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Intimacy: a developmental perspective

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> model that becomes deeply embedded in the way we are predisposed to structure the meaning of relationships. We expect to center our lives on some crucial bond, about which other ties of affection to specific people and places ramify and to which other relationships are instrumental. And conversely, I suggest, we find it hard to conceive of a meaningful life that is not so centered -- where there is no hierarchical ordering in our commitments, or where all relationships are conceived as instrumental. The only way we can grasp the meaning of life in terms of unspecific, generalizable relationships is by representing them in the light of some superordinate commitment -- to God or an ideal -- that takes the place of and is treated emotionally like a primary bond of love.

Shaver et al. (1987) develop the same line of argument by suggesting that there are three fundamental "behavioural systems" involved in love relationships between adults -- "attachment," "care-giving" and "sexuality." "Care-giving" is derived from the "mother-figure's" part in the child's "attachment" behaviour. "Sexuality" is equally important for the continuation of the species. A major advantage of such "attachment" theory is that it avoids the dichotomy between friends and family which otherwise plagues the field of close relationships.

Although attachment, care-giving and sexuality may all be present in many close relationships, one might see a parallel between Rubin's "bonding" and "intimacy" and the attachment/care-giving dichotomy. Indeed, although Rubin is careful to differentiate her notion of adult "bonding" from childhood "attachment" because the latter "generally denotes a relationship where the level of security of one person depends upon the predictable availability of the

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other" (Rubin, 1985:205), her description of male bonding behaviour is surely analogous to Bowlby's attachment "behavioural system." For instance, she speaks of the typical man who, she says, wants of his wife

> the mother whose presence alone was enough to soothe and warm him. And as with her, he wants it all to happen wordlessly -- another mother who will intuit his need, his fear, his loneliness. Only then can he recreate the feelings of that original bond, even if only for a moment or an hour. But a woman wants to talk. [Rubin, 1985:139]

Furthermore, the suggestion that male styles of intimacy contain a more substantial component of attachment behaviour would explain why men are more "romantic" and why they take longer than women to get over broken close relationships even though they do not expect that that will be so (Hatfield, 1983:110-113). For as Marris (1982:194-5) writes,

> When people are bereft of a crucial relationship, nothing seems to make sense any longer. The world has become meaningless. Instead of a generalizable structure of beliefs sustaining the bereaved through the particular loss, interpreting it and setting it in a larger context of meaning, the beliefs themselves are invalidated, compounding the sense of loss.

Weiss (1982:181) adds "the only indicator we have for the strength of an individual's readiness to form an attachment is the intensity and steadiness of the individual's experience of loneliness."

This is <u>not</u> to argue, of course, that women do not form attachments in adult life. Shaver et al (1987) clearly state that attachment and care-giving both are parts of adult close relationships -- especially romantic ones

where sexuality is also a component. However, one or the other behavioural system may well be primary. The evidence suggests that this is so for attachment in the male experience of "bonding," at least for Rubin's American informants. If so, then in terms of style of emotional relating, the male break from the mother has not been so successfully negotiated as Freudians imply for men. They move from one primary care-giver -- the mother, to another -- the wife, via a series of adolescent attachments, initially to same-sex groups and then to female lovers. Whatever happens in the public sphere, in the private sphere of close relationships, it is women who typically make the break -- from attachment to care-giving. Perhaps this inherent discontinuity may explain female preoccupation with relationships. Indeed, the emotional turmoil of young women in adolescence in Western societies may be better explained by an understandable reluctance to move from attachment to care-giving than the Oedipal conflict of which Chodorow (1978:135) makes much.

In any event, as Sherrod (1987) points out, issues of socialization and economic history cannot be ignored, and the question of power is surely fundamental. Indeed, power differences in themselves may be most important of all in explaining female interest and sensibility in relationships and male lack of concern about them (for some supporting evidence, unfortunately limited to American college students, cf. Helgeson et al., 1987).

