GRANDPARENTING STYLES IN AN URBAN/RURAL BORDERLAND IN NEW ZEALAND

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This paper on grandparenting styles draws on ethnographic interviews with old-old (80 and older) Anglo-Europeans living in a small-town community in New Zealand. The interviews were collected as part of the social content of a longitudinal study of the epidemiology of aging in an urban/rural borderland setting. Analyses indicate that grandparent status and role are both central to and contingent upon how old-old people negotiate and sustain independence and autonomy in the context of family and friendship networks. Diversity is examined using a typology developed from research on American Indian grandparents in an urban/rural situation as a framework, and modifications of the typology to accommodate the increasingly common experience of grandparenting in old-old age are suggested.

WITH INCREASING LONGEVITY IN NEW ZEALAND, along with many other parts of the world, grandparenting roles are extending also in terms of duration, complexity, and variety. While parenting roles are very predominant in both social research and public policy debates addressing the community significance of socialization and enculturation, New Zealand research has paid markedly limited attention to grandparenthood in any discipline. Thus, anthropologists are not alone in belatedly exploring the experience and reality of these later-life roles as they extend in generation, scope, and style. Particular consideration in this discussion is given to local New Zealand styles of grandparenting in light of comparative ethnographic perspectives.

The notion of extended family relationships spanning four living generations is increasingly common, while photographs of five-generational

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family groupings are seen as noteworthy in local newspaper reports. Zodgekar refers to the "two generational geriatric extended family" as a significant component of demographic aging in New Zealand (Zodgekar 1999), and as posing particular challenges to the intrafamilial and community management of dependency relationships. Accordingly, intergenerational relationships have been the subject of considerable analysis as part of a growing body of positive aging studies, using both sample survey and social psychological approaches (Koopman-Boyden and Hillcoat-Nalletamby 2000; Liu et al. 2000; Ng et al. 1998, 2000). Together with work by Armstrong (2003, 2007), this paper adds ethnographic content to shared conceptual paradigms of family relationships in New Zealand, and develops engagement with central social scientific theories, through the incorporation of anthropological perspectives.

Koopman-Boyden and Hillcoat-Nalletamby, for example, propose a model of family transactions that "shifts emphasis away from stages of the life-course to an emphasis on process and heterogeneity within and between cohorts" (2000, 14). Their study, however, relies primarily on extensive mail survey data collection rather than intensive qualitative interviewing. Shared behavioral patterns observed in such survey data can be enriched by discerning themes, which are themselves culturally meaningful, derived from qualitative research methods such as those used by anthropologists.

Among a growing collection of popular works, some offer advice on "active aging" (Millar 2001), while others have focused on grandparenting in a lively "how to" style. Gribben's *Grandparenting with Love and Laughter* (2000) exemplifies this latter approach and updates her earlier popular parenting handbook. The photographs, stories, and allusions in this genre relate to the phase of early grandparenting, with the grandchildren consistently represented as children, generally under the age of ten. There is some advice on managing the changing relationships with the parental generation, but little that speaks to grandparents for whom this phase is past, as their grandchildren themselves start establishing families in the next lineal branches of the family tree.

Some personally authored narratives throw light on individual experiences of New Zealand grandparenting specifically (Else 2000) and on advanced aging more generally (Maclean 2000). Published life histories, autobiographies, and biographies of public figures also contribute potential perspectives on how grandparenting is performed in a contemporary setting. Today's grandparents review their own grandparents' lives and their interactions with them, along with their current grandparental roles. References to and honoring one's antecedents and forebears, often treated as if specific to New Zealand's indigenous Polynesian Maori, in fact apply across the nation's multiple cultural traditions, as does significant personal and cultural investment in grandchildren. Taking a broader and multicultural scope in a book celebrating New Zealand families, Winn and Holdom (1999) cover a wide range of terms and relationships under the title of *Grandads Grandmas Nanas and Poppas.* They use both text from interviews and photographs to represent this variety.

Changing national patterns in family formation, household composition, and geographic mobility provide a backdrop against which older people in any contemporary community live their lives. Information on health and social status (Statistics New Zealand 1995; New Zealand Ministry of Health 2002) and living standards (Fergusson et al. 2001) is accumulating. The grandparents whose experience is presented and discussed in this paper were community-based participants in a unique epidemiological and longitudinal study, the Mosgiel Longitudinal Study of Ageing (MLSA) conducted by the Department of Medicine, Otago University Medical School, Dunedin.

