

CHAPTER 1



Introduction

Overview

One of the distinctive features of modern Japanese society is that its population is aging at a faster rate than in any other nation. Much of the media attention to the “aging society” trend, however, has been negative, emphasizing the growing social and fiscal costs associated with providing additional health services and expanding the pension system. Accordingly, “the aging of Japan” phenomenon is often presented and perceived as a burden to society, with today’s younger generations being the ones to shoulder that burden (e.g., Oshima, 1996).

We, too, believe the rapid aging trend has far-reaching consequences for the entire population, but, rather than perceive it as a negative phenomenon or focus solely on services that need to be “provided,” we envision this as a trend with a positive side, a side which emerges if there is commensurate growth in opportunities available to senior adults to become actively engaged and invested in community life.

This book explores human service intervention strategies in Japan which serve to (re-)integrate older adults into society and preserve their role as providers of

guidance and support for people of younger generations, while, at the same time, promoting positive development outcomes for young people. Our topic is "intergenerational initiatives," defined here as "activities, events and ongoing programs designed to increase cooperation, interaction or exchange between people sixty years of age and older and people twenty-one years of age and younger." This includes well-established programs with ongoing funding and administrative structural support, transitory programs and "demonstration" projects, and intergenerational events and activities held on a once-only, seasonal, or occasional basis. (Since cases that fit into the last category are often not classified as "intergenerational programs," the larger phrase, "intergenerational initiatives," is used to encompass all of the above categories.)

When considering the diversity and prevalence of intergenerational initiatives in Japan, and the appeal of the associated symbolism of intergenerational continuity and unity, we believe we have stumbled upon a powerful stabilizing force within Japanese society. Intergenerational initiatives represent an additional support mechanism in the lives of young and elderly people. They also contribute to participants' sense of community solidarity and cultural identity, and help people to pursue their educational objectives, arts and recreation interests, desired states of health and welfare, environmental preservation and community development goals, and attain a sense of religious and spiritual well-being.

In light of the changes occurring in Japanese families, as discussed later in this chapter, it is noteworthy that intergenerational initiatives are often viewed as extending family and peer support systems. Such reasoning is presented in the Annual Report on The National Life for Fiscal 1992 (Economic Planning Agency, 1992):

If nuclear families increase at the current rate, and the numbers of grandchildren also decrease as a result of

the general decline in the number of children, then occasions to spend time with grandchildren will also decrease. Thus, it will be more and more vital to create places within each community where old people and children can meet, as is already done in some areas. It will provide children with an opportunity to get to know views and opinions different from those of their parents, as well as a unique opportunity for social development quite different from that provided by association with peers (p. 204)

Intergenerational initiatives also influence intra-familial relationships. In the chapters that follow, we will present examples of how program participants extend what they learn from their program experiences to how they view and communicate with their own family members of other generations.

Therefore, one of the fundamental premises underlying our investigation is that people's experiences in intergenerational initiatives do not stand apart from, or necessarily represent a replacement for, their informal, family-based intergenerational relationships. Rather, we view intergenerational programming phenomena as serving to buttress the family unit which is still considered the linchpin of Japanese society.

Insofar as intergenerational programming endeavors are developed and integrated into human service and educational systems in various countries, including Japan, the U.S., and some European countries, the emanation of intergenerational initiatives can be viewed as an international phenomenon, with particular relevance in post-industrial societies undergoing demographic and social transformation. However, the extent to which each nation's intergenerational initiatives vary as a function of cultural context, social issues/problems, and public policy resources and vision is not clear. Whereas the literature on intergenerational programs in the U.S. is quite extensive, the literature on Japanese initiatives is limited. It is in this area that we hope to make a contribution.

Our objectives are:

- to survey and assess the types of intergenerational initiatives in Japan;
- to identify the benefits of intergenerational activities/programs for participating youth and senior adults, and to obtain a preliminary sense of the cultural relevance and human service significance of such programs in Japan; and
- to establish the groundwork for information exchange between Japan and America on successful intergenerational program models.