It may be the recent shift in power differentials between American men and women that has raised the relationship issues discussed in Rubin (1983 & 1985). Perhaps in the past male domination and female socialization kept men emotionally secure in their unquestioned "attachment" to faithful female "care-givers." Such at least was the view of Virginia Woolf (1929).

Matters of power and socialization bring us to the final area for consideration in this overview -- that is, network analysis.

1.2.6 Network Theory

Network theory had its origins in the study of close relationships -- the early work of Barnes (1954) and the path-breaking research of Elizabeth Bott (1971/57) and her colleagues at Tavistock Clinic. Philip Mayer's (1961) pioneering study of Xhosa urban networks in East London, with its account of rural "encapsulation" in urban society, was an early South African contribution.

Several British sociologists and anthropologists in the 1960's used the network idea to describe small-group interaction (cf., for example, Mitchell, 1969). Network analyses of close relationships as such have been few however, as the approach has been regarded as more appropriate for the study of community. Two articles, by Shulman (1975) and Fischer and Phillips (1982)

respectively, are worth summarizing as representative of this approach (cf. also Salzinger et al, 1988, for a recent effort to analyse children's social networks).

Shulman (1975) is methodologically closest to the present study. He asked 347 respondents between the ages of 18 and 65 in Toronto to name their six closest relationships outside the household. No further questions were asked to attempt to plumb the nature of these relationships or their effectiveness in practice. Although he asked for extra-household mentions, 41% of personal networks consisted of kin and 44% of friends. Neighbours accounted for only 14% of intimates in this Canadian sample. Kin were given priority over non-kin by his respondents. The largest proportion of non-kin were reported by single persons in the 18 to 30 age-category. In addition, significantly more young persons reported more frequent contact with their intimates (outside the home, of course) and stated that enjoyment rather than obligation was the major reason for maintaining the link (in fact, enjoyment was mentioned first by a full 86% of his overall sample. He concludes that:

> From the consideration of these findings we would conclude that the nature of close relationships does vary with life-cycle changes and that at each stage people tend to establish and sustain networks of relationships geared to the needs and concerns of their particular stage of life. [Shulman, 1975:818]

This seems a modest enough conclusion -- until one recalls the hundreds of social psychological studies of close relationships which have used college students as

subjects.

Claude Fischer and his associates (Fisher and Phillips, 1982) in their 1977 study of social isolation asked ten questions about "rewarding exchanges" to a random sample of 1050 persons in Northern California aged 16 and over. Although the researchers allowed subjects to name members of their own household and did not limit the total to six persons, they did restrict responses to persons living within one hour's drive of the respondent (except on the two questions supposed to plumb "emotional isolation").

The results of this survey reveal that:

> all else equal, (1) for both genders, high social status, especially more education, leads to less chance of moderate isolation from nonkin, but more chance of moderate isolation from kin; (2) for men, aging is strongly associated with isolation of all kinds (but being married protects them from kin isolation); (3) for women, a marriage, even if terminated, increases the risk of isolation from nonkin. [Fischer & Phillips, 1982:30]

These are essentially conclusions about functional networks, rather than intimate networks as such. Responses to the questions supposed to measure emotional isolation (essentially self-disclosure questions) indicate that married men tend to rely wholly on their wives for confidences (cf. also, Tschann, 1988). Although married women had a somewhat less restricted range of confidants, that range was nonetheless narrower than for never-marrieds. Poorly educated persons were also somewhat less likely to have confidants, as were

older widowed or divorced men and women. Furthermore, "isolated respondents -- notably those isolated from nonkin -- were less likely than others to express happiness" (Fischer & Phillips, 1982).

In conclusion Fischer and Phillips (1982:37) stress the complexity of social networks. As they say:

> No simple questions such as "How many friends do you have?" or "How often do you see your relatives?" can capture the various dimensions of personal milieux; we do different things with different people with different consequences. Our neighbors will water the plants, but distant relatives will lend us money. To ignore this complexity is to risk empirical errors. Our findings underline the point: isolation from nonkin and from kin are different in character, cause and consequence.