The Mosgiel Longitudinal Study of Ageing

At the time of the study, Mosgiel was a community of over 13,000 people, positioned geographically and culturally in an urban/rural borderland, fifteen minutes by road from Dunedin, a city of over 100,000 people, yet linked to an extensive hinterland of scattered smaller communities, with the very low population density that is typical of the region, Otago-Southland, in the southernmost quarter of the South Island. This positioning has been discussed fully in a previous paper on the significance of context, distance, and place in the experience of aging in New Zealand (Keeling 1999).

Housing in Mosgiel is mixed in style and age. Older people are likely to live in small clusters of four semidetached units, which share a common driveway, interspersed with three- or four-bedroom single-level bungalows for younger families. Most of these houses were built in the post–World War II period, when Mosgiel was developing as a periurban industrial and residential area, serving the surrounding farming area, wider provincial region, and nearby city of Dunedin with both agricultural and manufacturing sector industries. By the 1990s two major purpose-built retirement villages had been established, based on a strong cultural image of Mosgiel as a "good place to grow old."

The MLSA provides a wide-ranging description of the health and social situation of the majority of the residents of the community of Mosgiel aged over seventy years at the time of the project's start in 1988, and follows those still living in that community six to eight years later. From nearly 800 participants in the baseline phase, 313 were interviewed again in the period from 1994 to 1996. At the time of this follow-up interview contact, I joined the project as anthropologist. In addition to accessing the social networks and social and professional support data generated by the baseline and six-year follow-up survey phases, my supplementary anthropological approach centered on a series of twenty further extended qualitative interviews (Keeling 1998).

The twenty people I interviewed were chosen at random from the surviving MLSA participants in 1994–1996, at the time they took part in their follow-up interviews. They ranged in age between eighty and ninety years and included three men and seventeen women. All had been married, and all but one had biological grandchildren; most also referred to their several great-grandchildren. Eighteen of the twenty interview participants were widowed, and fifteen lived alone, with the others describing a coresidence situation with one or more of their children, and in one case with a grandchild.

The qualitative interviews followed an invitation to "talk some more" about family and friends, and it was in this context that talk about grandparenting emerged. Aspects of interactions with grandchildren have featured in analyses of the complex styles in handling distance (Keeling 2001). Similarly, in negotiating support (material, social, and emotional), the concept of style and performance is applicable to describe the flexible and situational behavioral repertoire accessed by the older people in their narratives of relationships with family and friends. Grandparenting, through this analysis, emerges as a series of negotiated relationships, with the reciprocal content of these ties fluid and dynamic, in a way consistent with the conceptual approach presented in Finch and Mason's *Negotiating Family Responsibilities* (1993).

Typical Mosgiel Grandparents

Mrs. Simpson (not her real name) was a grandparent whose social network was extensive, involving fourteen named people, other than grandchildren, and in whose social world her nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren played significant parts. Her social network was of the type that Wenger (1994) would call "locally integrated." She lived with an unmarried daughter, but in common with the others interviewed who were in coresident living situations, the household was not a three-generational one. They lived in a small two-bedroom house with a small well-tended garden, in a typical Mosgiel tree-lined street with several other similar houses.

Mrs. Simpson had been widowed for many years and had never driven a car, but she was extensively involved with local community service organizations. Family and friends have always been available to transport her to events and activities outside the home, and she has reciprocated with home cooking and general hospitality. She was a vigorous correspondent, particularly with grandchildren, many of whom did not live locally, and her sitting room was fully decorated with photographs and evidence of her participation in extensive family gatherings. The current baby photographs on display were of great-grandchildren. Two of Mrs. Simpson's grandsons lived locally and helped her with household chores. When asked who initiates this help, she said "Oh, well, I say, 'Could you come and do this? Bring screwdrivers, and things like that,' and then I always have a meal for them." She saw this as an affectionate and loving relationship: "They love me, and always kiss me, you know. We have a very good relationship, really, though I don't see as much of my other grandson. He's always busy."