In pursuit of our goal of elucidating the intergenerational movement from within a Japanese perspective, we begin by focusing on some of the significant trends taking place in contemporary Japan, including the increasing expectation of life (which is coming to pass in conjunction with a declining birthrate), an array of lifestyle changes, and the identifiable trend toward intergenerational segregation in living arrangements. In the context of these and other societal changes, we anticipate that there will be considerable interest and debate in the years to come regarding the changing nature of intergenerational relationships in Japan, how such changes are likely to affect the status of both the young and the elderly, and the degree to which problems associated with such changes can be minimized or ameliorated. Our intent is to augment this dialogue by focusing on intergenerational programmatic approaches within the context of how they address emerging social issues.

Japan in Transition: Demographic and Social Changes that are Altering the Landscape of Intergenerational Relationships

Until recently, the whole concept of intergenerational programming in Japan might have seemed totally irrelevant. The powerful endurance and resilience of the Japanese traditional family structure and value system

(Kumagai, 1986; Hamilton, 1988) and neighborhood-based informal support structures (Bestor, 1985; Robertson, 1991) met people's needs for affiliation and cultural identity.

According to some scholars on Japan (e.g., Lebra, 1992; Nakane, 1967/1992), the key to such continuity has been the importance of the family as the basic social unit of Japanese society. Most academic studies of the Japanese social structure highlight the historical and cultural importance of the concept of "ie," a term which is often translated in English as "household" (or "stem family"), but for which there are wider implications in Japanese society (Nakane, 1967/1992).

The term "ie," when used in the context of a system for ensuring family continuity, refers to a specific structural model of kin relationships. The family-line, which includes one's ancestors, the recently dead, and future descendants, is kept intact through a hierarchical pattern of relationships within the family, rules for property transmission, and a value system, influenced by Confucian ideology, of loyalty and responsibility toward the family. The head of the household, usually the first-born son, is considered heir and takes on legal responsibilities for all the members. Younger members are at the bottom of the hierarchy; they are considered to be indebted to the older members for their upbringing and are expected to take responsibility in caring for elderly family members when necessary. The continuity of the family was usually considered more important than the well-being of individual members (Hendry, 1995).

The infusion of Western laws and values following World War II represented the first major disjunction in expectations for intrafamilial relationships and responsibilities. Hendry (1995) states that the Civil Code drawn up during the Allied occupation created the legal basis for such change.

All children are supposed to have equal rights to inheritance and they share responsibility for the care of their parents. The laws are drawn up according to the

Constitution of 1947 which states: "With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes" (Article 24) (p. 27).

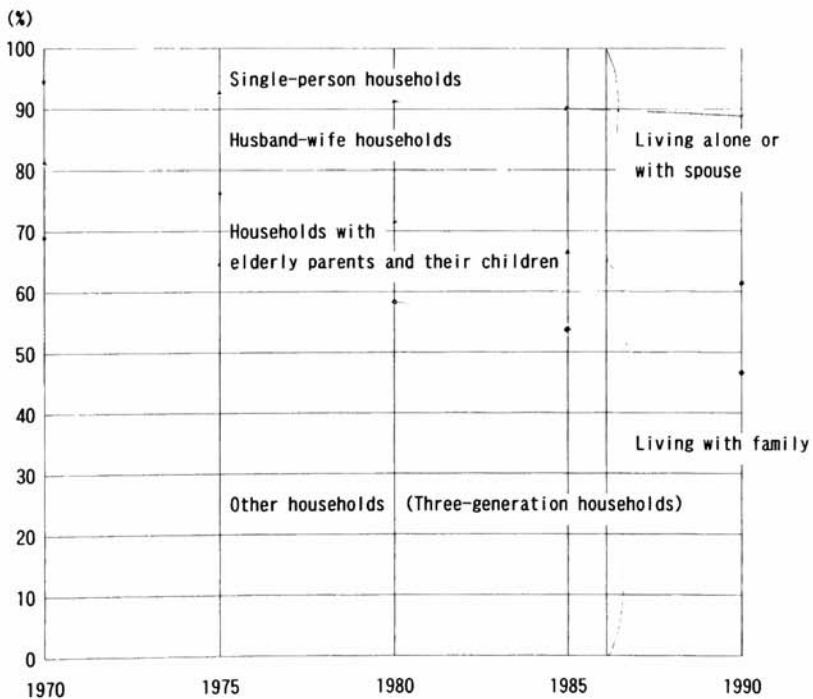
At a certain level, however, the "ie" still survives as a cultural unit (Lebra, 1992), though, as Lock (1993) points out, policymakers rarely use this pre-war term for the household, presumably because of its "oppressive symbolic associations (p. 49)."