From the point of view of the present study, this stress on complexity is a valuable finding.

This dissertation seeks to move beyond asserting complexity and differentiating between kin and nonkin, however. It takes into account the kin-like qualities of certain nonkin relations and the friend-like characteristics of certain family relationships. Indeed, the study assumes that it is less the objective fact of kith or kin and more the different qualities of the relationships that matter. Yet, many of the methods and assumptions of network theory are useful -- not to arrive at the structure of personal networks, but rather to discover the internal organization of close relationships themselves.

There are at least three different ways in which networks may be analysed. In the first place, one might seek to understand the structure of the networks themselves; or one might choose to analyse networks as they embody and reveal the quality of relationships; or, finally, one might study the linkage processes or ties between relationships and their environment. Scholars working in this tradition have tended to stress the first and third of these possibilities. Indeed, the most sophisticated network analysts have sought to mathematically model structures in process.

It is the intent of this study to examine the second possibility -- to use relationship networks in order to understand various dimensions of close relationships themselves. The data collected would lend themselves to other modes of analysis, but this is a social psychological study which concentrates on intimacy as an interactional phenomenon. Using a network approach seems to avoid many of the pitfalls of attempting to understand relationships outside of their complex patterning within wider networks. The method employed here uses network questions to uncover the actual dimensions of closeness in a racially segregated South African urban community.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 RESEARCH SETTING

Research was conducted in the small, Eastern Cape city of Grahamstown (known as Irhini in Xhosa) of more than 50 thousand inhabitants. The city was chosen as the site of the study because it is very much of a self-contained community, too far from nearest other urban areas (East London, Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage) to serve as a "dormitory suburb." Thus, the potentially skewing factor of commuter life-styles was avoided.

Furthermore, the city has one of the longest-standing urban black populations in South Africa, dating back to the mid-19th century. In gratitude for their help to the English colonists in the Frontier Wars, Queen Victoria awarded the Mfengu freehold rights to what is now the oldest section of the black township. Although the rights of present-day black property owners, whether Mfengu or otherwise, have been threatened by the government, there certainly existed at the time of interviewing a strong sense of the black community's continuity with the past.

In a similar vein, although few of the white Anglophone population of Grahamstown can trace their descent to the original 1820 settlers from England, its colonial history is a matter of pride to much of Grahamstown. The

preservation and restoration of many early buildings help to recall those origins, as does a large modern 1820 Settlers Monument which dominates the southern rim of Grahamstown's crater-shaped topography.

So with its physical isolation and its established urban history, Grahamstown presents a particularly stable, controlled environment. People who work there also live there. Out of the sample of 200 respondents, an amazing 84% of the Xhosa-speakers and 64% of English had lived in the city for 10 years or more. There was remarkable stability of residence within the city as well. Of the sample, 59% (64% Xhosa and 54% English) had lived for eight or more years on their current site. Indeed, 72% of the Xhosa sample had been born there and 37% of the English-speaking sample. These difference between the groups undoubtedly reflect the constraints of apartheid laws on black mobility in addition to the unique freehold rights for Fingo Village Xhosa.

Grahamstown's size was another factor expected to facilitate the study since the inhabitants were expected to be more approachable and friendly, as well as less pressured for time, than people from a major urban area. The city is relatively small, with a total population in 1980 of 56,208, of which 10,158 were white and 40,101 African (with an additional 4986 "Coloureds" and 229 "Asians"). While the white population has remained fairly stable in size throughout the century, the black

population has grown more than three-fold, with a precipitous rise since 1950, corresponding to the depopulation of black tenants on white farms. Black and white population pyramids by age and gender in Truu and Wallis (1985) demonstrate relatively even configurations, although the black pyramid has a much broader base, indicating rapid population growth. The latter is also skewed towards women in the 20 to 55 age-range, reflecting male out-migration during the prime earning years. The white pyramid for both males and females, on the other hand, is particularly wide for high school and university age groups because of the large numbers of boarding students. However, since this study drew its sample from permanent residents only, it was unaffected by that phenomenon.

