others; it is her role as a grandmother, a wife and a mother to do the work.

The construct of choice discussed earlier in the chapter can also be located with a gendered narrative. Women are socialised and expected to provide care and these wider expectations shape self-expectations. In order to fulfil cultural and gender norms of the good grandmother women are positioned with little or no choice even when the care is not provided on the basis of concern. However, as discussed earlier, choice should not be constructed as a binary (full choice/no choice); the personal intentions and circumstances storied by each participant were also influential in their decision-making along with wider ideas about childcare in the context of concern. Holding concerns for a grandchild’s wellbeing could amplify gendered understandings; as men are not expected to provide grandchild care when there are not concerns it is possible they would not be expected to do so in a context of concern.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted two participant stories centred on grandchild care being provided on the basis of concern. There are implications for grandmothers and their families when grandmothering is undertaken in this context. As participants have storied, these

include increased stress through holding concern for grandchildren and their wellbeing, the ways in which parental inadequacies shape their care provision, financial and health implications; and changes to family relationships including the management of conflict. Wider social and cultural expectations are reproduced in families, shaping ideas such as grandmothers will step in to provide more intensive levels of care. These expectations are shaped by wider social, cultural and gendered narratives about family life. Grandmothers are positioned to be the natural solution to provide care and manage the family, while also remaining in paid employment. Paid employment can be either a support (helping to place limits on the amount of time available for childcare) or a necessity (undertaken for financial reasons) or both. Caring through concern results in more intensive grandmothing, thereby situating grandmothers outside a normative grandmother role. This produces effects on the notion of choice; whilst not removing it entirely, it is shaped by ideas of obligation which diminishes choice particularly in the context of statutory guidelines or interventions.

Chapter Seven: Analysis

Balancing and juggling

7.1 Introduction

This final analysis chapter focusses on participant accounts which describe the balancing and juggling of childcare and paid work, the balancing of responsibilities and the navigation of family relationships. The participants' paid employment is not the only context that their grandchild care is situated in; it is also provided within the gendered context of family life. This shapes expectations for who juggles what, for where responsibility is situated and for where and how boundaries might be navigated.

7.2 Balancing and juggling childcare and paid employment

In this section, three participants story their experiences of paid work and childcare in the contexts of their family relationships.

7.2.1. Sylvie's story

"I hate constantly trying to juggle"

The section begins with an extract from my interview with Sylvie. Sylvie (64 years old at the time of the interview) is married and immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand as a younger married woman. She has twin adult daughters each of whom has one child. One grandson was almost nine years old and the other was fifteen months at the time of the interview. Sylvie picks up the older grandson from school on Fridays and has him for the weekend, taking him to school Monday morning. She also has both grandchildren as and when required. As Sylvie works full-time, I wondered how she accommodated childcare into her week. I characterised this as 'juggling', which for the purposes of this question was intended to enquire whether or not she had to balance childcare and work given the majority of her childcare occurs at the weekend:

C: Do you get a sense of juggling work and grandmothering?

S: Yep. I do, I feel like if I could have more time not working and look after them [grandchildren], for example maybe live with them so they wouldn't get

colds and wouldn't get sick, things like that. There are sometimes I really get a soft spot for my children [her adult daughters] thinking that it's too much for them and although I had them when I was 26, mind they were twins, so one child is really nothing really to raise or look after. But I do sometimes feel like that especially when they're [grandchildren] unwell and I can't take time off work

C: So how do you manage the caring for your family, your grandchildren, your work demands, feeling as though you want to give family more but you can't because of work, what kind of effect does that have?

S: [pause] it takes it out of me, physically, I have become sick for a long time and I think maybe the stress caused that and not being able to fill those gaps that I have seen, all the pockets. I hate constantly trying to juggle and really there is no balance that I can see.

Sylvie stories her preference to prioritise childcare over paid employment, if she was able to do so. She situates herself as important to her grandchildren's physical wellbeing to the extent that moving in would be preferable, positioning herself as necessary in order to provide the kind of care which would prevent sickness. As Sylvie stories this level of responsibility and co-resident care as an ideal for her as a grandmother, not being able to fulfil her own expectations is a cause of stress for her. She accounts for her importance in her grandchildren's lives by invoking a "motherhood is a burden" storyline in regard to her daughters. This is achieved by referring to her concerns that motherhood is too much for her adult daughters and her comparison with her own experience of mothering twins. This acts to partially excuse her daughters from providing the kind of care that Sylvie describes as necessary but is somewhat undermined in the next sentence as Sylvie describes her experience of raising twins, positioning her daughters as "having it easy" with one child each. There is however a commonly narrated idea amongst mothers of twins that mothers of single children experience mothering as less demanding (Andrade et al., 2014). Despite this, Sylvie situates responsibility for her grandchildren as hers whilst at the same time describing having no choice but to prioritise work.

Positioning herself with no choice vis-à-vis the balance between paid work and childcare is described as contributing to Sylvie's ill health; there is no mention of anyone else stepping in to "fill the gaps". She attributes her own ill health to carrying responsibility to meet her

grandchildren's needs whilst at the same time storying her inability to do so. Her account invokes some frustration at the constraints that paid work produces on her life: it is necessary but intrudes into her grandmothering. Sylvie's role is cast as indispensable to her daughters and her grandchildren; it is her responsibility to ensure everyone's wellbeing other than her own. She describes a "no win" situation; because of paid work she misses out on being able to care for her grandchildren as often as she deems necessary to help manage her grandchildren's sicknesses. Additionally, she describes how her health suffers when childcare and work demands result in a lack of balance. It is however unclear what balance would look like; Sylvie's descriptive "constant juggling" does not allow a space for balance.

7.2.2. Sarah's story

"I do get pangs of guilt"

Sarah, in the extract that follows, spoke of juggling an older parent, paid work, teenage sons and a grandchild. Sarah cares for Maddie, a granddaughter she described as "having arrived one weekend", having been adopted by Eve, a woman who "came into the family as an adult" to join Sarah, her husband and their two sons, 18 and 15. Maddie was 18 months old at the time of the interview, and Sarah cares for her every Friday, Friday night and sometimes Saturday. Sarah is employed three days a week however at the time of the interview had been working 45-60 hours for a year or more and this was likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Sarah was 55 years old at the time of the interview. I asked Sarah about how she managed caring for Maddie, as well as her father, who was 86, and whom Sarah takes out once or twice a week:

- C: Thinking about all those things that you're doing, the working and the childcare and your dad [yeah] and your boys [yes, yes] and being a wife, what kind of effects, are there effects from managing those?
- S: [pause 6 secs]. The work has been huge these last few years and balancing that with the home life that's the tricky bit. There are certainly times when I feel my boys are being left to their own devices which at times they're completely delighted about and I'm less delighted. I do, I do get pangs of guilt, because so much of my time is spent here at work including quite a lot of Saturdays and Sundays so my boys have at times been short changed. That's been challenging and at times has *really really* got to me. I have felt incredible

tension between work and home but I still do need to earn money, I can't stop yet

C: When you're working so much and family and childcare how do you get to hold it without something falling off the edge, whether that's physical health or financial health, you know

S: That is right. It's an extraordinary balance and there's probably no right answer. There's certainly times when I'm completely exhausted and then the need to step in and Maddie is an early waker and a fidget in the night so there've been extra times when I've had her because Eve's been unwell, or pregnant, I've had her quite a lot through that time. Eve was really struggling through some parts of her pregnancy and still working and I could see she was drained and exhausted and while I've felt drained and exhausted I've realised I wasn't quite as drained and exhausted as she was and therefore I could step in.

Sarah stories balancing work and home as “tricky” and draws on wider ideas of what being a good mother entails to describe herself as guilty for failing to measure up to these ideas. The guilt Sarah describes is located with paid work encroaching on weekend time, a time when working parents, and particularly mothers, are expected to prioritise their children given their absence during the working and school week. She stories a concern that her own mothering has not been sufficient and although Sarah is careful to mention her boys do not mind her absence this does not ameliorate the tension or the guilt. The implication is that there is a ‘right conduct’ for mothers which is quite different from doing what her teenagers prefer. Guilt and tension are storied as a consequence of the time Sarah has devoted to work and to her care of Maddie which has lessened her time with her sons. Balancing in Sarah's extract is described as a tension and managing this is one of the results from trying to find a balance between the juggle of paid work, home and childcare.

Sarah stories her role as a mother and a grandmother as one requiring careful management in order to juggle what she describes as important - working to earn money, managing home life, and caring for Eve and Maddie. Drawing on concepts of what pregnant and unwell mothers might need, Eve's exhaustion justifies Sarah's need to provide extra care to Maddie. Invoking a hierarchy of exhaustion, Sarah describes Eve's needs as greater and more deserving than her own; there is no mention of the grandchildren included in her rationale for helping. Balancing her own needs against Eve's, Sarah concludes that Eve's took precedence

despite Sarah's tiredness. Sarah's account is centred on meeting her own expectations for caring as a mother to her boys, and then as a mother to Eve. Her expectations for her care as a grandmother are not included and it is therefore unclear how these might shape (or not) the childcare she does provide. Given the construct of balancing that Sarah is drawing on it appears that familial roles and responsibilities are juggled, and tension and stress can result when these are unable to be balanced or are unaligned.

7.2.3. Lydia's story

"There is that, you know, the balls, it's the balls in the air"

Lydia was a third participant who described the combination of work and caring as being a "real juggle". She works twenty hours a week and has five adult children – one daughter and four sons. She cares for her four local grandchildren (her daughter's three children and one son's child) every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 3pm to 6.30pm and on demand Tuesdays and weekends. Lydia is married to the father of her children and is 70 years old. Lydia gave an example of a recent week in order to illustrate what juggling work and care looks like:

- L: My daughter's at university on the Thursday so I cover the tea-time and Wednesday and Friday for my son and his wife. She works long hours and he's in business. She has the Monday off so that's covered, sometimes I get them on the Tuesday but definitely down for Thursday and Friday. Come the holidays I get the calendar out and we go through it you know. The first week of the holidays there was YMCA and play dates and the second week of the holidays I went to [a North Island town] to mind grandchildren and had to fit work around that. The week after the holidays was very busy to make up for it, it was a matter of catching up [on her paid work]
- C: How do you manage the catching up?
- L: Ah, let me see what's today? How do I do it? The key thing is being highly organised and starting work earlier on those days. I started finishing work at 3 last year so I could get the children but then I have to start earlier
- C: So do you get a sense of juggling things?
- L: Oh yes! All the bits, today's been a real juggle, yeah, popping into school to see one of them [grandchild], one of them had left a jacket at our place so I

dropped it in, quickly, before a meeting, oh definitely. It's going to the assemblies, a few weeks back Winnie [daughter] was caught at work and there was a camp meeting on so she said would I go up there and take her place and ring her so she could hear over the phone what was going on. The boy's broken his arm at school, I've gone to hospital in the ambulance with him and that's taken time away from work

C: What happens to your work if those kinds of unexpected

L: Well it usually works out but it depends on the priorities. I might cancel something, or you know, depending, I'd cancel something to do it. There is that, you know, the balls, it's the balls in the air. I think that's it, juggling, but it's sort of normal isn't it when you've had a family?

C: Well I was thinking about expectations like are there particular expectations for grandmothers to do this do you think?

L: Well. What I think is historically there are aren't there? You know, whether there will be, well you'll have to ask the next generation, but it hasn't gone has it? I suppose sometimes I feel a bit maybe pressured, the time pressure of things is definitely there. I suppose I come from the generation that seems to do those things.

Lydia's account details the organisation she undertakes in order to accommodate both employment and childcare. This level of detail is illustrative of the importance of her availability and flexibility, and demonstrative of her usefulness: Lydia describes herself as someone who is prepared to adjust her work schedule and cancel work events in order to help. She is the one who has to accommodate school holidays by being available and adjusting paid work in order to be available to parents and her grandchildren should it be necessary. She invokes a 'stand-in mother' storyline in her description of juggling employment in order to respond to emergencies and attend school-related activities; accompanying her grandson in an ambulance is a very specific example of an activity more commonly assigned to parents, particularly mothers, and not grandmothers who are also in paid employment. This is a further example of Lydia's accommodation of childcare whilst at the same time it is her paid work schedule that is adjusted and not the mother's or the parents'.

Of significance vis-à-vis juggling is the basis upon which Lydia determines her priorities. She narrates her prioritisation of the grandchildren's and parental needs; accommodating what is required and managing her paid work accordingly. Lydia accounts for her place in this family by storying all the extras she is involved with: her care is not limited to just dropping children off and picking them up. Lydia draws on normative familial narratives in her description of juggling the competing demands on her time; juggling is storied as a natural and expected part of family life as both a mother and a grandmother. This idea, commonly associated with mothers who work outside the home whilst caring for young children, has been extended to include Lydia's role as a grandmother and justifies her role in her family. Although storied as a natural part of family life, there are still repercussions from juggling time, paid work and childcare; Lydia uses the metaphor of "balls in the air", situating this in a construct of 'normal' family life.

When asked to account for whether there might be particular expectations on grandmothers to juggle, Lydia draws firstly on historic expectations of grandmothers to situate her own grandmothering practises; previous generations of grandmothers have had to juggle and this is what she has now inherited as an expectation of what grandmothering involves. She then also attributes the need to juggle time within her own generational expectations – nothing has changed across the life course for her generation. Lydia describes inheriting expectations that grandmothering is conducted in particular ways, and she includes the expectations from her earlier life as a mother to young children that have both continued onto and shaped her grandmothering. At the same time there is speculation about whether these generational expectations will continue for future generations. Grandmothering is something which has some inevitable and known aspects, evident in expectations, and it also contains unknown aspects, there is uncertainty as to what grandmothering will entail for further generations. In sum, the juggling of time is described as a normal and natural part of family life and also as shaped by historic expectations.