The degree to which traditional family values have changed over the past fifty years is a matter of debate. There is clearly much indication that values associated with filial piety, deeply rooted in Japanese history and culture, have persevered to some extent; they are ingrained in the socialization process and are reflected in religious practices¹ and even in the Japanese language; for example, the level of formality used to address family members is determined by relative positions in the familial hierarchy, determined, in part, by one's age and sex.

However, after WW II the Japanese family began a rapid shift towards the nuclear family model, in part as a function of a longing for a western-style family life (Morioka, 1993), and in part as a function of an increase in materialistic and individualistic sentiment (Tonegawa, 1991). Kumagai (1995) poses that the modern Japanese family is neither solely traditional nor modern, but rather exemplifies a dual structure, incorporating elements of both the traditional (which is more prominent in rural settings) and the modern (which is more prominent in urban settings). Yet, as is emphasized in the discussion below, this duality seems to be in flux. Even when traditional family support systems persevere, they are often fragile in the face of the demographic, social, and economic forces in play in modern Japanese society.

One demographic trend considered by some Japan specialists to indicate that the institution of the Japanese family is undergoing fundamental change is the shift in household composition. A decrease in multigenerational households means that a growing proportion of the expanding aged population are living alone or only with their spouses. In 1960, 90% of people over sixty years of age lived with their families (their children) as compared to only 60% in 1991 (Ozawa, 1991). Changes in living arrangements of senior adults from 1970–1990 are displayed in Figure 1 and Table 1.

Figure 1:
Changes in Living Arrangements of
Senior Adults: 1970–1990



Note: Data is from Japan National Census (Management and Coordination Agency).

Presented in Economic Planning Agency (1994).

Table 1: Percentage of elderly living in three generation households, with their adult children only, with spouse, and alone.

Types of household	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Three generation households	69.2	63.9	58.4	53.5	47.0
Households with parents and their children	12.3	12.5	13.2	13.6	14.9
Husband-wife households	12.6	16.4	20.0	22.7	26.7
Single-person households	5.0	7.0	8.3	10.0	11.4

Note: Data is from Japan National Census (Management and Coordination Agency) Presented in Economic Planning Agency (1994).

