‘Pillars of the Family’ – Support Provided by the Elderly in Indonesia

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Abstract

Most research on family support networks in developing countries has focused on support provided by children to their elderly parents. Central to such research are the assumptions that the elderly require support as a matter of course, and that children are available, able and willing to provide such assistance. Qualitative and quantitative field research in rural East Java shows these assumptions to be false. Many elderly are without children, and where children exist, they are often unreliable. Far from needing support, the majority of elderly people remain economically active and materially independent.

This paper examines the role of elderly people in providing material and practical support to their families. Existing studies have concentrated on childcare and other services supplied by coresident grandparents. In Java, support from the elderly is more far-reaching: the elderly are central pillars of multi-generational families. Where pension incomes exist, these often serve to secure the livelihoods of whole family networks. The accumulated wealth of the elderly is important in launching younger generations into economic independence, and in underwriting their economic risks, such as unemployment, ill health and incompetence. Parental generosity does not necessarily elicit commensurate reciprocal support in old age, leaving many elderly people vulnerable. This raises important policy implications for elderly welfare and security in rural Indonesia.

Introduction

Most research on ageing in developing countries has focused on support provided by adult children to elderly parents. Underlying this approach is the mute assumption that elderly people are in need of support as a matter of course. Population ageing therefore represents a challenge, if not outright problem, to families and societies. This is reflected, for example, in the use of dependency ratios as a measure of the elderly ‘burden’ on the productive population (Anwar 1997); or in the anxious monitoring of elderly living arrangements and family sizes as indicators of their growing imperilment due to declining availability of support (e.g. Knodel and Chayovan 1997; Hermalin, Ofstedal *et al.* 1995; Chen and Jones 1989; Martin 1989). The received wisdom of elderly dependence is a legacy of the large body of demographic literature on intergenerational wealth flows (Clay and Vander Haar 1993; Caldwell 1976) and the importance of children for old-age security (cf. Nugent 1985 for a review).

More recently, leading demographers of ageing in Asia have started to voice doubts about some of the dominant assumptions and approaches in the field. For example, it has been noted that living arrangements are inadequate indicators of welfare or support for the elderly and that it is necessary to

investigate actual exchanges within and beyond households in order to assess intergenerational flows of support (cf. Hermalin 2000; Knodel and Saengtienchai 1999; Natividad and Cruz 1997). Moreover, there has been a growing appreciation of the role played by the elderly as providers of support in their families and communities (e.g. Hermalin, Roan *et al.* 1998; Andrews and Hennink 1992).

The aim of this paper is to add to the empirical body of research on the contributions elderly people make to their families: Are the elderly dependent? What kinds of support do they give? What is the extent of support provided relative to support received? The paper has two parts. First the question of elderly dependence is addressed and an estimate of dependence versus having dependants arrived at. Then three scenarios in which elderly people provide crucial support to younger generations are examined. As we shall see, elderly people in rural East Java provide support that goes beyond the traditional domains of childminding and housework. They maintain full parenting responsibilities for immature children and grandchildren. They take on the role of main breadwinner in multigenerational families after children have grown up. And they provide wide reaching practical and financial support for younger family members in times of crisis.

Research Location and Methodology

Indonesia provides a good case for a study of the role of elderly people in family support systems. On the one hand, the population is ageing rapidly and there are few formal provisions for the elderly in terms of financial support, health care or institutional care (Asher 1998; Ananta, Anwar *et al.* 1997; Hugo 1992). This would imply a strong role for families in old-age support provision. On the other hand, many family systems in Indonesia are not traditionally extended (joint, stem), but nuclear with bilateral kinship reckoning (Niehof 1995; Geertz 1961). Migration and divorce are common (Birg, Brüß *et al.* 1998; Jones 1994). Thus, the elderly are not automatically part of multigenerational households, nor do families generally operate as larger economic units of production from which the elderly can benefit after 'retirement'. The recent economic crisis in Indonesia has put severe strains on labour markets and household economies, with many young people losing jobs and forced to return to rural areas where dependence on families may be their only option (Breman 2001; Hill 1999).

Research for this paper was conducted as part of a comparative research project on ageing in Indonesia (1998-2001) based in three rural communities in East Java, West Java and West Sumatra. The findings presented here are exclusively from the East Javanese site where the author conducted fieldwork of 12 months duration in 1999-2000. The community, given the pseudonym Kidul, is fairly typical of a wider Indonesian context in which members of family networks are involved in both modern and traditional, formal and informal economic sectors. Due to Kidul's proximity to local and regional urban centres (Malang, Surabaya) the village economy is highly diversified. Agriculture is no longer the main source of activity; trade, factory work, transport, construction and civil service all play similarly important roles. By regional standards, the village is neither rich nor poor. Approximately ten per

cent of the population are aged sixty and over, slightly more than the national average of eight per cent.

Field research proceeded by drawing up a complete household map of the community and identifying households with an elderly person. Almost all (95 per cent) of the 210 elderly, defined as 60 and over, were interviewed at least once using semi-structured interviews. Most respondents (70 per cent) were revisited formally and informally, and extended re-interviews were completed with 45 per cent. The aim of the latter was to collect detailed life histories and information about potential and actual support networks. In order to differentiate support networks between economic and social strata, two randomised surveys were conducted at the end: one on elderly people's health and health-care use (N=75 elderly people); a second of the village as a whole, addressed to household economy and support networks (N=106 households) (see Kreager and Schröder-Butterfill 2001 for details on economic strata). Design of the surveys was informed by in-depth knowledge of the community. Both surveys were, in addition, developed to facilitate comparison with provincial and national data collected in the Indonesian Family Life Surveys. Data analysis combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, with ethnographic data guiding survey analysis and providing detailed case study material (cf. Knodel and Saengtienchai 1999; Franklin 1998). The rationale for relying heavily on ethnographic data is to arrive at locally-generated models of relevant social units, practices and relationships, rather than drawing on exogenous theories like modernisation or exchange (cf. Bledsoe and Hill 1998; Fricke 1997; Kreager 1986).

A. Are The Elderly Dependent?

The question of elderly dependence on their families can be approached from a number of angles. Actual availability of family members to provide support is of course a key precondition that cannot simply be taken for granted. Further, elderly people's need for material or practical support should be investigated rather than assumed. If most elderly people work and are in good health, dependency is likely to be low. Finally, it may also be illuminating to investigate norms surrounding intergenerational and familial relations to gauge the extent to which elderly parents *expect* to rely on families for support.