Mrs. Thorn, another typical grandmother, extended her talk of intergenerational linkages beyond conventional descent lines, which may relate in part to the fact that her own two children were adopted, and while her son had died in his early twenties, her daughter moved north and has raised her own family on the North Island. She illustrated her concept of what I have called "substitution of network members" (Keeling 2001): "I think I've got such a coming-down-the-ladder family, so to speak, that my nieces' families take over a good deal, too. You see, one niece had five children. There are sort of reserves coming on; they sort of hand on the job."

The three men interviewed all had smaller social networks, as well as smaller numbers of grandchildren, and none had great-grandchildren. It is not possible to evaluate the extent to which these gender differences might be representative of a broader picture, as the quantitative data from the wider Mosgiel study do not extend to any tabulation of grandparental relations.

For Mr. Clark, his nearest relative in geographic terms was a nephew, and his only son lived an hour's drive away, with his wife and Mr. Clark's two grandchildren. Mr. Clark was eighty-nine years of age and felt that the care he gave to his wife in the last two years of her life, when she was bedridden, while it was clearly given with love, had deprived him of regular contact with his local men friends. Now they too have died. In his interview, Mr. Clark acknowledged his loneliness, and said he was considering moving into more sheltered accommodation as he could not work in his garden or manage his daily needs due to failing eyesight.

Mr. Wilson had no grandchildren, as his only child had never married and continued to live with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. Mr. Wilson's discussion of family continuity was oriented to the past, apparently due to the fact that he had cared for his own mother and unmarried sisters who had lived nearby. He simply said, "My family's all gone now," despite the fact that he still lived with his wife and son.

Mr. Burt also shared a housing arrangement with an unmarried daughter, and an unmarried son who worked mostly overseas. However, he had a married son who also lived in Mosgiel, and his four grandchildren in that family featured significantly in his conversation. He described himself as a storyteller, relaying the family tradition of farming life in rural Otago, and contrasting this with the modern urban lifestyles in northern cities that are likely to attract his grandchildren away from Mosgiel.

"The Kids All Call Me Grandma"

In their responses to the invitation to talk more about family and friends, the Mosgiel interviewees showed that they were well aware of the connotations and meanings embedded in local forms of address and reference. All but two of those interviewed were second-, third- or fourth-generation New Zealanders of broadly Anglo-European descent. The two exceptions were women who had emigrated from Scotland and England, respectively, during their married lives. The New Zealand–born were commonly "local," with this defined as coming from the Otago-Southland region, with those from further afield having generally "married into" local or regional families. None acknowledged Maori descent, though Anglo-Maori intermarriage has a long history, and only one spoke about a son marrying a Northland Maori woman, and "moving away up there" (to the northernmost quarter of the North Island).

There was thus a broad acceptance that in cultural terms, tracing and naming kinship relations reflects Anglo-European or Pakeha New Zealand patterns, acknowledging bilateral ties, but with patrilineal transfer of surnames, among this generation of older New Zealanders. The terms grandparent and grandchildren are thus reciprocally applied to those tracing a descent relationship across two generations. Gender is differentiated simply by using the more specific terms: grandmother, grandfather, granddaughter, grandson.

Terms of address are more idiosyncratic and familial, although there are clear features in how these evolve. It is common for a family to want to differentiate between grandparents, through the use of different names on the "mother's side" and "father's side," respectively, and how this is achieved depends in part on the sequence of first grandparenting. For example, if a new baby is born to a couple, and the baby has four living grandparents, one set of grandparents may already have been named in relation to an earlier grandchild, so some names have already been taken, and the new grandparents' choice is restricted, if confusion is to be avoided. Most families want to use a shared term for the group of grandchildren who share grandparents by descent.

My interview evidence suggests that these negotiations are conducted amicably, and are sometimes resolved as the new grandchild learns to talk, and his or her own version of a family name may move into wider use. Thus one hears of grandparents who are called highly personal names (Lala and Ga Ga, for example), while other choices are more common: Gran, Grandad, Grandma, Poppa, Nan Nan, Pop. Although the use of personal names is common at this same generational remove from children, with the addition of the Aunt/Uncle label as a sign of status (Aunty Janet, Uncle Bill), some grandparental terms are themselves derived from personal names (Pop-Billy, Janny).