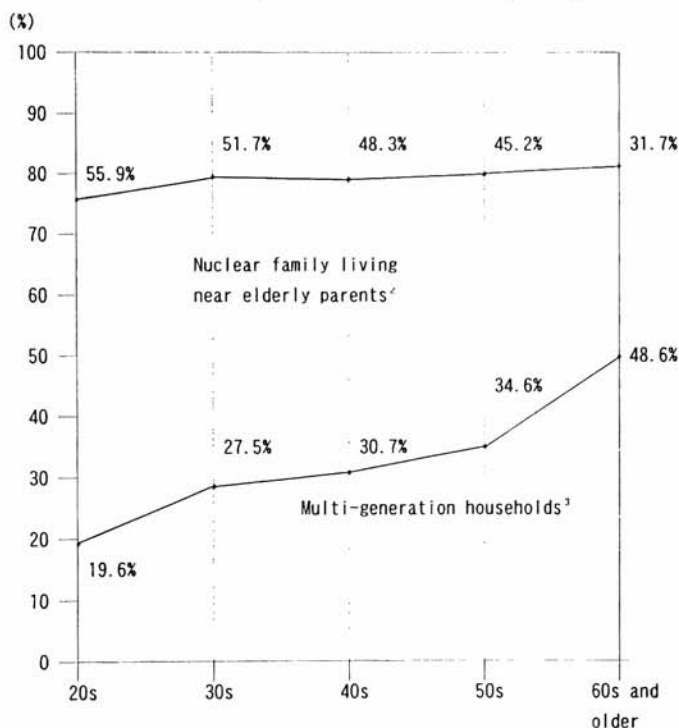
To determine whether the pattern away from multi-generational living arrangements is indicative of a fundamental change in family values in Japan, it is important to consider this data in conjunction with data on people's preferences for living arrangements. Figure 2, below, presents the results of the 1992 Poll on Preferences in the National Life (conducted by the Economic Planning Agency, 1992).²

Signaling a dramatic departure from the traditional multigenerational family living arrangements of past prevalence, only 48.6% of the senior adults noted that the "ideal family situation" for them would involve living with their children and grandchildren. Even lower percentages of respondents from other age groups preferred living in multigenerational households; less than 20% of respondents in their twenties felt that living in a large family where parents, children, and grandchildren live together represents the "ideal family" situation.

At first glance, the decline in actual as well as desired intergenerational living situations is dramatic enough to signal the likelihood of future changes in familial living arrangements, and perhaps even a change in basic con-

Figure 2: People's Preferences for Household Composition as a function of Age¹

"What is the shape of the ideal family for you?"



Notes: 1. Based on the 1992 Poll on Preferences in the National Life by the Economic Planning Agency and presented in (1992). Survey was conducted among 2,440 men and women aged 20 and older living in Japan.

2. Including two households living in one house.

3. Multi-generation households are defined here as "A large family where parents, children, grandchildren and others live together."

ceptions of "family." However, another conclusion can be drawn when viewing the high percentage of respondents who noted that they perceive the ideal family living arrangement to be for elderly parents to live *near* their children and grandchildren³ (see Figure 2). Noting that over 75% of the respondents in each age category wanted elderly people to live in or near households of younger

family members,⁴ one might conclude that there is a strong sentiment for maintaining some sense of family unity across generations, though this may not require living in the same household (Economic Planning Agency, 1992).

Having one's elderly parents living nearby rather than under the same roof is not necessarily a violation of traditional values of family unity. Hendry (1995) evokes the old saying, "One needs to be near enough to be able to carry hot soup from one house to the other without having to heat it up again." (p. 31). Hendry also notes that it is not uncommon for scattered families to see themselves as only temporarily separated due to economic necessities (including work opportunities) or other factors (1995).

Furthermore, living arrangements do not necessarily reflect the true nature of family relationships. Even for multigenerational families living together under the same roof, there is no guarantee of quality interaction between family members, particularly when considering the limited quantity of time spent together in common activities due to separate schedules for work, study, and other activities (as noted in the results from the Survey on Living Time Schedule by NHK, 1990, reported in Economic Planning Agency, 1993). Contrary to conventional wisdom, there is some evidence to suggest that family members living in multigenerational households do not necessarily exhibit stronger emotional ties (Morioka et al., 1985) or lower suicide rates (for elderly family members) (Ueno et al., 1981) as compared to nuclear family-type households.

Nevertheless, the factors which are making it more difficult for families to stay together in multigenerational households warrant attention, particularly in situations that require support for older family members within the home setting. Asano (1994) lists a few such factors:

The age of the family members who are expected to support old people becomes higher with the extension of the average life expectancy; with the progress of industrialization and urbanization, it becomes more

difficult for grown-up children to live together or live near their elder family members; and more and more of middle-aged women who used to take care of their parents are in the labor force (p. 103).