A.1 Availability of Kin

High aggregate levels of fertility in developing countries mean that the availability of children is generally taken as given. Elderly parents are assumed to have not one, but several children to fall back on; indeed, high fertility is sometimes seen as motivated by a concern for support in old age (Cain 1986; Nugent 1985; Datta and Nugent 1984). Nonetheless, simply assuming presence of children is problematic for two reasons. One is that long-term trends of high fertility may hide oscillations in reproductive rates, for example due to economic crises, epidemics and the like. The implication is that certain cohorts may face comparatively unfavourable parent-child ratios, even if long-term levels of fertility are high (Kreager and Schröder-Butterfill

2001). The second problem is that high aggregate fertility may hide considerable individual variation in reproductive outcome (Knodel, Chayovan *et al.* 1992). Proportions childless among elderly are thus an important indicator of the extent to which elderly can depend on children for old-age security. Local availability of children is further of importance for assessing sources of regular and physical support or *ad hoc* assistance. Table 1 provides data on the availability of children to elderly people in Kidul. Levels of childlessness are remarkably high, with one quarter of elderly having no surviving child and 41 per cent having no or one child only.[i] A third of elderly people have no child living locally, and more than half have at the most one child in the village.[ii] Of course, access to children may also be by marriage or adoption, which is common in Java, and reduces the levels of actually childless elderly to roughly 15 per cent (Schröder-Butterfill 2001b). Nonetheless, it is easy to see that for demographic reasons alone not all elderly can be classified as dependent, or, at least, not dependent on offspring.

Table 1 roughly here

Childlessness and a traditional preference for nuclear family formation underlie the comparatively low rates of residential dependence of elderly people in East Java (Koentjaraningrat 1985; Geertz 1961). Table 2 shows living arrangements of elderly people in Kidul. One in ten elderly live on their own, for elderly women the proportion increases steeply with age (22 per cent among women aged seventy and over), for men there is a decline to zero in the older age group. A further 12 per cent live just with a spouse, and eight per cent with relatives or non-relatives other than children or grandchildren. In other words, almost one in three elderly people are not living with a child or grandchild. Of course material independence and lack of contact with children cannot simply be deduced from this, but nor can the supposition of elderly dependence easily be maintained. Moreover, Table 2 reveals that almost thirty percent of elderly who *do* reside with a descendant live with an immature child or grandchild (defined as aged under 19 or under 25 if in education). This leaves only one in two elderly people living with a grown-up descendant. A lot of research on ageing in Asia takes coresidence with an adult child to be indicative of upward flows of intergenerational support (e.g. Hashimoto 1991; Keasberry 2001; Martin 1989; Knodel and Debavalya 1997). The extent to which this assumption is warranted for rural East Java will be investigated below.

Table 2 roughly here

A.2 Elderly Need for Support

Rather than trying to infer dependence from living arrangements, elderly people's likely need for support in old age should be examined directly. The need for close-to-hand assistance only exists where the elderly person is ill,

frail or handicapped. Even in such cases the support need not come from a younger generation family member. For elderly men in particular, spouses are often the most important source of care in Java. Data on health status are summarised in Table 3. More than half of all elderly are in good health. Among those aged under 70 the figure is even two-thirds. One-third of elderly are in fair health; this means their daily routines are somewhat affected by ailments, but their independence is not significantly circumscribed. For example, it includes people with diabetes, asthma or long-term blindness (where coping strategies have been developed). Only one in ten elderly in Kidul can be classed as being in poor health and as such significantly impeded in their daily lives and ability to maintain functional independence. Two per cent are permanently bed-bound, seven per cent have medium to severe mobility impairments, two per cent are blind. These figures compare well with other studies of elderly health in Indonesia that found comparatively low levels of poor health (Keasberry 2001; Rudkin 1994; Chen and Jones 1989).

Table 3 roughly here

The extent to which elderly people depend on their families economically will depend on their work status or income. Table 4 summarises data on work for villagers in three broad age groups. As would be expected, there is a decline in the proportions engaged in paid work from almost three-quarters among those aged 20-59 years, to 57 per cent in those aged 60-69, and a quarter in those aged 70 and over. For the elderly population as a whole, the proportion is 41 per cent (*figure not shown*).[iii] If we include people who engage in occasional paid work or unpaid productive work (producing goods for own consumption) and those who have no need to work because they have an income from pensions or land, the proportion of elderly with an income is much higher, namely 80 per cent among 60-69 year-olds and over half among the oldest age group. Clearly, then, economic dependence is not the statistical norm among elderly in rural East Java.

Table 4 roughly here

Elderly people who live with a mature child or grandchild are less likely to work than those living alone or with dependants only (see Table 5). Among the former group, 31 per cent engage in paid work, compared to 50 per cent among the latter. These differences are not enormous and the pattern is certainly not indicative of a system where elderly parents automatically 'retire' on their children's support if they can (for a similar result see Cameron and Cobb-Clark 2001). Moreover, once we take into account elderly people who have incomes from a pension or land, the difference between the two groups diminishes: slightly fewer than three-quarters of elderly people who do *not* live with an adult descendant have some form of income from work, land or pensions, compared to 61 per cent among those living with a grown-up descendant. This raises the important question of what these incomes are

for: Why do elderly people living with an adult child or grandchild continue to work? How do they use their work or pension incomes? We shall return to this issue below when the contributions from elderly people are examined.

Table 5 roughly here

A.3 Norms of Intergenerational Relations

One of the most commonly traded stereotypes about intergenerational relations in Asia is that children feel duty-bound to provide old-age support to their parents. Parents give children the '*gift of life*,' nurture and raise them, and launch them into adulthood (Chye 2000; Caffrey 1992; Lopez 1991). Children are then expected to provide care for their elderly parents 'as a means of repaying the tremendous debts … owed for producing and caring for them in infancy and childhood.' (Lamb 2000:46) Rural areas of Asia are seen as

> characterised by the absence of alternative systems of old-age support, by well-developed social norms underpinning family-based support systems, and by the dominance of the family among institutions and the ability of families to inculcate altruism and to enforce social norms. (Bhaumik and Nugent 2000:256)

Assumptions of strong filial obligations in Indonesia are echoed in this statement:

> The Indonesian social norm prescribes that children respect their elders. Children who ignore and who do not care for their parents are subject to social sanctions. … The norm which demands children to respect their parents remains in effect and is adhered to by the Indonesian people. … Children in many communities are happy and proud to be able to care for their parents … (and) often compete for the opportunity to care for their parents. (Wirakartakusumah 1999:17)

The reverse of children's reciprocal obligation is seen in elderly parents' right to 'retire' on familial support. This is often portrayed as the natural progression of life-cycle interdependencies (Harper 1992:170). Younger generations take over household headship and responsibility for the family enterprise and elders reap the rewards for their earlier efforts.

The interpretation of such normative statements for understanding intergenerational relations is problematic. Sociologists and anthropologists have long observed that actual practice cannot be inferred from norms (cf. Holy and Stuchlik 1983; Bourdieu 1977; Lockwood 1995). People may use norms to project a particular representation or justify a course of action without the norms being *reasons* for action. In Kidul, for example, village officials claimed that no elderly person lived alone; in reality, one in ten did. Beneath the dominant, official discourse we can often find a wide range of preferences and motivations entertained by actors in the practical management of their lives. In East Java, at least, this includes a pervasive discourse of independence (*mandiri*), fear of being a burden (*beban*), and shame (*sungkan*) at becoming dependent on younger generation family members (cf. also Vatuk 1990; Rudkin 1994). Thus, in addition to observations of residential, functional and economic independence we find evidence at the normative level that dependence in old age is not 'the norm'.

