



**GRANDPARENTING AND INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY
IN MULTI-ETHNIC SINGAPORE**

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

A thesis submitted to the Nanyang Technological University in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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Statement of Originality

I certify that all work submitted for this thesis is my original work. I declare that no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement. Except where it is clearly stated that I have used some of this material elsewhere, this work has not been presented by me for assessment in any other institution or University. I certify that the data collected for this project are authentic and the investigations were conducted in accordance with the ethics policies and integrity standards of Nanyang Technological University and that the research data are presented honestly and without prejudice.

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This thesis **does not** contain any materials from papers published in peer-reviewed journals or from papers accepted at conferences in which I am listed as an author.

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Summary

Singapore is ageing rapidly as a result of declining fertility and increasing life expectancy. The increasing number and proportion of older people has brought to fore issues related to well-being at older ages. Older people lives are being transformed by changes in family structure, living arrangements, ideational shifts, migration and changes in work force participation, among other factors. One key aspect of older people's lives that has not received much attention in the context of Singapore, despite its importance, is grandparenting. Grandparenting represents a key element of integrational relationships and bonding, and provides a unique way to examine the effect of changing contexts on the ageing experience.

Employing qualitative interview method, I examine the interrelationships between the generations—grandchildren, children and grandparents—by focussing on Bengtson's model of intergenerational solidarity and its various dimensions. I investigate the influence of family by analysing the living arrangements of grandparents, duration of interaction and frequency of visit between grandparents with their children, children-in-law and grandchildren. The thesis also focusses on the exchange of services between generations. I then examine the intergenerational relationships, the ambivalence and disagreements between grandparents and other family members in different dimensions of intergenerational relationship.

A key feature of this thesis is that it examines intergenerational solidarity through the lenses of grandparenting and through the perspective of grandparents themselves. The findings based on this approach illustrate the nuances of the interactions, bonds, respect, disagreements, ambiguities that characterize intergenerational relationships in a multi-ethnic society at the cross roads of modernity and tradition. Grandparents see their role as a positive experience which contributes to their wellbeing. The findings on the different dimensions of solidarity and ambivalence contribute to the understanding of the changing expectations, norms and practices that underpin intergenerational bonds.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Many countries in the world are experiencing rapid population ageing. In East Asia, the population aged above 65 is likely double and reach 8.5 percent in 2025 and 16 percent by 2050 compare to less than 4.7 percent in 2000 (Walker & Aspalter, 2014). In Singapore, too, the pace of ageing has been rapid: from less than 5 percent of population over the age of 65 in 1980 to 13 percent by 2017; the proportion of households with older person increased from 21 to 31% between 2000 and 2017; these changes have been driven mainly by reduction in fertility from 1.8 in the 1990's to 1.2 in 2017 and increases in life expectancy during the same period from 75.3 to 82.9 years (Malhotra et al., 2019).

Population ageing in Singapore as in other parts of Asia is occurring at a time of transformation in family, economic, gender, health, social and other demographic spheres. These broader changes are shaping the contexts of the ageing experience. In addition to these changes, the ageing experience is also shaped by the cohort characteristics of the older people themselves. Many of Singapore's older cohort grew up at a time when Singapore was not yet a rich country, with lower levels of education, and as part of bigger and multigenerational families that were prevalent in the past.

The ageing experience is closely related to the transformations in the family systems in Asian societies. In Singapore the changes in living arrangements show the scale of change within a short time period. Older persons in Singapore who were married but not co-residing with children increased from 9% to 20.6% between 2000 and 2017; during the same time period, older persons living alone increased

from 7.5% to 13.5%; living in three generational arrangements decreased from 35% to 21% (MSF, 2019).

The reasons for changing family structures and living arrangements could be partly explained by demographic changes including increasing non-marriage, declining fertility. Ideational changes in notion of family, privacy, relationships and weakening of family ties also have played a significant role (Phillipson, 2013). Family relationships are but one of the many sources of possible relationships that could mould individual experiences including that of ageing (Victor, 2004). Though the notions of filial piety is often used to characterise family values in Singapore, this has not prevented the decline in multi-generational households. The social and demographic forces have been stronger in reshaping family structures (Mehta, 2007; Vasoo, Ngian, & Cheung, 2000).

The changing family structures changes the roles, responsibilities and contributions of older people. In the past an important role played by older people was relational work and informal caregiving (Blake & Mansur, 1992). These types of work while not paid was not only an important contribution but also enhanced the wellbeing of older people (Novak, 2009). Such arrangements were characterised by a strong element of reciprocity and exchange between grandparents, children and grandchildren and strengthened the family bonds.

The changing family structures and decline in three generational households has meant that fewer older people are living with their grandchildren in Singapore, as in many other parts of the world. In addition, many older people continue to work longer into their old age (in Singapore, for instance, the statutory retirement age

is 65 with re-employment till 67) and their work commitments might not be fully compatible with grandparenting role. The changes in living arrangements or working status does not mean that older people do not take on grand parenting roles, but that the nature of grand parenting is changing. Also, there is diversity of grand parenting roles and their differences between various groups within a society and meanings associated with grand parenting (Biggs, Lowenstein, & Hendricks, 2003; Eytsemitan & Gire, 2003).

Singapore provides a good setting to examine the changing nature of grandparenthood. In addition to rapid ageing and changing family structure, Singapore's system of welfare for older persons places heavy reliance on families as key providers of support before the state steps in (Mehta & Vasoo, 2000). Many policies are geared towards ensuring families and older people themselves are able to provide and take care for themselves. These policies include promotion of life long employability, financial security through mandatory savings during working years; for families through tax benefits and subsidies for buying homes near the parents. Mehta (2019) study notes the positive impact of working in older age on the ageing experience in Singapore. Even though government policies and schemes helped many older people in Singapore, some of them face difficulty in meeting their financial and living needs (Donaldson et al., 2015).

The primary objective of this thesis is to investigate the changing nature of grand parenting in Singapore, including attitudes and meanings associated with this role, how current cohort of older people perform their grand parenting roles and how it shapes their identities, forges solidarity, builds relationships and impacts

wellbeing. The thesis will also investigate whether these aspects of grand parenting vary for different ethnic groups and by family structures. The study uses a qualitative approach to address the objectives.

The significance of this study is that it addresses the changing nature of grandparenting and intergenerational relationships in the unique setting of Singapore. The study does this by examining the frequency of interaction and contact between family members across generations, current living arrangements, the degree of love and respect between them. While there are some studies on intergenerational relationships in Singapore, most of them are focussed on a particular ethnic group or narrowly focus on a particular dimension of well-being of older people. The present study expands the current literature by taking a broader focus by inclusion of all ethnic groups in the study and examining several dimensions of intergenerational relationship including solidarity and ambivalence, which allows for understanding both positive, negative and ambivalent aspects of grandparenting.

The following is the outline of the thesis. First, I review the literature by describing the theory of intergenerational solidarity and its application to grandparenting. This chapter also outlines the theory of intergenerational ambivalence to analyse the negative perspectives of grandparenting. Then, I will discuss the methodology and the key themes of the study. The findings are presented in the next two chapters. With the aim to organise the study, I have classified intergenerational solidarity into two sections: factors related to structural and functional dimensions, and factors related to quality dimensions. In the former are three dimensions of intergenerational solidarity which constitute associational, functional

and structural solidarity. The next dimension relates to affectual, consensual and normative solidarity.

In the first findings chapter, I examine the impact of family on grand parenting role by analysing the living patterns, frequency of contact and visitation, and the geographical closeness between family members. This chapter will also examine the functional relationships between the generations. In the second findings chapter, I shall discuss the influence of intergenerational differences on grand parenting role by examining the relationship of grandparents with their children, children - in-law and grandchildren. It also investigates disagreements amongst generations and the impact of the notion of 'filial piety'. The study concludes by summarizing the findings of the effect of family and intergenerational relations on the grand parenting role in Singapore.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I review the literature on the theoretical frameworks used in the thesis to examine grandparenting. The framework draws on the concepts related to intergenerational solidarity and living arrangements. This chapter also explains on the theory of intergenerational ambivalence and the necessity to use this theory in this research. First, I present the conceptual details, followed by a review of the literature on how they the concepts have been applied and used to understand different aspects of grand parenting and family dynamics.