The above three participants have all described the tension between roles, juggling and balancing as ways to describe the experiences of paid work and grandchild care. They have been selected because they are illustrative of similar accounts of juggling, balancing and tension being a consequence of the responsibilities situated within grandmothering. Wider ideas of appropriate grandmother care position grandmothers, along with mothers, as the natural carers in the family. The three grandmothers in this section have situated their

childcare within an idea that the mothers are unavailable. Whether this unavailability is through the storying of maternal exhaustion (in Sarah's account), through being described as burdened by mothering (in Sylvie's account) and/or through maternal workplace demands, this maternal unavailability has shaped each grandmother's experience. These experiences include a requirement to balance and juggle childcare in order to manage other responsibilities including their own paid employment. On the one hand, juggling is storied as something which is helpful; it requires an ability to be organised and this organisation in turn allows for childcare and paid work to be managed. On the other hand, juggling can lead to tension and guilt particularly when paid work and childcare hours encroach on family time.

7.3 Juggling and balancing responsibility

This section presents extracts which discuss responsibility and where/who participants locate this within their provision of care. It is not only paid work and childcare which need to be balanced and juggled, responsibility is narrated as something which also needs to be balanced. Many participants described feeling a strong sense of responsibility when caring for their grandchildren. Some compared their experience of grandmother responsibility with their recollection of mother responsibility. At times, responsibility was described in terms of weight; with the implication that a grandmother responsibility is weighted differently than that experienced as a mother. The participants below all share a consciousness that their grandchild has been entrusted to their care and with this comes responsibility, primarily located with safety as outlined below. I begin with Sandra, who is the 65-year-old maternal grandmother of Tessa, aged two. She cares for Tessa every Friday, picking her up at 6.30am and returning her to her parents at 7pm. In order to accommodate Tessa, she takes Friday off work, although this has resulted in squeezing 40 hours into the remaining four weekdays. She often needs to work on Saturdays in order to 'catch up'. She is married to the father of her three adult children. She describes responsibility below:

7.3.1. Sandra's story

"You're caring for someone very very precious"

S: You're conscious of the responsibility that you've got, that you're caring for someone very, very precious and while your own children are very precious and you don't want anything to happen to them, I don't want to come and

front up and say ‘I’m sorry I’ve damaged your child’ [laughs], ‘sorry I broke it’ [laughs]. You take care of your children just the same when you’re a mother but I think you’re probably a little more vigilant with a grandchild because you’re conscious that you’ve got that, that you’ve been given, that responsibility’s been handed over to you for that period of time. And they’re trusting you to look after their child so that’s actually quite a big thing for a parent. I mean you’re obviously applying all that experience that you’ve got with mothering. So there is that crossover because really I suppose essentially you’re filling a feminine caregiver role.

Sandra’s storying of responsibility is located within two narratives: the prioritising of the safety of children and the importance of trust. While she is careful to point out that both her children and her grandchild are precious, she considers that her grandchild warrants closer vigilance because responsibility has been “handed over”. Sandra locates the weight of responsibility within an idea that not only is her granddaughter “very very precious” but that she has been entrusted to look after a child that belongs to someone else. She narrates this trust within a construct of parental concern; the carefully considered relinquishing of parental care to grandmother care entails trusting that nothing will happen to their child. This transference of responsibility is described as something that the parents would not do lightly and the seriousness with which childcare decisions have been made have influenced Sandra’s consciousness of the responsibility she has.

Sandra stories a grandmother responsibility as different to the responsibility felt as a mother: it has implications for what can be said and done including the importance of vigilance toward accidents and a mindfulness of the trust which the parents have placed in her ability to care for their child. There are similarities between mothering and grandmothering but they are not the same; mothering is storied as not having the same onus of responsibility as grandmothering does. In the context of an accident occurring, although this is also not desirable when mothering, it is storied as less desirable when grandmothering. Responsibility is located fully with the grandmother; not with the grandchild and not with the parents. Sandra narrates it would be her fault should anything happen to cause hurt or damage to her granddaughter during her care.

Sandra also draws on her mothering experience to describe the caring she provides as a grandmother, positioning herself within a gendered storyline where caregiving is allocated to women on the basis of their being 'feminine'. Being a mother, a grandmother and a caregiver are storied as natural consequences of the category 'female' and this provides a basis on which Sandra can construct her role/s. Mothering provides the basis upon which grandmothering can be practised – there is a 'crossover' – and this is attributed to previous mothering experience and to a natural part of being in a caregiver role, based on gender. However, Sandra's description "feminine caregiving role" could also apply to other relationships including caring for children and others who are not related. There is an implication that caregiving is primarily a female activity and that as a female it is natural to take on responsibility for a child's wellbeing. This suggests that the biological relationship between Sandra, her daughter the mother, and her grandchild can be measured against other forms of caregiving and that the childcare provided by a grandmother is no different to the childcare provided by other females who are in a caregiving role.

7.3.2 Alice's story

"I want to return them in the same condition they came in"

The consciousness of responsibility and the preciousness of grandchildren that Sandra describes is echoed by Alice. Alice, 63, is a grandmother to three boys and a mother of three adult children. She works 20 hours a week, is married, and cares for two of her daughter's three boys 20 hours a week (the third is still a baby and her daughter is on parental leave). The two boys were aged two-and-half and four-and-a-half at the time of our interview.

A: Being a grandmother is easier than being a mother although the intensity of feeling is there just the same, surprisingly. I didn't expect that, but it is. I think I'm more relaxed about it. One thing that is probably less relaxed is that I always feel that I want to return them in the same condition they came in [both laugh] you know I don't want them sporting bruises on their forehead from falling over. I do let these boys do that but I'm just more conscious that I'm caring for my children's, my daughter and son-in-law's children and they, of course they're precious, they need to be returned, hopefully in the same state

C: So you're conscious of the responsibility?

A: Absolutely yeah yeah

C: Of these children in your care

A: That's right, whereas your own children you're actually encouraging them to do things but yeah, I think, it's different but there's still the depth of feeling yeah

Alice positions herself within an idea that mothers are expected to feel intensely toward their children and grandmothers less so; but at the same contradicts this in her description that the depth of feeling is the same regardless of the relationship. She notes this is unexpected; within Western nuclear family storylines, grandmothers are not expected to feel as intensely toward their grandchildren as their children. While the depth of feeling is storied as the same, responsibility is not. Her role of grandmother is contrasted with her role of mother; grandmothering appears to carry with it a different kind of responsibility. It is initially presented as easier than mothering, however Alice then stories a proviso about the need for vigilance.

There is an interesting use of the term 'precious' used also by Sandra; precious things are valuable and require a particular kind of care. This includes a vigilance toward accidents not occurring lest her care could be found wanting. Guarding against accidents is storied as a necessary part of her grandchild care and this affects notions of responsibility. Alice draws on expectations of mothering as she describes mothering in terms of a responsibility to encourage experimentation; grandmothering is storied as mostly exempt from this. It is all right to allow some mistakes, for instance falling over, but this should not be evident. Although Alice started her story by comparing grandmothering with mothering (grandmothering is easier and as a grandmother you can feel more relaxed than you might as a mother), the consciousness of the importance of nothing happening to damage her grandchildren results in an awareness of the weight of responsibility. It is not possible to experience the levels of responsibility necessary to ensure nothing happens to your grandchildren *and* to maintain the higher levels of relaxedness previously described.

7.3.3 Annie's story

"The weight is somehow different"

Annie, below, also draws on narratives of mothering to position herself relatively as a grandmother. She is the 68-year-old mother of three adult sons, the oldest of whom has a

daughter, Florence who is 18 months old. Annie cares for Florence 20 hours a week and she is self-employed for 20 hours a week. She is married to the father of her sons and begins with a contrast of mothering and grandmothering:

- A: The thing with mothering is thinking of all the things I could have done differently but I think that's a fairly common experience. Somehow, with grandmothering the weight is somehow different.
- C: The weight of?
- A: Although there's also my paid work, I am handing her back and so there is space. But actually, what I've found is it's not so much the work involved in caring it's the sense of responsibility for her [granddaughter] being okay. That she's going to be okay without her parents and the, I have flashes of her falling down the stairs or those sorts of things so. It's, I do think you know if I take her down to the playground, my god what if she [intake of breath], I don't act on that but the thought's there.
- C: Were you like that with your own children?
- A: Not, no, no
- C: So what's the
- A: No, and accidents happen and happened, so what's the edge? I don't know [pause] the edge is, yeah there's a response, is the responsibility more intensified cos it's just in short time chunks or something maybe, don't know, mmm. If something happened on my watch I would feel responsible even though I know there's no way Neil and Lisa would carry blame. I would position myself as somehow responsible [slowly] even though I could not have prevented it. So that's a weird, that's weird. I mean responsibility is not intrusive, it's just there

Annie's is the third extract which provides a clear example about the importance of holding responsibility that no harm befalls a grandchild. She describes the responsibility of ensuring her granddaughter's wellbeing which results in anxiety and the need to manage her fears and to balance these with responsibility. She also introduces grandmothering as carrying a different weight to mothering and there is a sense that the weight of mothering might have contributed to her doing things in particular ways as a mother. Weight differences in mothering and grandmothering also initially includes her paid work, however returning her

grandchild to her parents allows a space which alters the weight and allows for paid work to be accommodated. Annie draws a distinction between the work of caring and the responsibility she feels for her granddaughter's wellbeing. When compared, responsibility is narrated as a greater concern than any associated work that may be involved in caring. Responsibility is located with ensuring her granddaughter's physical safety and also her emotional wellbeing (whether her grandchild be will all right without her parents around). Holding both of these is storied as a responsibility and there is a sense that it almost becomes a fear; a conscious knowing that something might happen. It is not clear however as to how this knowing has occurred. There is a sense that fear is lurking; adding to responsibility and presenting possibilities of accidents occurring. A focus on being responsible for maintaining her granddaughter's wellbeing allows for anxiety to intrude and requires management by Annie. Annie also draws a distinction between the sense of responsibility she experiences with her granddaughter and the absence of this she experienced as a parent with young children.

Mothers are positioned within mothering narratives to be responsible for their children but at the same time can attribute childhood accidents to a natural part of growing up. In contrast, Annie's experience of grandmothering draws on ideas that childhood accidents are not allowable: good grandmothers do not allow accidents to befall their grandchildren and her own expectations of the grandmothering role including keeping children safe from harm requires fear to be managed. She acknowledges accidents can and do happen and that she would not be held to account by the parents should anything happen. There are two juxtapositions in Annie's account. The first is that the parents would not hold Annie accountable should anything happen to their daughter. The second is that in knowing this, Annie nonetheless would hold herself responsible whilst at the same time knowing (and absolving herself of responsibility in the process) that she could not have stopped an accident from happening. The responsibility Annie experiences as a grandmother is magnified when compared with responsibility as a mother. This has implications for her grandmothering role: as a grandmother there is an intensified responsibility for the duration the grandchild is in her care in contrast to a mothering responsibility which is not situated in short chunks of time. The apparent dichotomy between the sense of responsibility for her children's physical safety when young, and her granddaughter's physical safety is described by Annie as "the edge". This positions her with responsibility for ensuring her granddaughter's safety, while at the same time knowing (and thinking) that accidents do, and might, happen. It could however

also be an illustration of the seriousness with which Annie approaches her care of her granddaughter. Her story functions as an illustration of what she needs to manage when looking after her granddaughter and the tensions of managing fear and anxiety regarding the physical safety of her grandchild.

These three participants share an overarching narrative: the importance of ensuring that no harm comes to their grandchildren when in their care. A grandmother responsibility is felt differently to a mother responsibility; the *weight* is different and therefore holds different consequences for grandmothers. The difference is attributed to being entrusted with the care of a child; grandmothers are not the mothers and mothers are positioned within wider ideas to encourage exploration – accidents are likely and are perhaps expected. In contrast, grandmothers are positioned within wider notions to keep their grandchildren safe; it is generally not the grandmother’s role to encourage experimentation. This demarcates grandmother childcare as different to that provided by other people including mothers.

7.4 Navigating boundaries

The provision of grandchild care involves communicating with and navigating relationships with the parents; one of whom is usually the adult son or daughter. This section makes overt the juggling of family relationships that grandmothers must engage with when providing childcare. Many participants illustrated the importance of a careful and intentional management of these relationships; I have chosen extracts that illustrate how boundaries and relationships are negotiated and navigated vis-à-vis the grandmother-parent/mother relationship and the implications this has for the grandmother-grandchild relationship in the context of care provision. These three participants have also all been introduced earlier in the chapter; and I begin with Sandra, who describes the importance of the parental relationship in her provision of childcare to her granddaughter Tessa below.

