GRANDPARENTING AMONG THE CHAMORROS OF GUAM

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For the Chamorros of Guam, contemporary grandparenting reflects the cultural
tension between the forces struggling for continuity with cherished traditions
and values centered on caring and sharing, and those requiring adaptation,
cultural change, and expanding lifestyle choices. Descriptions and analyses draw
on data collected in 60 life-history interviews and participant observation
research. The paper focuses on an emerging duality in grandparenting styles
and contrasts the gendered perspectives on grandparenting roles and attitudes.
The diversity of styles is embedded in personalities, gender, educational level,
and lifestyle choices, and reflects different responses to dramatic change in
sociocultural and economic conditions.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY produced dramatic changes in the lifestyles and
political economy of the Chamorros of Guam. These changes have created a
cultural friction between Chamorro traditions and the imported American
version of life on Guam. Grandparenting styles reflect the cultural friction
between the forces struggling for continuity with cherished traditions and
values, and the societal forces requiring adaptation and cultural change. This
paper focuses on patterns of grandparenting styles. The objectives are *i)* to
present the styles that maintain continuity with cherished traditions; *ii)*
to present the accommodations to new social and economic realities; and *iii)*
to identify gender differences embedded in these continuities and changes.
Case studies are used to illustrate the evolving patterns of grandparenting the
Chamorro Way (Diaz 1994).

  Although a great deal of research has focused on aging, culture, and
gender in American society, and studies in Pacific societies are accumulating,

there has been a paucity of published research on these issues among Chamorros, the indigenous peoples of the American territory of the island of Guam. The majority of recent research on Chamorro society and culture has been historical, demographic, social, educational, and/or bioarchaeological in nature. This paper draws on ethnographic research of social aging to examine the influences of culture and gender on grandparenting roles.

Grandparenting, Culture, and Gender

Grandparent research has documented that differences exist in the roles of grandmothers and grandfathers in different cultural groups, accentuating the importance of including gender variations in any attempt to understand grandparenting in its cultural context. A review by Spitze and Ward (1998) indicates that grandparents' choices tend to be shaped by factors that mold other dimensions of life, so it is reasonable to expect gender-based experiences and roles to be reflected in differences between grandfathers and grandmothers. Eisenberg (1988) has shown that white American grand-mothers and grandfathers tend to interact differently with grandchildren, with grandmothers being more likely to interact as caregivers and grandfa-thers being more likely to interact as mentors. Schweitzer (1999) found that American Indian grandmothers tend to be the primary socializers of grandchildren, teaching them the cultural traditions and skills of their people.

Early studies of grandparents focused on grandmothers (Hagestad and Burton 1986; Szinovacz 1998), and stereotypes about gender variations reflect the focus. For example, white American stereotypes perceive grand-fathers as less involved in the lives of grandchildren and less expressive about their grandparent role (Brubaker 1990). However, new American studies question the stereotypes. In her studies of gender and perspectives on grandparenting, Thomas (1994, 1995) found that in many ways men and women view their relationships with grandchildren similarly. However, she identified differences between grandfathers' and grandmothers' experiences of the relationships. Grandmothers reported greater satisfaction with these relationships than did grandfathers; grandfathers placed greater emphasis on generational extension of the family and on indulging grandchildren than did grandmothers.

The focus on grandmothers may also reflect the demographic pattern of longer lives for women (Hagestad and Burton 1986; Spitze and Ward 1998). On Guam, consistent with the mainstream American pattern, Chamorro females have longer life spans than males. According to the 1990 U.S. census, the most recent to report life expectancy by ethnic groups, life expectancy at

birth was 72.2 years for Chamorro females, 65.5 years for males. Among the 375 Chamorros aged seventy-five and older, 64 percent were women, while only 36 percent were men. As a result, there tends to be more intergenerational contact with grandmothers than with grandfathers, and grandmothers tend to have more influence on grandchildren.

Considerable variability in the general American experience of old age is known to exist between men and women. Gender differences in health, socioeconomic status, and social resources in earlier life stages persist into old age and result in variations in later life trajectories and responses to life events, such as grandparenthood (Barer 1994). The gender patterns interact with and are influenced by ethnic/cultural differences in aging and grandparenting experiences (e.g., Hunter and Taylor 1998; Williams and Torrez 1998), and by broader cultural differences such as the Western cultural ideal of individualism and the nonwestern ideal of kinship corporacy and their expression in the construction of generational ties (Albert and Cattell 1994; Simic 1990). In some respects, such as living arrangements, ethnic minority groups have in recent decades increasingly adhered to the white majority's norm of "mutuality at a distance" (Tobin and Kulys 1981), and patterns of intergenerational solidarity have been affected by increasing urbanization and modernization.