2.1 Intergenerational Solidarity

Intergenerational solidarity is a sociological concept that has been used to analyse the relationships among family members across generations. The model has been used, among other things, to examine the interactions amongst the members, type and nature of exchanges and reciprocity between them, and the dynamic and changing nature of the interactions and relationships based on needs and changing social structures and norms (Quadagno, 2002; Roberts, Richards, & Bengtson, 1991).

This model has been applied specifically to examine grand parenting which by its nature is intergenerational and involves grandparents, children and grandchildren (Clarke & Roberts, 2004; Mancini & Blieszner, 1989). This model has been useful to understand the role grandparenthood plays in the lives of older people who are more likely not to co-reside with their children. Studies using this model have established the positive role of grand parenting in enhancing the quality of

life of older people by strengthening family bonds and emotional attachment between generations, but they also can carry some risks (Gabriel & Bowling, 2004; Kivett, 1991; Settersten & Trauten, 2009). To further understand the model, I next present an influential model of intergenerational solidarity developed by Bengtson.

2.2 Bengtson's Model of Intergenerational Solidarity

Bengtson's model of intergenerational solidarity is a multi-dimensional model to understand parent and adult child relationships, and grandparent-grandchild relationships (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997; Lin & Harwood, 2003; Hoff, 2007). Bengtson (2001) describes the model in the form of six dimensions

- *Affectual solidarity* which includes the expression of sentiments and evaluations by family members in relation to other members of the family.
- *Associational solidarity* which comprise of the type and frequency of contact among the family members and other generations.
- *Consensual solidarity* which encompasses the unity in values and opinions among the generations.
- *Functional solidarity* which embraces the reciprocal relationships within the generations.
- *Normative solidarity* which comprehends the belief in filial piety and parental obligations.
- *Structural solidarity* which reflects the geographical proximity between the family members.

Affectual solidarity refers to the exchange of affection and intimacy and the feeling of togetherness among the members of family. (Bengtson & Schrader, 1982). This dimension also includes the expression of sentiments and evaluation of relationships with other family members. (Bengtson, 2001). The bonds between grandparents and grandchildren as with other familiar bonds, are built and strengthened by emotions, affections and sentiments (Silverstein, Giarrusso, & Bengtson, 1998) and has been used to measure and grade the strength and nature of their relationships (Szinovacz, 1998).

In earlier studies affectual solidarity was defined with more than one items in order to analyse the emotional ties and intimacy (Bates & Taylor, 2013). Those studies used affectual solidarity as a way to compare ethnic differences in grandparenting and to examine the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren (Harwood, 2001; Kivett, 1985, 1991).

Changing nature of living arrangements, family forms and family interrelationships have impacted the level of affectual solidarity between grandparents and grandchildren. These changes are driven by higher levels of labour force participation of women, increasing urbanization and migration, higher rates of labour force participation among older workers, shrinking of housing sizes (Young & Grundy, 2009). These changes, as seen in other countries in Asia, have weakened intergenerational bonds as nature of affectual solidarity has weakened due to lower rates of interaction and opportunities to express affection (Hettige & De Silva, 2014; Kohli, 2015).

In addition to changes driven by structural changes in the societies, ideational changes associated with family values and duties are also affecting affectual and other forms of solidarity. Changing expectation and roles in older age is one such factor. In Singapore and Japan, for instance, (Thang, Mehta, Usui, & Tsuruwaka, 2011), note that older people would like to pursue their other interests and not just grandparent role which might weaken the grandparent bond.

Associational Solidarity is a dimension of solidarity related to the duration of contact, frequency and nature of interactions, and type of contact between the family members including interactions between grandparents and grandchildren (Agree & Hughes, 2012; Bengtson, 1993; Bengtson & Schrader, 1982; Szinovacz, 1998).. Associational solidarity is formed by the joint interactions and actions between grandparents and grandchild (Silverstein et al., 1998). Such solidarity increasing satisfaction of grand parenting role (Reitzes & Mutran, 2004). While the role of associational solidarity is recognized, as with the case of affectual solidarity, changes in family system including higher levels of marital breakdown and patterning contact between grandparents and grandchildren are eroding (Wilson & DeShane, 1982).

Many aspects of associational solidarity are gendered. Grandmothers have more interactions with grandchildren as they are more likely to babysit or take on caring roles (Silverstein & Marengo, 2001). Grandmothers are also more active in spending creative time with their grandchildren and have higher level of life satisfaction (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015). This indicates that grand parenting has a role in leading a active life for older people. The interactions are also gendered in the sense that grandparent tend to have more interaction with their daughter's

children than son's children (Pollet, Nettle, & Nelissen, 2007; Uhlenberg & Hamill, 1998)

Affectual solidarity and associational solidarity are positively associated (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). The relationship between affection and associational solidarity works both ways as would be expected. Affection between family members increases frequency of visits and interactions, and this relationship has been supported for grandparents and grandchildren (Davey, Savla, Janke, & Anderson, 2009; Silverstein & Marenco, 2001). Associational solidarity is not just determined by grandparent and grandchildren, but also by the type of relationship grandparents have with their own children (Monserud, 2008).

Consensual solidarity as described by Bengtson (2001) and Szinovácz (1998) relates to the agreement or conflict in values, opinions, attitudes and beliefs between generations. Consensual solidarity measures the level of consensus on the member's shared ideas and values (Mahne & Huxhold, 2012). Consensual solidarity captures the degree of intergenerational unity in ideas and values (Silverstein et al., 1998). The level and nature of unity and disunity in the values and opinions among the members of the family is essential for understanding the relationship between grandparents with their generations.

The degree of consensus depends on specific characteristics of the grandparent, children and grandchildren. For instance, the level of consensus in between grandparents and grandchildren of teenage parents is generally low (Thomas, 1990). He also found that both single and married mothers found grandparents as being sup-

portive, they also expressed various degrees of conflict resulting from grandparent's involvement. Similarly the difference in educational levels and worldview between grandparents and children could hinder consensual solidarity, and so does the views on the proper and appropriate amount of care that should be given to children (Sun, 2012; Zheng, Zheng, & Meredith, 1997)

As mentioned earlier, for associational solidarity the middle generation (children) play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. This holds true for consensual solidarity. In China, for instance, (Xu, Silverstein, & Chi, 2014) document the role of the middle generation including the role of daughters-in-law on emotional closeness between grandparents and grandchildren. Overall, the degree of consensual attitude, beliefs, and opinion between generations has a positive impact on grand parenting role.

Functional solidarity refers to the exchange of different types of support, help, assistance between generations including between grandparents and grandchildren (Bengtson & Schrader, 1982; Mahne & Huxhold, 2012; Silverstein et al., 1998; Szinovácz, 1998). Bengtson (2001) defines this as “the giving and receiving of support across generations, including exchange of both instrumental assets and services as well as emotional support”. This includes financial, emotional, psychological and other forms of reciprocal support and services.

Grand parenting role by its nature has many components of functional solidarity. These are not just restricted to providing care, support, services or exchanges between grandparents and young grandchildren. This applies to the relationship between grandparents and adult grandchildren. In those type of intergenerational

relationship grandparents provides emotional support by listening and advising grandchildren (Huo et al., 2018). The degree of relationship based on the degree of involvement has been classified either as ‘influential grandparents’ and ‘detached grandparents’. (Mueller, Wilhelm, & Elder, 2002). Studies such as those by Xu & Chi (2018) document the extent of mutual support in instrumental, physical and emotional between grandparent, children and grandchildren.