A.4 Summary of Elderly Dependence

Are elderly people in East Java dependent on their families? Evidence of elderly people's availability of children, living arrangements, health and income status allows us to reject the notion of general or even widespread dependence. Only half of all elderly live with a mature descendant, a mere 10 per cent are physically in need of care, and fewer than half of people aged seventy and over have no source of income. These facts do not in themselves allow conclusions about the positive benefits elderly people may be providing to their families, or about the dependency burden on the old from younger generations. In order to investigate the second question, the extent and kinds of contributions elderly people make to their families, we need to investigate intergenerational flows of support within and beyond the household.

Figure 1 anticipates the quantitative importance of various wealth-flow types in East Java, some of which will be investigated in more detail below. The classification was developed on the basis of qualitative material on family exchanges, and data on work, household headship, ownership of assets and household activities from interviews and survey returns. We distinguish six broad types, two of which essentially set aside elderly without children and elderly who do not live with children. The nature and extent of their support networks is investigated elsewhere (e.g. Schröder-Butterfill 2001a). Among elderly who live with a child or grandchild, four categories are distinguished: elderly with young dependants, elderly with adult dependants, arrangements where generations are interdependent and exchange is more or less balanced, and elderly who depend on their coresident descendant. A number of provisos are noted. Firstly, the data refer to support arrangements at a certain point in time, thus the picture is unrealistically static. Old age is full of transitions, with elderly becoming ill or losing a spouse, or children moving out or in. Thus both the needs for, and the ability to provide, support on the part of family members may change over time. Secondly, the typology suggests a neatness that is in fact lacking. Elderly may be providing for dependent offspring but receiving infrequent support in return, or anticipating the delegation of responsibility in the near future. The complexity of providing support to one family member but receiving it from another is also set aside here. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the typology is exogenous in the sense that villagers themselves do not think in terms of these classifications. This is not surprising given that people are part of long-term, open-ended exchange relationships with family members, where goods and services exchanged are largely considered incommensurate and disparities tolerated. In short, villagers engage in generalised, rather than restricted systems of exchange, where social aspects are emphasised over material ones (Lévi-Strauss 1969; Sahlins 1965:147). The utility of nonetheless creating a typology lies in the fact that it provides a rough summary measure with which to counter common assumptions of elderly dependence, to illustrate some of the variety underlying coresidential arrangements, and to sketch the importance of support provided by the elderly.

As the diagram shows, one in three elderly people are not involved at all in coresidential exchange relations with children or grandchildren, either because they have no children, or because they do not live with them. As many as 29 per cent of elderly are the net providers of intergenerational support, of which 13 percent involve mature, as opposed to young, dependants. Roughly one in five elderly find themselves in arrangements where it is possible to talk of an interdependence and mutual benefit of the generations. Such arrangements take a variety of forms, for example, an exchange of practical for material support, or similar contributions by members of both adult generations to the household economy. Only 20 per cent of elderly can be classified as largely or entirely dependent on their families for material or physical support. The latter figure is broadly comparable with survey findings in Central Java in the late 1980s where only 11 per cent of elderly men and 27 per cent of elderly women indicated children as their main source of income; the figures for Sri Lanka and Thailand from the same survey are much higher, 35 and 52 per cent and 25 and 45 per cent, respectively (Andrews and Hennink 1992).

Figure 1 roughly here

B. Types of Support Provided by the Elderly

Elderly people in rural developing societies may assist their families in a range of ways. Research into the role of elderly people in Asia has tended to focus on their indirect contributions, that is assistance with childcare or housework which enables the younger generations to devote themselves to other productive or reproductive roles (e.g. Hermalin, Roan *et al.* 1998; Chan 1997; Andrews and Hennink 1992). In rural Java, elderly parents' and grandparents' contributions are more far-reaching. They maintain full parenting responsibilities well into old age; they represent the economic backbone of multi-generational families; they step in during crises in the younger generation and supplement meagre household incomes by continuing to work. The different kinds of elderly assistance will be examined in turn.

B.1 Parenting in Old Age

As we have seen, one in ten currently elderly people in Kidul have children who are not yet mature (*for a definition, see above*). Most of these children are in their late teens or even early twenties. It is therefore reasonable to assume that they are making contributions to the households they live in, rather than requiring support from their parents. Certainly, earlier authors on Java have noted important economic contributions made by children (Hart 1980; Geertz 1961). For example, in their study of Java in the early 1970s, Nag, White and Peet (1980) found 12 to 14 year-old boys to be contributing 4.7 and girls 7.3 hours of work to their households, which represented 42 and 59 per cent, respectively, of average adults' input. In Kidul, at the end of the 1990s, the reality is different. Education levels among young people are high; according to our household survey, 61 per cent of 15-19 year-olds are still in education. Beyond primary school, parents have to pay fees for their children,

and in secondary school these are often considerable.[iv] Only nine per cent of 15-19 year-olds are in some form of paid work. Except in very poor households, it is not expected that unmarried working children contribute their income to the household budget. Instead, it is deemed normal that youngsters spend their money on clothes, entertainment or consumer durables, or that they should save up for when they marry. All of the 15-19 year-olds in our survey who are working keep their income to themselves, and among 20-24 year-olds (of whom 48 per cent work) 83 per cent do. (This is not to say that such children do not occasionally buy generous gifts for their parents or siblings, or contribute money in a crisis (cf. Koning 1997; Wolf 1992).) We also found no evidence that teenage children are expected to make significant contributions in practical ways to the running of the household. All in all, then, it is reasonable to assume that in the vast majority of households where elderly live with immature or single children the dominant flows of intergenerational support and wealth are downward, from parents to children (cf. also Knodel, Chayovan *et al.* 1995:442). Far from being a source of support, unmarried children generally represent a net economic drain on elderly parents' resources.[v]

Elderly people not only support immature children, but also assume parenting responsibilities for grandchildren. In rural East Java coresidence with a young grandchild whose parents are absent is almost as common as coresidence with a dependent child (see Table 2). Nine per cent of elderly people in Kidul find themselves in such a skipped generation household.[vi] Two kinds of arrangements may be distinguished. In the first, the elderly generation has permanently taken on the parental role, either because the grandchild's parents have died, or have relinquished parental responsibilities for other reasons, like divorce or remarriage. In the second, grandparents are caring for grandchildren temporarily to allow the middle generation to participate in labour migration. Roughly a third of all skipped generation arrangements involving immature grandchildren are of the former kind. The following is an example that unfolded during the fieldwork period.