The Chamorros of Guam are experiencing the effects of modernization through the change to wage labor from a subsistence household economy, change to automobile transportation from the use of caribou carts, development of a tourism industry, and the building of modern structures, such as supermarkets, shopping malls, highways, and fast food chains. In the process, the cultural roles, attitudes, and values of generational ties for both men and women are also changing.

In her essay on grandparenthood in cross-cultural perspective, Charlotte Ikels (1998) focuses on the kinship context in which grandparenthood is embedded and the overall status of old people in society as basic to understanding variation. Among the precolonial Chamorros a matrilineal descent system was followed, associated with an avunculocal residence pattern, and elders experienced high status and respect. Their descent system may have been similar to that described by Flinn (2007) among the Micronesian people of Pollap; however, the impact of European colonization was earlier and more extensive on Guam because of its strategic importance to the Spanish colonizers. Therefore, modern Chamorro culture, kinship, and age structure reflect the combination of precolonial Chamorro and Spanish colonial systems of household organization, residence patterns, and descent systems as well as the post-Spanish influences of an extended American "colonization."

During 200 years of Spanish colonization (1668–1898), remnants of the indigenous matrilineal descent system continued, as evidenced by children taking the names of their mother's family, women and elders continuing to have high status and responsibility in the family and community, and land being owned communally by the family. These practices continued until the American administration in the early twentieth century required the Chamorros to follow the U.S. legal system, using the father's surname and individual land ownership. Subsequently, during more than a century of American presence and influence, the Chamorros have experienced changes throughout their social, political, and economic structures. The changes continue to affect intergenerational relationships generally and grandparent/ grandchild relationships in particular as they shift between their Chamorro way and Americanization.

A diversity of grandparenting styles within ethnic/cultural groups has been documented by Weibel-Orlando (1997), who identified five divergent perceptions and expressions of grandparenthood in a North American Indian population: distanced, fictive, custodial, ceremonial, and cultural conserva- tor. Inclusiveness, or what the Chamorros term caring and sharing, is a cul- tural value among the Chamorros, so the grandparenting styles of fictive, custodial, ceremonial, and cultural conservator are acceptable to them. While the distanced style of noninterfering, affectionate grandparents who live independently in their own homes at some distance from the nuclear paren- tal family is the Anglo-American cultural ideal, it is considered by Chamorros as an aberration. The ideal among Chamorros is the multigenerational, extended family living in the family compound, sharing a common kitchen and social area in mostly modern, American-style homes.

Other studies of American Indian grandmothers (Schweitzer 1999) describe a situation similar to that of the Chamorros, namely anguish at the "great loss of traditions" and the continuing changes occurring in their own lives in response to the economic and social realities in the wider American society. The American Indian approach to grandmothers has its roots in a way of life that values continuity with the past; as such, it emphasizes living in close proximity to and maintaining supportive relationships with one's kin. Schweitzer concludes that the keys to understanding American Indian grandparenting today lie in exploring the forms of family and community organization that are ordinarily the most resistant to change: the social organization, ideology, values, and worldview that are typical of each group. These keys to understanding also seem to apply to grandparenthood among the Chamorros.

Continuity is viewed by social aging scholars as an adaptive response to pressures that result from a basic need for stable viewpoints of ourselves and

our worlds, which can be used to anticipate and guide responses to life events (Atchley 1989). Continuity theory proposes that as individuals progress through their adult lives, they attempt to maintain stability in their spatial, sociocultural, and psychological domains. This stability contributes to their sense of well-being over the years. For Chamorros, continuity is a collective and individual process embedded in life experiences, which ties events and ideas of one period to those of the next. It is pivotal to Chamorro culture, occurring in such internal aspects as personality and in such external aspects as living arrangements, relationships, community, location, and lifestyles, as well as other cultural, social, spatial, and spiritual dimensions.

   Traditionally in Chamorro culture, priority was attached to a guiding worldview called *inafamaolek* that involved the interdependence of family, community, church, and nature (Mokua'u 1996). Social life centered on the family, church, and farm, and in values of sharing and caring for both the family and community. The family was the cornerstone of a Chamorro's personal life, and identity was embedded in the roles and responsibilities of the family (Untalan Munoz 1990). Integral to this value system was respect for elders. In the twentieth century the Chamorros have experienced pressure to adhere to mainstream American cultural norms, which has led to a sense of cultural friction between maintaining the continuity of their traditional culture and adapting to a new American value system.

