Parenting and Grandparenting



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Synonyms

Caregiving for children; Grandparenting; Grandparents caring for grandchildren; Intergenerational exchange; Intergenerational relations; Intergenerational transmissions; Parenting

Definition

Parenting refers to the activities that parents engage in to raise their children and the skills involved to facilitate child development (Lee et al. 2014). When children are young, parenting behaviors often focus on "nurturing, stimulating and socializing children...(and) monitoring their activities" (Furedi 2002, p. 5). As children enter adulthood, parenting in parents' mid- and later life usually involves granting children autonomy and helping them to achieve independence in emerging adulthood as well as providing instrumental and emotional support to adult children when needed.

Grandparenting concerns the support and care that grandparents, typically grandmothers, provide to their grandchildren (Timonen and Arber 2012). Scholars tend to view grandparenting broadly also to include contact, shared activities, emotional attachment, and overall relationship quality between grandparents and grandchildren.

Overview

Parenting Styles and the Changing Context of Parenthood

Emerging adulthood is a transition period from adolescence to young adulthood when children "are striving to become independent, self-reliant individuals, while simultaneously establishing an equal relationship with parents" (Nelson et al. 2011, p. 740). Parenting in emerging adulthood usually involves launching children and facilitating them to achieve independence. In later life, older parents of adult children tend to adopt a more hands-off parenting approach, trying not to interfere much with their children's lives yet still provide support when needed (Connidis 2010).

Parental psychological control and autonomy support are two widely discussed dimensions of parenting in emerging adulthood. Parental psychological control pertains to the use of manipulative parenting tactics, such as inducing guilt and anxiety, withdrawing love, and invalidating children's feelings and thoughts, to intrude upon children's psychological development and pressure

children to comply with parental standards and requests (Barber 1996; Barber and Harmon 2002; Soenens and Vansteenkiste 2010). In contrast, parental autonomy support refers to parenting behaviors that promote independence, encourage children's autonomous expression and action, and are responsive to children's needs and interests (Soenens et al. 2007). Parental psychological control could be associated with problems of identity formation (Luyckx et al. 2007), emotion regulation (Manzeske and Stright 2009), and aggressive behaviors (Clark et al. 2015) in emerging adulthood. This parenting style could also link to lower levels of autonomy and difficulties having positive social relationships for emerging adults who are, in turn, associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression (Inguglia et al. 2016). However, autonomy-supportive parenting is likely to promote emerging adults' autonomy and positive connectedness with others. These positive attributes, in turn, could be linked to lower levels of anxiety and depression (Inguglia et al. 2016).

The typology of parenting styles in emerging adulthood is developed based on the balance of two parenting dimensions: responsiveness (e.g., warmth, induction/reasoning, responsive to children's needs) and demandingness (e.g., control, punishment, verbal hostility). The authoritative parenting style is likely to be both highly demanding and highly responsive to children's needs. Conversely, authoritarian parenting is characterized as high on demandingness but low on responsiveness, while permissive parenting is described as high on responsiveness but low on demandingness (Clark et al. 2015; also see review in McKinney et al. 2016). Compared to other parenting styles, authoritative parenting could be associated with lower levels of relational aggression (Clark et al. 2015), fewer drinking-related problems (Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez 2009), better relationships with parents, and higher levels of self-worth, social acceptance, and kindness among emerging adults (Nelson et al. 2011). Authoritative parenting might also yield better emotional adjustment outcomes (i.e., self-esteem, depression, anxiety) for emerging adults. These

outcomes could be optimal when both parents adopt this parenting style (McKinney and Renk 2008).

Parents' gender and children's gender interact with parenting behaviors to affect children in emerging adulthood. For instance, mothers are more likely to exhibit authoritative and permissive parenting, while fathers are more likely to adopt an authoritarian style (McKinney and Renk 2008). Specifically, mothering in emerging adulthood tends to demonstrate more responsiveness, warmth, and knowledge of their children's behaviors, whereas fathering practices are more likely to involve higher levels of punishment and verbal hostility (Nelson et al. 2011). Parenting styles in emerging adulthood could also vary by children's gender. For example, parents are less likely to demonstrate a permissive parenting style on daughters than on sons (McKinney and Renk 2008).