7.4.1 Sandra’s story

“I keep my thoughts to myself”

- C: I wonder if there’s any particular aspect of navigating the parental relationships that you’d like to talk about?
- S: I’m always very conscious that I don’t cross any boundaries. I try to keep to their routine, they’ve got things they don’t allow Tessa to eat and I’m fine

with that, there's no challenges with that, it's probably cos it's my daughter and we've got a close relationship anyway. I keep my thoughts to myself when I think I might have done something differently cos ultimately it's their child and it's their call unless it's my advice that's asked for so that's been a learning curve. You know, you don't leap in and go 'oh actually I never did it that way' cos things have changed, you know the paradigms have changed

C: Oh ok. I was thinking about all the experience you bring as a mother you bring into the role of grandmother? And what do you do with that experience, how do you manage the lines

S: Yeah, it's quite difficult to manage that actually without coming across that you're wanting to take over so it's often 'have you thought about' or 'what I used to do' and trying to do that without being overbearing. It is a bit of a delicate balance. I can't say 'well actually you should be doing it this way' because I'm going to get their backs up but there are ways of saying it and they can take or leave it

The question I ask Sandra at this point in our interview includes a taken-for-granted assumption that parental relationships are something that require navigation. This assumption draws on wider shared understandings regarding the importance and authority of parents in their children's lives and childcare arrangements. For Sandra, navigating parental/grandmother relationships involves a recognition of territory; there are boundaries which should not be crossed. She draws on the construct of relational boundaries to position herself as staying on the 'right side' of the line; that is the line that recognises parental authority. She also describes the vigilance required in her reflexive account of continually ensuring this. The parents are storied as the ones in charge; their role is primary, and Sandra's is secondary in terms of caring for Tessa. Sandra constructs her role as a grandmother as deferential to the parents, and one way that she stories her management of boundaries is abiding by parental rules which include Tessa's routine and the food rules. This is not challenging; and the reason for this is attributed to the closeness between her and her daughter.

Mother-daughter closeness notwithstanding, Sandra stories the importance of waiting to be asked and not 'leaping in' with suggestions. This is accounted for through Sandra's storying of the ways things have changed; situating her as not knowing enough about mothering to be able to offer advice. Her mothering experience is therefore discounted and rendered almost

obsolete. For experience to count and to be relevant, there is the suggestion that you need to be in the role currently. At the same time, her mothering experience is storied as being still legitimate however it needs to be couched in such a way as to not undermine parental authority. This is a difficult balance and requires careful thought about how to make her mother experience available. It is not acceptable to seem as though you want to take over the mothering role and this would be demonstrated through the unsolicited giving of advice. Sandra has worked out that it is important to ask a question or offer a suggestion and there is a manner in which these are able to be delivered that is likely to be more palatable to the parents; that will not cause offence. The management of this – offering advice, asking questions – is a matter of delicate balance. If not articulated with the right amount of care, the balance could be upset and the parental-grandmother relationship put at risk.

Sandra makes explicit how the weight of mothering knowledge and experience along with the risks of interfering can be felt acutely when she states “I have got a lot of experience but I can’t say well actually you should be doing it this way because I will get her (daughter’s) back up”. Sandra draws on a common parental discourse to position herself and her daughter; authority rests with her daughter to mother in the way she decides, and her role of grandmother is constrained by her inability to speak out – interfering is wrong and allowing her daughter the authority to stipulate how care will be carried out is right.

7.4.2 Alice’s story

“We won’t hold back from saying things”

Alice’s account below differs from Sandra’s account, not only because it describes her husband’s involvement in navigating boundaries but because she includes place and space:

- C: How have you navigated the parental relationship?
- A: Before Alexandra [daughter] even had children my husband said “you know that when your children are here they’re going to be abiding by our rules” and he also said “you might not always want our advice but that’s up to you, you do it your way but we won’t hold back from saying things”.
- C: Okay. What was that like for you?
- A: I thought that was cool. We won’t hold back but whether you do it or not that’s absolutely up to you, that’s your choice. We’ll do whatever. There are

definitely differences in upbringing but I think Alexandra is quite happy with what I do. I am conscious of her wishes at times if it might be a bit different. When I'm around at her house I don't interfere, that's their rules, if that's what they want to do. I might have an opinion and say "have you thought of such-and-such" or something but it's absolutely their decision. The only difference is I think they make life hard for themselves but at the end of the day it's totally their choice even though sometimes I wish they'd follow through!
[laughs]

C: Is there ever a tension between navigating support and not interfering, is that a fine line to walk at times?

A: I think it's probably yes, I just have to tell myself sometimes "stop" cos one of the kids might be doing something here and Alexandra says something and I say something and I think ooh they don't need both of us saying something so I'll shut up. So it's sometimes making sure that I, it's just allowing the parents to take the lead when they're here. When I'm looking after the boys I take the lead and so it is actually consciously stepping back and allowing Alexandra to take the lead. If Alexandra's had a go and the kids haven't listened I might have a go at seeing if they'll listen but if Alexandra sort of says "stop" that's it I wouldn't override that.

My question to Alice "how have you navigated the parental relationship?" like my question to Sandra, has undoubtedly shaped Alice's response, with its implicit assumption that parental relationships require navigation. Alice's account also invokes the importance of territory; this time however it is the physical space that is important as she describes a boundary being drawn between her and her husband's house and that of her grandchildren's parents. The physical space matters in terms of childcare as it influences what is able to be said and not said. Alice makes a distinction between the two houses as she stories a place-based authority regarding whose rules prevail. This is in stark contrast to Sandra's account where parental rules prevailed regardless of physical place; in Alice's and her husband's house, *their* rules apply when the grandchildren are being cared for. Authority extends to the giving of advice; whether sought or not and whether it is acted on or not is irrelevant; what is storied as important is the boundary and authority that the home territory provides. The physical space, whilst important, is also dependent on who is in that space as that determines who has authority to speak and what is able to be spoken.

There are exceptions however: firstly, the giving of grandparent advice can be given at either home, however in the parental home the giving of advice is described by Alice as having “an opinion”. Additionally, she takes care to mention that advice-giving does not constitute interfering with parental rules. Secondly, Alice stories her deference to her daughter when her daughter and/or the son-in-law and grandchildren are in the grandparents’ house. Alice draws on ideas of what children need to support her in her decision to hand over authority; children do not need to have parental authority undermined by their grandmother and they should not be overwhelmed with too many adult voices. Wider parental ideas situate mothers (and fathers) as rightfully in charge of their children and Alice also draws on this to position herself with less authority than her daughter. The only time it is permissible to intervene is to support her daughter to be taken seriously by her children. This is illustrative of Alice’s awareness of a boundary line and the effect that crossing over it will have on the children.

The handing over of authority from Alice to her daughter is storied as a conscious stepping back; in the usual course of events the care of the grandchildren is Alice’s responsibility when they are in her home and this entails ‘taking the lead’. This is also in contrast to Sandra’s account; Sandra described following the parents’ lead when caring for her granddaughter. There are two versions of the navigation of boundaries. Childcare is either provided on the parents’ terms irrespective of place and space boundaries, or it is provided on the grandparents’ terms, perhaps *because* of place and space boundaries.

7.4.3. Lydia’s story

“If you don’t say something who will?”

In the extract below, Lydia positions herself differently again vis-à-vis parental/grandmother authority as she describes the importance for her of speaking out:

C: What happens if the parents are parenting in a way or they do something that you don’t agree with?

L: I’d say something to them on the quiet, I would yeah

C: Have you done that?

L Oh yes

C: What’s been the effect, has it been okay to do that?

L: It was ok for me [both laugh] I usually side with my daughter-in-law, tell my son to pull his socks up or whatever. But yes I think so cos I sometimes think if you don't say something who will? No-one will, you know what I mean, it's just part of loving really isn't it?

Somewhat in contrast to Alice and Sandra, Lydia narrates a different kind of boundary. This boundary is one which does not completely rely on recognising parental or maternal authority or the importance of space and place and navigating that vis-à-vis care. Rather, it is storied by Lydia as one that draws on ideas of relationship rights and responsibilities in order to justify speaking out. This speaking out cannot be done anywhere however. It involves the management of an appropriate time and place and Lydia draws on wider notions centred on the importance of not undermining parental authority as she explains the importance of speaking to the parents privately and not speaking out publicly. It is unclear what type of parenting Lydia might find disagreeable however it is evident there has been parenting she has witnessed that has not been acceptable to her and which she has spoken out about.

Lydia narrates that it is her responsibility as a grandmother to speak out should she witness a parenting practise she does not agree with. This is in contrast to the two earlier extracts where recognising parental and maternal authority was narrated as important. Lydia can account for speaking out by attributing it to part of loving and there is the suggestion that she is filling a vacuum no one else will fill. This acts to justify speaking out; it is narrated as a responsibility and a natural part of family life. Wider ideas position people outside the family with less authority to comment particularly on matters concerning the private domain of family relationships. Lydia's mother role provides justification for her to chastise her son; she describes this as part of her role and at the same time she stories her support of her daughter-in-law.

All three participant extracts in this section describe the different ways in which the boundary between parental and grandparental rights to speak (and act) are negotiated. Sandra's account privileged the importance of the parental voice; drawing on wider ideas of parental authority to do so. Alice described the role that the physical place and space have in the navigation of whose voice is able to be heard and when; and Lydia storied the importance of being heard, situating it as a responsibility she held. Place and space were important in Lydia's account also; any speaking should be done in private. The navigation of boundaries as defined by

these three participants also includes holding a consciousness of parental authority while at the same time ensuring relationships are not affected, particularly between mothers and daughters; in Lydia's account this was extended to her daughter-in-law.

7.5 Discussion

This discussion section will examine the influences on the interface of paid work and grandchild care. These influences include how wider social and cultural ideas shape understandings regarding the juggling and balancing of paid work and childcare, the balancing of responsibility and the navigation of family relationships. The personal stories of juggling and balancing childcare and paid work and the responsibilities attributed to these are reflective of and draw on publicly available narratives; it is women who are positioned to juggle paid work and childcare, and grandmothers are no exception.

It is not well known that grandmothers, in contrast to mothers, are also expected to balance the twin demands of work and care; including how this is achieved, and the consequent ramifications (see Meyer, 2014; Wang & Marcotte, 2007). Juggling and balancing paid work and childcare can be viewed as consequences of self-and-other expectations and these expectations draw from wider ideas of what constitutes appropriate grandmother care. Wider narratives shape grandmothers to be available to their children and their grandchildren and this applies whether in paid work or not. The presence of paid work alongside childcare introduces the need to juggle and balance both; to maintain equilibrium through organising life in order to meet competing demands on time. The grandmothers in this chapter – particularly Sylvie and Sarah - have described how paid work has encroached on the time available for childcare. In Sylvie's example, she lamented how her paid work acts as a constraint on her availability to care for her grandchildren and for Sarah, paid work and grandchild care impacted on the amount of time available for her to be with her teenage sons. Lydia refers to the importance of organisation and there is the unspoken assumption that she is the one who will undertake this. She also draws on normative gendered storylines to position herself as primarily responsible to juggle childcare and paid work: *“it's sort of normal isn't it when you've had a family”*. Drawing on constructs that childcare is women's work can enable grandmothers to evaluate their performance on their successful ability to juggle paid work, care, and home life. Failure to measure up can result in the “incredible tension” and “pangs of guilt” that Sarah describes.

The wider ideas of the importance of availability influenced the stories participants told; being highly organised and balancing care and employment were storied as unwelcome but necessary. The construct of availability means putting your family first and this positions employed grandmothers to manage the tension between their paid work and their obligations to family. This was felt acutely by Sylvie who storied her work demands as interfering with her ability to provide the type of care she thought appropriate in terms of what constitutes good grandmothereing.

Both Sylvie and Sarah storied their need to be in paid employment; at this point in their lives it is not optional. Good grandmothereing narratives include being there for your children and your grandchildren; particularly at the weekend which is traditionally characterised by the prioritisation of family time. Sarah's story is shaped by these ideas, she is acutely aware she is not fulfilling expectations of what constitutes a good mother as she describes the guilt she experiences at work encroaching on weekend time. This same construct shaped her ideas about the type of support she should provide to the mother of her grandchild: making decisions to provide care based on who is most deserving (the mother). Sylvie also drew on good mothering ideals to position herself with a desire to rescue her daughters from becoming overworked by the demands of motherhood. This is potentially disruptive of the good mothering narrative; if one has been a good mother, then one's adult children should not need rescuing from motherhood unless there is a legitimate way to do so. Sylvie refers to this, by drawing on her experience of raising twins, situating Sylvie with the mothering expertise which can be used to make her daughters lives easier.

Stress, worry, exhaustion and ill-health are some of the experiences the grandmothers in this chapter have storied as a result of combining paid work and childcare. Achieving balance through juggling was narrated as elusive and as creating tension; paid work and childcare were described as existing uneasily together, at least for Sylvie and Sarah. One inevitably gives way to the other – sometimes through need, evidenced in both Sylvie's and Sarah's accounts in their prioritisation of employment – and in Lydia's by her prioritisation of childcare. Wider gendered narratives situate working and caring grandmothers in a challenging position; exemplified by the ways in which these participants storied their endeavours to accommodate both childcare and paid work. Storied as a “constant juggle” by Sylvie and having “all the balls in the air” by Lydia results in ill health, worry and tiredness.

Participants storied the ways in which responsibility manifested in their care and in doing so drew on both grandmothing and mothering narratives. Mothering narratives allow for a responsibility which includes experimentation and ‘accidents’ to be a normal and natural part of childhood, essential for proper development. All three participants drew on this idea in their stories of their mothering and then drew a stark contrast with grandmothing. Narratives of grandmothing associated with responsibility allow for a temporary responsibility only (at least in the context of regular, informal care) and this temporary responsibility was storied as one which did not allow for mishaps; instead careful vigilance was required. There are tensions which derive from the weight of responsibility and these are multiplied as the grandmothers in this chapter endeavour to make sense of the differences between mothering and grandmothing responsibilities as well as their adult children’s expectations around childcare.