The decrease in shared living arrangements has also been attributed to the trend toward fewer children per couple (older adults with few or no children may have no choice but to live alone), more geographic mobility, and an attitude change on the part of older adults favoring independent living (Sodei, 1991).

In urban areas, less space for housing and less adherence to the traditional norm of shared living arrangements contributes to the disproportionate number of senior adults living alone. In rural areas, where traditions for multigenerational living are more ingrained in people's lifestyle preferences (Kase, 1995), an even higher percentage of senior adults live alone, but this is more readily attributed to underdeveloped economic conditions which trigger a process whereby young people move to the cities looking for work, leaving elderly people behind (Sodei, 1991). Whereas this results in a serious threat to family continuity in many rural areas (Hendry, 1995), this process is neutralized when declining agri-business is successfully substituted with tourism or other business activity that can serve to maintain the economic vitality of an area (Moon, 1986).

Perhaps the most fundamental change taking place in Japanese society which has implications for affecting patterns of intergenerational relationships (within and beyond the family) is the rapidity with which its population is growing older. Based on current trends and statistics, the percentage of the population in Japan that is sixty-five years of age or over was 12.1 percent in 1990, 14.1 percent in 1994 (Japan Statistical Yearbook, 1996), and it is anticipated to increase to 25.8 percent of the population by the year 2025 (Kono, 1994). Although the percentage of elderly people in Japan is not currently the highest in the world (Switzerland, Sweden, and the

Federal Republic of Germany, before the unification, have corresponding proportions exceeding 15 percent), Japan has the most rapidly aging population, and it is anticipated that Japan will have the world's most aged population in the twenty-first century (Kono, 1994).

Kono (1994) notes that several factors contribute to the rapidity of population aging in Japan, including the decline of fertility in the postwar years and increased longevity (Japan has the longest life expectancy in the world). The fertility rate decline, from 4.32 children per family during the post-war "baby boom" to 2.14 in 1973 to 1.50 in 1992 (Atoh, 1994), is often associated with a pattern of marrying at a later age and is often considered to be related to social and economic factors such as women being more likely to enter into the workplace, and the extreme costs of housing, education, and weddings (Kono, 1994; Okazaki, 1994).

Tsuya (1994) attributes the decline in fertility rate to changes in people's attitudes regarding family responsibilities related to marriage and childbearing. Based on her analysis of data from the 1988 National Family Survey in Japan (conducted by the Mainichi newspapers and Nihon University), young adults exhibit a declining sense of primacy of marriage and a decreasing sense of importance for having children, compared to their parents and grandparents. Tsuya (1994) attributes such a shift to a decline of traditional attitudes toward singlehood and increased flexibility of views toward procreation; i.e., people are more likely to consider the emotional as well as utilitarian reasons for having children. She also links such attitudinal changes to the growing sense of individuality among family members and the increased prevalence of urban living.

In a similar vein, Kumagai (1995) writes:

Both the concept of and the attitude toward marriage has changed significantly. Under the traditional "ie" system the prime objective for marriage rested upon the continuation of the family lineage. It was more or less a

traditional institutional marriage, and the will of the parents played a significant role in the decision of marriage. Today, on the contrary, marriage is based on mutual consent of the two parties, and their wishes are given first consideration over those of the parents (p. 146).

Makihara (1994) further notes that the declining birthrate trend "is intensified by young women's apprehension that marriage will chain them to the care of elderly in-laws" (p. 53). Makihara also believes there is an important link between the declining birthrate and inadequate childcare services, though there is some encouragement on the horizon in the form of corporate policies more supportive of childcare leave arrangements and equal opportunity laws for women.