Study Setting and Methods

The island of Guam lies 10 degrees north of the equator in the western Pacific. It is the southernmost island in the Mariana Islands, which are culturally part of Micronesia. As an unincorporated territory of the United States, it is also the country's easternmost section, since to travel there from the continental United States, one must cross the international dateline in the mid-Pacific. Guam's motto is "Where America's Day Begins." As one approaches Guam on the large jets that fly into the international airport, one can see the island's entire 212 square miles from on high. And after seeing only blue ocean for the 3,000-mile flight from Hawai'i, one feels a sense of the isolation and vulnerability experienced by living on such a relatively small piece of land in the midst of such a powerful ocean. The sense of vulnerability increases when one realizes that Guam is subject to frequent typhoons and earthquakes, so that people seem to be constantly rebuilding their damaged homes and businesses and replanting destroyed crops and trees. This sense of vulnerability may be a factor in the Chamorro traditions of caring and sharing with extended family and neighbors, meeting reciprocal obligations, and accenting the importance of community.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the composition of the population on Guam experienced dramatic growth, from 9,676 in 1901 to 160,796 in 2002. The Chamorros, who still represented 94 percent of the island's population in 1930, made up only 46.2 percent in 1999, though they continued to be the largest group, with a population of 62,292. The increase in population after World War II resulted from a massive influx of U.S. military personnel; since the 1970s, however, it has been due to immigration from the Philippines, Asia, and other Micronesian islands.

My experience among the Chamorros began while living and working as a nurse on Guam from 1975 to 1978. I returned from July 1994 to July 1995 to carry out ethnographic research on the Chamorro experiences of aging: their perspectives, concerns, and strategies for health and old age (Torsch 1996). The manner in which I attempted to understand grandparenting among the Chamorros was through examination of population trends and characteristics, and consideration of individual biographies and attitudes obtained through sixty individual life-history interviews as well as through participant observation. The in-depth interviews followed a modified life-history format that allowed each person to describe her or his perceptions of generational issues and grandparenting, as well as the attitudinal, behavioral, and socioeconomic dimensions of their lives. The sampling technique was primarily convenience sampling based on the accessibility of individuals to the researcher. A total of sixty Chamorros were interviewed, ranging in age from fifty-two to ninety-four years, and consisting of fifty females and ten males. Access was opened by meeting seniors through the senior citizens' centers, through recommendations by family members and friends, and by meeting individuals at community functions, such as fiestas and novenas. The term senior is used because of its usage by mainstream Americans for those age sixty-five years and over, though the Chamorros used the term elder and included individuals as young as fifty years in this group. An attempt was made to obtain interviews from a diverse cross-section of the Chamorro senior population. Variables used as bases for sample quotas included age, gender, education, labor-force participation, and social class.

Participant observation was used to develop rapport and to increase understanding of the Chamorros' complex social setting, relationships, health environment, and cultural milieu in order to facilitate both demographic and qualitative data collection. Participant observation took place in several senior centers, community fiestas, novenas, and general Chamorro family gatherings. It was conducted in both the more heavily populated northern and central areas of the island and in the less populated, more rural southern part.

Demographic Changes

As Panapasa (2007) notes in her study of grandparenting in Fiji, demographic change is important in the wider context of the changing dynamics of grand-parenthood in the Pacific. Significant demographic characteristics among the Chamorros that are associated with changes in grandparenting include increased labor-force participation, longer life expectancy, and extended family living arrangements. With the Americanization of Guam, there has been an increase in labor-force participation by Chamorro men and women, including seniors, which represents a significant change in Chamorro society. In 1930 the labor-force participation rates were 49.6% (4,035 out of a total 8,128) among men and 11% (909 out of a total 8,274) among women age ten and over. As of 1990, the overall labor-force participation increased to 46.3% (11,384 out of a total 24,609) among Chamorro men and 35% (8,870 out of a total of 25,326) among Chamorro women age sixteen and over (U.S. Bureau of Census 1930, 1990). This reflects the shift from a household subsistence economy to a wage-labor economy. It also reflects a change in traditional gender roles with increased female participation in the labor force.