Financial contributions and transfers are a prevalent aspect of exchanges related to functional solidarity. The nature and degree of financial transfer depends both on the circumstance of individuals in each generation, but also expectations embedded within societies. In societies like India and Bangladesh, while older persons might be financially dependent on their children, their children might also face difficulty in supporting them (James & Syamala, 2014; Khan, 2014). As noted by Chan (1997) majority of elderly above fifty-nine years old were receiving some form of financial support in Singapore. Apart from the old age income security measures from governments in various countries, the above-mentioned flow of transfers has a great impact on the life of elderly in Asian countries and especially in East Asian countries. But financial transfers also flow in other direction—from grandparents to children and grandchildren. In Indonesia, many older people are the main financial contributors to households with adult children (Butterfill, 2004), besides other forms of non-material support provided by grandparents.

Normative solidarity refers to “expectations regarding filial obligations and parental obligations, as well as norms about the importance of familistic values” (Bengtson, 2001) . As Bengtson & Schrader (1982) explain normative solidarity is

a “sense of obligation to care or perception and enactment of norms of family solidarity”. The expectation and obligation can take various forms. From older persons being considered as head of household in societies like Indonesia (Noveria, 2014), to the normative obligation and expectation of younger generation to provide support for older generation (Kivett, 1991; Mehta, 2007). In some cases, grandparents are considered as the substitute parents for their grandchildren especially when their children have family issues. The impact of normative solidarity was greater among these grandparents and grandchildren (Chalfie, 1994; Giarrusso, Silverstein, & Bengtson, 1996).

The expectation of filial piety and obligations between generations are sometime in tension with actual living and social conditions. In the case of Hong Kong, while filial piety promotes co-residence between generations this doesn't necessarily translate to greater respect or trust between generations (Ko, 2012). The normative solidarity and functional solidarity are closely related (Even-Zohar & Sharlin, 2009). Functional solidarity is the exchange of support or services and normative solidarity is the obligation to fulfil those support and services. Silverstein, Gans, & Yang (2006) observed larger support from the adult children to their widowed mother than mothers who were married which showed the existence of filial support amongst them. On the other, those with lower educational status had stronger support for filial obligations than those with higher education (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2012). Thus, normative solidarity is the expression of filial obligations among members which helps to understand the relationship among them.

Structural solidarity refers to the “cross-generational interaction promoted by geographical proximity” (Bengtson & Schrader, 1982). Geographic proximity is assumed to provide more opportunities for interactions between generations (Bengtson, 2001). Structural solidarity is much more focussed on structure of the interactions between generations (Mahne & Huxhold, 2012). A key aspect of the structural solidarity as it relates to grandparent and grandchildren interaction is the element of geographical proximity between them (Silverstein et al., 1998). Structural solidarity increases not only interactions, care and support provided by grandparents but also the chances of receiving them (Baldock, 2000). Structural solidarity is closely associated with associational and normative solidarity described earlier. Norms about co-residence, for instance, could influence structural solidarity. And such solidarity could be the means for transmission of family and cultural values (Lum, 2005; Peek, Coward, & Peek, 2000). The trend toward independent living among older people in many countries, on the other hand, has the potential to weaken structural solidarity (Timonen, 2008).

Before moving to look at intergenerational ambivalence, a summary of the key terms and their specific meaning as used in this thesis is presented. The key terms are grandparenting, family and intergenerational relations. Grandparenting, besides denoting the role also captures the changes in life course of a person, and reflects society changes and is shaped by demographic, institutional, structural and social factors (Arber & Timonen, 2012; Troll, 1985). Intergenerational relationships denote the degree of interactions shared between generations, among other dimensions as described earlier (Mahne & Huxhold, 2012). This study uses the term to understand the existing relationship amongst the grandparents with

their children, child-in-law and grandchildren. Family is the context in which grandparenting happens.

2.3 Intergenerational Ambivalence

The earlier section reviewed some dimensions of solidarity. While solidarity is a key aspect, grandparenting is also characterized by ambivalence. The concept of intergenerational ambivalence was developed by (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998). As they elaborate, the concept is meant to capture not only the positive aspects but also the “confusion, mixed sentiments, and unsettled arrangements in relationships”. And such ambivalence when “polarised simultaneous emotions, thoughts, social relations, and structures are considered relevant for the constitution of individual or collective identities which are (or can be) interpreted as temporarily or even permanently irreconcilable” (Lüscher, 2002). This concept has been very useful in thinking about intergenerational relationships (Peters, Hooker, & Zvonkovic, 2006).

Lüscher (2002) differentiates social relations into two distinct dimensions. One dimension comprised of the individual with a personal dimension and the second dimension comprises of an institution such as the family. These two dimensions are linked by family relationships. The following sources of ambivalences are noted

- Personal dimension: It consists of subjective relationships amongst adult children and older parents and it is identified with convergence and divergences of views, attitudes, behaviours and characterized by similarity and differences.

- Institutional dimension: The ambivalence regarding the past forms of social order and relationships and current dramatic changes. It is characterised as reproduction and innovation.

Based on these dimensions, Luscher (2012) introduces four domains namely solidarity, emancipation, atomization and captivation. Firstly, if a family maintain solidarity domain, they support each other but preserve traditions. They are reluctant to accept changes. Secondly, those families keep emancipation domain have closeness and warmth (convergence) among members as well as accept the changes (innovation). Thirdly, families under the atomization domain lack cohesion among members and families are fragmented to small units. Finally, a family may follow captivation domain forces i.e. enforce their will on the others without their permission. Here we can see the presence of a superior and subordinate mode of relationship which follow institutional orders and bind them to a moral form.

Various studies have investigated the sources of ambivalence among intergenerational relations. Girardin et al. (2018) explored how the availability of resources is connected to the variations in the emotional support and also the expression of filial piety among children towards older adults. Other studies have examined the role of geographical proximity and its role in ambivalence (Connidis, 2007).

To conclude, the literature reviewed presents the importance of the use of the theory of intergenerational solidarity to analyse the grandparenting role from the grandparent's view by applying Bengtson's theory of intergenerational solidarity. The model is useful to understand grand parenting role by analysing their families

i.e. types of household, geographical proximity and frequency of interaction at first level and intergenerational relations i.e. ties with children, grandchildren, and child in-law, level of reciprocal relations, expression of filial piety at secondary level. Further the study will also use the concept of ambivalence to situate the findings on grandparenting and intergenerational relationships.

The literature reviewed suggested a lack of focus on intergenerational relationships in the context of Singapore and more broadly in situation in which grandparents are not co-residing. These are the two gaps in the literature that this study attempts to address. By examining the case of Singapore with its many unique features of social and family systems, the findings will enhance our understanding of the role of social and family factors in intergenerational relationships.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is intergenerational solidarity proposed by Bengtson which has been used to analyse cohesiveness between grandparents, parents and children both at the macro and micro levels (Bengtson & Oyama, 2010; Saco, 2010). In addition, the study also adopts the theoretical framework of intergenerational ambivalence in order to examine the ambivalent nature of grandparenting. The dimensions of these two frameworks were reviewed in the previous chapter.

The dimensions of intergenerational solidarity and ambivalence are investigated using qualitative methods in this study. The use of qualitative study was primarily motivated to collect rich primary data in the voices of older people themselves that will allow understanding of intergenerational relationships. Also, as this is the first of its kind study in the context of Singapore, qualitative methods are necessary to allow for collection of unstructured data by allowing people to express their own views without the constraints of a structured questionnaire. Such data would be much more useful to bring out the richness, complexity, nuances of the lived experience of grandparenting, and delve into emotions, feelings related to grandparenting in Singapore.

The study used semi-standardised interview method to collect data from older people. Interviewing is one of the most commonly used research methods in social sciences. This method consists of standardised, semi-standardised and non-standardised interviews (Fielding & Thomas, 2001). In the first method there is no change of the words and order of questions during the interview. The researcher

will just simply follow the interview schedule. During the second method of interview, i.e.; the semi-standardised or semi structure model, even though the interviewer has the interview schedule and asks questions in the same way, there is freedom for the researcher to change the sequence of the questioning in order to explore additional information. In the third method of non-standardised interview, the interviewers just have certain topics which they want the respondents to share with (Fielding & Thomas, 2001).