Much has also been written about how family dynamics are evolving in Japan in regard to systems of care for chronically ill or disabled elderly people. Although there are more young- and middle-aged adult women entering the workplace and developing rewarding career paths, the burden of providing home-based care is disproportionately placed on the shoulders of women, often daughters-in-law (Kono, 1994). Such conflicting demands on women have led to increased calls for support in the form of government welfare services for dependent and semi-dependent senior adults.⁵

Lebra (1984) notes that the question of who will care for ailing elderly family members often leads to divisive quarrels among relatives, particularly when the wives of eldest sons are unwilling or unable to assume this responsibility. Lock (1993) extends this discussion and anticipates an escalation in such family quarrels as a result of increases in longevity, a concordant increase in the number of years spent providing care for elderly relatives, and the growing age of caregivers.⁶ Continued change in the status of women, in the form of an extension of the current pattern toward increased access to educational and work opportunities,⁷ will likely have a significant impact on the nature of care for dependent

elderly people, insofar as women are still the primary caregivers for elderly parents.

There are other indicators that traditional norms related to filial support for the elderly are changing in Japan. It is significant, for example, that young adults are displaying an enhanced interest in finding alternatives to the patrilineal stem family system (in which elderly parents live with the families of first born sons) (Kamo, 1988). Contrary to stereotypical views of the Japanese, according to a 1993 survey of young people (of ages 18–22) from eleven Asian and Western countries conducted by the Youth Affairs Administration of the Management and Coordination Agency, Japanese youth had the weakest commitment to caring for parents. Only 23% said they would support their parents at any cost, as compared with 63% of Americans (Makihara, 1994).

As a sign that is suggestive of a pattern of decline in traditional values of respect for the elderly, the news media in recent years has been quick to seize upon the theme of "silver harassment," the abuse or neglect of elderly people. Articles such as the one published in the *Mainichi Shimbun* (Newspaper), entitled "Elderly Bashing," provide some shocking examples of physical violence, psychological abuse, and financial abuse suffered by elderly people at the hands of younger family members ("Elderly Bashing," 1994).

The content of television programming also reflects a lack of respect for elderly people. In a study comparing Japanese and American television programs for children, Holtzman and Akiyama (1985) noted that in both nations, elderly people are rarely portrayed, and when they are portrayed, it is often in a negative or stereotypical manner. On a similar note, Ehrlich (1992), who studied how elderly people are characterized in Japanese films, noted that immediately following WW II, films typically depicted the elderly as revered, respected, and exhibiting a steadfast quality. Though faced with harsh realities, they transcended their difficulties (at least in a spiritual sense). In contrast, when elderly people are portrayed in

modern Japanese films, they are often presented as being "isolated and disenfranchised." With a backdrop of illness and disease, such films typically convey a tone of hopelessness and bleak pessimism. Ehrlich states:

In Japanese cinema, the image of the elderly tends to either symbolize an ideal past, now lost or rapidly on the verge of extinction, or else it serves as a mirror of the illnesses of the present (p. 272).

Pessimistic views toward aging are also found in survey results. According to a survey on Japan's long-life society, conducted from September 5–15, 1991 by the Public Relations Office of the Cabinet Secretariat, only 37% of women in their twenties had positive associations and looked forward to enjoying a life with ever-increasing longevity expectations. They perceived life to be "dull" and "wretched" for elderly people (Fujitake, (1992).

Even as part of this research project, some preliminary interview respondents noted negative characteristics of elderly people as the primary reason why endeavors aimed at enhancing intergenerational communication should be pursued only with great care. The first author (who is not Japanese) was frequently told things like, "You don't understand how conservative Japanese elderly people are. . ." and "They are often extremely difficult to deal with." Such comments reflect perceptions of elderly people as inflexible and suggest some belief that avoidance is the best intergenerational relations strategy.