The shift in labor-force participation rates has also included older Chamorros. Among seniors in 1990, 49 percent of men and 17 percent of women aged sixty-five to sixty-nine years were in the labor force. Among those in the seventy- to seventy-four-year-old age group, 30 percent of Chamorro men and 9 percent of Chamorro women were active in the labor force. The rates indicate that at the end of the twentieth century many Chamorro seniors were employed in the labor force rather than functioning full-time in the traditional household economy. The change in labor-force participation has affected the style of grandparenting as well as the role of the extended family among the Chamorros.

Increasing labor-force participation has also changed the class system. In the early twentieth century, Guam was divided into wealthy, land-owning, upper-class families and landless, poor, lower-class families. With the American administration came increasing opportunities for wage jobs, public education, and an improved standard of living for many as a middle class evolved. This has allowed many Chamorros to buy land and establish family compounds, where they have been able to maintain the traditional extended family system in which grandparents are an integral part of the household.

Life expectancy at birth increased among the Chamorros from 34.5 years in 1902 to sixty-nine years in 1993 for both sexes. Longer life expectancies are changing the dynamics of intergenerational relations, as some Chamorro families now have five generations living and interacting, whereas two or

three generations was the norm early in the twentieth century. An aging population also increases opportunities for contact between generations, which magnifies and otherwise impacts the grandparenting role (Crosnoe and Elder 2002; Uhlenberg and Kirby 1998).

The coresidence of grandparents and adult children and grandchildren is viewed as an essential aspect of a quality life and the continuation of valued traditions, much as Panapasa (2007) found in her Fijian study and Flinn (2007) found on Pollap. The 1990 U.S. census data on living arrangements show that only 4.9 percent of Chamorro females and 3.4 percent of males age sixty-five and over lived alone as compared with 31 percent of U.S. females and 9 percent of U.S. males age sixty-five and over. These data reflect the Chamorro pattern of extended families living in family compounds and the tradition of family care for older members. These patterns may be changing, though, as economic and social pressures lead younger adults to desire an American-style nuclear family living arrangement and as federally funded, low-income housing that only accommodates single-family units continues to be built. These trends are likely to increasingly affect changes in styles of grandparenting.

Chamorro Grandparenting: Vignettes

During my year of ethnographic research among the Chamorros, the most frequently mentioned positive aspect of being a senior by both men and women was having grown children and grandchildren. This reflected the significance placed on kinship ties and the sense of continuity in intergenerational relations among the seniors. It also indicated how being old and being grandparents are interconnected in Chamorro culture. It was not unusual for elders to comment that: "The best part of being old is watching your grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow. That's my life. We follow our parents' footsteps, raising children and grandchildren." As several other papers in this issue report, grandparenting was considered to be an integral part of the social definition of old age. The Chamorro words for grandmother (*biha*) and grandfather (*bihu*) are defined similarly to the American terms, the parents of one's parents, and since English is becoming the more standard language among youth, one hears the English words as frequently as one hears the Chamorro words.

The seniors identified a variety of experiences with grandparenting from their own childhood years. Recalling the family histories and life course of the grandparent generation, many seniors described having been raised by their grandparents as a result of the early deaths of their mothers and fathers. Others had not known their grandparents because of their early deaths. The

remembered pattern of grandparenting in each case, however, was similar, with grandparents fulfilling productive roles in the traditional household economy.

In the midst of demographic, societal, and economic changes, styles of grandparenting are changing and becoming more diverse in modern-day Guam as they are throughout the Pacific region. One underlying force among the Chamorros is change in the function of the extended family. Where once the family was the center of the household economy of fishing and farming, now family members tend to work in wage-labor jobs away from the household. No longer is the family unit the center of production; no longer is the household the base for economic activity.

There is emerging diversity in grandparenting styles among the Chamorros of Guam as they experience social, economic, and demographic shifts in their lives. Two major themes in this diversity are: i) the cultural friction between traditional practices as grandparents versus "American" patterns; and ii) contrasts in the perspectives and roles of grandfathers and grandmothers. The emerging styles of Chamorro grandparenting range from styles that maintain the Chamorro traditional ideal to ones that are considered by many a shameful style, essentially an adoption of mainstream American patterns of spatial and social distance from the family.