The black and white living areas of the city are adjacent to one other (a cause of concern to the South African state, which has been trying for some time to "resettle" Africans to Glenmore, 50 kilometers away in the Ciskei), each quite visible to the other, and connected down the middle by the national road between Port Elizabeth and King Williamstown. Blacks can easily walk to work or shop in the white area. This made it possible for both interviewers to easily traverse the total physical area of about six square kilometers.

Grahamstown projects a preeminently r idential atmosphere. It is the home of the largely residential

Rhodes University with about 3000 students, seven boarding schools, numerous churches, and 12 very modest industries. Since its inception, it has served as a market center for the surrounding farms. Today education and tourism count as its major economic resources, hardly a basis for vigorous development and support of the large black labour pool in the township. Thus unemployment, depressed wages, and widespread poverty afflict the majority population. Indeed, while white family incomes in 1970 were roughly equivalent to the national average of R3774, a survey conducted in 1976-77, indicated that the average African family income in Grahamstown was "little over R100" (Willsworth, 1980:12-17). Grahamstown Xhosa unemployment, similar to that of many other urban poor, is particularly concentrated amongst youth aged 15 to 24 who have left school but still rely on kin for sustenance (cf. Truu and Wallis, 1985:75-79, for a detailed discussion of Grahamstown unemployment).

2.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY

2.2.1 Sampling and Interviewing

A small random sample was drawn of 100 English-speaking whites and 100 Xhosa-speaking blacks, equally divided by gender and five age categories. Thus there were 40 individuals, 20 male and 20 female, in each of the following age groups: children 9 to 11 years, adolescents

16 and 17, young adults 22 to 25, mature adults 36 to 45, and senior adults aged 62 and over.

The distinct socio-political organization of the two different racial/ethnic groups under investigation suggested different sampling techniques for each. Since white adults are required by law to register to vote, the voters roll provided an ideal list, including name, address, year of birth, gender and occupation for each such person. A count was made of the total number of males and females within each of the three adult categories. That total was divided by 10 to give "n", and each "nth" person was selected. If the individual turned out to be Afrikaans-speaking, deceased, or had moved from Grahamstown, the next person in line was selected. All those selected and approached in the white adult sample agreed to be interviewed, although one retired male insisted on filling in the interview schedule by himself, so his life history is particularly sketchy.

Similar lists, including age and address, of children with permanent residence in Grahamstown were obtained from each English-medium school. Proportional to each school's population of the age/gender category in question, each "nth" name was selected. In two instances, the next name in alphabetical order had to be selected. The mother of one 17-year-old boy refused permission for him to be interviewed, and in the case of

a 9-year-old girl, the mother seemed harried and generally reluctant, so the interviewer did not persist with the request.

Random sampling was achieved for the Xhosa population of Wards one to four of the Grahamstown Township by selecting every 13th dwelling in a recorded total of 1320 (according to the Bantu Administration Board). Thus at every 13th dwelling, the given gender of the next age category was sought. If there was no one living there of that description, the interviewer asked in the adjacent dwellings until someone was found who fit the correct gender and age. Given the high density of population (cf. Wilsworth, 1980:85-86) the interviewer had only infrequently to look beyond a single site for a given subject. It is impossible to determine accurately the "refusal rate" with this technique. Although no one refused outright, a young policeman was particularly suspicious and guarded, especially in respect to his fiancee. Certainly a person could misrepresent to the interviewer his own or another's age or the place of his abode, not to mention the existence of another family member. No one recommended a socially marginal individual, such as an inebriate or petty criminal. On the whole, senior adults were readily available, trusting and forthcoming, so they provided excellent checks on accuracy. Young black men were the least easy about being interviewed, but even the most reluctant agreed.