The social and historical context for parenthood and parenting has changed over time. The change is primarily driven by the profound social and economic changes in American society in the past several decades. In particular, the divorce rates for first-time married couples are remarkably high (Stevenson and Wolfers 2007). Meanwhile, labor force participation rates among young people aged from 16 to 24 were at a historically low point in the early 2000s. Although the labor market economy improved for young people in recent years since the recovery from the Great Recession, their labor force participation rate is still lower than that of 2000 (Fernandes-Alcantara 2018). Partly driven by the economic hardship during and after the Great Recession as experienced by young adults, there is a noticeable rise in the number of complex and especially multigenerational households. Indeed, the share of young adults aged from 25 to 34 living with parents more than doubled from 11% in 1980 to 26% in 2015 (Fry 2016). Linked with these trends is increased scholarly attention to launching children and parenting in the context of marital changes.

Grandparenting Styles and the Changing Context of Grandparenthood

At the turn of the twenty-first century, researchers have identified five grandparenting styles among American grandparents (Mueller et al. 2002). Influential grandparents (17%) actively engage in grandparenting and are emotionally close to their grandchildren. They also tend to have high strong authority and a influence grandchildren's life. Supportive grandparents (23%) are less likely to exert authority or discipline on their grandchildren than influential grandparents, but they still play an active role in their grandchildren's lives. Compared to *influen*tial grandparents, the level of involvement in grandparenting activities among supportive grandparents is slightly lower. Passive grandparents (19%) moderately engage in grandparenting activities. They tend to have a friendship-like relationship with grandchildren but provide little instrumental support to their grandchildren. Authority-oriented grandparents (13%) have limited involvement in grandparenting activities, as do passive grandparents. These grandparents identify themselves as having an authoritarian relationship with their grandchildren. Detached grandparents (28%) tend to be the least involved in the grandparent role. They participate in minimal, if any, grandparenting activities and have a distant relationship with their grandchildren. A more recent study in the growing grandfathering literature continues this line of inquiry and identifies three grandfathering styles and their determinants based on grandfathers' level of involvement in contact, activities, and commitment, and these styles include involved (32%), passive (52%), and disengaged (16%) (Bates et al. 2018).

Studies mentioned above inform our understanding of the enactment of the grandparent role, yet further empirical analysis is needed to validate if these grandparenting typologies and their distributions would still apply to more recent cohorts of grandmothers and grandfathers, such as the baby boomers. Relationships and support exchange between grandparents and grandchildren may change as both grandparents and grandchildren move across the life course stages when grandparents' health deteriorates and grandchildren reach

adulthood (see review in Hayslip and Page 2012). For example, when grandparents and grandchildren are younger, grandparenting is more likely to involve shared activities and childcare, whereas grandparenting concerning older grandparents and grandchildren tends to involve more financial support and confiding (Silverstein and Marenco 2001). Indeed, there are considerable variations in grandparenting styles, behaviors, and grandparentgrandchild relationships by grandparents' and grandchildren's demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, nativity, marital status), grandparents' socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, health status, family dynamics, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as well as country contexts (Hayslip and Fruhauf 2017; Hayslip and Page 2012; Shwalb and Hossain 2017; Silverstein and Marenco 2001; Timonen 2019; also see review in Stelle et al. 2010).

In the context of changing demographic trends and marital dynamics, grandparents today are more likely than grandparents of earlier cohorts to play a notable role in their grandchildren's lives. Postponement in marriage and childbearing of the parent generation may contribute to the delay of grandparenthood among more recent cohorts of grandparents. Nonetheless, the substantial gains in the total life expectancy (World Bank 2019) and disability-free life expectancy (Crimmins et al. 2016) might exceed the length of delays in the grandparent role, producing a longer healthy grandparenthood of 15.8 years for men and 18.9 years for women from age 50 (Margolis and Wright 2017). The gains in life expectancy may imply more years that grandparents and grandchildren could "share lives" together (Oeppen and Vaupel 2002). Moreover, the percentage of children with three or more siblings dropped from 60% among those born in the late 1950s to below 30% among those born after 1980 (Uhlenberg 2004). The reduced family size resulting from fertility decline could potentially increase the opportunities for grandparents to make investments in each grandchild, as grandchildren would have fewer siblings to compete for grandparents' resources (Uhlenberg 2004). Additionally, rising levels of women's labor force participation, increased nonmarital childbearing, and prevalent parental divorce (see reviews in Lesthaeghe 2010, 2014) could create more needs for grandparents to take on more caregiving responsibilities for their grandchildren.