Case Study 1: Pak Abdul and Bu Rohana[vii]

Pak Abdul is a village official and farmer in his sixties. His wife, Rohana, in her fifties, does not regularly work. When I first interviewed them they were living with an unmarried son in his early twenties and a married daughter and son-in-law with a nine year-old son, Alfi. A week later, the daughter tragically died in an accident, thrusting her parents into a period of despair and grief. This had been their only daughter and they had hoped she would be close-by as they grew older. What eventually drew the grieving parents back into life was their new-found responsibility for their grandson. Rohana took on the mothering tasks her daughter had previously undertaken, and Abdul started paying for the grandson's school fees, pocket money and other needs. Over a period of a few months the son-in-law, who still lived with them, became increasingly detached, often spending the night in Malang where he worked. His contributions to the upkeep of his grandson became more irregular. When I tentatively asked Rohana what would happen should he remarry, the response was vehement and unequivocal: "He may do as he pleases, stay or

leave, but under no circumstances may he take his son with him! Alfi will now stay with us, and will inherit his dead mother's share."

Most grandparents gladly assume the role of surrogate parent in an event of family crisis; indeed, having a grandchild to look after was often seen as compensation for another loss. In such examples it is common for grandparents to come to refer to their grandchild as *anak angkat* (adopted child), who will later inherit. Of course, unlike dependent children who grow up by the time parents reach their seventies, grandchildren may continue to depend on economic and practical support from elderly grandparents well into old age. Pak Abdul, for example, will be in his seventies by the time Alfi reaches secondary education and may then have to sell agricultural land to cover his costs.

A different logic underlies the second kind of skipped generation arrangement. Here grandparents are temporarily, though often indefinitely, responsible for the upbringing of a grandchild, and thereby enable the middle generation to pursue work elsewhere (cf. Spaan 1999 for a discussion of labour migration in East Java). Some authors have cast such fostering arrangements as examples of family strategies, where family members cooperate in order to maximise economic or other opportunities (Bledsoe and Isiugo-Abanihe 1989; Peterson 1993; Richter 1996). The middle generation improves incomes and living standards, and the elderly generation benefits from companionship and remittances. However, in the Javanese context, talk of a family strategy seems problematic as elderly parents do not perceive themselves as having the option to refuse, nor do they usually benefit from the arrangement. Indeed, it is wholly inappropriate to model Javanese multigenerational families as 'firms' pursuing a common economic enterprise, as perhaps in the case of the Chinese *chia* or Japanese *ie* family. Instead, Javanese villagers are economically individualistic: property is owned individually, family members rarely cooperate economically, even spouses will often not pool their incomes (Geertz 1961; Jay 1969; Koning 1997).[viii] We also found little evidence that skipped generation households stimulate remittances from absent parents (e.g. Rudkin 1998). Fewer than two-thirds of elderly household heads with coresident dependent grandchildren reported receiving *any* form of financial support; in all but two cases the sums remitted were insufficient to cover the child's expenditures and had to be supplemented, if not entirely covered, by the grandparents. Insofar as fostering by grandparents represents a strategy, it is strategic merely from the point of view of the middle generation, who benefit from free childcare and greater mobility. The elderly grandparents may in turn be significantly worse off as a result of the support they provide to their dependent grandchildren. The following case is an illustration.

Case Study 2: Mbah Juminah

Mbah Juminah is a widow in her seventies. She comes from an upper class Central Javanese family and was married to a member of the Indonesian army. Her husband died some years ago, and Juminah still receives a small pension (Rp. 356,000 [US$ 50] per month). After her husband's death she

unsuccessfully tried to set up a business and was left with large debts. She had to sell her nice house and now lives in a small, run-down rented house which she shares with her divorced son and three grandchildren between the ages of four and 17. One granddaughter is the daughter of the coresident son whose wife left him soon after the birth of their child. The other two grandchildren (one of them the four year-old) are the children of another son who works and lives in the nearby district capital; his wife works in Malaysia. Mbah Juminah not only cares – cooks, cleans, washes, baby-sits – for her three grandchildren, she is also largely financially responsible for them. Her coresident son does not contribute his income and leaves it to his mother to pay for the food and school fees of his daughter; he merely provides pocket - and transport money. Similarly, the non-resident son, who visits his mother and children once a week, contributes a sum which does not even cover one daughter's school. Not surprisingly, things are tight for Juminah. To generate a little extra income she is trying to grow mushrooms in the kitchen of her already overcrowded and damp house. Help from other family members is not forthcoming. Indeed, she awaits repayment on a large loan she made to another of her children several years ago.

To summarise the evidence so far, we find that one in five people aged 60 and over in Kidul live with a dependent descendant for whom they have primary responsibility. In the vast majority of cases, this responsibility extends not just to practical care, but also economic support. Whilst the dependency burden from immature children decreases with parental age, surrogate parenthood or fostering of grandchildren show no appreciable decline with age. Parenting thus represents an important type of support provided by the elderly of all ages in rural Java.

B.2 Pensions and Land: The Elderly as Economic Backbone

What is the role of elderly parents once their children are fully grown-up? Is their support then limited to the provision of childcare and domestic help, or do they intervene in more far-reaching ways in the livelihoods of their families? In this section, evidence is presented to show that it is not uncommon for elderly people to continue providing materially for their offspring, rather than their contributions being confined to assistance with practical tasks. The focus will be on support to coresident adult children or grandchildren. As Table 2 shows, half of all elderly in Kidul live with a mature descendant; of these arrangements 57 per cent involve a currently married child (*figure not shown*).

Support from elderly people to adult family members has been largely neglected in ageing research on Asia. In particular, few studies examine support flows within the household (exceptions include Chan 1997; Hermalin, Roan *et al.* 1998). A reason for this oversight can arguably be found in the predominance of survey methodologies. Most surveys continue to treat households as the relevant basic unit of analysis in developing countries (cf. Andrews 1992 for an overview, and Knodel and Saengtienchai 1999 for a critique). Information on actual exchange dynamics within the 'black box' that

is the household tends to be lacking as it is sensitive and difficult to collect (cf. Natividad and Cruz 1997:29). Moreover, a long tradition of treating families as guided by an altruistic head who is motivated to maximise collective welfare has disposed researchers to presume income pooling and equitable access to resources in households (e.g. Becker 1981).[ix] In ageing research this assumption, combined with dominant notions of elderly dependence and decrepitude, has meant that most researchers adopt the shorthand of equating coresidence with support *for* the elderly. In other words, the usual assumption is that coresidence implies net upward flows of intergenerational wealth, although smaller downward flows are sometimes acknowledged.