The Mosgiel grandparents also showed that their roles as grandparents were inclusive and extended beyond strict descent relations. When the phrase "the kids all call me grandma" was used in one particular interview, the reference was to grandchildren acquired through subsequent remarriage of a daughter in this case, as well as to children in the neighborhood. The strict use of step or half before grandchild is considered both clumsy and unnecessarily grudging, and several people made a point of stressing their desire to embrace and welcome additional children into the family circle, whether by informal adoption or at least without qualification. One woman suggested that there should be a specific collective noun for a group of grandparents or grandchildren and thought that "a pride of . . ." should not be restricted to lions! This inclusiveness and phraseology shows pride in both the number and quality of relationships with grandchildren.

Styles of Grandparenting

Mosgiel grandparents carry out their roles and responsibilities in a variety of styles. The identification and description of styles is a recurrent topic in the American grandparent literature, and recurs as a theme in the contributions of Dickerson-Putnam (2007), Torsch (2007), and others in this issue.

In this section, I adopt and adapt the discussion of American Indian grandparenting styles presented by Weibel-Orlando (1997) to assess the analytic and comparative potential of style as applied to the cultural configuration of grandparenting roles in Mosgiel's New Zealand Anglo-European community. In addition to exploring grandparenting styles, this discussion draws on Finch and Mason's (1993) insights into the negotiation of family responsibilities in extended families. In analyzing the Mosgiel familial support data, processes were clearly identified in Finch and Mason's terms: balancing dependence and independence, negotiating commitments over time, making legitimate excuses, and enacting reputations and moral identities in the negotiation of family responsibilities. Grandparenting style can be played out in any of these processes.

Weibel-Orlando (1997) identifies six grandparenting styles: cultural conservator, custodian, ceremonial, distanced, fictive, and care-needing. The cultural context of her study is of North American Indians who were "retirement relocators" from urban California back to their more rural childhood homelands in later life. The six styles are neither mutually exclusive nor culturally unique, as the following illustrative exploration will show, derived as it is from a very different, largely Anglo-European, cultural context in a southern New Zealand urban/rural borderland. The comparison is primarily conceptual, offering a framework for ethnographic consideration of similarities and variations in grandparenting styles.

Weibel-Orlando's styles are defined by seven factors, including the quality and intensity of the grandparent/grandchild relationship, grandparents' perceptions of their grandparenting roles, accessibility between the generations, the type of social and familial integration of the grandparents, personal goals of the grandparents, stability of the relationships at the intermediate parental level, and the age of attaining grandparenthood (Weibel-Orlando 1997). How relevant are these factors in the Mosgiel grandparents' talk and conduct as grandparents?

The Cultural Conservator Grandparent

Weibel-Orlando elaborates this style primarily in the sense of grandparents raising grandchildren (1997). In Mosgiel, this style was clearly expressed within the familial context, in the sense that older people were keepers of the family story and curators of the family tree. Keeping track of genealogical and affinal connections was demonstrated with pride in the interviews I completed. Women particularly demonstrated their role as "kin keepers," and as a point of reference through and around which family news circulated.

Modes of communication and the transmission of this family knowledge were reinforced (as discussed below) by participation in familial life-course events, frequently through face-to-face contact. Use of the telephone and letter-writing both featured as key elements also, along with holiday and occasional visits if the family was dispersed. Within the family, grandparents continued to tell the stories of family history. In at least two instances, interview participants showed family histories and photograph albums that they were writing and compiling at the time of the interviews with the specific intention of passing on knowledge to their grandchildren (Armstrong 2007). One woman said proudly that her family history now needed to be reprinted, as the first 500 copies had been distributed at a recent family gathering honoring the arrival of her own great-grandparents into the district in the 1850s.

When Mrs. Bremner spoke about her grandchildren, she said "they get a lot from grandparents," and noted with regret that her own children had not known her own or her husband's parents. She was using the opportunity of her ninetieth birthday in the month she was interviewed to reflect and write down both the story of her own life and a wider family history, saying, "If I don't give it to them now, it's a lot they are going to lose."

Talking about sharing stories was closely linked to the double meaning embedded in "passing on": the passage of time and the urge to share life stories and experience with others was openly addressed. These older people were clearly aware of life's transitions, which bring the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of experience, and they saw this cultural capital as worth sharing with those close to them in kinship or community.