When considering such negative stereotypical views toward elderly people, the problems faced by a growing percentage of families taking care of dependent senior adult relatives (despite the increase in government-sponsored services for elderly people), and changes in social norms for filial care of elderly parents (Ogawa and Retherford, 1993), the "heartfelt longevity society" called for in the Management and Coordination Agency (1992) report on intergenerational relations seems like a faraway

goal. In chapter 2, we expand our discussion of the challenges faced by many Japanese senior adults.

Of course, some of the demographic and social changes described above are not unique to Japan. The transition from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates, the resultant increase in the old-age dependency ratio (the number of elderly persons as compared to the number of persons of working age), and the shift of some of elder-care responsibility from familial to societal support systems, bear similarities to the historical experience of Western industrial nations which have undergone similar patterns of socioeconomic change (Ogawa and Retherford, 1993).⁸

Yet, there are limits to how far such comparisons can be drawn. In Japan, the process of economic and technological development, as well as the rate of increase of the proportion of the aged in the population, has occurred far more rapidly than in Western countries (Rindfuss, Liao, & Tsuya, 1994; Atoh, 1996). Also, it is important to consider how East Asian cultural influences on Japanese family values and traditions might lead to post-industrial patterns of family transition, for which there is no precedent in the West (Rindfuss, Liao, & Tsuya, 1994). Nor should differences in gender stratification (Brinton, 1989) or labor market structures (Rosenbaum and Kariya, 1989) be overlooked in efforts to draw forth similarities between Japan and Western industrial nations in terms of the sociological vestiges of modernization.

Intergenerational Programming in Japan and in the U.S.

In the U.S., intergenerational programming has been introduced as a relatively new concept in the fields of human development, education, and social gerontology. The National Council on the Aging has defined "intergenerational programming" as

activities or programs that increase cooperation, interaction or exchange between any two generations. It involves the sharing of skills, knowledge or experience between old and young (Thorp, 1985, p. 3).

American intergenerational program endeavors are often viewed as a countermeasure to the process whereby, as a result of new residential, educational, and recreational patterns of living, there is a decrease in meaningful interaction occurring between the young and the old (Newman, 1983; and Stearns, 1989). Various negative consequences have been associated with the trend toward increased intergenerational segregation, including a decline in senior adults' life satisfaction (Newman, 1980; Cohen, 1978), an increase in negative stereotypes toward the aged and aging among younger people (Newman, 1985), and a reduction in the extent and quality of the social networks of children (Kalish, 1969; Crites, 1989) and senior adults (Newman & Brummel, 1989).

Although the trend toward intergenerational segregation in Japan is less severe than in the U.S. (this is certainly the case in terms of living arrangements), this process is still seen as having a negative impact on the social support and life enrichment opportunities available for children and youth as well as for elderly people (Aoi, 1992; Aging Integrated Research Center, 1994a). As in the U.S., concerns related to the negative consequences associated with intergenerational segregation provide a rationale for aiming to programmatically link young people and senior adults in a variety of ways and settings.

Experimentation with regard to intergenerational programs in Japan and in the U.S. has also been catalyzed by other concerns. In both countries, intergenerational initiatives are often seen as presenting a strategy for providing productive roles for senior adults; combating "ageism;" promoting pro-social values on the part of youth; promoting intergenerational understanding and mutual support in the face of changes in family

structure; and mobilizing the talents, skills, energy, and resources of the young and the elderly.

There is also a parallel in terms of how in both countries there are some intergenerational models designed to help preserve elements of cultural heritage and promote a sense of cultural identity. Although both cultures are obviously different, with different histories (Japan has a 2,000-year history and the United States has barely a 200-year history as a republic), the principle of intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and values is the same.