In fact, mere coresidence tells us very little about actual flows of support within a household. As Albert Hermalin has observed:

> No formal definition of living arrangements can be informative about the content of … relationships. Older parents living with married children may be recipients of considerable financial and emotional support, or they may be mainly aiding their children and grandchildren in the form of child care, shopping, and meal preparation. (Hermalin 2000:11)

In order to understand the meanings of living arrangements, questions like, 'Who are the main and secondary sources of economic support? To what extent are goods shared? What entitlements do various family members have to material and practical resources? How are responsibilities for housekeeping tasks distributed?' need to be posed. On the basis of ethnographic and household survey evidence we find that many elderly people in rural Java provide crucial material support to their coresident adult descendants. In terms of the wealth flow typology in Figure 1, net flows of intergenerational support are downward in one quarter of households where elderly coreside with an adult child or grandchild. In a further 37 per cent of such households elderly people are making significant material or practical contributions in return for support received. In other words, despite the fact that the presence of adult descendants may lead us to assume that coresidence is sought for the benefit of the elderly, in one in four households the senior generation actually represents the economic backbone of the family. The following provides a good example.

Case Study 3: Mbah Winar & Mbah Jina

Mbah Winar and Mbah Jina are an elderly couple in their 70s. From good families, both were able to attend school during the Dutch era. Winar was a member of the Indonesian army, he now receives a regular monthly pension (Rp. 470,000, c. US$ 67). His wife inherited *sawah* (irrigated land) from her parents, which was sold and the money used to build various houses. The couple do not have any children together, but Jina has a daughter from a previous marriage whom Mbah Winar considers his own. When the daughter married, she was given a house next to her parents'. One of her children, Tommy, was raised and schooled by his grandparents. Some years ago the elderly couple decided to move away from the small industrial town they were living in, leaving behind their daughter with whom relations were not warm. Their decision to move hinged on Tommy's willingness to move with them, and the house the elderly couple built in Kidul was immediately put into the

grandson's name. When Tommy married, his wife joined the household and they now have a toddler. The domestic arrangement is considered mutually beneficial to both generations: Tommy's wife does all the housework, and is expected to care for the elderly couple when they are ill. Economic responsibility, however, rests with the elderly couple. All the money for daily shopping (c. Rp. 10,000 per day), utilities (Rp. 15,000 per month), and snacks for the great-grandchild (Rp. 500 per day) comes from Winar's pension. Tommy only irregularly has work at the nearby sugar factory. When he does, he contributes about Rp. 20,000 a week to the shopping. The remainder of his income is spent on modern consumer goods.

In this example the elderly couple represents the main source of income in a family of five; in exchange for their support they receive practical care and companionship. (For this reason the example falls into the wealth flow type 'interdependence of generations'.) The arrangement is long-term, and as pensions continue to be paid to widows after the main beneficiary's death, it is likely to carry on in the future. Closer analysis of elderly 'pillars of the family' reveals that – with some exceptions – they belong to the wealthier strata in the village. Elderly in receipt of a monthly pension or regular income from land are over-represented: 30 per cent of elderly households in which the dominant flow of material support is downward include a pensioner, and 57 per cent a pensioner or landowner. In households where elderly are dependent on the young, the proportions are three and five per cent, respectively. The overall proportion of elderly households in receipt of a pension in Kidul is 20 per cent.[x]

Research in other developing countries has begun to investigate the role of pension incomes in wider family networks. Francie Lund (2001), for example, has found that pensions to poor elderly in South Africa go a long way in raising the standard of living and providing security for entire households (cf. also Case and Deaton 1998). The reliability of pensions in particular means that the income can be used strategically and allows households to obtain credit that they would otherwise not be eligible for. Rather than pensions 'crowding out' familial support (Cox and Jimenez 1990; Treas and Logue 1986:657), Lund finds a whole range of wider positive knock-on effects:

> While many economists worry about the potential of this public spending [i.e. pensions] to 'crowd out' individual savings, and to reduce transfers between generations, research shows that it 'crowds in' care, the status of elderly, the health status of children, the creation of local markets, and micro-enterprise formation. (2001:1)

Our data from rural Java also suggest that pension incomes represent important mechanisms of economic redistribution in family networks. Among elderly in receipt of a pension in Kidul, only thirty per cent use their pensions predominantly for their own needs. In all other cases larger family units are being shored up. This is reflected in relative household sizes: whereas the average household with an elderly person has 3.75 members, households with an elderly pensioner have 4.4 members; pensioner households where pensions are shared even have 4.8 members. Of course, there are positive and negative interpretations of this wider distribution of pension incomes. The effect on younger generation members is an improvement in living standards

and financial security over what would otherwise be enjoyed. For the elderly, receipt of a pension increases the likelihood of living with any child or grandchild (84 per cent versus 72 per cent), which suggests greater companionship and potential support when needed. In the case of Mbah Winar, at least, the arrangement arrived at is seen as mutually beneficial. However, the dilution of pension incomes due to large numbers of dependants may in fact leave the elderly with little or no advantage over their non-pensioner peers. To use a crude approximation, average monthly pensions in Kidul are Rp. 380,000 (US$ 54), which translates into abundant daily incomes of Rp. 12,700 for sole beneficiaries. Once divided by average household sizes of 4.4 or 4.8, we obtain per head daily sums of Rp. 2,600-2,900 (c. US$ 0.37-0.41). When compared with average daily per head expenditure figures of Rp. 2,350, we can appreciate that this leaves little room for manoeuvre.[xi]

Moreover, it is *not* always the case that elderly people's far-reaching economic support arises from a positive choice on the part of the elderly. Some parents see themselves forced to continue providing indefinitely for handicapped or simply incompetent offspring. For many there is little evidence of any reciprocal benefit arising from material support provided. The following will serve as an example.

Case Study 4: Mbah Rosid

Mbah Rosid is a man in his early seventies. For the past few years he has suffered from Parkinson's disease and now needs feeding and washing. In his prime he ranked among the medium-sized farmers in the village, respected for his hard work, feared for his temper. Mbah Rosid was married three times. With his third wife he has a son and a daughter in addition to four step-children. When the son married about 10 years ago, Rosid handed over most of his agricultural land to his son and daughter. In addition he built his son a house next door and equipped him with a mini-bus; his step-son was given a motorbike. Rosid's daughter, now also married, lives with her parents. She will inherit the parental house. The daughter and son-in-law use their income to purchase consumer goods and do not contribute to household expenses. Rosid's wife provides most of the physical care for the elderly man, though the daughter helps. This is more than can be said of the ne'er-do-good son, who despite the generous starting capital from his father has failed to establish himself professionally as a driver. He and his young family still receive daily support in the form of food from Rosid's wife who runs a small shop. The cost of Mbah Rosid's medicine recently necessitated the sale of his remaining agricultural land; neither children contribute to his medical costs. A steep material decline in family fortunes has thus resulted from the elderly man's failing health, and is compounded by the younger generation's failure to repay some of the generosity received.