Key Research Findings

Launching Children

Launching children out of the parental home and helping them establish independence are crucial parenting tasks in the critical life stage of emerging adulthood. Among recent cohorts of young adults, the age of nest-leaving has been slightly postponed, and the probability of home-returning has also increased (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999; Mulder et al. 2002). These two factors jointly generate an increasing number of young adults living with parents (Merten et al. 2018; Mulder and Clark 2002). For instance, recent estimates suggest that in the USA, the proportion of children aged 18 to 24 living in parental homes rose from around 40% to over 50% between 1960 and 2007 (Furstenberg 2010). In this context, allowing adult children to live with their parents for an extended period is perhaps one of the most critical instrumental supports that parents could provide.

Various parental factors shape whether and when children leave from and return to their parental homes. These factors include parental socioeconomic resources, parental instrumental support, parental health, parental family structure, parental marital status, parenting practices, and parent-child relationship quality (Angelini and Laferrère 2013; Goldscheider et al. 2014; Mulder and Clark 2002; Seiffge-Krenke 2006; South and Lei 2015). Worth noting is the mixed findings regarding the association between parent-child relationships and patterns of nest-leaving. Regarding the influence of mother-child relationships, some research suggests that better relationships between mothers and young adult children are generally associated with a lower likelihood of children staying in parental homes in adulthood (Merten et al. 2018). For example, a German study finds that parental support of child autonomy and a family environment that encourages negotiation and differentiation through parentchild conflict facilitates children leaving home on time (Seiffge-Krenke 2006). However, other researchers find that emotional closeness between mothers and children could be positively associated with the likelihood of staying in parental homes and home-returning (South and Lei 2015). There are also inconsistent findings on the influence of father-child relationships. Some scholars suggest that emotional closeness to fathers could be associated with a lower likelihood of nest-leaving without a partner (Goldscheider et al. 2014), whereas others find that father-young adult child relationship quality is not associated with the likelihood of home-leaving and homereturning (Merten et al. 2018; South and Lei 2015). Growing research continues to investigate how parental characteristics, in general – and parenting behaviors and parent-child relationships, in particular - could shape adult children's homeleaving and home-returning behaviors.

Parenting in the Context of Marital Changes

While parental support continues into children's adulthood, the scope and nature of parental support for adult children are likely to be conditioned by the marital experiences of both adult children and parents. When considering the marital status of adult children, married and cohabitating adult children tend to have less frequent face-to-face contact with their parents than unmarried ones, but having young and school-aged children themselves may increase their contact with parents (Bucx et al. 2008). Also, mothers are more likely to provide emotional comfort and financial assistance to unmarried adult children than married ones (Suitor et al. 2006). When considering the marital status of parents, divorced parents may have less frequent contact with their adult children than married counterparts (Bucx et al. 2008; Kalmijn 2007). Parental remarriage, particularly that of fathers, is likely to reduce contact with their adult children (Bucx et al. 2008; Kalmijn 2007). In the section of examples of application below, we use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to demonstrate the associations between parents' marriage experiences and their provision of support to adult children.

Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren

An increasingly critical component in contemporary grandparenting is the provision of childcare to grandchildren. In recent decades, the historical grandparent figure as "fun-loving" and "peripheral companions" has shifted to the "guardians of family stability" and playing the role of surrogate parent; this trend is particularly evident in minority families (Silverstein et al. 2012). Among people aged 30 and over living in households, 7.2 million (or 3.7%) were grandparents living with their grandchildren under age 18, of whom one-third (2.4 million) were a caregiver for their grandchildren (United States Census Bureau 2017). The amount of caregiving from grandparents to their grandchildren varies to a significant degree by racial or ethnic group. In general, grandparents in minority families provide disproportionally more care to their grandchildren than non-Hispanic white families. For example, the proportion of both African American and Hispanic grandparents providing intensive care is much larger than that of white grandparents (Chen et al. 2015). Moreover, the percentage of both African American and Hispanic grandparents living with their grandchildren in multigenerational households (i.e., grandparents living with grandchildren in the presence of parents) or in skipped generation households (i.e., grandparents living with grandchildren in the absence of parents) are much higher than that of white grandparents (Chen et al. 2015). The higher tendency of minority grandparents living with their grandchildren may imply a higher level of involvement in caregiving.