It is tempting to imagine that grandmothers would experience some freedom from the kinds of responsibilities that mothers are positioned to feel toward their children, however the three participants in this section of the chapter have storied an intense kind of responsibility and the mechanisms of how it works when the grandmother is the carer. Parental narratives position parents with ultimate responsibility for their children; participant accounts described how responsibility is handed over on the premise of trust that the children will be well looked after. All participants drew on their experiences as mothers with young children to describe their roles as requiring less vigilance toward their children: whilst accidents were not encouraged, they were able to be accommodated with an ease; in contrast to grandmothing. If their care can be described as intensive⁴ – and literature suggests it can – then grandmothers are positioned to be extra vigilant, fully present and responsible. This includes occupying and engaging their grandchildren in activities of their choosing while at the same time ensuring no harm befalls them. Achieving the subject position of ‘sufficient grandmother’ within grandmothing discourse is connected with an ability to protect grandchildren from harm. Alice, Sandra and Annie all story their awareness of the importance of protecting their grandchildren from accidents and there is a heightened need to return grandchildren to their parents in a pristine condition.

⁴ Intensive grandmothing is defined as when grandmothers assume childcare responsibilities over and above casual and occasional visits and which include day-to-day care of the kind required by this study (Meyer, 2014).

The role of grandmother has been shown to be a role which is generally dependent on the parent generation for how and when contact with grandchildren takes place (see Barnett, Scaramella et al., 2010; Sandberg, 2016; Arber & Timonen, 2012). The relationship between grandmother and grandchild is therefore a contingent one: dependent on the parental generation. Studies show that there is an important role mothers play in the relationship between grandmother and grandchild and that the quality of this relationship is also influential in the quality of the grandmother-grandchild relationship (see Fingerman, 2004). This was borne out in participant accounts: Sandra drew on ideas of the primacy of mother-daughter relationships to describe their relationship as “close” and Alice’s description of her relationship with her daughter drew on the importance of mothers in grandmother-grandchild relationships in her consciousness of the importance of stepping back and allowing her daughter to assume authority. Lydia also storied her support of her daughter-in-law as someone she would usually “side with”.

Dominant Western family discourse positions grandmothers to be there but not interfere (see Arber & Timonen, 2012). Non-interference is prioritised as important because of normative understandings about independent adulthood and parenthood. Interference from a grandmother can suggest insufficient mothering (a good mother will result in an independent and able adult child) and this can put the parental position at risk while at the same time undermine the grandmother’s position within the good grandmother narrative (see May et al., 2012). Good grandmothers should not undermine parental authority or the parent-child relationship but at the same time should be available for advice when asked. The stories Sandra and Alice told are reflective of this and both included the importance of not overstepping parental/maternal boundaries, although in Alice’s account there was less concern about this depending on whose home the boundaries were enacted in. Navigating the territorial boundary of support and non-interference requires grandmothers to negotiate what this means for them in practise, borne out in Sandra’s account of her consciousness of not crossing boundaries and in Alice’s account of the difference that physical space makes to boundaries. Lydia’s story drew on different ideas however. Whilst she acknowledged the importance of not undermining parents in front of their children (and in so doing drew on wider ideas of the importance of the parent-child relationship), at the same time speaking out was not attributed to interference but rather to family love which is able to transcend boundaries of what might or might not be permissible to speak.

Not interfering marks a moral boundary for grandmothers, evidenced in Sandra's account as she described the difficulties of maintaining the boundary. She ascribed the ability to be on the right side of the boundary (that is, complying) by exercising diplomacy and relying on her daughter to let her know should she cross the boundary: *"I'm reasonably diplomatic and I've got a very good relationship with my daughter which helps, she'll tell it to me straight if she feels I've gone too far"*. That is, her daughter determines where the boundary is and not the grandmother. This reflects familial hierarchy, where the parents (not the grandparents although they are older) are positioned to have the authority over their children and how their children are cared for. Not interfering is complex; as grandmothers are in continuing and active relationships with their adult child the parent, as well as with the grandchild, they are therefore mothering and grandmothering simultaneously. Alice also storied the importance of stepping back from her role of mother, in the interests of grandmothering, and allowing her daughter to mother.

'Being there' for support was also described as important; the navigation of the interface between availability and non-interference denotes recognising the importance of supporting parents/mothers with childcare and managing previous mothering and current grandmothering experiences. This management should ideally result in not overstepping into interference as either a mother or a grandmother. It therefore requires a juggling of identities, present throughout this chapter in accounts of responsibility and the negotiation of authority. Lydia's account illustrated clearly her simultaneous mothering and grandmothering – drawing on her authority as a mother and a grandmother in order to speak out about their parenting if necessary. Sandra described her mothering experience as obsolete, however she then storied the ways in which she could draw on her mothering in order to offer advice in non-interfering ways that would then be palatable to the parents. Alice drew on her experience as a mother and a grandmother in what she named as expressing of opinions (at the home of her daughter) and as the giving of advice (in her own home). All three participant stories are however, demonstrative of the ways in which the boundary between parental and grandmother rights to speak and act are negotiated and managed.

Alice's account is one which characterised the importance of physical context in the delineating of boundaries. Home is storied as the place which allows an imperative to speak, to act and to care in particular ways. Alice's description included the importance of the parents acknowledging that when their children were in the grandparents' physical space that

their (the grandparents') rules would prevail. In the parents' home this was different however as Alice stated "when we're around at their house, that's their rules". This is in contrast to Sandra's account; her care of her granddaughter is in her own home, however parental rules still apply. Parental and grandparental authority can be, but are not always defined by the physical boundaries a home imposes; drawing on wider ideas of place and space in boundary drawing. The rules which govern home spaces are important aspects of familial relationships, shaping how decisions are made and by whom (Cox & Narula, 2003). Within the home space, where childcare takes place, families make decisions about what occurs and when and how; these are also shaped and influenced by wider social, political and gendered structures. Conradson (2003) suggests that the home is a site where boundaries are negotiated particularly with regard to what is considered private; this includes the provision of care. Consideration for boundaries and rules is therefore bound by the home space and shapes what is admissible and what is not.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the responsibility that grandmothers experience in caring while working and the navigation of parental boundaries required. Juggling and balancing paid work and childcare involves the simultaneous juggling of responsibility (rather than any associated tasks) along with the navigation of familial relationships. Some participants such as Sarah and Sylvie described juggling other domains of care including caring for ageing parents and their own younger children. Although gender was not mentioned explicitly in any of the extracts in this chapter, there are a number of wider social, cultural and gender expectations that shape childcare. It is primarily viewed as women's work; it is therefore up to women to balance both, to manage the associated responsibilities and to navigate parental and familial relationships. The domestic sphere is where the politics of family play out, and grandmother care is situationally dependent on these physical and domestic spaces. Juggling and balancing also involves the management of the politics of family and the navigation of familial boundaries around care.

Participants in this chapter have storied aspects of these in their extracts; the overarching idea however is one of balancing and juggling. Whether this is endeavouring to balance the hours of paid employment with childcare, or the navigation of boundaries, they occur within the politics of family life. Not only have participants storied their careful management of

accommodating and juggling paid work and childcare, they have also storied their careful management of family relationships. This includes the importance of the grandmother-mother relationship; if this is disrupted it is possible that the grandmother-grandchild relationship could be adversely affected. Maintaining this relationship requires attending to notions of responsibility as well as knowing your place as a grandmother which includes acknowledging maternal authority. This requires managing the simultaneous roles of mothering and grandmothering, juggling the identities of both within the complexity of family relationships.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

8.1. Introduction

The principal aim of this research was to examine the ways in which participants storied their experiences of being in paid employment and providing regular childcare to their grandchildren. The key constructs identified and discussed in the preceding three chapters included the place that childcare support has in the construction of identity, the implications for grandmothering when childcare is provided through concern, and the balancing of paid work and childcare commitments. These key constructs will now be contextualised within two wider, public narratives: the caring narrative, and the employment narrative. These two narratives provide the structure, along with existing literature, within which the key analytical findings are situated and discussed. The chapter begins with the caring narrative, which outlines the public narratives of care before describing the two key findings which are situated within these: care as a ‘labour of love’ and ‘childcare as relational’. The employment narrative outlines the wider ideas of paid employment and how these contribute to the other key findings of this study: grandmother support for maternal employment, and the role of paid employment in the lives of grandmothers. The chapter continues with a discussion of the intersection of both the narratives of caring and paid employment and focusses on the construct of balance; one of the foci of this study. This section also includes a discussion on gender. Gender was a specific focus for the study in the setting of the research questions, and gender informs how childcare and paid work is understood and how they are both experienced. The chapter concludes with an outline of the limitations of this study.

8.2. The caring narrative

Wider narratives of care describe being cared for as a basic human need (Nussbaum, 2000); as an indicator of humanity (Kittay, 2011); as essential to a good life and a prerequisite for wellbeing (Engster, 2005). Caring for someone has been constructed as engendering belonging, a sense of importance and appreciation – to not provide care is to deprive people of a good existence (Lynch, 2007). Care narratives exist across various contexts and because of this defining care has been described as problematic (Tronto, 2013) and as contested and ambiguous (Daly & Lewis, 2000). In the 1990s feminist studies recognised the importance of the contexts in which care took place, broadened to include both private and public domains,

paid and unpaid, involving work and emotion provided mainly by women to adults and children (Thomas, 1995). In the domestic context the unpaid and emotional aspect of care has been emphasised whilst in the public context the practical nature of care has been the focus along with the paid/unpaid binary (José, 2016).

Narratives of care also describe care as a relational endeavour. Care provision includes caring *about* (foreseeing unmet needs), taking care *of* someone (the responsibility to meet needs) and caregiving (the practical tasks of care) (Tronto, 1993). Relational caring in the context of family includes a focus on the importance of attachment, engagement and intensity with a corresponding high level of the significance of care (Lynch, 2007). Within family a commitment to care includes ideas of continuity - characterised as an ongoing commitment over time - to doing 'overtime' and being 'on call' with a moral and legal imperative to care for young children constructed as stronger than other forms of care including caring for a parent and other family members (Barnes, 2005; Lynch, 2007). When care is provided within the context of family relationships it is also associated with (and understood to encompass) love, affection and responsibility (Phillips, 2007). This forms part of a wider idea of what constitutes 'good care' which positions people to act ethically and to demonstrate commitment (Sayer, 2005).

Caring is not undertaken in a vacuum; it is located within wider contexts of gender, socio-politics, power and culture. Moral imperatives to care are widely constructed as much stronger for women than men and women are disproportionately represented in both informal and formal care (Daly, 2001; Reay, 2005; Tronto, 1993). Decisions to care are shaped by these gendered constructs of moral obligation and these have been described as often non-negotiable (Craig & Jenkins, 2016). Feminist literature has drawn attention to the importance of constructing care both ideologically and structurally as labour, and labour moreover principally undertaken by women (Lynch, 2007). When care is located within the family it is referred to as a 'labour of love' (Graham, 1983). Love labour ideas emphasise the work required to sustain primary care relationships, including love, commitment, attention, time, energy and resources. It is also characterised by obligation, itself derived from the kind of dependencies humans naturally have as part of a relational existence (Lynch, 2007). Love labour is therefore emotionally engaging; its main goal is the development and wellbeing of the other. Constructing care as a labour of love means there are expectations for higher levels of attentiveness and responsiveness than other forms care might take. It is also often unpaid,

when care is situated within naturalised notions of familial love it is understood as a contribution that is made freely (Lynch, 2007).

Beliefs regarding the proper care of children are situated in time and place contexts and informed by cultural and socio-political values which are also influenced by wider structures including social and economic policies and workplaces. These structures reflexively intersect with ideology, reifying care practises (Craig & Jenkins, 2016). Caring for children in Aotearoa New Zealand, a liberal welfare country, locates childcare as a private responsibility and not a public concern (Craig & Jenkins, 2016). The private domain of the home remains the site where childcare is regarded to be of higher quality than that able to be provided by the public realm (Jenkins, 2013). These narratives of care structure and shape decisions to care and in the context of grandmothering, influences the practises of childcare, and descriptions of what constitutes ‘good grandmothering’ (Santero & Naldini, 2020).

This chapter will now situate the two key analytical findings of this study pertaining to care, which draw on the wider caring narratives outlined previously. The first is that childcare is an *intensive labour of love* which requires grandmothers to take responsibility and to prioritise the grandchild’s wellbeing. The second is that *childcare is relational*, undertaken within familial relationships which shape assumptions about grandmother care including availability. Whilst availability could be illustrative of both findings, in terms of this study it is more clearly located within the relational care construct.

8.2.1. *Childcare is an intensive labour of love*

Current understandings regarding childcare practises in countries such as Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand suggest that the care of children requires sustained, focussed and intensive levels of attention (Craig & Jenkins, 2016; Ehrenreich & English, 2005; Gray et al., 2008). Neo-liberalism has been attributed to motherhood becoming intensified with its focus on the family, and notions of personal responsibility (Lewis, 2010). Intensive mothering ideals prescribe mothers to be fully responsible for childcare, to be fully devoted, even putting the needs of their children before their own (Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018; Rizzo et al., 2013; Henderson et al., 2016). This idea of intensive childcare, which has been mainly centred on mothering, has recently been extended to include grandparenting (Meyer, 2014). Accounts of care in this study drew on these ideas, shaping expectations that grandmothers

should provide a standard of care which not only lived up to but exceeded that which a mother is expected to provide. Social expectations regarding standards of mothering can position mothers to be the gatekeepers of the care of their children, and this is also linked to the wider idea of intensive motherhood. Positioned as being in charge, mothers must not only mother intensively; the care they seek for their children needs to be based on decisions about what will be best for their child as this will reflect on their mothering capability (Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018). The childcare provided by grandmothers, situated within an intensive 'labour of love' narrative shaped the finding that the childcare grandmothers provide is second only to parental childcare because the care is based on love (Jenkins, 2013; Share & Kerrins, 2009).