Grandparenting Styles

The Ideal

Tan Maria sits in her living room on a Sunday afternoon as her own children and grandchildren walk through, dutifully doing the traditional nginge of kissing the hand of the elder as a sign of respect before sitting down for the rosary and songs. Tan Maria responds with "Dios ti ayudi hao," meaning "May God bless you." She has nine children, twenty grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, all of whom live on Guam. Her youngest son and his family live in the house next door in the family compound. She and her husband have been married for forty-four years and have a special, close understanding of each other that she says comes with time and shared experiences. Tan Maria and her husband are considered the heads of the family and are approached for their wisdom in making family decisions. Tan Maria's extended family is continuing the Chamorro cultural traditions, which have historically centered on the family and Catholic Church, including the elders as respected leaders in the social system.

Images of the ideal in grandparenting among the Chamorros are often portrayed in Chamorro art. In a batik painting by Guam artist Judy Flores,

a Chamorro grandmother is shown sitting on the front porch surrounded by her grandchildren, who are playing and vying for her attention. In a woodcarving by Guam artist S. Blas entitled *Suruhana*, the traditional healer, also a grandmother, receives the nginge from her grandchild. Both artists depict the Chamorro ideal of grandparenthood being rooted in family connections.

The Shameful

Lourdes is a seventy-eight-year-old Chamorro who lives alone in her cottage apartment at one of Guam's government-sponsored residences for older adults. When her stiffness and pains from arthritis permit, she spends her days at the American-style senior center, which is located at the residence complex. Though she is the mother of eight and the grandmother of forty-two, there is no room for her in any of their homes and little in their lives. Those living on Guam are too busy working to care for her. Three of her children live in the mainland United States, but she seldom sees them and never receives any assistance from them. She gave her property and house to her daughter when she could no longer do the housework so she now has no place of her "own." She has been married twice; widowed by her first husband, she divorced her second because, according to her, she became tired of his running around with other women. This created considerable stress because she is Catholic. She cries when she describes her living arrangement. She is happy when her family visits her on weekends but becomes irritable with all the noise and wants them to leave. Then when they are gone, she cries because she is alone. She does not understand her feelings and is confused about her situation. She cared for her parents in her home when they became unable to care for themselves. She is ashamed that she is not cared for by her family.

Lourdes is one of the aged Chamorros whose life has been affected by the introduction of modern American social and political economic structures and attitudes toward older individuals. Her family has been divided by the out-migration of some of her children to find jobs in the mainland United States, and her family is not continuing the Chamorro traditions of special respect for elders and intergenerational extended family households—hence, the "shame" that she feels.

Traditional Versus American Patterns of Grandparenting

Of the older Chamorros I interviewed, some were adamant about the need to maintain traditional roles and status, that the elders be *saina* and

not *manamko*. In the Chamorro language there are two key words that depict those in their later years. Saina is the Chamorro term for elder. It encompasses the positive connotations of wisdom, having respect, having valuable knowledge and experiences to share, being active, and being a power in family and community. This is the opposite of the concept of being old and worn out, subsumed in the term manamko (plural) or *amko* (singular). Manamko carries the negative connotations of having no one to care for one in later life, being without respect from others and, often, being landless and thus lacking the access to power and status that land ownership can support. According to these definitions, Tan Maria would be referred to as saina, Lourdes as manamko.

These terms, in use today, reflect the complex nature of the contemporary grandparenting experience. Those who follow the traditional roles of grand-parenting are considered saina, those who do not are considered manamko. The popular name for the agency that runs the American-style senior centers, SPIMA, is an acronym for *Servicio Para I Manamko,* and those who attend the senior centers are called manamko. Though it would not be appropriate to describe those who attend as worn out since many continue to participate in community and church activities, participation in the senior centers is not a traditional Chamorro style for grandparents. The relatively recent introduction of senior centers has been part of the Americanization of Guam. Since its inception in 1978, the government's Division of Senior Citizens has been charged with planning, implementing, and evaluating programs to promote the well-being of senior citizens (Guam Division of Senior Citizens 1987). Some older Chamorros welcome these programs; some do not. The division in attitudes about the centers reflects the cultural friction between traditional behaviors and the newly introduced choices.

It is likely that the most powerful force for the maintenance and continuity of the Chamorro ideal of grandparenthood has been the passion for cher-ished cultural values. When asked in a focus group what they would change and what they would preserve in their lives, the participating Chamorros' first priority was the preservation of their most cherished cultural values, namely maintaining close extended kinship ties and continuing an ethic of "caring and sharing" (Torsch 1996).