Interviews were conducted over a six-month period, from February through July 1982. A Xhosa-speaking woman from the Transkei, who regularly works in Durban, Natal, and an American woman interviewed each of the two ethnic groups. Because the interviewers were foreign to the area, uninvolved in community affairs, and intending to leave at the end of the interview period, one might have expected substantial self-disclosure on the part of the informants (cf. Jourard, 1971). Indeed, the remarkably high response rate and general openness of the informants about a very personal subject area attest to the stranger-confidant phenomenon described by Jourard.

Interviews lasted approximately two hours although time length varied considerably depending on the subject's age (a longer life history typically requiring more time to narrate) and the individual's general expansiveness. Although an initial effort was made to use tape recorders, they proved so inhibiting in the pilot study that they were abandoned in favour of shorthand note-taking.

2.2.2 Characteristics of the Sample

Using the above-mentioned random sampling techniques, 200 individuals were selected, whose demographic characteristics are briefly outlined below. The subjects represent a broad range of occupations from judge and business executive to domestic servant, garage attendant

and night watchman. A full breakdown is provided in Table 1 as follows:

TABLE 1 **Occupations by Ethnicity of Respondents**

Occupation	Ethnic Group Xhosa	English
Lawyer/Judge		1
Univ.Teacher/Admin.		5
School Teacher/Admin.	1	3
Nurse/Soc.Worker	1	
Executive	1	3
Artist/Journalist	1	1
Civil Serv./Admin		1
Civil Serv./Clerical		3
Civil Serv./Unskilled	1	
Police	1	
Small Business Owner		1
Clerical/Sales	1	
Semi-/Unskilled	3	
Technician		1
Chef		1
Manual: Factory	1	
Manual: Mine	1	
Domestic Service	3	
Maintenance Staff	8	
Garage Attendant	1	
Night Watchman	1	
Driver/Chauffeur	1	
Hawker	1	
White Collar/Part-time		5
Unemployed Unskilled Worker	1	
Independent Income		2
Retirement Pension		12
Old Age Pension	18	
Disability Pension	1	
Dependent Spouse	7	2
Other Dependent	4	
Pupil	42	40
Univ or Grad Student		19
TOTAL	100	100

It is clear from the above list of occupations, even though the adult proportion of the sample is quite small, that Grahamstown is primarily a service rather than an industrial community. Furthermore, the ethnic breakdown demonstrates how very underemployed and low-status are

the adult Xhosa subjects. Indeed, in the South African context, any effort to explicate social stratification must needs take account of racial divisions. One cannot even assume equal pay for equal work. Thus the following table of socio-economic status is necessarily sub-divided along racial lines.

TABLE 2 **Socio-Economic Status of Respondents**

Social Class	Number	Percent
White Elite	47	23.5%
White Middle Class	44	22%
White Working Class	9	4.5%
Black Elite	7	3.5%
Black Working Class	85	42.5%
Black Rank and File	8	4%

Pay scales, standards of living, and life-styles are different for members of the black and white elites even as for the two working classes. There is no middle class in the black culture of poverty. Further, the inclusion of a rank and file category for the Xhosa-speakers designates a lumpen class without regular dependable income or attachment to someone with such. By the same token, membership in the black working class implies that one has or is part of a household with regular income, be it from wage labour or pensions.

Looking at the sample by marital status, one finds no married adolescents, although a small number of the Xhosa youth were already biological parents. Amongst the Xhosa-speaking young adults engagements and marriages

occur earlier than with the English young adults. By middle and senior adulthood, however, these ethnic differences disappear. In terms of gender, on the other hand, there are significant differences in the three adult age groups.