No references to more recent technological methods of communication such as e-mail and the Internet feature in these Mosgiel interviews, as they were conducted before 1996 (cf. Armstrong 2003). In New Zealand in the 2000s, grandparental participation in the World Wide Web is widespread (Armstrong 2007), and it is an open question whether this might have inclusive or exclusive tendencies: keeping grandparents linked into family communication networks or marginalizing those who are unable or unwilling to adopt the newer modes of communication so extensively used by the younger generations.

The Custodial Grandparent

In Weibel-Orlando's terms, this style relates to situations where "unanticipated family trauma separates child and parents" (Weibel-Orlando 1997, 148), and the grandparent takes on care of the child. Transmitting cultural and moral values within the family, being the source of family and historical knowledge, is one thing, but being responsible for the care and protection of a grandchild or grandchildren is another. While this situation of custodial responsibility for grandchildren was rare in Mosgiel, there were two cases described that strongly and clearly suggested that the significance of this style should not be underestimated.

Two women spoke of having a custodial relationship with a grandchild from birth, in the sense of having been the primary caregivers for these infants. When Mrs. Edwards' granddaughter at the age of four went back to live with her mother, who was by that time married and living in the nearby city of Dunedin, Mrs. Edwards said, "It broke my heart." Despite having had this experience, she went on to comment somewhat critically on her own son's style of becoming a nearly custodial grandfather. He was providing a home to his daughter and her young family after the breakdown of her marriage, and Mrs. Edwards was very clear about the difficulties sixty-year-olds (particularly grandfathers, she thought) face in dealing with preschool children on a daily basis.

Mrs. Burgess continued to speak of the grandson for whom she had cared as "my boy." At the time he was in his midteens, and effectively lived with his grandmother during the school week, as his mother, stepfather, and half siblings lived in a small neighboring rural community. In addition to preferring not to face an hour's travel each day by bus, he and the rest of the family also recognized that his continued company for his grandmother was now important for her. While she was aware of subtle shifts in the balance of dependency within their relationship, she clearly appreciated the fact that he continued to call his place with her "home."

Caring *for* others shades sometimes imperceptibly into caring *about* their well-being, and this range of caring was evident in the way the Mosgiel grandparents talked about their grandchildren. Expressions of worry or anxiety about grandchildren were indicative of an underlying sense of custodial concern and responsibility for their well-being. "Worry" was described in several instances about young adult grandchildren's choice of occupation or difficulties in finding satisfying work. While positive comments about grandchildren were expressed on the establishment of long-term relationships through celebrations of marriages and births, worry, disappointment, and distress surrounded the breakdown of partnerships. When the dissolution of a marriage also interrupted contact with the next generation, grandparents described their sense of loss and concern for the continuity of their relationship with the younger children (see Drew and Smith 2002 for American comparisons; Flinn 2007 for Micronesian comparisons).

Conversely, expressions of pride in the achievements of grandchildren related to public and personal achievements such as graduation, selection for a national sports team, adventurousness in overseas travel, and job advancement or promotion. Although in one breath, these older people might refer to their grandchildren as "their pride and joy" (or one particular grandchild might be singled out in this way), the downside reflects worry and anxiety at times, and certainly carries an implication of ongoing responsibility, even as these grandchildren enter their twenties and thirties.

Acknowledging previous invisibility of grandparenting roles in New Zealand social science research, Read (2003) claims that the recent heightened interest in this field has two sources: demography and child care. She proposes investigating three distinct role categories in her doctoral research by interviewing grandparents in the three groupings of those who have full-time care responsibilities for grandchildren, those who supplement for parent care while parents are at work themselves, and those who see themselves as fitting the "traditional image of grandparenting." A clear exploration of just what is embedded in this traditional image would clearly be a welcome contribution to New Zealand cultural and family studies.

The Ceremonial Grandparent

Although Weibel-Orlando encountered only two American Indian cases of this style of grandparenting, Mosgiel examples were frequently described. In both settings, this style is distinguished from distanced grandparenting (below) by the public display of grandparental participation, particularly in family and life-course events (Weibel-Orlando 1997). While the Mosgiel grandparents perhaps would not describe their role in terms of ceremonial behavior, their presence at life-course events, again primarily within the family, clearly carries symbolic significance. Two grandmothers, Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Edwards, spoke at length of the particular importance of their participation at the wedding of a grandchild, despite extensive and expensive travel required to make this possible.