The caring as a labour of love narrative positions grandmothers to provide childcare freely, without financial compensation and on the basis of love; holding the best interests of grandchildren at heart. Reflected in the findings of this study and supported in literature, the 'labour' aspect incorporates taking responsibility for a grandchild's safety and wellbeing - however to construct this as 'work' would potentially undermine the loving relationships in which their care is located. Literature notes that childcare undertaken by grandmothers within this context does not easily translate into paid work: the two appear mutually exclusive (Lynch & Lyons, 2008). Although the term 'labour of love' was not specifically used in this study, the accounts of care reflect the ideas associated with this narrative. The intensive care construct and its invoking of vigilance and responsibility suggests work to sustain the level of care it requires.

A clear finding in this study was how accounts drew on the wider construct of intensive grandmothering in stories of vigilance toward grandchildren, situating the grandchild's safety and wellbeing as paramount. This is supported in overseas literature: intensive grandmothering is understood to be central to the wellbeing of children and their sense of belonging (Goodfellow & Lavery, 2003; Mitchell, 2007; Ochiltree, 2006; Arber & Timonen, 2012). This idea shapes and influences how grandmothers approach responsibility when they are providing care; that is, it is an intensive responsibility (Sjöberg & Bertilsdotter-Rosqvist, 2017). It is clear from this study that grandmothers take on this particular kind of responsibility when caring for their grandchildren, in order to provide a level of care equal to, or better than the care a mother provides (Worrall, 2009). Grandmother childcare has been described as the next best thing to the childcare a mother provides and this positions

grandmothers with a responsibility to live up to societal and parental expectations regarding childcare.

Prioritising the wellbeing of a grandchild was a central finding in this study and when wellbeing is compromised grandmothers are positioned within caring narratives to be the ones to intervene. When parenting does not fit social and cultural norms including the prioritisation of children's wellbeing, grandmothers are seen as the preferred and best option (Engstrom, 2008; Taylor et al., 2018). When parenting is situated outside normative good parenting practises, grandmothers step in, positioned to compensate for parental shortcomings in order to maximise the wellbeing of their grandchildren. In this study, compensation, in the form of replacement parenting, increased the intensity of grandmother responsibility resulting in accounts of stress and conflict reflected also in literature (Cooper, 2012; Denby, 2011; Sampson & Hertlein, 2015). Findings from this study indicate that the provision of care in the context of concern draws on both the 'care as a labour of love' narrative and care as 'relational' idea.

8.2.2. *Childcare is relational*

The wider caring narrative situates caring as a relational activity. The 'caring is relational' idea highlights the intergenerational connections between grandparents, parents, and children and situates the care of grandchildren within the interconnections of family relationships. It also positions grandmothers to monitor and manage family relationships. This relational management was clearly illustrated when care was provided on the basis of concern, requiring an awareness toward husbands/partners and any adult children living at home. This finding is supported by international literature; studies note that grandmothers have a "generational responsibility" to parents and grandchildren, which is magnified in contexts where there are concerns (Goodfellow, 2003, p.11) The negotiation of childcare and the decisions made within the family draw not only from the 'caring is relational' idea but also from wider gendered and social ideas situating women as natural carers. The care of grandchildren takes place within a context of the family; a key site for childcare and where decisions about childcare are made (Hayes, 2010; Jenkins, 2013). Shared understandings of the family include assumptions about care: it is something that people, usually women, in families do and family care is constructed in wider ideas as the quintessential ideal of care

(José, 2016). Within the family, it is primarily mothers who are positioned to be in charge of everything pertaining to the care of their children (Sjöberg & Bertilsdotter-Rosqvist, 2017).

Locating childcare within this relational caring construct produces implications for grandmothers; this study found that the quality of the relationship between mothers and grandmothers matters and this is well established in literature; it is primarily mothers who set the terms for childcare (Fingerman, 2004). This shapes how grandmothers approach childcare; drawing on the idea that mothers are in charge, grandmothers in this study were positioned to not offer unsolicited advice. In contrast, this study also found that drawing on this concept highlighted the grandmothers' own role as mothers and this position of mother allowed for advice to be given even when unsolicited. The idea that mothers are in charge is therefore one that was available to some grandmothers in this study, as mothers themselves, dependent on whether they were speaking or acting from the mother or the grandmother position.

In this study, drawing on the relational caring idea resulted in the importance of knowing the boundaries between mothering and grandmothering, demonstrated through a recognition of maternal authority and the importance of not intruding. To not recognise this authority is to potentially put the maternal-grandmother relationship at risk (Buchanan & Rotkirch, 2018; May, Mason & Clarke, 2012). The accounts of grandmothers aligned with this also; supported by overseas literature which also notes the importance of boundaries, locating the responsibility to not intrude into maternal territory with grandmothers and not with mothers (Harper & Ruicheva, 2010). The relational construct emphasises the relationship between mothers and grandmothers – not only on the basis of gender and therefore their role as carers – but because a good relationship between grandmothers and mothers has been shown to lead to more involvement with grandchildren (Fingerman, 2004).

The relational caring construct includes multiple caring roles; for example, all the grandmothers in this study were also mothers and therefore they are mothering their adult children at the same time that they are caring for grandchildren. Being positioned as a grandmother and a mother are potentially competing positions to navigate. For example, one of the dominant ideas in literature regarding good grandmothering is the paradoxical idea of the importance of being available for support whilst at the same time not interfering (Breheny et al., 2013; Harper & Ruicheva, 2010; May et al., 2012). A 'good grandmother' is

constructed as someone who does not interfere and grandmothers who drew on this narrative situated their childcare on the 'right' side of the interference/non-interference boundary. A 'good mother' is constructed as someone with the authority to be in charge and to speak out. For grandmothers who drew on the relational caring idea to situate themselves as mothers, this boundary was less clear or irrelevant. Situating themselves as mothers of adult mothers allowed for the expressing of opinions and the giving of advice without needing to be mindful of the importance of non-interference. At the same time, grandmothers constructed their adult children as independent, drawing on ideas of sufficient personhood, which situates adults to be self-determining and autonomous (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005; McNay, 2004). These notions could produce conflict; ongoing mother/grandmother availability could compromise independence (Lye, 1996; May et al., 2012).

A common assumption arising from the relational care concept is the ongoing availability of grandmothers for childcare provision. Wider ideas emphasising the role of grandmothers' childcare provision rests on assumptions of availability, willingness and resources (Jenkins, 2013). At the same time this normalises grandmothers' practices and influences how grandmothers approach and understand childcare. The stories of grandmothers in this study drew on this idea of availability in descriptions prioritising unexpected childcare events and their prioritisation over paid employment. This has been described in literature as the 'caring face' of the normative 'not interfering' discussed above (May et al., 2012). That is, not interfering is still regarded as key, however there are circumstances – most notably unscheduled events or health emergencies - when not interfering would position grandmothers within the relational care idea as not caring sufficiently.

The relational care construct can presuppose the availability of grandmothers to provide childcare. Drawing on this idea, grandmothers can be required to have to identify valid reasons for imposing limits on their childcare. In this study, paid employment was constructed as a valid reason for unavailability; allowing childcare to be provided within the time constraints paid employment imposed. This is supported by international studies which suggest paid employment provides a useful justification for imposing limits on childcare (Meyer, 2014). In contrast, other studies have found that some grandmothers want to provide limitless care and support (Arber & Timonen, 2012). This will be discussed more fully in the following paid employment section.

In sum, the wider ideas regarding care shape the childcare grandmothers provide; central to the findings of this study were the intensive ‘labour of love’ and the relational caring constructs. These have formed the understandings contributing to this research and within which grandmother childcare is situated.

8.3. The employment narrative

8.3.1. Public narratives on maternal and grandmother employment

Contemporary narratives focussed on women’s paid employment have shifted from an ideological justification for women’s engagement in paid work being limited to various points in the life course to an acceptance and active promotion that women should and will be in paid employment from leaving school through to older age. This is reflected by the majority of women across Western countries being in paid employment (McKie et al., 2001). In 2014, almost 64 percent of women in Aotearoa New Zealand were in paid employment with a third of those in part-time paid employment (Morrissey, 2015). Over the lifetime of this cohort of women there have been shifts in the patterns of workforce participation. After World War II and the start of the ‘baby-boomer’ generation, it became gradually more acceptable that married women were in paid employment; they were particularly needed as teachers, administrators and nurses (Te Ara, n.d.). By 1966, women constituted 27 percent of the paid workforce and of these, 41 percent were married women. However, up until 1972, married women were taxed at the higher secondary tax rate; a reminder that their paid work was regarded as secondary to men’s (Te Ara, n.d.). The hegemonic male breadwinner model prevalent in the 1950s through to the 1980s shaped women’s participation in the paid workforce, rendering it as largely unnecessary and positioning women as dependent on men for financial security (Olson, 2002). By the early twenty-first century, women were not only ‘permitted’ to be in paid employment, they were expected to be in paid work and were also expected to be able to support themselves and their children if necessary. At the same time women continued to undertake the majority of unpaid work including care work despite the fact that by 2014, paid employment was regarded as ‘normal’ for women with children with 70 percent of partnered mothers in paid work (Te Ara, n.d.). As at June 2020, 474,700 women between the ages of 50 and 70 years were in paid employment, and 28,000 women over seventy years old remain in paid employment.

Neo-liberalism has shaped attitudes toward ageing and paid employment in ways which are relevant to this study. All grandmothers were part of the previously described ‘baby-boomer’ generation used to describe those people born between 1946 and 1964. This generation is the first in Aotearoa New Zealand for whom there is no real incentive to retire from paid work. Not only has there been no official retirement age since 1992, from the age of 65 people are entitled to government funded superannuation payments and can also remain in paid employment. Neo-liberalism also places pressures on people to age well, be independent for as long as possible, and to be responsible citizens who make healthy choices to enable successful ageing. Participation in this narrative constructs older women as ideal ageing ‘subjects’; not only are they positioned to be of benefit to communities, they are also encouraged to be less dependent on state provision (Dalingwater, 2018). These shape expectations for what older life will comprise and forms part of the backdrop against which grandmothers make their decision to remain in paid employment. Participation in the paid workforce has provided opportunities for women to define and refine their identity construction; paid work has been found to be linked to a sense of societal worth (Goldin, 2006). Whilst these ideas situate paid work as increasingly important as a source of fulfilment and a source for the construction of an identity other than that of child-carer, there is however still a tension. Competing narratives still position paid employment as secondary to the care of children, particularly for mothers, and, increasingly, grandmothers.

Research from the early years of the 21st century suggests that hegemonic intensive mothering ideologies influence maternal paid work decisions, informing ideas such as childcare being the primary responsibility of mothers and paid employment the responsibility of fathers (Blair-Loy, 2003; Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2013; Macdonald, 2011). In spite of this, numbers of employed mothers have increased; mothers are more likely to be in paid employment than not (Cohany & Sok, 2007). The ideology of intensive motherhood intersects with financial realities in women’s lives influencing how paid employment, motherhood and now grandmotherhood are experienced (Christopher, 2012). Within the construct of intensive motherhood, part-time employment is constructed as the only viable option in order for mothers to meet their childcare commitments – framed in some studies as women ‘having the best of both worlds’ (Jenkins, 2013; Callister & Singley, 2004; Tiedje, 2004). As such, the majority of mothers seek part-time employment, regarded as the best solution which allows for the satisfactory combination of paid work and children (McKie et al., 2001).

In contrast, other international studies indicate a rejection of the intensive mothering idea. The emerging concept of *extensive* mothering has been described as existing in response to social and cultural constructions of the ideal mother, that is, it challenges intensive mothering ideals (Christopher, 2012). Extensive motherhood constructs maternal employment as beneficial; there are emotional benefits for mothers and there are financial benefits for mothers and their families (Lee & Bauer, 2013). It allows for the importance of building a career in order to increase wellbeing and gain some financial independence (Dow, 2016; Gerson, 2010). This contradicts the intensive motherhood concept where caring for children is constructed as sufficient; it is paid employment and not childcare that is situated as central to mothers' lives. Paid employment is not viewed as incompatible with mothering; the extensive mothering construct still positions the mother to be responsible for locating high quality replacement child carers. That is, mothers are required to delegate childcare to others; usually women and most likely grandmothers, reinforcing gendered notions that childcare should be allocated on the basis of gender (Christopher, 2012). Extensive motherhood ideas therefore position mothers as responsible to find childcare that meets the expectations of intensive mothering ideals. Grandmother childcare meets these expectations, enabling mothers to focus on their paid work, or develop a career (Lee & Bauer, 2013).

The ideas outlined above which have been drawn on in this study regarding paid employment include the constructs of intensive and extensive motherhood. These both shape one of the key analytical findings regarding paid grandmothers' employment in this study, that is, grandmothers' support of paid employment for mothers. The social, cultural and political structures which shaped and continue to shape the paid employment of grandmothers are also influential in how paid employment is regarded by grandmothers, for themselves and for the mothers. This influences the second key finding regarding paid employment: the role that paid work has in the lives of grandmothers. These will each be discussed below. The intersection of paid work and childcare will be discussed separately.