Using semi-structured one-to-one interviews, I collected information in a systematic way. The first part of the interview focussed on collecting basic descriptive information of the respondents followed by in-depth questions related to the various dimensions of intergenerational solidarity. I altered the sequence and wordings of the questions in order to adapt with the respondents and also to collect and source additional information.

Fielding & Thomas (2001) noted two different ways of interviewing i.e. one-to-one interview and group interviews. This study used the former type of interviewing where the researcher met the respondents individually. I selected this method of data collection in order to obtain direct responses from the respondents and at the same time I was able to observe their feelings and emotions. By conducting one - to-one interviews the respondents felt much more comfortable to talk without the interference of their family members. The advantage of using this method in the current study is that it permits us to understand the life experiences of the older people within their family context and collect rich information on family patterns and grand parenting.

3.1 Respondent selection and interviews

This qualitative interview study focused on grandparents. I started with pilot interviews with grandparents in personal network. The pilot interviews served the purpose of refining the semi-structured interview schedule and to gather preliminary information on the topic. After the pilot, I selected the main respondents using snowball sampling. Neuman (1991) states that snowball sampling is a multistage technique where it starts with one or a small number of people and broadens on the foundation of relationship built with the first category of people interviewed. Neuman also noted that, each person in snowball sampling is related with another either directly or indirectly. I used the snowball procedure to select respondents who were either directly or indirectly related to each other or to the interviewer.

In total I interviewed 20 respondents with the following key characteristics. All of them were grandparents aged between 58 and 77 with 7 grandfathers and 13 grandmothers. All 20 respondents were Singapore citizens. Out of the 20, 3 were ethnic Chinese, 6 Malay and 11 Indians. The ethnic composition of my respondents does not reflect that of Singapore where Chinese make up more than 70 per cent of the population. The study, as any other qualitative study, was not meant to produce a representative sample. As an ethnic Indian not born in Singapore my network was limited and also language barriers made it difficult to interview Chinese respondents. Among my respondents only 3 were living alone while all others were living with at least one other family member. Most respondents (14) had one or two children and the remainder had 3 or more children. Similarly, most respondents (12) had one or two grandchildren. 9 respondents were working.

The one-to-one interviews took place in various venues based on the convenience of the respondents usually during weekends. Most of them preferred to meet at their homes. Some of the interviews took place at temples or outside their workplace. One respondent preferred to come to my house for the interview as her house was crowded and she needed privacy. Most of the respondents were alone during the interview and allowed me to record the conversation with less disturbance.

The study was approved by the IRB of Nanyang Technological University. I obtained informed consent from the respondents. Following the IRB protocol, all information collected have been kept confidential and the respondents remain anonymous.

3.2 Data analysis

The semi-structured interviews provided rich information on families, the role of grand parenting, and intergenerational relationships. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Apart from interviews, I noted the surroundings where the interview took place, the physical appearance of the participant, the rapport during the interview, and my thoughts and field notes. All the transcripts were double checked with the original recordings for reliability. Verbatim transcription permits all the feasible analytic uses and it protects from data loss (Fielding & Thomas, 2001). Qualitative researchers seldom use statistical analysis and most of the qualitative data sources are in the form of words, phrases or describing events (Neuman, 1991).

The study's findings are organized using the dimension of intergenerational solidarity. The first theme is centred on living patterns of grandparents, duration and

visit of grandparents with their children and grandchildren and also the reciprocal exchanges between elderly with their generations. Here I reveal the importance of family on grand parenting role. The second theme explores intergenerational relations and the role of grand parenting, where I discuss the relationships of grandparents with their children, grandchildren and children -in-law. This focus helped me to understand economic condition of the elderly, disagreements between grandparents with their family members and also how much elders are respected and loved in their family. Simultaneously the study also observed the disagreements of opinions, feelings and confusion amongst grandparents with their children and grandchildren using the dimension of intergenerational ambivalence.

3.3 Limitations

Like all research studies, I too faced some constraints while conducting my study. First and foremost, language difficulties in communicating with Chinese and Malay respondents. Many older people preferred to speak in their mother tongue. The majority of respondents in my study are healthy and active. They are not in a dependent relationship with their families. Therefore, the study's findings are restricted to active older persons and does not include those who have functional limitations or vulnerable in other ways. As the subject matter of the interview was on intergenerational relationship, this could be put some respondent in an uncomfortable position especially if they are facing issues. Overall, this was not a major problem as respondents felt comfortable sharing their views with me.

Chapter 4: Family and Grand parenting Role

4.1 Introduction

In presenting the findings, I'll draw extensively on the concept of intergenerational solidarity that was reviewed in Chapter 2. In this chapter, I present the findings related to structural, associational and functional solidarity and draw out the type and nature of material and non-material exchanges between generations. Finding related to ambivalence are also presented in this chapter.

4.2 Structural Solidarity

As might be recalled structural solidarity is about spatial proximity of generations. I begin by looking at the preferences before moving to the current situation and implications of structural solidarity among respondents of the study. Almost all the respondents were not co-residing with their children. It is in this context; the following findings should be situated. The idea of co-residence evoked particular preference for living separately from children and this had an implication for their grand parenting role.

A common thread expressed among the respondents was ambivalence towards co-residence. One respondent (Indian) put it this way (I use pseudonyms for the respondent. In appendix table, I provide addition information on the respondents)

There are pros and cons. [...] There are lot of difference of opinion and difficult to get along, then lot of problem. [...] of course, if you stay together there are always help around. There are lot of people to help you. There are lot of interactions. [...] of course, you don't have much privacy everybody together. [...] if you are staying alone you have all the privacy. You can do whatever

you want. [...] I forward, I prefer privacy. It's much easier for me to get along without anybody interfering into our workspace. (San)

Another respondent (Malay) replied:

Not very positive on co-residence. I don't like it. I prefer they stay independent. So, they learn how is life, how is family life. [...]. (Amal).

The opinion of one respondent (Malay) was that:

Let them bring their own. They have to know how difficult we are. I will tell my children, that don't depend on me. I'm tired already then how, better your family you do your own, unless really very difficult then come to us. (Irfan).

Above quoted opinions of the respondents point towards no difference of opinion regarding co-residence. A large number of the grandparents in this study are not interested in residing in the same household as they value their privacy and avoid conflict that might arise with co-residence.

Grandmothers also expressed similar views.

Good and bad in it. I prefer better to be independent [...] now a day's youngsters are more open, older generation have another interest. Young they like to go for parties going for movies etc. but for aged people prefer to stay home, more into prayers, more into spirituality and religion. (Pooja)

Another respondent (Indian) grandmother said:

Separate independent living is better. They all can take care of their own interest. Houses are small also, less friction. You can be yourself if you alone. You can do what you want. (Sara)

Besides the issues of privacy, conflict and independent living, another reason for not co-residing is the desire for grandparents to allow their children to experience parenting, struggles that come with it and lead their own life (as a respondent put “learn how life is”) with its attendant struggles and joys. As put by grandfather (Malay) talking about why he thinks his children should bring up their children (his grandchildren)

Let them bring [up] their own [children]. They have to know how difficult it is. I will tell my children that don't depend on me. I tired already then how, better your family you do your own, unless really very difficult then come to us. (Irfan)

Another reason for preference to live independently, even though joint living could make it easier for care, was due to concerns about potential for conflict due to differences in childrearing practices

Actually, staying together in one way help the grandchildren to know more about their grandparents. But the daughter -in-law or son -in-law may not be very happy if we stay together. Because they are younger generation, they have their own way of bringing up children. You must allow them to do what they want. [...] So, it's better children stay with their children. (Akshaya).

The opinions towards independent living did not vary by gender. Both grandfathers and grandmothers were in general did not prefer to reside with their married children. Likewise, Indian and Malay grandparents have mentioned similar opin-

ion regarding the idea of co-residence. They too prefer to stay independent. Similarly this finding support the analysis of Lim & Kua, (2011) stating that apart from physical affinity, adult children and elderly parents have inherent emotional attachment in Singapore. So, it is not staying together that matters but the attachment between them.