Cultural values and family needs could be the primary drivers for the racial and ethnic differences in grandparent caregiving (Silverstein et al. 2012). The family-oriented value held by many Hispanics emphasizes mutual support between family members (Mendoza et al. 2018). This value could encourage the grandparents' caregiving role in many multigenerational households. Grandparents' assistance with childcare could enable parents to work and save a considerable expense on formal childcare services. Indeed, in both the USA and European countries, under the context of the substantial increase in women's labor force participation and

the rising cost of formal childcare services, grandparents who provide significant support in childcare perform a valuable role as "mother saver," particularly to mothers with low educational attainment and young children, by increasing their chances to work (Arpino et al. 2014; Compton and Pollak 2014; Timonen and Arber 2012). Rather than shouldering the full childcare responsibility, Hispanic grandparents could co-parent young children by receiving help from parents when three generations live together. Parental support and strong family ties may help buffer the health risks and emotional stress from grandparent caregiving (Chen et al. 2015; Hayslip 2009).

Compared to their counterparts in other races and ethnicities, African American grandparents have the highest rate of being custodial grandparents or surrogate parents for their grandchildren in skipped generation households (Burton and Dilworth-Anderson 1991; Chen et al. 2015; Saluter 1996). African American grandparents in skipped generational households usually face economic hardship, heightened risks of health problems, and emotional stress (Bertera and Crewe 2013; Chen et al. 2015; Waldrop and Weber 2001). Despite these hardships, African American grandparents often play a vital role as "child saver" by fulfilling parental responsibilities when parental support is lacking due to, for instance, incarceration, substance abuse, alcohol addiction, or health problems (Timonen and Arber 2012). The care from custodial grandparents, particularly in adverse family contexts, could benefit grandchildren profoundly (Hayslip and Kaminski 2005).

Grandparenting in the Context of Marital Changes

Marital changes of grandparental and parental generations could significantly shape grandparent-grandchild relationships. There is a substantial increase in the proportion of grandparents who have experienced marriage dissolution and repartnering at some point in their lives (Brown and Lin 2012; Manning and Brown 2011). Such marital instability is more prominent among babyboom grandparents than among earlier cohorts (Kreider and Ellis 2011). Married grandparents

are more likely than divorced ones to maintain strong bonds with their grandchildren and assume a more critical role in grandparenting by maintaining more frequent contact (Uhlenberg and Hammill 1998). Divorced grandparents, particularly divorced grandfathers and paternal grandparents, may have more problems with keeping frequent contact, engaging in shared activities, or maintaining a good relationship quality with their grandchildren (King 2003). Using data from the Health and Retirement Study, we elaborate more in the section of examples of application on how grandparents' marriage experiences may shape their provision of childcare and living arrangements with grandchildren.

Grandparent-grandchild ties could be affected not only by grandparents' marital experiences but also by parental marital status. Parental divorce may exert adverse effects on contact, relationship quality, and support between paternal grandparents and young grandchildren; matrilineal grandparent-grandchild ties, however, are less likely to be affected but instead gain more solidarity (Bridges et al. 2007; Jappens and Van Bavel 2016). Grandparents are more likely to provide higher levels of childcare and to live with grandchildren when the parent generation has experienced marital disruption (Bao and Chen 2019), which could help young children better cope with the life transition of parental divorce. Parental re-partnering could restrain grandparenting involvement, such reducing grandparent-grandchild (Ganong and Coleman 2012; Lussier et al. 2002), but it may also create the opportunity of building new stepgrandparent-stepgrandchild relationships. Both grandparental and parental remarriage could generate stepgrandparent-stepgrandchild relationships. Stepgrandparent-stepgrandchild relationships that have been established for a long time are not likely to differ from biological ties in characteristics and functions (Clawson and Ganong 2002). Newer stepgrandparent-stepgrandchild relationships created by re-partnering in later life usually exhibit lower intergenerational solidarity (Ganong and Coleman 2006, 2012). To facilitate intergenerational solidarity in stepgrandparent-stepgrandchild ties, effort, and agency from the parental generation are necessary, such as setting role models and encouraging interactions (Chapman et al. 2016).

Examples of Application

Two nationally representative data – the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) - are used to illustrate some key points on parenting and grandparenting, respectively. The PSID is a wellknown longitudinal survey of US residents and their families. Members of the initial panel of approximately 5,000 families (about 18,000 individuals) were first interviewed in 1968, then being followed up annually until 1997 and biennially thereafter. New families have been added to the panel as children and other members of original panel families form their own households. By 2013, a cumulative total of over 9,000 families had been included in the survey panel, providing information on more than 70,000 individuals throughout the study.

For this application, data from the Rosters and Transfer Module of the 2013 PSID (hereafter, module) are used to demonstrate the patterns of money and time giving from parents to their adult children. The module asked respondents and their spouses (or long-term partners) to name and describe all living parents and children over 18 years old. Information from this module allows for the construction of the giving patterns from parents to adult children. The sample uses adult children reported in the 2013 transfer module linked with the family characteristics of their biological or adopted father and mother using the Family System Mapping System. With reference to each PSID head and wife, the transfer module asked about recent transfers of time and money received from parents and parents-in-law.