Mbah Rosid's example summarises some of the points made thus far. Elderly in Kidul tend to continue working beyond the age of sixty, regardless of the availability of younger generation family members. Unless regular income from a pension exists, cessation of work is in response to frailty, in which case

spouses are often the primary carers. The elderly generation carries on supporting the young beyond their maturity and marriage; in other words, the dominant flows of intergenerational wealth are downward, even in parents' old age. Such support often takes the form of covering the costs of day-to-day living, but may also include large, expensive gifts or bequests. Receipt of parental support does not, on the whole, elicit significant flows of reciprocal assistance. (Exceptions are cases where relatives other than children, like grandchildren, nephews or nieces, have benefited from elderly support. As such support falls beyond the remit of customary familial generosity, it is considered legitimate to voice expectations of return, as was at least tacitly the case in Mbah Winar's example.) The lack of reciprocity is borne out by the body of ethnographic data collected. Villagers of all ages emphasise that parents' responsibility to children is paramount and indefinite. This is captured in the saying that parents will never be heartless (*nggak tega*) towards their children. Parents who cease to bail out adult children in need are harshly criticised. Children, in contrast, are considered to have their own responsibilities once they marry (*sudah lepas*) and should not be expected to provide for their parents unless absolutely necessary. Parents talk of their reluctance (*sungkan*) to approach children for support, and elderly seen as overly demanding are the subject of critical gossip.

B.3 Crisis Support by Elderly

Thus far the focus has been on the role of elderly people in providing long-term day-to-day economic support for their children and grandchildren, be it for immature descendants or for adult offspring who remain in the household and continue to rely on the older generation for routine support. However, the ideal pattern of family formation in Java is for children to set up independent households upon, or soon after, marriage. The generations are then mutually independent and exchanges limited to visits, gifts and mutual help during ceremonies. Unless, of course, a crisis occurs.

Case Study 5: Mbah Hari

Mbah Hari is an elderly man in his seventies. He used to work as a minor clerk in a school; he retired in the 1980s and receives a small government pension (Rp. 350,000, c. US$ 50). The couple have no productive assets, and their house is modestly furnished. Mbah Hari and his wife have seven surviving children, most of whom are dispersed throughout East Java and Bali. One never-married son in his forties and a married daughter with three small children were, however, living with Mbah Hari when I first arrived in Kidul. Lany, the married daughter, has not always lived with her parents. She moved out upon getting married, then returned when her first marriage broke up. With her second husband Lany moved to Jakarta where her husband worked as a hotel receptionist. Seeing living costs spiral in the capital, the young family moved back to East Java in 1998. However, due to the worsening economic climate they never quite managed to establish themselves again. Over a period of two years, they moved in and out of Mbah Hari's house, depending on the son-in-law's occupational fortunes. By the

time I met the young family they were indefinitely domiciled at Lany's parents. The son-in-law only occasionally worked, often going for weeks without work; Lany was breast-feeding. Consequently, Mbah Hari's meagre pension, which would have comfortably covered the elderly couple's needs and afforded some security in the case of illness, had to stretch to cover a family of eight.[xii] As the elderly man put it, his pension was the pillar (*tumpuan*) of the family. In addition, Mbah Hari's wife, in her late 60s, occasionally worked as domestic help in the household of neighbours. As she explained, "When the grandchildren ask for snacks or need medicine, how can I disappoint them?" By the time of a second field visit, a year later, Lany had left for Malaysia in the hope of finding work in a factory. The son-in-law had returned to his natal village, but was without regular employ. The three small grandchildren were being looked after by Mbah Hari and his wife. The strains of carrying this responsibility was clearly showing on their faces. This, they complained, was not how they had imagined 'retirement'!

The example of Mbah Hari illustrates the key role elderly may play in underwriting the risks young families face in an uncertain economy. Clearly, life course transitions are not necessarily linear and irreversible, and parent-child livelihoods may remain critically interdependent even after children marry and first leave home.[xiii] Thus, although Lany gained residential and economic independence twice, she saw herself forced to return to her parents' home during crises. In Java, where divorce and adult mortality are traditionally high, temporary and permanent crisis reincorporation into parental households has long been a feature of intergenerational support systems; one in ten elderly people in Kidul, for example, live with a divorced or widowed child. In times of economic crisis and heightened volatility in the labour market, as experienced in Indonesia after 1997 until now, crisis support takes on an added importance. We encountered examples of elderly people returning to work to help pay off debts in the younger generation; of family homes being sold by elderly parents to pay for hospitalisation; and of grandchildren being incorporated into grandparental households to reduce the burden on parents who had lost jobs. In smaller ways, elderly parents' 'non-essential' incomes in households where adult children are economically active often serve as a financial cushion that may be drawn on at crucial times, for example to cover for health care, expensive life-cycle rituals (*slametan*) or merely the much-demanded snacks (*jajan*) for grandchildren.

As in cases where elderly people provide long-term economic support, crisis assistance may cause strains on the elderly generation. In Mbah Hari's case, the elderly couple are economically and physically significantly worse off as a result of their daughter and son-in-law's failure to successfully maintain independence. The following is a particularly tragic example of an elderly widow's economic and social decline as a result of her cumulative efforts over a couple of decades to bail out family members in crisis.

Case Study 6. Mbah Sum

Mbah Sum is a widow in her late 80s. When I first met her, she was living in a lively five-generation household with her widowed daughter, also elderly, her married granddaughter, a great-granddaughter, and two small great-great-grandchildren. Three surviving younger sisters lived close-by. Mbah Sum no longer worked, but helped with housework and childcare. By the time I left some 12 months later, Sum was living just with her daughter in a tiny windowless bamboo shack. What had cause this remarkable transition? Mbah Sum comes from a respectable village family and made three good marriages; she has the one surviving daughter. With her third husband, a village official, Mbah Sum acquired considerable wealth in the form of land. However, after his death in the late 1970s, Mbah Sum came under constant pressure to hand over wealth to the younger generations. Bit by bit she sold land to cover family needs: a great-grandchild was hospitalised, costly circumcision and wedding ceremonies needed paying for, capital was required to enable the granddaughter to leave for Saudi Arabia and to shore up her daughter's failing trading venture. Most fatally, she agreed to sell her house cheaply to her granddaughter Diana, who had returned a rich woman from working in Saudi Arabia. Diana invested in various business schemes none of which proved viable. By the time I arrived in the village, she had run into huge debt and saw herself forced to sell the house in which her elderly mother and grandmother were living. Mbah Sum now spends her dying days in poverty. She relies on a combination of charity, help from relatives like her grandson and elderly sisters, and what little her daughter can make from selling second hand clothes. None of these sources stretches to covering biomedical health care.

As this case study shows, the lines between crisis and long-term support may become blurred, as a series of crisis interventions for different family members add up to sustained pressure on the parent or grandparent in question. Like in the case of Mbah Rosid, Mbah Sum's life-time accumulated wealth is dissipated through the family network, both as 'seed capital' and 'insurance policy'. However, the nature of intergenerational wealth distribution in rural Java militates against its strategic use to secure old-age support. Inheritance, which is passed on during parents' life-times, is ideally divided equally among all children, resulting in often quite small, unprofitable shares. In practice this often means the piece-meal distribution of wealth in response to family needs, and without any conditions being attached to its receipt (as is usually the case in impartible inheritance where the heir is also the designated carer). Thus, although Mbah Sum has been extremely generous over a long period of time, none of her beneficiaries feel particularly obliged to care for her when she becomes dependent.