8.3.2 Grandmother support of paid employment in the lives of mothers

The emergent wider idea of 'extensive mothering' shaped how grandmothers' constructed paid employment for the mothers in this study. Most international research which is centred on grandmothers' support of maternal paid employment draws from the intensive motherhood narrative, by justifying maternal employment on the basis of financial need in

order that mothers are able to fulfil their childcare responsibilities (Lakomy & Kreidl, 2015; Posadas & Vidal-Fernández, 2012; Whelan, 2012). The construct of intensive motherhood suggests that mothers in paid work produce adverse effects on their children, which can shape attitudes which favour grandmother care, as second-best to mother care rather than formal daycare provision (Steiber & Haas, 2009). The results of this study are inconsistent with such literature; one of the most striking findings of this research was how grandmothers drew on extensive mothering ideas to situate paid work as important for maternal wellbeing and career trajectories. This important finding has also been supported in a small number of overseas studies: paid work has been described as beneficial and as having a strong association with maternal wellbeing (Boyd et al., 2013; Dow, 2016; Lee & Bauer, 2013). The extensive mothering construct situates paid employment in a more equitable relationship with mothering, acknowledging that paid employment ‘makes for better mothers’ (Christopher, 2012).

The findings of this study regarding grandmother support for maternal paid employment clearly indicate that grandmothers did not feel compelled to draw on the construct of intensive mothering in order to justify maternal paid employment. This is a significant and new finding for any literature which focusses on grandmothers’ support of maternal paid employment. Literature suggests that grandmothers can struggle with mothers being in paid employment because of the intensive mothering ideals outlined above; this includes babies and young children *not* being placed in formal daycare (Aassve et al., 2011; Villar et al., 2012; Wearing & Wearing, 1996). It should be noted that two of these studies are from Europe where intensive mothering ideals are still predominant in countries such as Italy and Spain; the last study from 1996 was based on interviews with twenty well-resourced grandmothers in Sydney, Australia.

8.3.3 The role paid employment has in the lives of grandmothers

The wider narratives described earlier in this chapter influence how the paid employment of grandmothers’ shapes their identity construction and why paid employment is important. The findings of this study drew on the notion of successful ageing to construct paid employment as offering independence, visibility and an opportunity to story an identity different to that of ‘grandmother’. This finding is consistent with overseas grandmothering literature which has found that paid employment offers an experience of mattering to others outside the family

(Mooney et al., 2002); independence, and an identity different to that of wife, mother and grandmother (Altschuler, 2004; Forssén & Carlstedt, 2007). However, to date, literature has not described the importance of visibility vis-à-vis grandmothers in paid employment. Rather, its opposite, invisibility, has been discussed and attributed to women who undertake unpaid work including childcare (Eichler & Albanese, 2007; Erickson, 2005; Thomeer et al., 2014). The finding of this study therefore, which constructs paid employment as important for visibility makes an important contribution to the literature on grandmothers. Visibility in this context is narrated as an antidote to the invisibility which can be characterised by being at home caring for children. That is, paid work is important not just because it provides independence and financial support, it also allows for an opportunity to be seen.

Identity construction as a paid worker can and does provide a respite from childcare provision; it is protective, disallowing extensive grandchild care (Lee & Tang, 2015; McGarrigle et al., 2018, Saunders, 2010). This offers grandmothers the opportunity to contain their childcare and provides an accessible and understandable justification for imposing limits. Echoing the construct of intensive motherhood and its requirement that paid employment needs to be justified, this study found that grandmothers drew on the idea of intensive grandmothereing described earlier in order to justify the imposing of limits on childcare. Intensive grandmothereing positions grandmothers to 'be there' and available. Paid employment offers a legitimate reason to limit childcare and contests the idea that grandmothers be there 'on demand'. This finding is supported in wider literature (Meyer, 2014).

Some studies have noted there is an association between becoming a grandmother and early retirement, particularly for those grandmothers providing childcare (Lumsdaine & Vermeer, 2015; Rupert & Zanella, 2018; Van Bavel & De Winter, 2013). Particularly, well-resourced grandmothers have been found to be more likely to withdraw from paid employment on the birth of a grandchild (Zanasi et al., 2020). This is not echoed in the results of this study: although many of the grandmothers were well-resourced, their continuation in paid employment was important for the reasons discussed above and was also accommodated alongside childcare. Noted in overseas literature, grandmothers (those who are mothers) have made decisions already about paid work and childcare at least once already in their lives and these studies speculate that women who continued in paid work as mothers are more likely to value paid work as grandmothers (Finch, 2014; Hank, 2004). It was beyond the scope of this

study to enquire about grandmothers' previous paid employment and so this remains a matter of speculation in terms of this research.

8.4. *The intersection of care and employment narratives*

This section of the chapter focusses on one of the principle questions in this research: how the intersection of childcare and paid work is experienced and storied. Therefore, both the caring narratives of childcare as a 'labour of love' and care as relational, and the narratives shaping employment including intensive and extensive motherhood and wider societal structures, shape how this intersection is understood. Further, gendered narratives attribute the combination of paid work and childcare to women; it is women who are expected to be able to manage the balance of childcare and paid work (Meyer, 2014). Combining childcare and paid employment has been noted as comprising a high proportion of grandmothers' time and influences the frequency at which these women experience the pressures to balance both (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Craig & Powell, 2013).

Literature to date on grandmothing has not focussed on *how* grandmothers make decisions regarding whether to combine paid work and childcare. This omission has been attributed to decision-making occurring within potentially competing narratives of appropriate ways to grandmother, particularly when paid employment and childcare are combined (Christopher, 2012; Young, 2018). One of the most compelling constructs which affects the intersection of childcare and paid employment in this study and which also draws on the wider ideas discussed across this chapter, is the 'work-life balance' idea. This notion, of which childcare is an important component, has been described in literature as a construct which gives rise to problems (Young, 2018). That is, *how* grandmothers make their decisions to combine paid work and childcare could require justification, particularly if paid work was prioritised over childcare. This would produce implications for how grandmothers are understood by their families and society. Chiefly, it promotes something which is an impossibility; based as it is on an objective and equitable division of self across two domains which are positioned as competing and conflicting (Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Conceptualising paid work in a binary relationship with childcare, rather than as parts of a whole, has been described as undermining rather than contributing to, the lives of women (Young, 2018).

8.4.1. *The construct of balance*

The importance of ‘balance’ in people’s lives is often discussed, whether this is ‘work-life balance’ or balancing paid work and care commitments, the idea of achieving balance has been an important construct in the literature on grandmother childcare for some time (Meyer, 2014). A ‘balanced life’ has been constructed as an ideal to aspire to and this shapes how balance is thought about and what it might look like. It might not be achievable when grandmothers are positioned across the domains of childcare and paid employment. There is support in some literature which describes the tension that these two competing tasks create; studies note that grandmothers struggle to balance paid work demands and childcare and one often takes priority over the other (May et al., 2012). To date, it is unclear in the literature how decisions are made regarding the prioritising of paid work or childcare and it could be speculated that because of the numbers of factors, any decision would be contextual and dependent on other factors such as health, the nature of the paid work and particular family circumstances. This study found that combining paid work and childcare drew on the construct that paid work and childcare *are* competing, illustrated through accounts of a need to prioritise one activity over the other at times, constructed as producing tension, stress and a conflict of interests.

The intersection between paid work and childcare has been constructed in literature as both balance and conflict for women – the terms ‘role conflict’, ‘work-home conflict’, ‘work-family conflict’ and more recently ‘work-life balance’ have all shaped understandings of the combination of paid employment and childcare (Emslie & Hunt, 2008). Feminist literature suggests ‘work-life balance’ is a flawed construct which does not capture the complexity, constraints and negotiations that comprise the lives of women and their attempts to reconcile these competing tensions. Some studies suggest the term ‘work-life conflict’ is therefore more accurate as it captures the struggles women face and reflects the compromises (Young, 2018). This fits more closely with the findings of this study; accounts from grandmothers of their paid work and childcare responsibilities align more with ‘work-life conflict’ rather than ‘work-life balance’. Grandmothers also invoked the ‘work-life conflict’ when speaking about the mothers.

The construct of work-life balance, epitomised by ideals of part-time employment and childcare illustrates a having the ‘best of both worlds’ storyline, which is closely aligned with

the idea that women can ‘have it all’. The dominant gendered, social and cultural ideas connecting part-time paid employment and childcare with achieving ‘balance’ could suggest that the achievement of balance is necessary in order to do grandmothing successfully. This study, with its focus on combining childcare and paid work, drew on this wider notion that balance is both attainable and necessary; however, findings suggest the opposite. Balance for grandmothers was constructed as both tricky and elusive; drawing on wider ideas of paid work and childcare as competing rather than complementary.

8.4.2. *Gender*

Gender is central to understanding paid employment and childcare and it is therefore vital to examine how gendered understandings inform childcare and paid employment for grandmothers. Feminist literature constructs gender as fundamental in deciding who will be called upon to provide childcare and grandmothers are disproportionately represented in childcare provision (Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2001; Luo et al., 2012; Wang & Marcotte, 2007). Gender is the dominant influence in childcare and is central to understanding grandparent childcare (Craig & Jenkins, 2016). In this study, gender was absent in grandmother accounts, however that is not to diminish its salience. Referred to as unspoken, gender expectations have been noted to be working “just under the surface” and are largely invisible (Young, 2018, p.92). Although there are now more women in paid employment than ever before, gendered constructions of home and childcare have not changed much; arguably because gendered social expectations do not simply disappear and women continue to be positioned as responsible for all matters pertaining to home and children (Beagan et al., 2008; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Young, 2018). Both the caring narrative and the paid employment narratives in this study are gendered in ways that shape what is available/not available for grandmothers and upon which decisions are made.

Gender matters because the organisation, the carrying out, and the responsibility for the management of childcare is still viewed as women’s work and this shapes expectations and assumptions (Bowlby et al., 2010; Conlon et al., 2014). These assumptions and expectations shaped the findings of this study and although not explicit in accounts, are implicit. Implicitness was illustrated by the ways talk was structured, drawing on ideas that paid employment is important for women’s wellbeing as a respite from hands-on childcare, in accounts situating mothers in charge of everything to do with children including how they are

looked after and in expectations that it is women who will manage the balancing of multiple roles. Gendered activities which are performed within the home such as childcare reinforce gendered concepts reflected in wider structures such as paid employment.

The narrative of caring is one in which women are represented disproportionately to men in terms of their roles as mothers and grandmothers. There are societal expectations that grandmothers will be the ones who care and moreover they are positioned across both caring and paid employment narratives to be more capable than men of combining paid employment with childcare and more able and willing to juggle multiple roles (Craig & Mullan, 2011). Women as ‘natural carers’ is a taken-for-granted and normalised wider notion which shapes childcare. For instance, the findings from this study drew on assumptions that childcare is a responsibility held by women across their lifetimes, through mothering and then grandmothering. This study might therefore have unwittingly contributed to positioning grandmothers as responsible to combine paid work and childcare. That is, making visible the work grandmothers do for families and wider society, may have contributed to further entrenchment of the gendered constructs positioning this as women’s work and women’s responsibility.

The rhetoric that women have the same rights to paid employment as men does not account for the ways in which childcare continues to be dominantly constructed as women’s work. This produces implications for paid employment – part-time work is not only constructed as ideal for mothers, it is now understood to be ideal for grandmothers (Jenkins, 2013; Meyer, 2014). Part-time employment is constructed as ideal because it allows for gendered home and care responsibilities to perpetuate in order that women can devote their time to children. Notably absent in this study was mention of the employment status of fathers as a factor in the grandmothers’ provision of childcare. This could be influenced by narratives which situate part-time employment as most suitable for mothers, and/or wider narratives locating childcare as the responsibility of women. The decision to combine paid employment with childcare is constructed as a dilemma for mothers; few would question paid employment for fathers on the basis of childcare provision; the idea that “paid work conflicts with men’s domestic responsibilities simply never arises” (Durbin & Fleetwood, 2010, p.231).

This context provides a foundation upon which accounts in this study have drawn. Gender functions as the invisible backdrop, part of the taken-for-granted cultural context, permeating

everyday life, structuring institutions but rarely recognised (Olson, 2002). Public narratives persist in constructing men's prioritisation of paid employment over childcare and women undertaking childcare irrespective of their paid employment responsibilities, as natural (Olson, 2002). Although there is provision in Aotearoa New Zealand for 'parental leave', in practise there is a huge disparity in who takes leave; it is almost always women (Morrissey, 2015). This reflects and further entrenches gendered understandings and assumptions that the paid work and childcare combination is a concern for women and not men (Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Grandmothers are both scrutinised and self-scrutinise through the lens of gender; devoting time to the care of grandchildren fulfils the demands of good grandmothering. This is legitimate under the gendered lines of the organisation of society, but as the home is the site where caring is understood to take place, and as caring is seen as female work, this acts as an endorsement of gender practises and how gender is performed in the caring space.

Neo-liberal policies suggest people have choice and narratives of choice situate people as free to decide what form, if any, paid employment should take. This suggests women have as much opportunity as men; the genders are equal (Hakim, 2004). However, an emphasis on choice and equality has had the effect of making invisible the gendered structures shaping how choices are made. The absence of gender as a factor in accounts of grandmothering in research centred on grandmothers who combine paid employment and childcare is not uncommon. Furthermore, neo-liberalism constructs the constraints and challenges of managing paid employment and childcare as individual problems which have nothing to do with gender (Beagan et al., 2008; Charles & Harris, 2007).

Attention to the language grandmothers use is important as language and its use is the principle means through which gender is performed and gender norms are enacted (Speer, 2005). When grandmothers in this study spoke of childcare they drew on familiar and habitual sociocultural narratives that connected childcare with something women do, and in the process positioned themselves accordingly. Grandmothering is a gendered performance and as such is situated within what is regarded as making sense within wider narratives of grandmothering; the stories produced are told within the boundaries of what is considered normal behaviour. In order for grandmothering to be recognisable to others it needs to be performed within particular gender and cultural narratives in order to be intelligible (Butler, 1999). In sum, although gender was not a focus in the accounts grandmothers gave and was

not commented on, it was always present, and shaped accounts of how grandmothers combine paid work and childcare.