Some of the grandparents are ready to co-reside but only for weekends if needed. They would prefer to meet their children and grandchildren on weekends, just to chit chat with them, cook food for them, and play with their grandchildren. This weekly interaction is possible for many older people as many stays closer in public flats to their children.

This preference on living separately coexist with the void that older people feel about not having their married children and grandchildren living with them. When I asked the respondents about the life without their married children and grandchildren few of them replied with emotive feelings of loneliness. During one interview with a respondent, she said that:

I find that space very empty, especially when I look at his room. [...] but of course, he visits me every weekend, he come along with his wife and children and spends a day with me. (Pooja)

The vacuum felt by this particular respondent capture the inner pain whilst at the same time shows an acceptance of the reality of living without immediate family and grandchildren. Both the elderly and younger generation accepts the difficulties in staying together and purposively planned to live separate after marriage. The weekly visit by the grandchildren helps the elderly to overcome the emptiness

of life. This weekly visit is possible because of the geographical proximity of housing choice in the context of Singapore.

A similar view was shared by two other respondents whose children and grandchildren do not stay in Singapore.

It's very difficult to say life without them, because at time we feel a bit lonely but sometimes when we have something to do, we forget about their existence and we just continue with our work. (San, Indian).

This respondent doesn't want to explain the intensity of pain he suffers without meeting his son often. His response shows the emotions and feelings involved in the relation with his child. He overcome his loneliness by engaging in various activities.

I am keep in touch every day through skype. There is bonding between us [...] I do miss her, but because of the skype facilities we are keep in touch every day. If I can't skype every day, I call her. (Lalitha, Indian).

In the case of the Indian grandfather he faces additional barriers as his grandchildren do not speak mother tongue which makes it difficult for him to communicate. In the absence of frequent physical contact, older persons use communication technologies such as Skype to stay in touch with their children and grandchildren. This to a certain extent helps them overcome the lack of geographical proximity in building intergenerational solidarity. Still, this ambivalence of emotions, sentiments and feelings present more among the Indian grandparents than other ethnic groups. Lack of geographical closeness and lack of the use of mother tongue are the sources for this ambivalence.

In this study I also interviewed a few grandparents who have daily contact with their children and grandchildren. Co-residence is not present in these cases. In this group, most grandparents were not working and they took on the role of baby-sitting. A response by one of the respondents (Indian) was:

[...] Morning the grandchildren came into our house. I have to entertain them, toughest part. Elder daughter will send the grandchildren here. She send the kids in the morning and she takes them in the evening after they had their dinner. We take care of them. They are school going. Morning we take them to school and around noon time we bring them back. [...] Sometimes when you want to concentrate on reading or watching a special programme on TV, want to get unique time alone it's quite difficult to get. Other thing at least we know that evening they will going back and later we have time to do the thing we want. (Bhaskar).

Those grandparents who have daily contact with children and grandchildren lack time for their personal matters. Apart from the joy and love they receive from their grandchildren they also feel stressed and tired in taking care of them daily. This is more prevalent among grandmothers as they are mainly doing household duties, feeding grandchildren, dressing them and other chores. Due to daily visit and interaction grandchildren have a thick bonding with grandparents which shows positive signs of grand parenting.

Thus, when we analyse the impact of the living pattern of grandparents on the grand parenting role, we understand that all the respondents are positively accepting of independent living. At the same time this study observes ambivalence

among a small group of grandparents while they describe their feelings on life without their married children especially those children living outside of Singapore. Another source of ambivalence observes the lack of use of mother tongue among grandchildren which brings a communication gap between grandparents and grandchildren. The study also found that both Indian and Malay respondents are favourable to stay independent and at the same time ambivalence of geographical distance of children found among very few Indian respondents. As mentioned earlier, the structure of interaction is possible because of the nature of housing in Singapore. While analysing how far the respondents living from their children, most of them answered similarly same. They responded, “reasonably near”, “staying near”, “quite near”.

In this regard the measures introduced by the Singapore government to encourage families to stay closer so that they can care for each other and tax incentives for those caring for older persons is worth noting (Vasoo, Ngian, & Cheung, 2000). In this study all the married children are staying separately from their parents but the majority are residing nearby. This finding is different from the observation made by (Thang et al., 2011) where the grandparents and children in Japan are not staying closer and this restrict the grandparents to meet and interact with their grandchildren as per their wish. This restriction is not at all present in this study because of the effectiveness of the above-mentioned policies.

4.3 Associational Solidarity & Functional Solidarity

As reviewed in the literature, interactions between generations is positively affected by living arrangements and is associated with visits and other forms of

contact (Cooney & Dykstra, 2013; Eytsemitan & Gire, 2003). In my sample of respondents, most of the grandparents were staying close to their grandchildren. Almost all the respondents meet their children and grandchildren every week. Some of the grandparents are able to meet their children and grandchildren every day. When I asked how the elderly often interact and meet children and grandchildren, a one respondent (Chinese) replied that

My daughter two children come every day. My son and family two weeks a time [...] the two grandchildren everyday coming, just for evening time dinner, short time. (Kin).

This respondent often cooks lunch, dinner etc. for their children and grandchildren. She used to play with her grandchildren. She felt happy by doing all these tasks even though she becomes tired sometime. As she is not working these household activities and the enhanced grand parenting roles gives a higher satisfactory level of life and of achievement in helping her family. This daily visits and interactions have a positive impact on her grand parenting role. Similar finding was observed by (Davey et al., 2009) opined that frequent contact leads to thick bonding amongst grandparents and grandchildren. At the same time, she is also obtaining financial support from her children who are indirectly supporting her. This mutual support amongst the grandmother and children shows the *functional solidarity* between them.

Another respondent's (Indian) experience is similar:

Every morning my daughter brings the girls and maid along to the house. Maid will do the cooking and cleaning. I will look after the kids, everything

whatever to do with kids [...] After that I have to send them to school [...]
In that way my time is flying off [...] for the hour 8 to 9 I feel tired because
I am forcing them to do things especially feeding, really headache. (Lola).

Even though tired she said that she is really happy to take care of her grandchildren and she look forward to see them. This grandmother is able to visit and interact with her children and grandchildren daily. She felt the house was extremely quiet without them. These types of feeling are often found more in grandmothers than grandfathers. Physical support of grandparents towards their grandchildren found more among grandmothers. This is similar to what was observed by Thiele & Whelan (2008) that grandmothers spend a lot of time with grandchildren and by doing various activities with them they are more creative and active. Another respondent (Malay) who has six children and eight grandchildren replied emotionally because of the love and care she is getting from her children and grandchildren. She took care of her six children and six grandchildren. Currently two of her grandchildren are staying with her. She said:

I handle them very good. It is easy for me. They never bring me difficult [...]
I never feel difficulty in taking care. Since we know them how to take care,
very easy for me lah. I am enjoying. I teach them, chit chat with them [...]
(Hyna).

Apart from the busy life style, grandmothers found higher satisfaction in their lives because of the presence of their children and grandchildren. These elderly respondents are not working and so they are babysitting mostly from morning to evening. This higher satisfaction level among grandmothers is visible in Indian,

Chinese and Malay grandmothers. These grandmothers are also rewarded financial support from their children for their physical support. This finding supports the view of Thang et al. (2011) where grandmothers in Singapore provide instrumental support for their grandchildren includes fetching grandchildren from school and cook food for them. Similarly, Croll (2006) pointed that, strong flow of resources found among the generations who stay independent than stay together.

The physical and emotional support from grandmothers by taking care of their grandchildren and the economic support to the grandmothers from their children shows the mutual exchange of services. In other cases there are a number of older people who contact their children and grandchildren on weekends. Most of the elderly are working and they too enjoy their visit except only a few respondents. When I asked one respondent about how often you meet your children and grandchildren, he (Malay) replied:

Friday, Saturday Sunday partly the grand children are staying with me. We are quite close. I think we love each other [...] we feel very lively when they are around. [...] Babysit on the most, feeding not really but feeding medicine when they are fever. I never feel tired, I enjoyed doing all these. (Amal).