The illustration points highlight how the transfer patterns in money and time vary by parents' marital status. The analytic sample includes parent to adult children pairs with a valid report on the marital status and the transfer information. We measure the incidence of transfers from all parents combined. When calculating the average amount of money and time transferred from parents to

adult children, we include all respondents; even they reported no support. When parents did not transfer money or time to adult children, the corresponding transfer takes a value of zero.

On average, 33% and 15% of the parents in the sample have helped their adult children in means of time and money in the preceding 12 months, respectively. Figure 1 shows that parents' tendency to help with their adult children in means of money or time varies by their marital status. About one in five (21%) of married parents have given some money to an adult child in the past year, while the percentage is lower among divorced or widowed parents (14%). Married parents are typically better off financially than unmarried parents and therefore may have more financial resources available for their adult children. About one-third (31%) of married parents have spent some time helping their adult children with errands last year, compared to 22% of those unmarried ones. Because changes in marital status could bring significant changes to parental financial well-being and time availability, the analysis also examines whether recently divorced or widowed parents transfer less time and money to their adult children than married parents. Somewhat surprisingly, about 30% and 18% of the recently divorced or widowed parents have given some time or money to their adult children in the past 12 months – a transfer pattern that closely mirrors those of married parents (Fig. 1). It is possible that parents at a later life stage may have accumulated resources that could buffer the negative financial impact of divorce or widowhood. It may also imply that the impact of divorce and widowhood on parental support to adult children is not immediate. Taken together, married and recently divorced or widowed parents are more likely to help their adult children in means of time and money than unmarried parents; and time transfers, rather than financial support, is more of a common approach through which parents help adult children.

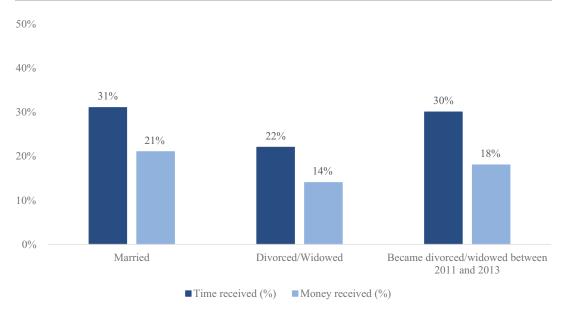
Figure 2 presents the average amount of money that parents gave to their adult children last year by parents' marital status. It shows that married parents gave about 156 dollars to their adult children. In contrast, divorced/widowed parents or

recently divorced/widowed parents gave a little over 80 dollars – only about half of the amount provided by married parents.

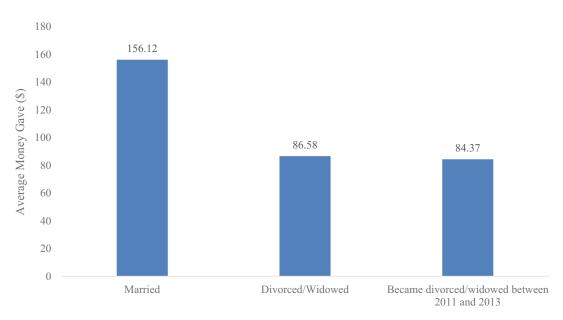
Figure 3 shows time transfers from parents to adult children in the past year by the marital status of parents. In sharp contrast to money transfers from parents to adult children, divorced/widowed parents provided the largest amount of time to their adult children (58 h), followed by recently divorced/widowed (44.5 h), and married parents provided the fewest hours to adult children last year (33 h).

We use data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) to highlight some features of grandparents caring for grandchildren. HRS is an ideal data because it provides rich contemporary data on transfers for a sample of individuals who are over age 50 when first observed. The HRS enumerates all of the respondent's children and asks the respondent about time and money gave to and received from those children. The analytical sample includes over 21,000 respondents from eight waves (1998-2012) who reported on marital status and childcare hours for grandchildren. The average age of grandparents in the sample is 69.5 years old, and the majority of respondents are married (67%), while one-third of them are either divorced or widowed.