8.5 Conclusion

This study has sought to examine how grandmothers experience combining paid employment and grandchild care. To date there has not been any published research undertaken in Aotearoa New Zealand which has focussed specifically on this question. Although there is ample evidence that grandmothers are increasingly sought by parents to provide childcare, at the same time as they are in paid employment in unprecedented numbers, there has not been a corresponding increase in research in this area.

The key aim underpinning this research was to understand how this combination was narrated by grandmothers and to examine some of the ideas contributing to participants' constructions of how paid employment and childcare responsibilities were managed. Key to this was the storying of the dilemmas, pleasures and the challenges that negotiating paid work and childcare entailed. Previous studies have focussed on the empirical nature of grandmothering rather than how grandmothers make sense of what they do, informed by the kinds of norms and narratives which shape grandmothering. There was clear support for paid employment and intergenerational paid employment with grandmothers themselves modelling its significance. Grandmothers' support of maternal paid employment challenges hegemonic intensive motherhood and emphasises the importance of paid employment for maternal wellbeing, drawing on the narrative of extensive motherhood.

This study therefore fulfils a gap in local and international literature by highlighting significant areas of importance. Firstly, grandmothers occupy an important role in families, able to be justified and accounted for through their childcare provision. Grandmothers' provision of childcare draws on the wider caring narrative that care is a 'labour of love' and as such it is childcare which is not able to be replicated in the formal domain. This care also draws on the wider narrative that caring is relational. In this study the childcare grandmothers provide was found to support families, and mothers. The relational narrative also positioned grandmothers as the people to 'step in' when there were concerns about parental inadequacies. These findings are consistent with international literature; however, this study

is the first to date which focusses on the storied experiences of grandmothers in Aotearoa New Zealand and their provision of childcare whilst being in paid employment.

Secondly, drawing on the narrative of extensive motherhood, paid employment was constructed as beneficial to maternal wellbeing; a finding that contrasts with the intensive motherhood narrative which situates paid employment as secondary to the importance of caring for children. Despite constructing paid employment as valuable within the extensive motherhood narrative, it is still mothers and grandmothers who are positioned to take responsibility for childcare arrangements whether in paid employment or not. Although this finding is consistent with some emerging literature on extensive motherhood which also describes paid employment as beneficial to mothers, there has been no widely published literature to date on grandmothers' support of mothers' paid employment on the basis of the benefits it provides.

Thirdly, grandmothers value their own paid employment for the independence and sense of freedom it enables as well as its contribution to visibility. Paid employment provides an important and valued site for identity construction which is not predicated on childcare. The sense of wellbeing that paid employment provides is as important for grandmothers as it is for mothers. One of the ways in which paid employment shaped childcare was through the ways in which it was constructed as a legitimate way to set limits on the amount of childcare provided. Whilst this particular finding is consistent with a small amount of published international literature, there are no local studies to date which have focussed on the ways in which paid employment influences the construction of grandmothership.

Finally, although some existing international literature has discussed grandmothers who are balancing grandchild care and paid employment, the research to date is not well established. There is a body of overseas research which discusses the interface of paid employment and childcare among mothers; however this study addresses an important gap by its focus on grandmothers who are managing both. The findings of this study contribute to understandings of the place that paid work and childcare has in the lives of women through the nuanced way grandmothers storied how this interface works in their lives. One of the more important aspects of this paid work-childcare interface was the way in which the narratives informing the participants' paid employment shaped the grandmothership experience rather than the juggling and balancing of paid work and childcare. Although the juggling narrative is drawn

on, it is primarily used to describe the ways in which identities are juggled rather than the tasks of paid work and childcare.

8.6 Limitations of this study

This study was based in Aotearoa New Zealand's largest urban centre and the criteria of participants living within fifty kilometres of Auckland's CBD influenced participant characteristics. Grandmothers who are in less dense urban areas, smaller provincial towns and cities and rural areas were therefore not able to be included. Their stories and experiences might be similar and/or different to those of the participants in this study. For instance, grandmothers living in rural areas and small towns may be subject to idealised notions of family solidarity and intergenerational dependence (Keeling et al., 2008). These ideas would shape how grandmothering is understood and experienced; in a farming community the childcare a grandmother provides could be constructed as a pragmatic solution to day-to-day life which requires less negotiation than grandmother childcare in urban communities.

The majority of participants (with the exception of two women) were White, Western, well-educated, resourced and articulate women of middle and older age. They are therefore representative of a particular cohort of women in the 'baby-boomer' generation which shapes and contributes to particular attitudes and values around childcare and grandmothering. There was no representation from either tangata whenua (indigenous Māori grandmothers) or any participants representative of Pacific nations. There is evidence to suggest that the results of this study would have been influenced if there had been a wider diversity of grandmother participation (Hendricks, 2010; Ko, 2012; Sun, 2012). Collective cultures, such as those represented by Māori and Pacific nations, emphasise the importance of wider whānau and may locate the responsibility for childcare differently to what has been narrated in this study.

For most participants and their families, paid employment was not necessary for financial survival. Whilst maternal paid employment was described as important for mothers, it was not an absolute necessity and the findings may have been different if paid employment was financially essential. It is likely in a context of paid employment being absolutely necessary that the narrative of a 'career trajectory' would not be available. Fewer or more hours spent involved in childcare and paid work could have shaped different grandmother experiences. It is also important to acknowledge there are differences amongst cultures and ways of

understanding how the combination of paid work and childcare is regarded; cultural diversity may also have contributed to a variety of storied experiences.

A further limitation is that almost all participants in this study were married or partnered and all the mothers of grandchildren except one were partnered. The presence of husbands and partners in the lives of the grandmothers would have shaped their accounts. Married and partnered grandmothers will have a different experience of grandmothering than single grandmothers. Partnered status influences the involvement in grandchild care for men but not for women, however it is not clear whether this influenced the experience of the participants in this study (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Tomassini et al., 2004). Likewise, the partnered status of the parent generation may have affected findings. That is, single mothers may require more maternal support than partnered mothers and this could affect paid employment patterns for grandmothers. There is evidence to suggest that the results would be different if this study had included divorced parents and more than one single mother (Arber & Timonen, 2012; May et al., 2012; Sjöberg & Bertilsdotter-Rosqvist, 2017).

Literature suggests that there are financial, health and relationship disadvantages for grandmothers when they provide childcare (Hendricks, 2010; Meyer, 2014). Although this study did note these, participants mainly attributed this to their provision of intensive childcare in the context of concern. It is likely that the participants' demographics and enjoyment of paid employment shaped their accounts of what was being balanced and juggled. Meyer's study found that grandmothers who had no choice but to be in paid employment and who were also providing childcare, experienced significant health and financial disadvantages (2014).

This research story is one of many possible stories that can be told from the participant accounts. It has been shaped by my worldview and by my epistemological and theoretical preferences, themselves shaped by my previous study, my beliefs, values and practises. There are limitations in interviews where there is a match between researcher and participant. I believe that my own experiences as a grandmother shaped the analysis and a non-grandmother researcher might have highlighted and examined different stories to mine. The interviews have captured a version of grandmothering according to what was available to be told on that particular day, on that particular time, in that particular place, with that particular person. This therefore shapes the analysis that is presented.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1. Conclusion to this study

This study is based on the stories of fifteen grandmothers, all in paid employment at least twenty hours a week (many were much more than that) and providing childcare to a grandchild or grandchildren at least ten hours a week (sometimes much more). This research fills a significant gap in literature both in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas on grandmothers in paid employment and providing regular care to their grandchild or grandchildren. The world's population is ageing with people living longer than ever before. At the same time, in Western countries, those who choose to have children tend to have fewer and later in life. These factors produce changes on grandmothering, which is altering in response to diverse family compositions and changing expectations. As mothering has intensified in recent years, so too has grandmothering and grandmothers are now expected to be available to both parents and grandchildren, when their own lives have also become busier. Grandmothers today often have one or both of their own parents alive who may need care. They may also have adult children living at home, are often in paid employment and may have grandchildren to care for.

There are particular ideas and understandings which contribute to grandmothers' childcare and unsurprisingly, childcare continues to be a gendered activity. Mothers and grandmothers are still regarded as 'natural carers' and this is evidenced in this research by an absence in grandmothers' talk of grandfathers and fathers, which *is* surprising given most of the participants were partnered and so were their adult children. Responsibilities for paid employment and childcare were situated with women and this indicates that the combination of childcare and paid employment is still primarily located with women. Literature does not, for example, describe men as 'career men' or 'fathers in paid work' and this highlights how gender shapes and constructs the everyday practises of men and women. Although women's increased participation in the labour force has challenged traditional gender stereotypes and the socio-cultural expectations about normative roles for men and women, it is structural changes that are required to close the gender gap in terms of childcare provision. That is, changes in the deeper social, historical, political and cultural understandings that shape a society are necessary including socially constructed gender categories and identities (see O'Neil & Domingo, 2015).

Grandmothering takes place in the family; a site which is not static but rather responds to, affirms or rejects shared assumptions and expectations about what families do. The family is a site which therefore reproduces, sustains and sometimes changes commonly understood conventions (see Young, 2018). Grandmothers are positioned in social and cultural narratives as well as legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand, to provide childcare when there are concerns for a grandchild's wellbeing. There are expectations that they will accommodate an ongoing responsibility for what is essentially the parenting of grandchildren in the absence of parents. Whilst this disrupts one of the common ideas regarding grandmothers (to be available but not intrude), it also has implications for the family. Transitioning into being a different kind of grandmother can produce effects such as tension and conflict, and family relationships are altered as a result of changing roles.

The mothering role is central in this study; all grandmothers in this study are mothers, and all of them drew on the centrality of mothers in families to story their relationships with their daughters or daughters-in-law. Grandmothering and mothering occur simultaneously and each role has a different set of expectations. Grandmothers, for example, are positioned within social narratives as acknowledging that mothers oversee everything pertaining to their children. It is therefore in the best interests of grandmothers to be mindful of this lest they encroach into maternal territory. Mothers are positioned as mediators between grandmother and grandchild and grandmothers storied their cautiousness toward their relationship with mothers lest the grandmother-grandchild relationship become adversely affected. The 'good grandmother' narrative positions grandmothers to be mindful of the paradox of 'being there' yet at the same time not 'interfering' (see May et al., 2012). Interference undermines the 'good grandmother' as it implies a lack of acknowledgement that the parents are in charge. Conversely, 'being there' when needed enables the 'good grandmother', who is available when support is called for. At the same time grandmothers are mothers to their adult children; this allows for an authority similar to, but not the same as the mothers of their grandchildren. It is not the same because the grandmothers' children are adults and narratives of adulthood include autonomy and independence (see Mansvelt et al., 2017).

The role of grandmother in this study is understood as a constructed one; the stories told by participants are those which draw on wider socio-cultural, political and gendered narratives in their accounts of grandmothering. Participants are therefore positioned in these wider narratives and their personal accounts either supported or contested the normative

expectations associated with grandmothing. One of the most striking and significant contributions of the present study is the way in which participants constructed their childcare. It was storied as important for supporting maternal paid employment as this was viewed as necessary for maternal wellbeing. In many studies, the importance of paid employment for mothers has been predicated on financial need; this provides an accepted justification for employment given that intensive mothering narratives position mothers as needing to be at home caring for children. In contrast to this, the grandmothers in this study drew on the emerging extensive mothering narrative to describe maternal paid employment as vital for mothers' wellbeing (see Christopher, 2012). Paid employment is therefore actively encouraged and valued for what it contributes to the lives of mothers and not for what paid work provides in material terms. This challenges normative ideals of intensive motherhood, which positions mothers to stay home and care for their children.

One of the central aims of this study was to understand how grandmothers experienced the combination of paid work and childcare. That is, whether it resulted in juggling multiple roles in the effort to maintain 'work-life balance'. While the notion of work-life balance is commonly understood to be a goal for a 'good life' it is in fact a flawed construct, placing paid work and life in opposition to one another, which does not allow for the complexities that characterise the lives of women. Paid work and life are part of a whole, which in the case of this study, includes childcare. There was a recognition that the combination of paid work and childcare created some tension at times, and some necessary juggling, especially so for those grandmothers who were managing older parents, adult children at home, their own paid work and their grandchild care responsibilities. However, the juggling of the tasks associated with childcare was not a predominant feature of participant stories. Significantly, the stories told were centred on the right to work, the enjoyment of paid work and the configuration and juggling of identities. Identity constructions included a mother identity, a grandmother identity and a paid worker identity, all occurring simultaneously across multiple sites. This matters because it contextualises grandmother experiences in narratives which highlight the importance of alternative sites for identity construction; not simply within narratives of care.

By focussing on how and why stories were told rather than analysing the content, the present study has provided insights into the normative expectations that influence grandmothing. The findings are of significance because they draw attention to the multifarious nature of the grandmothing experience. This diversity is illustrated by the following key findings.

Firstly, juggling was storied as the juggling of identities (mother and grandmother in particular) rather than the juggling the tasks of childcare and paid employment. This is significant not only because mothering and grandmothereing occur simultaneously but also because it adds to the gendered narratives that structure grandmothereing at this point in the life-course and prompts a different thinking about grandmothereing. Secondly, the results of this study suggest that grandmothers' paid employment is a significant site for identity construction, allowing for grandmothers to be seen in terms of their paid work and not simply as a provider of childcare. It gives grandmothers a visibility which acknowledges the importance and place of paid work in their lives; White Western culture has a tendency to devalue older people and women in particular. Many women describe feeling invisible as they age. Thirdly, it highlights the importance of paid employment for both mothers' and grandmothers' wellbeing which contests the dominant intensive mothering (and grandmothereing) narratives. These dominant narratives suggest that childcare should be paramount and that paid work for women is based upon financial necessity or the need for financial security. Grandmothers drew on the emerging narrative of extensive mothering in their support of maternal paid employment, which highlights the importance of paid work for mothers, supporting a career trajectory and acknowledging the influence that paid work has on maternal wellbeing.