To the Chamorros, being a grandparent is not a continuation of being a parent, such as Flinn (2007) reports for Micronesians on Pollap; rather, grandparents are perceived to have different roles and responsibilities from parents. Many of the seniors I interviewed shared concerns that their grand-children were not learning the Chamorro traditions and language and were not learning moral lessons of right from wrong or respect for elders. However, they did not believe it was appropriate for them to interfere with their own

adult children's child-rearing decisions. From the behaviors described as objectionable, it seems that many have their roots in adoption of American styles of behavior, learned from American media representations. Whether the grandparents' attitude of noninterference reflected adoption of American patterns requires further study.

Though the passion for maintaining the traditional cultural values forms a framework in intergenerational relations, the choices as to exactly how this is acted out vary. Some elders maintain traditional grandparenting roles in the extended family household context and provide child care for grandchildren, leading a life that is productive and centered in the family, community, and church. Others take advantage of new opportunities available to today's older Chamorros, such as attending the senior center programs and/or participating in the work force. Though not the traditional style, these individuals continue to be productive and involved. What is considered shameful is when the grandparent's life is no longer focused on the extended family system; this seems too alien to traditional values and therefore disgraceful. One Chamorro woman related the variety of experiences even within one family.

> I retired when I was sixty and entered the traditional practice of staying home to care for my grandchildren while my daughter went to school and later worked. My sister had retired at sixty. She wanted to stay home, watch grandchildren, and cook. So she was happy doing these things, but it made me physically ill and unhappy. I guess every person is different. I love my grandchildren, but I became very irritable. I seemed to be sick all the time and felt tired. I had always worked before and had been very active in the community. I had been fortunate to have a college education, which is not the usual among the elderly Chamorros. I was used to dressing up, going to meetings, using my mind. I wanted to return to work, but I knew my daughter needed my help with the children. She and her husband would have trouble making ends meet unless she worked. So I told her I would help her with the money; she could stay home with the children. But she did not want to give up her job since there might not be such a good job when she tried to return to the work force after the children were able to go to school. So I told her I would help her with money for child care. So I returned to work when I was sixty-one. I love my work. I like to dress up, go to meetings, and be active in the community.

This account described one sister who wished to maintain the traditional style of grandparenting by staying home and caring for her grandchildren,

and a second sister who chose to participate in the labor force. Both sisters were productive in their own ways and both led lives centered in family well-being, true to Chamorro values.

Some seniors desire to maintain the traditional role of grandparenting but cannot because their children have had to leave the island to obtain jobs and raise their own children in the mainland United States. One interviewed woman, who was very oriented to maintaining the traditional grandparent role, was very depressed because while it is the tradition for a son and his family to move into the family compound, her son and his wife and their children live stateside in the United States. They do not plan to return to Guam because of lack of job opportunities on the island. So she lives alone, does not drive due to her poor eyesight, cares for a daughter's children during the day, but is alone and frightened at night. Even though she is maintaining the tradition of caring for her daughter's grandchildren, she is depressed and unhappy in her life because her notion of what "should be" is not being met. She worries about what will happen to her when she becomes frail with no family living with her.

In this instance, the out-migration of children and grandchildren prevents an older woman from assuming the traditional role as grandparent in an extended family household and has forced her to adopt a distanced style of grandparenting with regard to her son's children. This distanced style may become more common among the Chamorros as out-migration continues, adult children leave Guam for education and jobs on the U.S. mainland, and visits between the generations become infrequent due to the expense as well as the miles. Armstrong (2007) discusses how social generativity through grandparenting can be impaired by geographic separation for European and Maori women in New Zealand. The Chamorro cases exemplify the style of distanced grandparent identified by Weibel-Orlando (1997) in her American Indian study. The style involves distance that can be geographical, psychological, and cultural. Significantly, as presented by Weibel-Orlando, it was not a traditional style; it emerged with migration of American Indians to cities. Among Chamorros, the trend is another example of the cultural friction that occurs between seeking the ideal of maintaining Chamorro traditions and adapting to the new, Americanized social and economic reality of life on Guam.

Perspectives of Grandmothers and Grandfathers

Also embedded within the cultural friction between traditional and modern styles of grandparenting is the contrast between men's and women's perspectives on the roles they choose as grandparents. In the subsistence agricultural

economy, everyone in the household contributed to the welfare and survival
of the family. Traditionally, male Chamorros farmed, fished, and ranched.
Females had responsibility for caregiving to the children and older family
members, for domestic production such as making sleeping mats, for pre-
paring food, and for the health and religious activities of the family. Everyone
worked very hard all of their lives. The older family members provided
necessary contributions: gardening, tending to domestic duties, and taking
care of children. There was no retirement, and until the late twentieth
century there were no senior centers organized for the seniors to congregate
and socialize. Instead, socializing centered on the family and church
activities, which are still a significant part of the lives of most Chamorro
seniors.