Like grandmothers, grandfathers are not directly involving in household duties and caring for their grandchildren and so they don't feel over worked. They will overall supervise the activities of grandchildren and enjoy their presence. Another

respondent (Chinese) enjoyed and felt happy while taking care of his grandchildren. He felt that his grandchildren often asked a number of funny questions and also felt active when his grandchild comes to visit:

Every week we meet, Sundays, we chitchat, not often go out, sometimes go together shopping, play along with them [...] We take care of him, sometimes we teach him also, sometimes we tell story. (Wong).

The reply by another respondent (Indian) was so touching while she explaining how she prepare to invite her son and family during weekends. She said:

I usually invite them for lunch or dinner [...] older granddaughter very attached to me. She usually wants to sit down with her. She is very interest in drawing. So, I get the drawing pencils and colour pencils. She will ask me to draw, then she wants colour. Sometimes she ask me to play game, I say I play ball with her. I have few toys for her. Sometimes my son myself and daughter-in-law all of us get involved. We played with her and entertained her. Sometimes we bring her to playground [...] I feel very happy because they are so attached to me even though they are seeing once in a week. Elder granddaughter is very attached. She won't come into the house if she doesn't see me. I must open the door then only she must comes in. she is so attached. [...] I don't feel tired, I really feel sad when they leave, but I can't hold them. (Pooja).

These words point to the expectations and happiness of grandparents when they meet their children and grandchildren. The participation of children, children-in-

law and grandparents with grandchildren in various activities, games, etc. showcase the importance of family to a healthy life. Both grandparents and grandmothers of all ethnic groups actively engaged with their children and grandchildren. This shows the physical as well as emotional support amongst grandparents and family members. This supports the study conducted by (Mehta, 2007) which I noted earlier that the grand parenting role is utilised to usher a good relation with children and children -in-laws.

A few respondents in my sample were unable to see their children or grandchildren such as those staying overseas

My daughter we meet frequently staying Singapore. She has got no children. My son because he is overseas and because of the time zone, it's very difficult to talk to him. May be once a fortnight we skype. They are in Switzerland. We try and visit them yearly. They do come here every year, spend about two or three weeks and then go back. (San, Indian).

For him the short time he spends with his son and family is not enough. Whenever they skype, they have to talk in English with his grandchildren as the children don't know Tamil. Language is a barrier for some of the grandparents to maintain a good relationship with the next generation. In a study related to transnational carers, Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding (2007) interviewed children that had grown up and migrated as well as their elderly parents. The long distance between both parents and their children elevated the distress of grandparents to talk freely towards their grandchildren abroad. This is because of the lack of usage of their language at home and other formal places which decrease the emotional support

between grandparents and their grandchildren. The absence of geographical proximity to maintain a healthy relationship with children and grandchildren is clearly stated in this case.

There are some respondents even though they form a minority group who give more importance to their own personal life in that they prefer their own personal space. For them the visits of children and grandchildren are problematic. One respondent (Malay) replied:

Every Friday night they send their children to my house. That's why I become problem. After marriage they leave to grandparents. How to rest? Cannot rest lah. [...] Friday night they will send then Sunday afternoon bring back. Tired. We husband wife must take rest but cannot. [...] young parents always want to enjoy. After marriage, have children still they want to enjoy. (Irfan).

This working grandfather felt tired of the visits by his grandchildren. According to him children should stay their own unless they faced with a difficult situation. This respondent falls under the group of grandparents who prefer independent living. These types of grandparents are mentioned in the studies by Thang et al., (2011) conducted in Japan and Singapore. They explore grandparents who are interested in their own personal activities more than family responsibilities. For them, they prefer individual choices.

The present study has explored a positive way of associational solidarity as well as functional solidarity amongst the grandparents and their children and grandchildren. Over all, the impact of family which is analysed on the basis of structural

solidarity (living arrangements and geographical closeness) and associational solidarity (frequency of contact and visit) observed a positive effect of the grand parenting role of elders in Singapore. Despite the fact that elderly and their married children and grandchildren are not staying together, yet they maintained a good relationship and attachment with them among all ethnic groups. A small number of grandparents expressed their ambivalent feeling especially where their children are living outside of Singapore. This is identified with their ambivalent feelings towards geographical distance. Another source of ambivalence observed in a respondent is the lack of the use of mother tongue which create a barrier to communicate with his grandchildren. This feelings and emotions are observed among Indian grandparents. These types of ambivalence come under the personal dimensions of the theory of intergenerational ambivalence by Luescher, where it affects the relationship between grandparents with their children and grandchildren. They fall under the solidarity domain where we can see support between them but they find difficult to adapt to new changes which affect their relationship.

Thus, this chapter examined the three dimensions of Bengtson's model of intergenerational solidarity associational solidarity, structural solidarity and functional solidarity and also showed less of a degree of ambivalence towards geographical distance and ambivalence towards the lack of use of the mother tongue which help to understand the positive and negative aspects of grand parenting role in Singapore.

Chapter 5: Intergenerational Relations and Grandparenting Role

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present findings on the impact of intergenerational relations of older people on the grand parenting role by examining the relationship between older person and people in other generations such as children, grandchildren and children-in-law. As Saco (2010) note, intergenerational solidarity is deliberated association among two or more individuals of various age groups. Affection and support are said to nurture effective relationships. Next the findings will look at the dissimilarities between generation and its association with economic condition of families. To analyse the disagreements the study adapts the framework of ambivalence. Finally, I examine the role of filial piety and status and respect given to older people. These three areas correspond with Bengtson's dimension of affectual solidarity, consensual solidarity and normative solidarity.

5.2 Affectual Solidarity

Affectual solidarity refers to the essence of the consistent emotions and feelings among the family members and the exchange of these emotions and feelings among them. (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). It can be in the form of love, compassion, and trust. To examine this, I asked respondents about their relationship with their children, children-in-law and grandchildren.

Most respondents shared similar views about the healthy relationships between generations. Most of the respondents said that they maintained good relationship

with their children, children-in-law and grandchildren. The reply by a respondent (Indian) was:

Good relationship. I don't interfere in their activities. When they need help, I do help them. Other than that, I don't interfere in their affairs. When I need help, I call them and they come and do. (Pooja).

She maintains a bonding relationship with her children grandchildren and child-in-laws and at the same time doesn't get too involved with her children's personal lives. This allows her to minimize conflict and maintain good relationships. Affectual solidarity is expressed in different ways by different families. Some are maintaining relationships by going out for dinner or go for shopping. As most grandparents and their children are working, it is difficult for them to meet every day. They, however, make time for weekly visits which could involve going to nearby malls and provides them an opportunity to share their mind (including problems), memories and experiences and help them bond.

This is expressed in the following responses.

Yeah... sometime gathering, go for dinner, gathering go for chalet, just short time lah... sometime go oversee lah... Taiwan. (Kin, Chinese).

I have been very good in maintaining relationship with them. We meet each other, contact each other to get feedback, share knowledge, share problems. (Amal, Malay).

Once in a while we go out together. Weekends some time we go out, Bishan Park. We spend our time with children. (Lola, Indian).

This section focused on the ways through which grandparents and family members express their affection each other. Respondents from all ethnic group have good and healthy relationship with their family members. They all exhibit their affection and love by often gatherings, spend time by going out for shopping or dinner etc.

5.3 Consensual Solidarity

Consensual solidarity involves the agreements and disagreements among family members regarding unity, values, ideas (Szinovacz, 1998). Consensus and conflicts will happen among any relationship which will have its own impact on that particular relationship. To understand the nature of consensual solidarity, I asked respondents about the differences in opinions between generations.