Figure 4 shows the average hours that grandparents spent caring for their grandchildren in the past two years by grandparents' marital status. It is evident that there is a gradient in hours that grandparents of different marital status spent on caring for their grandchildren. The average hours that married grandparents spent on caring for their grandchildren (340 h) is about two and three times as that as the average hours their divorced (176 h) and widowed (106 h) counterparts spent, respectively. This gradient may reflect the fact that married grandparents are able to bring the resources of two people, whereas divorced and widowed grandparents may have limited resources to help with their adult children in terms of childcare. The gradient may also indicate that the stronger kinship bonds shared between married grandparents and grandchildren can facilitate grandparents spending time with their grandchildren. In summary, these figures demonstrate the marital status of parents and



Parenting and Grandparenting, Fig. 1 Percentage of parents who made time and money transfers to adult children by parents' marital status, Panel Study of Income Dynamics, 2013

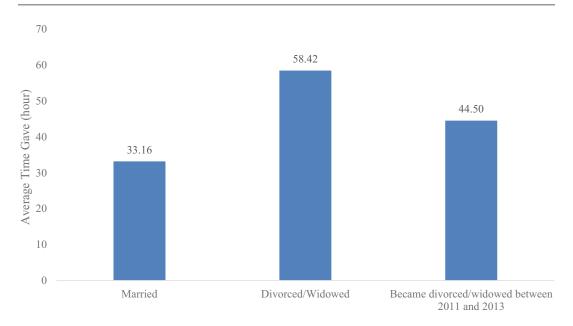


Parenting and Grandparenting, Fig. 2 The amount of money parents provided to adult children by parents' marital status, Panel Study of Income Dynamics, 2013

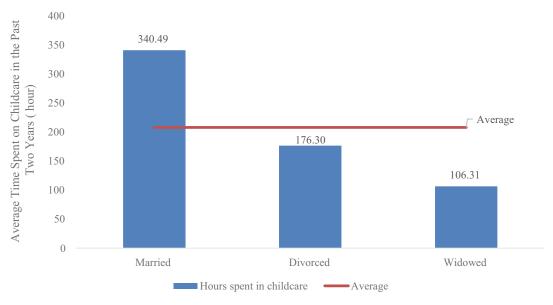
grandparents is a critical factor that could be associated with the type and scope of support provided by parents to adult children and by grandparents to grandchildren.

Future Directions for Research

Existing studies have paid much attention to the effect of parenting on the well-being of adult children or how grandparents' involvement could influence young grandchildren's development



Parenting and Grandparenting, Fig. 3 The amount of time parents provided to adult children by parents' marital status, Panel Study of Income Dynamics, 2013



Parenting and Grandparenting, Fig. 4 The amount of time grandparents spent on caregiving for grandchildren by grandparents' marital status, Health and Retirement Study, 1998–2012

(Hayslip and Fruhauf 2017; Reed et al. 2016). However, only a few studies have shed light on the change and continuity of grandparent-grand-child relationships when grandchildren enter adulthood (Silverstein 2019). As an increasing number of grandparents could accompany their

grandchildren into adulthood, more research is needed to understand the nature of grandparenting styles and practices and their influence on adult grandchildren. Additionally, although research on grandfatherhood is booming, more empirical work is needed on the involvement of grandfathers raising grandchildren and the implication of grandparenting on grandfathers. Furthermore, the rise of co-residence between adult children and parents may coincide with macroeconomic trends. It would be fruitful to explore whether and how these macro-level trends are associated with parent-child dynamics. For example, researchers may want to explore how industry re-structuring influences low-educated adult children's likelihood of living with parents and how the Great Recession is associated with returning home to live with parents. Finally, future research may consider further documenting the patterns and sources of variations in parenting and grandparenting by gender, race/ ethnicity, socioeconomic status, birth cohort, and cultural contexts.

Summary

Styles, activities, and responsibilities of parenting and grandparenting may change as people enter old age and are influenced by social, demographic, and economic trends, as well as cultural contexts. Launching children to assist their independence in adulthood is an essential task for middle-aged parents. Older parents also provide considerable financial, instrumental, and emotional support to their adult children. Caregiving for grandchildren is crucial support that many grandparents provide, especially in minority families. The contribution of grandparents in childcare could benefit the parent generation and facilitate the development of grandchildren.

Cross-References

- Grandparenting
- ► Intergenerational Exchange and Support
- ► Intergenerational Exchanges
- ► Intergenerational Family Dynamics and Relationships
- ► Intergenerational Family Structures
- ► Intergenerational Housing
- ► Intergenerational Relationships
- ► Intergenerational Solidarity
- ► Intergenerational Stake

- ► Multigenerational Families
- ► Parent-child Relationships

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