In modern Guam there are many opportunities for seniors to adopt the
current American model and continue to be productive while at the same
time seeking more leisure activities. Many Chamorros now attend the senior
citizens' centers, which are located at the community center in most villages.
This is a new, leisure-time activity that was not available to previous genera-
tions of older people. The choice of whether or not to participate is allowed
by the financial cushion provided by the Social Security benefits for which
most older Americans are eligible. Prior to the financial security offered by
this American program, seniors, both men and women, were tied along with
their extended families to the household economy and continued to work
all their lives.

Chamorro grandparenting does not follow American stereotypes of
uninvolved grandparents; rather, we find that both grandmothers and grand-
fathers are involved in the socialization of grandchildren, teaching the
language and traditions. Both tend to view their relationships with grandchil-
dren similarly, much as Thomas (1995) found in her studies of gender
patterns in American grandparenting. Both are very expressive of their
concerns and involved in the lives of their family. However, just as Thomas
found for older white Americans, older Chamorro men and women also put
emphasis on different aspects of grandparenting. In my interviews it was the
grandfathers who voiced greater concern about the trend of losses of tradi-
tional knowledge and skills among youth. The grandmothers focused on
the benefits that Americanization had brought in a lessened workload, and
thereby, in more opportunities for leisure time to enjoy the company of
friends and family.

According to many of the older Chamorro women who participated in
my study, one of the positive themes characterizing old age today is the
lessened workload and freedom from past household obligations that
have accompanied Americanization. An older Chamorro woman from the
southern part of the island addressed this positive theme.

The fun about being old is you can just go out and talk with friends, or go in the house and . . . joke with the kids and everybody. Before when my parents were elders and even before, they had to work all their lives. There was no break for them. Now with Social Security an elder may retire and relax in financial security. This is a good thing I wish my parents could have experienced.

Many women who had spent most of their lives in traditional Chamorro fashion were working part-time at the senior centers. They expressed their "double" enjoyment of being with people their own age during the day and then spending the evenings with their children and grandchildren, living with their extended family. They were quite happy to turn over the major portion of the household work to their daughters and to have more time to focus on their own fulfillment.

In contrast to the women's emphasis on a lessened workload and freedom from past obligations as a benefit of old age, the older Chamorro men that I interviewed were very oriented to their role of transmitting traditional skills, language, and values to their children and grandchildren. A sixty-one-year-old Chamorro grandfather described the role of Chamorro men.

The male's function was as provider for the family—also to teach the children the skills they need to provide for the family. The elder was the showcase for the younger generation, showing them how things should be done. They taught us the importance of family, of sharing with each other, and of helping each other.

As a father, I taught my children the ways of the land, how to raise fruit trees, how to hunt wild boar, how to build structures and roof. The skills and knowledge that my father shared with me, I have passed on to my children so they can teach their children. And since I still have my health, I teach my grandsons how to do these skills. I also attend many of the activities of my grandchildren, their sports and school activities.

Most of the grandfathers in my study talked about teaching their grandsons the necessary skills of survival: how to fish, cast a fishing net, catch shrimp, and hunt deer. They often expressed concern that the young generation today could not survive if the occurrences of World War II were repeated. During World War II Guam had been captured by the Japanese military; Chamorros were forced into labor camps and required to provide food, supplies, and labor for the Japanese soldiers. It was a difficult time in

which many Chamorros died of disease or lack of food, or were killed by the Japanese, and it left an indelible mark on the psyche of today's older Chamorros. The grandfathers were also concerned that many youth do not view knowledge of Chamorro traditions as important in their Americanized lives and are losing connection with their history and identity as Chamorros. One of them related:

> My family worked hard, and we were very prosperous before the War. We shared with each other and helped each other. Many of the sharing ways are dissipating among the younger generation. They are kept alive by some, but there are fewer and fewer practicing the Chamorro cultural traditions of sharing and caring with each other.

Conclusion

The roles of grandparents in Chamorro society are in the midst of dramatic change as Guam becomes an increasingly Americanized society with a wage-based economy. Grandparenting styles are becoming increasingly diverse, and this diversity is embedded in individual personalities, gender, lifestyle choices, and educational level as well as sociocultural and economic situations.