Several types of intergenerational activities are found to be prevalent in both countries, such as the senior adult "reminiscence" (or oral history) interviewing activity conducted as part of some youth community service projects. Findings with respect to the case study conducted on the Funabashi Junior High School Community Service Program (described in chapter 4), are consistent with what is written about similar initiatives implemented in the U.S. (e.g., Brookdale Center for the Aging, 1986; ReVelle, 1989), where it is emphasized how participating youth learn about history and the lives of the senior adults, and how the experience contributes to the seniors' sense of "validation" for their life experiences.⁹

There is also a finite array of program planning parameters which are the same in both countries. This includes, for example, how program participants are recruited, oriented, and trained. In successful programs, participants are prepared and supported before intergenerational interaction is initiated and during the course of intergenerational exchange. The best program examples in both countries reflect effective program planning procedures and careful attention to intergenerational communication dynamics.

There are some differences, however. In the U.S., one can more readily speak of an intergenerational "field" or "movement." Over the past decade, there has been a proliferation of national, state and citywide conferences, handbooks, and manuals describing how to implement

various intergenerational program models (e.g., Beverly Foundation, 1984; Johnson & Siegel, 1980; Kaplan, 1994a; Kramer & Newman, 1986; Newman & Brummel, 1989; Reed & Spieker, 1982; Thorp, 1985; and Ventura-Merkel & Lidoff, 1983). Furthermore, various non-profit organizations play an important role in promoting intergenerational programs and policies.¹⁰ The extensive organizing and information-sharing activity in the intergenerational programming field has assisted with the replication and expansion of successful model programs, and in the clarification of program planning, implementation, and evaluation parameters. This has been instrumental in creating a knowledge base about intergenerational programs (e.g., in terms of populations served, how participants benefit, program size, organizational strategy options, and cost) which is available to would-be intergenerational program developers.

There is also some indication that the intergenerational program movement in the U.S. is shifting focus. Whereas initiatives have traditionally been designed to create shared fun, friendship, and learning experiences for the children, youth, and senior adult participants, more attention is now being paid to the potential of intergenerational programs to provide solutions to social problems (Ventura-Merkel, Liederman & Ossosky, 1989). The Generations United (1994) publication entitled, "Young and Old Serving Together Meeting Community Needs Through Intergenerational Partnerships," reviews several interesting intergenerational program initiatives designed to investigate and improve community conditions. This is a fortuitous development because the linkage between intergenerational programs and larger social concerns and quality of life issues is likely to promote its integration into the human services system.

In contrast (and for reasons presented in later chapters), there is no indication of an integrated field or movement in Japan that envelops or provides direction for individual intergenerational programs. Certainly, there is a wide range of intergenerational activities, initiated in

a variety of educational, recreational, and social welfare and public health settings. Yet, in contrast to the U.S., there are far fewer resources available in Japan through which organizations and individuals can obtain information about specific program models, the parameters of program implementation and evaluation, or the breadth of intergenerational programming options.

Nevertheless, we suggest viewing Japan's intergenerational programming endeavors with the same conceptual lens with which such endeavors are viewed in the United States. Despite differences between Japan and the U.S. in terms of cultural traditions, emerging social issues, human service directions and resources, and family composition demographics (for example, 40% of the elderly population in the U.S. live alone as compared to 13% in Japan [Sodei, 1991]), there are some basic constants regarding how intergenerational initiatives are conceived and how they are viewed. Hence, we consider there to be only one intergenerational field (though with some international variation) which has implications, within the context of demographic and social change, for supplementing familial support systems and maintaining social cohesion.

Research Plans and Procedures

In terms of our first research objective, to survey and assess the types of intergenerational initiatives in Japan, we did not conduct a nationwide inventory of intergenerational programs, because it had already been done. The Aging Integrated Research Center ("Eijingu Sougou Kenkyuu Senta"), with funding from the Office for Aging Affairs of the Management and Coordination Agency (Prime Minister's Office), pulled together a team of academic researchers to conduct a survey of all 3,000+ municipalities in Japan, from which they identified 302 intergenerational programs, and eventually chose to focus on ten specific programs reflecting geographical