Summary and Implications

This paper has assessed the dependency of elderly people in rural East Java and examined the role they play in their families. Contrary to common stereotypes, the elderly are not dependent as a rule. Only one in ten elderly

people in the study community are in poor health, and the majority continue to work or have income from pensions or land. This is true also of elderly people who live with an adult child and who are over 70 years old. In addition to the need for support being low, not all elderly have descendants they can depend on should they wish to. Childlessness and population mobility are high; as a result, more than a quarter of elderly people do not live with a child and only one in two live with a mature child or grandchild. All in all, it is a minority (20 per cent) of elderly people who are actually dependent on descendants for material or physical assistance.

Not only are the elderly not dependent, but they are often vital to the survival and welfare of their families. It is conventionally assumed that coresidence with a child is indicative of net flows of support up the generations, from young to old. However, closer examination of elderly people living with a descendant reveals that in almost half of all cases the elderly generation represents the economic backbone of the household: wealth flows in these arrangements are unequivocally downward. In a further quarter of households the old are making significant practical or material contributions to family welfare. The importance of elderly people is felt in a range of situations, be it in caring for immature children, taking on parenting responsibilities for grandchildren or shoring up adult offspring who have failed to make the transition to successful independence. Elderly people with regular sources of income like pensions are particularly prone to having dependants, whilst elderly of all statuses are liable to having to step in to protect family members in crisis. In Java, unlike in many other parts of Southeast Asia, a preference for residence in extended families is lacking; where coresidence occurs it is more commonly in response to vulnerability in the younger, rather than older, generation.

What are the implications of these findings for elderly Javanese people, for ageing research, and for policy?

The expectation that elderly parents are 'never heartless' towards their children, combined with economic conditions that make it difficult for young villagers to establish themselves, mean that elderly people continue to provide intergenerational support even at advanced ages. Elderly people's own material welfare and security can be circumscribed as a result, either because incomes are shared among many or because key assets are sold or passed on, undermining the elderly person's ability to maintain independence. Moreover, parents' generosity is not tied to claims to, or even expectations of, reciprocal support by children. As a result, they may find themselves in a double bind: having provided support to their limits, elderly people may become dependent on descendants who are incompetent or negligent.

A number of implications for ageing research can be summarised. Firstly, the findings add to the growing body of evidence that elderly people cannot be treated as a homogenous group, much less as a population that is dependent as a matter of course. Analysis and interpretation needs to take better account of subgroups within the elderly population on the basis of characteristics like health, economic status and kin availability. Further research is needed to investigate the contributions made by active elderly in a variety of settings and situations. Second, it is once again clear that the flows of intergenerational support cannot be inferred from mere coresidence.

Hence, more attention has to be paid to actual exchanges and practices. For example, in order better to understand intergenerational flows of support in households, data are needed on household headship and ownership, all sources of income and their relative importance, the extent to which resources are shared, the identity of members with financial or practical responsibility for various tasks or outlays, non-working members' entitlements to household wealth, and so on. If in addition we wish to understand the ways in which support arrangements unfold over the course of family biographies, retrospective and longitudinal data are necessary. It is doubtless true that the information described is not necessarily disclosed by respondents in a single survey interview. Third, ethnographic research clearly has a role to play in uncovering the logic of familial and intergenerational relations which may then serve to adjust some of the assumptions regarding units, exchanges and identities on which survey methodologies are based. In Kidul, for example, it seems unlikely that notions of bargaining and exchange are motivating parental generosity.

Policy suggestions arising from this paper are tentative at best. The finding that elderly people are far from universally dependent, indeed are oftentimes the source of support for dependants, should reassure policy makers and encourage the development of targeted approaches. Rural elderly people do not as a rule expect to retire at sixty. Providing employment opportunities or micro credit to allow the elderly to continue to work, especially in the traditional sectors increasingly eschewed by the young, may represent an efficient way of ensuring independence in old age. Moreover, the evidence on the use of pension incomes demonstrates clearly that pensions serve dual functions of protecting the elderly and shoring up wider family networks. Giving regular, reliable income into the hands of elderly people may be considered part of a wider strategy for socio-economic development. On the other hand, the fact that family support for the elderly cannot be taken for granted should guard against complacency: children are neither necessarily available to provide support, nor does the rhetoric of filial obligation and reciprocity have much valence on the ground. Even in rural Southeast Asia, it would seem, there is a role for market and state in the provision of old-age security.

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[i] Our findings of high levels of childlessness can be placed into a wider historical pattern of sub-optimal fertility in Indonesia. On the basis of the 1971 census, Hull and Tukiran (1976) identify East Java as an area particularly affected by childlessness, with 17-23 per cent of women aged thirty and over childless; levels in Indonesia generally are also high (14-16 per cent). More recently, Martin Vaessen (1984) found Indonesia ranking fifth in levels of infecundity and childlessness among 28 developing countries. Indonesian Family Life Survey data from 1993 confirm Hull and Tukiran's observations of above average childlessness in East Java.

[ii] For a discussion of likely causes of high levels of childlessness in East Java see Schröder-Butterfill and Kreager (2001).

[iii] Figures from the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics show that for Indonesia as a whole 73 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women aged 60 and over are working, although a definition of working is not given (Wirakartakusumah, Nurdin *et al.* 1997). According to the 1993 Indonesian Family Life Survey 70 per cent of elderly men work for a salary, income or profit; more than half of these state that they work in excess of thirty-four hours. For women the proportion working is 36 per cent.

[iv] One family for which detailed figures are available was paying Rp. 575,000 [US$ 82] per year on their 16 year-old daughter's senior high school education; this includes fees, books and uniform, but not transport costs. This sum represents roughly 67 days' wages for an agricultural labourer, food seller or factory worker.

[v] Entry into the labour market, especially in formal or semi-formal sectors (e.g. the police, factory work), often requires a hefty 'recruitment fee' which parents feel obliged to try and raise. One elderly man was contemplating selling his agricultural land to raise the Rp. 15 million (c. US$ 2000) necessary for his son to join the police.

[vi] Skipped generation households with immature grandchildren are more common in East Java than in Taiwan (two per cent), the Philippines (six per cent) and Thailand (six per cent) (Hermalin, Roan *et al.* 1998).

[vii] All personal names have been changed.

[viii] On the occasion of a religious holiday, early on during fieldwork, I gave the old man living in the house next to me Rp. 20,000, saying it was for him and his wife. Later he asked me, perplexed, whether this was for him or for his wife. I repeated, "For both of you, to share." As the elderly couple lived and ate together, I naturally assumed that they operated a common budget. The next day he proudly announced that he had shared the money with his wife: he had given her Rp. 5,000!

[ix] For criticisms of familial altruism and the assumption of resource pooling see Folbre (1997), Pezzin and Schone (1997), Sen (1989), or Parsons (1984).