Other annual or calendrical events (birthdays, anniversaries of family events, Christmas, Mother's Day) all provide opportunities for acknowledgment of the ceremonial role of grandparents in both semipublic and private contexts. Interaction with grandchildren may not be frequent but it is regular and mutually valued, and often entails overcoming significant obstacles such as cost and distance, as well as joint and long-term planning required to make it happen.

The Distanced Grandparent

This style is described by Weibel-Orlando as relatively rare among the American Indians she studied, but as involving geographical, psychological, and cultural distance (1997, 144). My earlier paper titled "Relative Distance" (Keeling 2001) has addressed variations in the way "closeness" is defined by participants in the Mosgiel study, and also explores the geographical spread of family members within the neighborhood and region, and across a wider national and international scale.

Mrs. Fletcher used the expression "close beside" to refer to the particular bond she has with a grandchild who lives near her, indicating that physical and emotional closeness reinforce each other in this instance. Mrs. Wood was a migrant from the United Kingdom when her own children were teenagers and young adults, and two of her own children elected at that time not to migrate to New Zealand. She therefore has half of her grandchildren living in Britain and the other half in southern New Zealand. Through occasional visits to Britain, at perhaps five-year intervals, she maintains her relationships with her grandchildren in accordingly very different ways.

Mr. Burt gave several instances of ways in which he perceived a kind of "distance in time" between his own youth and that of his granddaughter. She had just turned twenty and had recently acquired her first car, and he noted that he had been over forty years of age when he bought his first car. In talking about the marital difficulties her grandson was experiencing at the time of her interview, Mrs. Macdonald observed, "I didn't expect to live this long"; in a similar vein, Mrs. Bremner compared very directly the way she herself had grown up, and the generally formal kind of relationship she had with her own grandparents, with the relative freedom and casual nature of her current contacts with grandchildren.

The Fictive Grandparent

This style is considered to be "an alternative to the lack or absence of biological grandchildren" (Weibel-Orlando 1997, 147), although in Mosgiel, it should also include an addition to biological links (Armstrong 2007). A fictive kinship or grandparenting link carries a connotation of being neither "real" nor founded on biological links. The use of quasi-kin labels was evident in the ways in which older people in Mosgiel talk about their definitions of both friends and family. Specific reference in this context to fictive or adoptive grandparental relationships was not uncommon. Mrs. Burgess, mentioned earlier as blurring her own roles as mother and grandmother in the way she continued to have her teenaged grandson living with her, also related to the children of her next-door neighbor as fictive grandchildren. They freely came across to play in her yard, particularly when her own grandchildren were visiting, and she referred to this combined grouping as "the kids."

Several interviews recorded blurred distinctions between descendants at the grandchild level, in a way that entails one of the principles of inheritance, substitution, or proxy, as discussed in Keeling (2001). While there was a pre-existing genealogical link, by extending the use of classificatory kinship terminology, a grandniece for example might regularly be referred to as a granddaughter, particularly if the linking relative had died or was not locally resident.

The Care-Needing Grandparent

Weibel-Orlando describes this sixth style of grandparenting as an "emerging" American Indian style, one not readily apparent in her first period of fieldwork, but increasing ten years later (1997, 155). In the Mosgiel context, working with New Zealand Anglo-Eurpoeans who were commonly great-grandparents, and aged eighty to ninety years, this style needs to be treated as having fully emerged, but not necessarily predominant. Care-needing grandparents balance the notions of independence and dependency on others, and acknowledge that they may need more care. While a full discussion of the specific styles and principles through which the provision of support between older people and other family members is negotiated is beyond the scope of this discussion, grandchildren are key participants in the composition of the support networks of older people.

Within the social networks of the older people taking part in the Mosgiel study, it was clear that supportive relationships are not all unidirectional. These grandparents described relationships of reciprocity with their grandchildren: they received practical help, such as gardening and help with shopping, hairdressing, and housework, from teenage and young adult grandchildren on a regular or occasional basis. For example, when asked to identify the family members from whom she had received the most support in the previous year, Mrs. Howell unhesitatingly nominated her two grandsons who live locally.