Grandparents use various strategies to minimize the possibility of dissimilarities within the generations. As two respondents described

I never interfere with taking care of children even though I am a doctor. If want to give running nose medicine to grandchild will call daughter-in-law and ask her permission, can I give? I try best to follow. Previous experience I learnt it's the best way. As a grandmother my job is too happy with them, play with them, don't want to discipline them. We just want to be happy. If they did anything wrong, I will tell parents. They have to decide what they want to do. Only for one or two days, so no role-conflict. (Sara, Indian).

Before they give birth, I went to take a course, Grandmas how to take care the grandchildren. [...] I don't give any idea. Your style I follow. I respect the new pattern. Otherwise you got any argument, no respecting give way

lah. Sometimes they want to do their ways. New nation got new style. (Kin, Chinese).

In the above two responses former respondent is working and earning steadily. She doesn't want to depend on her children. The latter needs economic support from her children. But both of them are prepared to avoid disagreements with children and children-in-law.

Another respondent (Indian), a grandmother of two who babysits every weekday, mentioned that she often scolds her granddaughters during lunch time. She gets irritated many times but never punish the kids. She felt tired and gets a headache while taking care of them. Still she doesn't face any interference from the side of the children's parents. Mutual understanding between parents and grandparents seeks to reduce disagreements between them. This is expressed in the following responses by respondents. One respondent has stated:

[...] they just leave me alone. They never tell what I am doing is wrong. [...] my son-in-law is very nice. He never come and force on us. (Lola, Indian).

The feedback of one respondent (Indian) who is divorced and who treats her son and his family equally replied that,

No. because I treat my daughter-in-law as daughter. So, she treat me as mother. She call me mummy. Early stage some misunderstandings. But I told her don't treat me as in-law. You are my daughter. Then we become very closer. I treat my children as friends. They don't hide anything. We communicate each other. The love is there. (Vanaja).

Majority of the respondents irrespective of any ethnic group doesn't face any differing ideas or faces. Very few grandparents in my sample were facing the variations in ideas and opinions with their children and children-in-laws. These differences in opinions have a negative impact on the grand parenting role. In the case of one respondent (Malay) who needs to scold his children because of the behavioural problems of grandchildren. The dissimilarities in ideas and thinking between the generations leads to family problems. He said,

Now the children we speak one they speak two. Watch cartoon, hand phone. Kindergarten children to use hand phones. Sometime I scold my children also. You don't teach children properly. Sometimes they accept sometimes won't. You come here you follow my instructions or go out. (Irfan).

This response expresses the ambivalent nature of relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren. The disobedient nature and lack of respect from grandchildren are the source for this ambivalence among grandparents. This category comes under the atomization domain where they lack togetherness.

Another respondent who had disagreements with her daughter for different reason. She said,

Sometimes when I get upset with my daughter and if I raise my voice she will say, please don't raise your voice with my daughter. She is very particular about that. We don't express our anger in front of her. I respect that view. If you want good relationships respect their views. At times I have to change. (Lalitha).

This respondent and children are understanding and try to reduce differences of opinion by respecting the perspectives of each other. It shows a positive impact on grand parenting. Instead of variation in opinions with children as mentioned above the following respondent (Chinese) have disagreements with his daughter-in-law. He shared that,

[...] daughter in law from China. She had different opinion in social life. She likes to show off. She likes to have card, jewellery. Bit difficult to live. Leave them alone. (Wang).

His statement about financial condition is related to this disagreement of opinion. He said that,

I have my own income. Not depending on children. As far as they don't bother ok. Son's side, my daughter -in-law want expensive items. So, my son can't meet come over to my side. They don't bother me. I am happy. No need to support me. (Wang).

This again explains that the difference of opinion leads to the ambivalent nature of relationships between grandparents and their children-in-law. The spendthrift attitude of daughter-in-law leads to dissimilarities of opinion among the respondents which creates an ambivalence in their relationship. This again comes under the personal dimension of ambivalence where we can see the ambivalences amongst the relation between elderly and child-in-law.

Because of these diverse views some older people are not able to meet their grandchildren frequently. This create a barrier and distance in the relation with grandchildren. This has an effect on the grand parenting role of elderly. Later he said that,

They have their own life, not bother all these, I have to go on (Wang).

The results presented in the previous chapter suggested that the older persons do not prefer co-reside in order to avoid potential conflict. In addition to lack of co-residence, older people use various strategies, as described in the chapter, to avoid the disagreements within their generations. Still, this section observed some sources of ambivalent relations between grandparents and their generations with less intensity. This is found among Malay and Chinese respondents. However, such confusions and dispositions do not have a big impact on grand parenting role.

5.4 Normative Solidarity

Bates & Taylor (2013) define normative solidarity in terms of “filial obligation and the importance of family values”. To examine this aspect, I asked respondents about the degree of love, respect and care they received from their families. The responses varied regarding the nature of normative solidarity.

A respondent (Indian) who is working and busy with their children and grandchildren on weekends replied that,

Children really respect me. Whatever I say they follow and honour. Granddaughters are just following their parents. (Hyna).

This grandmother is very much satisfied with her grand parenting role. She looks forward to meeting the whole family on weekends. She also said that if the children are not able to come and meet her, she will go and meet them. This showcase the deep rooted relationship present among them.

The response by another respondent (Indian) who also working and living alone stated that she is receiving a reasonable respect and care from her sons. She further said that if she really says something serious her children listen.

A respondent (Indian) who takes care of his granddaughters four days a week said that respect is something we have to earn. According to him, as a father or grandfather it's not good to demand respect and care. He believes that it's something we have to earn. He felt very joyful whenever his granddaughters hug him and taking care of him. As the daughter and son-in-law are very accommodative, he never felt his grand parenting role as unsatisfactory. The relationship with grandparents and children is more expressive now a days. The idea of filial piety still exists in families but in a different way. Current generation of children and grandchildren gives more care and show understanding in order to express their filial piety.

A grandmother (Malay) of six commented that her grandchildren respect and love her, and treat her nicely. Another respondent mentioned that she always teaches her children to respect elders from their young age. Her children and grandchildren often visit her and couple of grandchildren are staying with her too. For them 'filial piety is expressed through love and care more than respect.

Similar situation was described by a respondent (Indian) who is also a widow. She stated that,

Yeah...Yeah...my both daughters are very close to me. Everything I do they are ok. (Subhadra).

But now there are changes in pattern of thinking and living. The emergence of nuclear family resulted in independent thinking. This was expressed by this widowed grandmother that,

No, they will buy something and then tell me. They always scared that I will reject. Do everything first and then tell me. I am okay for that. They are growing. I don't interfere in their matters. (Subadra).

We can see changes in the views of older people. They are not curious to know everything regarding their children. The importance of privacy and freedom in the present context of nuclear families are understood by both children and grandchildren. Another explanation by a respondent (Indian) shows that,

Yeah. My two girls are really loving. The moment grandchildren came I am happy. My son-in-law also loving. When they going back, they always cry. They will hug and kiss, very loveable kids. (Lola).

Likewise, another respondent spoke that,

Of course, this depends on how we take care when they were young. We show them the love, then we take care them [...] I am that kind of person who love kids very much. I hug them, kiss them. They hug me, kiss me. When they see me, they are so happy. [...] My son is already 45 years old. He tell me, "Give me dinner. I want tofu". If I was tired, he will tell go outside for dinner like that. (Vanaja).

This above respondent is a divorced and still working hard. She takes care of her grandchildren four days in a week. She treats her children very nicely even though she is a single parent. She gave freedom and at the same time control them. She is very satisfied with the love and care she is provided in return back from her children and grandchildren. Both grandchildren are helping her especially elder granddaughter who helps her by washing plates, cleaning, sweeping etc. This kind of support from the side of grandchildren is unusual in the current society. This care and love give more strength for this respondent who still works up to twelve hours a day.

While analysing the filial piety among elderly one respondent (Malay) expresses his opinion that children need to care more.

Of course, not always. 90 percent happy as a grandfather. But sometimes difficult. In Singapore money comes first. I hope children will help us. Father mother old, they don't care. (Irfan).