[x] To date, only a minority of elderly people in Indonesia receive a pension, as entitlement is largely confined to former civil servants (who are not necessarily white collar workers) and members of the army. In the last couple of decades, formal sector employees have started joining voluntary pension schemes; in 1996, membership among current workers comprised about 11.7 per cent of the formal sector labour force, but only 3.5 per cent of the overall labour force (Asher 1998). Exact figures for government pensions are not available, but Asher estimates that 1.5 million Indonesians aged 55 and over are in receipt of a civil service pension and 0.5 million of an army or police pension; this implies an overall proportion of about ten per cent. The fact that coverage in Kidul is higher (c. 20 per cent) is due to the village's proximity to Malang, renowned as a university city and an old army

stronghold. Ownership of agricultural land in Kidul, on the other hand, is lower than in most Indonesian villages. Among elderly households 20 per cent controlled some wet-rice land (*sawah*).

[xi] The expenditure estimate is based on an average for households with an elderly member belonging to the middle two economic strata in the village.

[xii] The family spend about Rp. 9,400 a day on food and Rp. 30,000 on utilities per month. The pension and other occasional incomes amount to roughly Rp. 374,000 a month, leaving only Rp. 60,000 a month for outlays on medicine, rituals, clothes, or school fees. Clearly, there is no scope for saving, nor a margin for emergencies.

[xiii] In this respect, current life course approaches may be emphasising harmony over disjuncture in intergenerational interdependence. As Tamara Hareven writes, "Within a familial setting, the life transitions of the younger generation are intertwined with those of the older generation. For example, the timing of leaving home and marriage in early adulthood is interrelated with the timing of the older generation's transition into retirement or with inheritance. This is precisely where generations are interdependent." (1995:5)

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Table 1: Percentage of elderly people in Kidul by number of children ever born (CEB), children surviving (CS) and children in the village (CiV)

	CEB	CS	CiV
0	21.4	25.6	34.0
1	15.2	15.3	23.2
2	13.1	10.3	25.1
3	4.8	10.8	9.4
4	9.0	9.9	3.9
5	9.7	11.3	2.5
6+	26.8	16.8	2.0
N	145[a]	203	203

Source: Field data 1999. [a] Data on children ever born are incomplete as probing was only introduced after childlessness emerged as a topic of particular relevance. Information on respondents not re-interviewed at a later stage is thus often lacking.

Table 2: Living arrangements of elderly people in Kidul by age and sex

	m<70	m>70	w<70	w>70	All
Living alone	5.3	0	5.9	21.9	9.7
Husband and wife only	15.8	22.2	10.3	4.7	11.7
With young descendant	39.4	19.4	23.5	4.7	19.9
- Child	*36.8*	*8.3*	*8.8*	*0*	*11.2*
- Grandchild (skipped)	*2.6*	*11.1*	*14.7*	*4.7*	*8.7*
With mature descendant	31.6	52.7	53.0	57.8	50.5
- Child	*26.3*	*44.4*	*51.5*	*48.4*	*44.7*
- Grandchild (skipped)	*5.3*	*8.3*	*1.5*	*9.4*	*5.8*
Other arrangements	7.9	5.6	7.4	10.9	8.3
Total (N)	38	36	68	64	206

Source: Field data 1999. 'Young descendant' is defined as a child or grandchild under the age of 19, or under the age of 25 if still in education. In skipped generation households the middle generation is missing.

Table 3: Health status of the elderly in Kidul by age group

	60-69	70 +	Total
Good	66.3	48.5	57.6
Fair	26.9	37.4	32.0
Poor	6.7	14.1	10.3
Total (N)	104	99	203

Source: Field data 1999. 'Fair' comprises elderly who have health problems that do not significantly impede their independence or activities of daily living (e.g. long-term blindness, non-crippling rheumatism, asthma). 'Poor' refers to elderly who are seriously affected in their ability to live independently (e.g. people who are bed- or wheelchair-bound).

Table 4: Work status among adults in Kidul by age group

	20-59	60-69	70+
Paid work	73.0	56.6	24.0
Occasional or unpaid productive work [a]	---	7.5	12.0
Not working, but income from land or pensions [b]	1.3	16.0	19.0
Unpaid domestic work [c]	18.0	9.4	18.0
Not working	6.5	5.7	6.0
Unable to work	1.3	4.7	21.0
Total (N)	233	106	100

Sources: Household survey 2000 and field data 1999. [a] Refers to people who occasionally work or who grow things partly for own consumption, partly for sale. [b] Some undertake paid or domestic work in addition. Similarly, a few people in paid work also receive a pension. [c] Refers to elderly women who have major housekeeping tasks, either keeping house for their families, or, if living alone, for themselves.

Table 5: Work status of elderly by coresidence with an adult descendant

	Not w. adult descendant	With adult descendant
Paid work	73.0	56.6
Occasional or unpaid productive work	---	7.5
Not working, but income from land or pensions	1.3	16.0
Unpaid domestic work	18.0	9.4
Not working	6.5	5.7
Unable to work	1.3	4.7
Total	233	106

Source: Field data 1999.

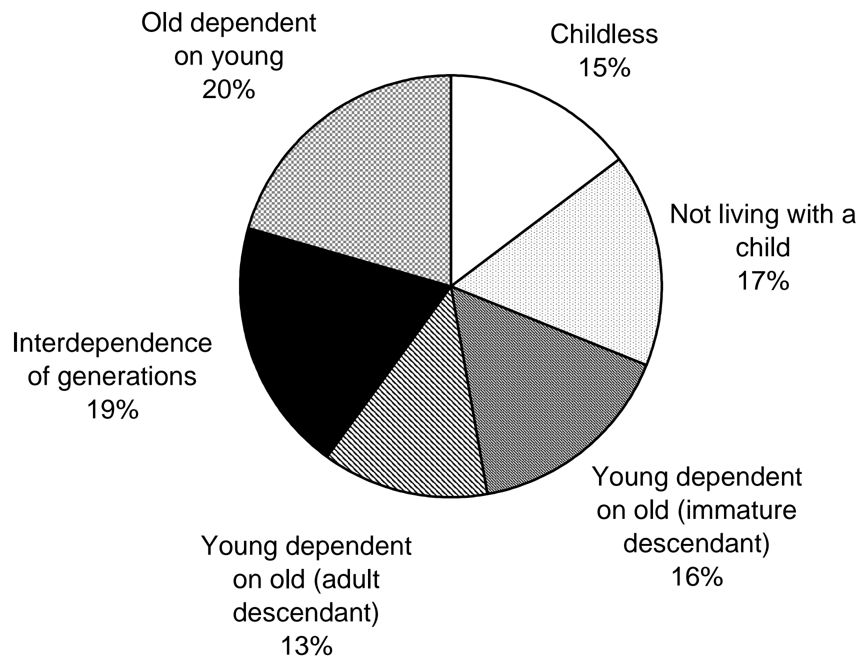

Figure 1: Wealth flow types of elderly people in Kidul