In his book *Choice Points*, Glidewell (1970) described how people come to "choice points" in their lives when they must make life-alternating decisions such as between fight or flight or between independence or dependence. These decisions affect their emotional lives and interactions with the significant others in their families and communities. The Chamorros of Guam seem to be at such a choice point when choosing their roles as grandparents—between continuing the traditional roles as saina, which connotes wisdom, respect, being active, and having a position of power in family and community, or adapting to new, American-style roles as manamko, that is uncared for, without respect, and lacking access to power or status. As Schweitzer (1999) concludes for the American Indian societies, it may be that new, nontraditional roles serve to bridge the gap between the old and new ways of grandparenting. In the process, the meanings of Chamorro labels may change. In the meantime, a sense of cultural friction prevails.

Within this cultural friction the emerging styles of grandparenting range from those maintaining the traditional ideal to what is considered by many as a shameful style, essentially an adoption of American patterns distanced from the family. The central value differentiating this duality is the maintenance of significant family connections, roles, and responsibilities. A key traditional

value has been productivity in the family, in the church, and in the commu-
nity. At the heart of the choice point for today's grandparents is the decision
whether to maintain a traditional productive role or adopt a "nonproductive"
(or nontraditionally productive) role. There are many new ways of being
productive available; both grandfathers and grandmothers may be employed,
retired, and/or participating in the senior centers.

Today's Chamorro elders also present diversity in their perspectives on
the importance of continuing to be productive *versus* the blessing of having
more leisure time and fewer household responsibilities. Gender-based
differences are significant aspects of this diversity, with more women focus-
ing on the benefits of having new opportunities for leisure and opportunities
for participating in nonhousehold work activities. It is more often the men
who express concern about loss of Chamorro heritage and traditions. Because
of their experiences of privation during the Japanese occupation in World
War II and because Guam is subject to frequent natural disasters in the form
of typhoons and earthquakes, there is concern on the part of the grandfathers
that their grandchildren will not have the survival skills necessary in such
crises. Since they perceive these skills to be part of their cultural heritage and
part of their identity as Chamorros, they are concerned about this break in
cultural continuity.

Many older people beyond Guam's shores are experiencing the choice
point of deciding between productive and nonproductive roles. A study by
Merrill Lynch and Harris Research (2004) indicates that this choice point is
associated with gender differences between what older American men and
women wish to do with their later years. The men accented wanting to spend
more time with spouse and family; the women accented the desire to do
meaningful volunteer work, reinvent themselves, and enhance their spiritual
side. The choice point is perhaps becoming a global experience as older
people strive to maintain a sense of relevance in their families, communities,
and society in the face of the overwhelming impact of social forces such as
ageism and organizational structures such as forced retirement.

As on Guam, the choice is not always the grandparents'; it may be imposed
by new political and economic realities. Among the Chamorros the
out-migration of children and grandchildren may determine the style of
grandparenting, or being landless and poor they may not have the economic
resources to continue traditional roles and practices. Situated within the
cultural friction between traditional practices and American patterns of
grandparenting is the economic status of Chamorro families. There seems to
be a class-like difference between grandparenting styles of "landed" and
"landless" Chamorros. Landed Chamorros, who tend to be middle and upper
class, have the resources to maintain continuity with their traditional values

and the extended family living arrangement. Landless, and often low-income, Chamorros are more likely to find themselves having to adopt American-style living arrangements outside the extended family and being unable to continue their cherished traditional values of caring and sharing.

Also, the change in labor patterns from household subsistence toward wage labor outside the family compound has meant that many of the economic survival skills of the grandparents' generation and knowledge of the land and sea are less relevant to the grandchildren. The discontinuity brought by the Americanization of Guam creates breaks with past history and the traditions by which previous generations organized their lives. These discontinuities can cause great anxiety and a feeling of loss of interconnectedness in the group (Keen 1993). They will require adjustments at the individual and community levels in order to regain a sense of cultural continuity and personal interconnectedness in Chamorro society.

There are many unknowns in the future of Chamorro culture, in the new Chamorro Way. Will the valued traditions, anchored in the extended family and in values of caring and sharing, remain relevant in the twenty-first century? Or will the Chamorros increasingly adopt the mainstream American style of grandparenting with infrequent visits and separate living arrangements? Will their influence in child rearing and in transmitting values and traditions as well as the Chamorro language continue to be increasingly relegated to day-care institutions and schools? The paths taken when Chamorro grandparents come to their choice points will be part of the answer to these questions.

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