9.2 Implications of this research

There are important implications as a result of this study. The demographic structure of the population is ageing and this is of concern to policy makers. There is an increased emphasis in policy on the importance of paid employment in the lives of older people. How this applies to grandmothers and the possible implications for the childcare they provide to enable mothers to be in paid employment is under-examined. Many families prefer grandmother childcare (see Fergusson et al., 2008). Long periods of time outside the paid workforce for mothers of young children might not advance their career aspirations, or their wellbeing. The potential conflict of interest between grandmothers' and mothers' paid employment along with grandmothers' active engagement in grandchild care warrants further investigation.

Whilst it may appear as if improvements have been made in terms of the gendered nature of responsibility for childcare and how childcare is combined with paid employment, this research has revealed that in practise this has remained with women. Both mothers and

grandmothers, at different points in the life-course, are positioned within gendered narratives to hold responsibility for both. One of the implications of this study is the absence of a storying of men's contribution to childcare. As a result of this study highlighting grandmothers' experiences, the implicit assumption that grandmothers will be the grandparent who provides childcare may begin to shift and change.

9.3. Recommendations for future research

This study has begun an important conversation about the role that grandmothers have in 21st century families. There is a need to build on this knowledge; it is becoming vital to further examine the extent to which grandmother care supports maternal paid employment, particularly within Aotearoa New Zealand. Statistics demonstrate that women of all age groups are more likely to be in paid employment than not (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). Given the increased participation in paid employment for older women it is possible that grandmothers will become less available for childcare. This produces implications for mothers, families and the country as a whole, as current government childcare subsidies do not extend to those children under the age of three and for those over three, is limited to 20 funded hours per week. Further research is necessary to examine how families approach childcare needs and how this impacts on the paid employment of grandmothers. This could include an examination of the repercussions on other aspects of grandmothers' lives including their relationships both inside and outside the family.

There is a need for more grandmother-specific research. Grandmothering is performed across many different personal, familial and social contexts. As Aotearoa New Zealand is a bicultural nation, it is vital to include stories from tangata whenua on grandmothering. This research regrettably did not include any Māori kuia; their experiences would aid understandings about how grandmothering is understood and experienced in this place. The literature suggests that Māori construct childcare as shared across generations including grandmothers, aunts and other women (see Jenkins, 1986; Mikaere, 1994). However, increasing urbanisation of Māori may affect the availability of these women for childcare. To date, there are a small number of published studies in this area (see Edwards & Harris, 2010; Smith, 2020) and a Māori grandparenting resource is published by the Families Commission (2012). Key areas for research would include how (and if) Māori grandmothering has

changed over time, and how these changes have influenced how Māori women understand their role in their whānau.

Some of the changes that inform and shape grandmothering are demographic including increased life expectancy, migration and information technology. Changes in life expectancy mean there is increasing likelihood that great-grandmothers will be a feature of many families. Currently, there is only a small body of research in this area that is focussed on great-grandparents (see Allen & Wiles, 2014; Drew & Silverstein, 2004; Even-Zohar & Gaby, 2016). It would be pertinent to examine their role in families, and whether this produces changes on other family relationships. Other important areas of change which impact on grandmothers and which merit attention are the changing nature of household composition including increased numbers of blended families, step-families, single-parent families and multi-generational households. These changes will result in diverse grandmothering experiences and provide insights into other forms of grandmothering. Given that some studies suggest that it is increasingly likely that grandmothers will be geographically distant from their grandchildren (see Hendricks, 2010; Mueller & Elder, 2003) it could be pertinent to examine the effects of this on family relationships including how childcare is managed.

The place and space in which grandmothers provide childcare is important to examine as the narratives which are produced differ according to the site in which care is undertaken. The home is a very particular place; it is regarded as a private space and a gendered space, which shapes understandings about who provides childcare (see Dyck, 2005; England, 2010). All of the childcare that grandmothers provided in this study was undertaken in their homes and not the homes of their grandchildren. It is likely that childcare undertaken in other places, for instance the parents' home would draw on different sets of expectations; constraining and enabling different activities to result in different constructions of grandchild care. The locations in which childcare takes place could therefore deserve a focussed attention in further studies.

There remains a void in grandparenting research which is undertaken from the perspective of gender. This is important to address because there continues to be an underlying assumption that women will provide childcare and the tasks associated with caring for children. Whilst there is an emerging body of research on grandfathers and their role in families (see

Buchanan & Rotkirch, 2016; Tarrant, 2012), more research is needed into how grandfathers construct grandfathering including notions of caring. Changing gender patterns in the parent generation including changes to parental leave entitlement to be non-gender specific could result in many more fathers staying home to care for young children; this will produce an effect on how childcare is negotiated and with whom. Research which examines this and the impact this has on grandmothering would be welcome.

There has been research conducted on people who are childless, or child-free (see Allen, 2010), and there is an emerging and small body of research on older people who are grandchild-free as a result of their own or their children's childlessness (see Hank et al., 2018). The propensity for people to delay having children, and changes in fertility patterns have meant people are generally having fewer children and later in life, and/or are unable to have children or choosing not to have children at all. Some older women are also child-free whether through choice or otherwise. As becoming a grandmother is regarded as a normative life transition for women (see Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Taubman-Ben-Ari et al., 2012), some research suggests that not having grandchildren could result in feeling stigmatised (see Margolis, 2016). Research which highlights the experiences of older women who are not grandmothers, could help in the construction of alternative identities for these women and also serve to highlight their experiences.

9.4 Conclusion to this study

This narrative analysis of grandmothers' accounts has made a significant contribution to what we now know about grandmothers' paid work and childcare. It has addressed a gap concerned with the gendered narratives that structure grandmothering at this point in the life-course and it prompts us to think about grandmothering differently. The application of narrative analysis has enabled a focus on how and why stories are told in particular ways and has allowed grandmothering to be socially situated, drawing attention to the norms and expectations which shape grandmothering and childcare within paid work and intergenerational childcare practises. This is critical in shaping what we now know about grandmothering at this point in time. It remains vital to recognise the contribution grandmothers make not only to the lives of their children and grandchildren, but to society, in a continuity of care that for many women has been engaged with over a lifetime.

This study has resulted in a number of important insights into grandmothing for grandmothers who combine paid employment with regular weekly childcare provision to their grandchildren. The childcare provided by grandmothers is primarily to support mothers to engage in paid employment. At the same time, grandmothers are remaining in paid employment, often have parents who require support, and increasingly have adult children living at home. This results in a multitude of responsibilities and expectations which all contribute to how grandmothing is experienced. One of the societal expectations which shaped the grandmother accounts in this study included the assumption that women are 'natural carers' and will continue to engage in childcare throughout the life-course. An illustration of this is that the care of children is no longer confined to mothers, but has extended to include grandmothers in a continuous cycle of care. Gender is central in the determination of who will provide care; social and gendered ideas that shape the care of children inform expectations that grandmothers and not grandfathers will be willing and available to provide childcare.

Particular attention was paid to the impact that holding multiple roles had on the lives of participants and the expectations of self and others that gender and grandmothing discourses created. Importantly, this study found that holding and managing multiple roles and balancing paid employment and childcare resulted in the juggling of identities rather than the juggling of the tasks inherent in combining paid work and childcare. This is a significant finding. The public narratives that shape grandmothing have implications for how grandmothing is constructed and grandmothers drew from these when storying their experiences. Drawing on narratives such as the importance of paid employment has allowed for the construction of an identity which is not only based on normative understandings of grandmothing and the practicalities of combining childcare and paid work. The juggling of identities included a valued identity of paid worker, which allowed for independence and visibility in contrast to an identity of grandmother and mother, centred on childcare and associated responsibilities. This valuing of paid employment also shaped participant accounts of the importance of paid employment in the lives of mothers. Maternal paid employment was constructed as important for wellbeing and for allowing an identity construction different from that of 'mother'. The importance of paid employment and what it offers in terms of identity construction as distinct from what it offers financially for both grandmothers and mothers was therefore a significant finding in this study.

Grandmother childcare was storied as two clear intentions: to support maternal paid employment and to provide increased levels of childcare in the context of concern. When parenting is deemed to be inadequate, grandmothers step in and provide stability and safety to their grandchildren. There is an intergenerationality of childcare, shaped by gendered narratives which structured grandmothering in the participants' lives. These gendered narratives convey the norms and expectations within which grandmothering is situated including the responsibility to combine childcare and paid work across the life-course.

This study has made a significant contribution to the literature on grandmothers and has provided a novel and alternative frame in which to view grandmothers and grandmothering with its nuanced understandings of identity construction. It is unique in its focus on the storied experience of grandmothers in Aotearoa New Zealand and the findings have provided a conceptualisation of grandmothers and grandmothering which acknowledge the norms, discourses and expectations in which grandmothering is situated. The gendered narratives that structure grandmothering at this point in the participants' lives have been highlighted, in order to call attention to how they have shaped grandmothers' identity construction at the intersection of childcare and paid employment.

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Appendix A

HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000017535

Title: Grandmothering in New Zealand

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please log on to <http://rims.massey.ac.nz> and register the changes in order that they be assessed as safe to proceed.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Dr Brian Finch

Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and

Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix B

ARE YOU A GRANDMOTHER?

Are you also working in paid employment at least twenty hours a week *and* looking after a grandchild or grandchildren at least ten hours every week in order to support parents?

If this describes you, I would love to hear from you!

I am interested in talking to grandmothers who live within thirty kms of Auckland City and who are working and caring for grandchildren, in a non-custodial context. I am conducting research on the experiences of grandmothers who are working and caring for grandchildren as part of a PhD study with Massey University.

If you would like to know more, please contact me:

Caroline Day

Email: [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

I look forward to hearing from you,

Caroline



INFORMATION SHEET

Grandmothering in New Zealand:

Exploring the experiences of grandmothers who are in paid employment and providing regular weekly childcare to one or more grandchildren

Hello,

My name is Caroline Day and I am a student with Massey University, completing research for my PhD on grandmothering in New Zealand. I am also a working grandmother, and my interest in this topic developed partly through my own experience and partly through listening to the stories of other working grandmothers.

Thank you very much for your interest in participating in my research on grandmothering. You have received this information sheet because you responded to an advertisement describing the study, or you have been recommended to me as someone who may be interested in participating in this study.

The purpose of the study

The project is focussed on exploring the experiences of grandmothers who are in part-time paid employment of a minimum twenty hours per week and also caring for a grandchild or

grandchildren for a minimum of ten hours every week.

What will my participation involve?

Your participation will involve taking part in a one-on-one interview with me, at a place and time that is convenient for you. The interview will be approximately one hour long and audio recorded. Your name and any names that you use in the interview will be replaced by pseudonyms in the written study. Any other identifying details will be anonymised. The only people who will have access to the transcripts are me and my supervisors. The transcripts will be kept securely on a password-protected computer. You will have the option of having the audio recording returned to you, and you can also check a copy of the transcript of your interview if you wish to do so. Once the research is completed, all material will be destroyed in a secure manner.

If you choose to participate in this study, you may stop the interview recording at any time and you can withdraw from the study up until the two weeks after the interview transcript has been provided to you. Once you have agreed to participate, I will forward you a consent form for you to read, consider, and sign, before we go any further.

A final report of the study findings can be sent to you upon completion if this is of interest to you.

Below is a summary of your rights as a participant:

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the study until two weeks after the interview transcript has been sent;*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;*

- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.*

Thank you for your interest in this research. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about your experiences and I am happy to answer any further questions about this project.

Contact details of researcher:

Caroline Day

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Contact details of supervisors:

Dr Mary Breheny

Email: M.R.Breheny@massey.ac.nz

Assoc Prof Juliana Mansvelt

Email: [J.R. Mansvelt@massey.ac.nz](mailto:J.R.Mansvelt@massey.ac.nz)

Please feel free to contact my supervisors or me if you have any questions about this study.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix D



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Providing care for grandchildren while working: the experience of grandmothers

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I also understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide is confidential. I will not be able to be identified from any publications arising from the research.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings and/or transcript returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

Appendix E

Interview process and interview question guide

- Introductions and rationale
- Info Sheet and Consent Form
- Confidentiality and process
- Any questions/concerns

Demographics first:

Hours of work

Hours of childcare

Number of children/grandchildren

Maternal or paternal grandmother

Age of grandchild/ren

How long arrangement in place

Geographic proximity

Ethnicity

Partnered/married/not – to grandfather or not?

Question guide:

- How did this caring arrangement come into being?
- What is actually involved in providing this childcare?
- Choice – who suggested this? If adult parent, how much choice experienced?
- Expectations – what do these look like from parent generation? Your own?
- Does anything get juggled?
- Managing boundaries
- Thoughts about grandmothers in general? Have they changed over time?
- What has changed since taking this up?
- Effects on physical, emotional, financial, social health
- Thoughts about being a parent and parenting and now being a grandmother and

grandmothering – any patterns? Idea of second chance? (grandmothering vs mothering)

- Type of grandmother – is this different to how you mothered?
- Relationships with grandchild's parents – changed over time? What about with the adult child's partner?