Receiving help from grandchildren was commonly reciprocated if not in cash, then in kind. This took the form of providing meals and short-term accommodation when grandchildren first left their parents' home and came back to the Mosgiel region for study, or were first holidaying away from home in their teens. Cash payment for assistance from grandchildren was referred to as common when the alternative was to pay a stranger for this service. For example, a granddaughter was training as a hairdresser, and Mrs. Murray preferred to pay her rather than visit a local hair salon; Mrs. Thorn paid the granddaughter of a niece to do heavy cleaning for her, since she saw it as a way she could assist with payment for the teenager's education.

In the reverse direction, help was also given by grandparents to grandchildren. Emotional support and practical or financial help were all mentioned in the interviews. Mr. Clark spoke with pride about helping his grandson acquire his first boat: "The boy is a yachtsman, and I helped him buy his first yacht. I am extremely interested in where they are at."

Discussion

Changing demographics and family formation patterns, as well as mobility, will continue to open up interesting new grandparent research questions in New Zealand. For example, the rising age of first-time mothers may have an effect on a later age for first-time grandparenthood (see Statistics New

Zealand 1995) and later great-grandparenthood. The Mosgiel grandparents featured here would typically have first become grandparents in their midfifties and great-grandparents in their midseventies. What effects will adding perhaps five to eight years to these familial transitions have on the ways grandparents play out their roles in the future?

Add to this the significant changes in divorce and remarriage rates, as well as household mobility across all age ranges, and the picture becomes even more complex. While the Mosgiel study does not include examples of later-life couples who do not have grandchildren in common, this is likely to become an increasingly common pattern in New Zealand's future. These trends may also compound gender differences in the grandparenting experience, as older men may themselves have two-generation families; younger women who are still themselves at a childbearing stage may become step or adoptive grandparents following family recomposition.

One primary difference between the two settings in which grandparenting styles have been compared here (American Indian/New Zealand European) relates to the age and life stage of those interviewed. In the New Zealand case, the interviewees were all older in years and in later life-stages. All but one were biological grandparents, and most were also great-grandparents. Thus their grandchildren tended to be young adults, and their great-grandchildren ranged from babies to children of primary school age. Nevertheless, Weibel-Orlando's typology adapts well to the analysis of Mosgiel styles of grandparenting and great-grandparenting as well. The Mosgiel data confirm and inform the care-needing style, which Weibel-Orlando (1997) included as emerging.

Furthermore, grandchildren, and more particularly, the birth and lives of great-grandchildren, are the primary source of the relative definition of the Mosgiel older people as seniors. Their self-definition of "old age" is more than slightly based on these relative and familial transitions. Observing one's own daughter becoming a grandmother for the first time reminds an eighty-five-year-old woman of her own progression through the life course. Assessing how her adult son manages his role as grandparent incurred comment from Mrs. Edwards. Mrs. Burgess explained that her own childbearing had been late and thus rationalized why she had so far no great-grandchildren.

An awareness of the natural sequencing of intergenerational links was poignantly expressed by those older people who were experiencing familial losses that they described as "out of order." In the previous year, Mrs. Simpson's son had died in his fifties, and her interview resonated with distress as she spoke of hearing her grandson and granddaughter speak at their father's funeral. A relatively predictable progression through the life course and experiencing timely life events frame the cultural construction of aging in this as in many cultural settings. Disruptions and events that interrupt or breach these cultural expectations accentuate the centrality of shared life-course transitions.

New meaning is added to the notion of life expectancy when those in later life look back to their own parents and grandparents. Mrs. Allen said quite frankly, "I didn't think I'd live this long. No one on my father's or my mother's side got out of their seventies. But here I am, I've had my eighty-ninth."

Conclusion

Qualitative interviewing of twenty people aged between eighty and ninety years of age in the context of the Mosgiel Longitudinal Study of Ageing has opened up rich talk of New Zealand European grandparenthood in the 1990s. Length of life and survivorship, depth and variety of experience, the generational structure of personal and familial experience, and specific involvement in periods of family and social history tell multiple stories. Concepts of generations and the ways that intergenerational relationships are lived out impinge on the underlying experience of continuity and interdependence.

Becoming and being a grandparent, and living to see one's own children in turn becoming grandparents, are thus central cultural symbols of advanced age stages. However, these expectations are shown here to be various and negotiable, according to locally discernible styles of grandparenting. Mosgiel styles of grandparenting illustrate the variations on this theme, reinforcing the notion that grandparenting is both central to and contingent on the ways in which these older people negotiate and sustain their independence and autonomy in the context of their social and family networks.

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