Even though he is working, his income is not enough to meet his daily expenses. This financial inadequacy creates an ambivalent nature in relationships between the respondent and within his/her generations. Apart from that the frequent visits with his grandchildren and the misbehaviour of his grandchildren leads him to think his grand parenting role is less than satisfactory.

To conclude, majority of the grandparents are treated with much respect and care by their children, children -in-law and grandchildren. More care, love and support were observed among the respondents who are widows and divorced. Working grandparents or active elderly are also receiving high level of respect from their

children. Only one Malay respondent expressed unsatisfactory level of filial piety from their children. Lack of financial support from the children and also grandchildren's misbehaviours and disrespect are the sources for this ambivalence.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Singapore is witnessing dramatic demographic shift in the age structure of its population. In other countries in the west with similar demographic situation, several studies have been conducted to gain a better understanding of the challenges of the ageing population, and the role of family dynamics, employment, and ideational change on ageing well.

Grand parenting is a vital role played by older persons in many societies, and this role has an important function of connecting different generations. The present study set out to investigate grand parenting role of older people based on the theory of intergenerational solidarity. This study also used the theory of intergenerational ambivalence to examine the ambivalent nature of such relationships. Firstly, while analysing the impact of family on grand parenting role, the study focussed on the living patterns of older people, duration and frequency of contact of elderly with their generations and geographical proximity of elders with their generations. The study also observed low level of ambivalent findings about the relationships amongst the grandparents with other generations. The analysis of material and non-material exchanges amongst the elderly between generations were also discussed. Secondly, the study observes the effect of intergenerational relationship on grand parenting role. This was explored by analysing the relationship between older persons with their children, children-in-laws and grandchildren. It focussed on the disagreements of opinions, feelings, and confusions and economic condition of older persons and lastly about the respect and status they received from their families.

Earlier studies based on grand parenting and intergenerational relationships are outlined in chapter 2. This study revisits the theories, concepts and ideas and applies them to the context of Singapore and contributes to the existing literature in the following ways. The first part focussed on the impact of family on grand parenting role. The study analysed this by interviewing grandparents regarding their living patterns, and frequency of contact and visit of elders with their children, children -in-laws and grandchildren. Grand parenting role in this study is mainly analysed on the basis of older persons' relationship with married children. Most of the respondents in this study are staying with their spouse and unmarried children. Earlier studies observed the changes in the structural aspects of living pattern. Most of the studies pointed to the decline in co-residential pattern of living (Croll, 2006). This study also explored the absence of co-residence due to changes in the living patterns. The results indicated that the married children of all the respondents are staying separately from their parents. The study findings show that the lack of co-residence from the side of married children doesn't have any negative impact on grandparenthood.

To understand the intensity of relationships among family members, previous studies assessed the duration and frequency of interaction and contact among them. This study also analysed the associational solidarity among grandparents with their children and grandchildren. The study found that a great number of grandparents have regular weekly contact with their children, children-in-laws and grandchildren except very few respondent's children who are residing overseas. Those few grandparents express the ambivalent nature of relationships with

their children. Living patterns of children are the source for this ambivalence, especially those children who are staying away from Singapore. This is observed among the Indian respondents. Thus, the weekly contact and regular gatherings of the majority respondents have promoted bonding with their grandchildren. This weekly gathering is possible due to geographical closeness between them.

A large number of married children are staying near to their parents which made frequent contact possible. Owing to technological advancement grandchildren residing overseas are also able to stay connected with their grandparents. Independent living of children was generally accepted by most of the grandparents. Timonen (2008) also earlier noted the independent living of elders which lead to weaken the structural solidarity. Due to frequent visit and geographical closeness, grandparents in this study are not at all worried about the independent living from their children. Another finding is that grandmothers are more actively engaged in grandparenting duties compared to grandfathers. This shows higher satisfaction level of grandparenting among them. In this context, the study found functional solidarity between grandparents including physical, emotional and financial support. The physical support of grandmothers mainly in the form of taking care of their grandchildren and cook food for them helps to create thick ties between them. In exchange to these grandmothers received financial assistance from their children. This finding is similar to earlier studies where grandmothers are more satisfied with their grand parenting role as a result of frequent interactions with grandchildren (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015). Existence of financial transfers from children to their parents were also common among the previous studies especially in Asian countries. Older people perceive their role as a grandparent to be the

most satisfying family relationships across one's lifespan. It also indicates that the grand parenting role serves as an effective intergenerational bridge to connect with the subsequent generations. Findings indicate that both male and female grandparents understood the complexities of co-residence and they are purposively moving back from that type of living arrangement. Thus, this section examined structural solidarity, associational solidarity and functional solidarity. The study discovered the positive and negative effect of family on grand parenting role among the elders in Singapore.

Nearly all the respondents reported having a good relationship with their children and family. There are various studies on the decline of intergenerational relation especially due to the lack of interaction and contact. Those studies analyse affectual solidarity in order to measure the relationship among family members. Based on that, current study analysed the relationship amongst grandparents with their generations and it found to be positive among the majority respondents. The study assessed the consensual solidarity by examine the disagreements between generations and also the financial status of grandparents. More than half of the respondents pointed the absence of confusions and mismatching of opinions in their relationships. Grandparents in this study refrained from the personal life of their children which help them to avoid from disagreements. Current study also observed the relation between disagreements and economic dependency between grandparents and their generations. Both employed and unemployed respondents are not involved in any ambivalent situation. Very few respondents expressed disparity between generations. Lastly, the concept of filial piety was explored by examining the love and respect grandparents receive from their family members.

The expression of filial piety received by elders was different amongst each respondent. Nearly all the grandparents said they feel loved, respected and cared from their children, children-in-laws and especially grandchildren expect one Malay respondent.

A key area that needs further exploration is the use of mother tongue language amongst grandparents and grandchildren. The study observed difficulty among the grandparents to communicate with their grandchildren especially those grandchildren not staying in Singapore. This led to the absence of association among grandparents and grandchildren due to the lack of interaction. More studies are needed to analyse the lack of the use of mother tongue language among grandchildren.

This study tries to explore the changes in the nature of grandparenting, by examining the grandparent's perspective in Singapore. For this, the study collected data from the three ethnic groups in Singapore, namely Indian, Malay and Chinese. This study would be more worthy if it can compare the Singapore case with any other Asian countries, can be extended to South East Asian countries also. As this is a Master's thesis, the researcher face time constraints to fulfil this aim. Further, the researcher doesn't have any scholarship support or grant to meet the extra expense. However, the researcher, plans to expand sample size to more South East Asian countries.

Thus, the theories used in this study namely Bengtson's theory of intergenerational solidarity and the theory of intergenerational ambivalence by Luscher contribute to understanding grandparenting in Singapore. The findings of this study

are organised within the framework of the dimensions of intergenerational solidarity and ambivalence. This theory allows us to understand the various aspects of grandparents within their generation to explore the nature of grandparenting in Singapore. Overall, the theories related to intergenerational solidarity and ambivalence contribute to the understanding of the grandparenting role in Singapore through the analysis of grandparent's relationships across generation.

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Appendix A

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Race	Living Arrangement
San	M	74	Indian	Living with Spouse
Pooja	F	69	Indian	Living with husband and one son
Sara	F	63	Indian	Living Alone
Irfan	M	63	Malay	Living with wife and one son
Akshaya	F	77	Indian	Living Alone (Widow)
Lalitha	F	58	Indian	Living with husband
Bhaskar	M	69	Indian	Living with wife and one daughter
Kin	M	63	Chinese	Living with husband
Lola	F	63	Indian	Living with husband and daughter.
Hyna	F	69	Malay	Living with two sons
Amal	M	59	Malay	Living with wife and two children
Wong	M	59	Chinese	Living with wife
Vanaja	F	60	Indian	(Divorcee) Living with son & daughter
Wang	M	65	Chinese	Living with wife and one son
Subadra	F	66	Indian	Living alone (widow)