

# **GRANDPARENTING AND EXTENDED-FAMILY SUPPORT: THE SILENT GENERATION**

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## **I. ABSTRACT**

It has often been the practice to associate the extended family with traditional societies. With the increased complexity, ambiguity, and fluidity of today's family life this perception could be rapidly changing. There are many instances in "advanced" countries today of single or separated parents who rely on their kin members for support. With the shrinking of family size and increased longevity more vertical ties with next of kin are forged in addition to horizontal ones. Intergenerational relations involving grandparents and grandchildren will play a larger role in the family life of the future. Parents in old age will provide more assistance to their adult children and grandchildren than they receive. As family relationships and loyalties become more complex new problems will emerge. This development suggests increased recognition of the needs as well as of the rights and duties of caregivers. This paper analyzes these issues from a psychosocial and psychodynamic perspective. It assesses some of the implications of extended family relationships, particularly those of grandparenting, as they impact on all the family members as well as on society at large.

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