TABLE 3 **Marital Status by Gender**

	Gender		
Marital Status	Male	Female	Total
Married	36 60%	25 42%	61 51%
Engaged	2 3%	2 3%	4 3%
Divorced/Separated	3 5%	4 7%	7 6%
Widowed	1 2%	14 23%	15 13%
Unmarried	18 30%	15 25%	33 28%
Total	60 101%	60 101%	120 101%

$X^2=13.666$, df=4, $p<.01$

The critical gender differences lie within the married and widowed categories. Women tend to marry men older than themselves, to live longer, and to remarry less often than widowed men.

Comparisons of household composition highlight interesting ethnic differences within the sample.

TABLE 4 **Household Composition by Ethnicity**

Household Composition	Ethnic Group: Xhosa	English	Total
Nuclear Family	35 35%	78 78%	113 57%
Extended Family	62 62%	6 6%	68 34%
With Friends Only	0 0%	6 6%	6 3%
Alone	3 3%	10 10%	13 7%
Total	100 100%	100 100%	200 101%

$X^2=72.25$, df=3, $p<.001$

More than twice as many English as Xhosa in the sample live in nuclear families whereas extended family households are ten times more common for Xhosa-speakers. Indeed, eleven of the English-speakers, but no Xhosa, live alone with their spouse. Nine of those are, in fact, senior adults. Eleven of the extended family households are exclusively extended family, nine of which are Xhosa. Because of their impoverished state, the shortage of housing and their wider kin obligations, Xhosa-speakers are not only more likely to live with kin but also with greater numbers of kin than the English. For instance, ten English-speakers, as compared to three Xhosa, live by themselves and six of them (all young adults) choose to live with friends. Both South African law and Xhosa tradition militate against this option for Xhosa. Indeed, all the Xhosa couples interviewed chose

to "borrow" kindred children rather than live alone by themselves, even in senior adulthood.

As might be expected (cf. Pauw, 1963:146-9), female-headed households are more common amongst the Xhosa-speakers (12 amongst English-speakers and 24 amongst the Xhosa). While this difference is significant below the .05 level, it is nonetheless smaller than might have been expected given the accepted wisdom about matrifocality among people in poverty. What is particularly interesting is that about one eighth of the English-speaking families are female-headed also.

Data were also obtained on the number of siblings of each of the subjects.

TABLE 5 **Children in Family by Ethnicity**

	Ethnic Group		
No. of Children	Xhosa	English	Total
One to Two	12 12%	39 39%	51 26%
Three to Four	39 39%	46 46%	85 43%
Five or More	49 49%	14 14%	63 32%
Total	100 100%	99 99%	199 101%

$X^2=34.311$, df=2, $p<.001$

As one might expect, the Xhosa-speaking subjects come from larger families. The English group are more than

three times as likely to come from small families (one or two children), while the Xhosa are more than three times as likely to come from large families (five or more children). Supporting the same findings are data for sibling position which indicate that while the largest proportion of Xhosa subjects are middle children, English-speaking subjects are more likely to be elder/eldest or younger/youngest children ($p<.001$). While these differences might be attributed to polygyny amongst older traditional Xhosa males, an age breakdown of the above data demonstrates that the largest Xhosa families were found not only amongst senior adults, but also amongst the adolescent age group.

2.2.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed consisting of 56 items (of which 11 were omitted for children). Because "closeness" was conceived of as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, the questionnaire was designed to test for six different factors chosen on intuitive and theoretical grounds. Although these hypothesized factors did not hold up to empirical testing, they are stated here to avoid any impression of the "empiricist" bias to which Selman (1981:244) alludes in his essay on children's friendships:

> Although any research effort in this area must start with the researcher's own intuitive ideas of possible factors that make someone a close friend, seldom are these factors made explicit a priori.

In this study the factors initially hypothesized as dimensions of intimate relationships included dependency, trust, shared experiences, shared sentiments, caring, and tolerance of ambivalence. (For a similar listing which was not tested, see Chelune, et al, 1984.) The reasoning behind these factors is set out below.

Dependency was defined as one's reliance on another, or of another on oneself. The nature of support might be either financial, emotional, or in the order of personal service. Such questions, for example, as "Whom do you need most financially?" (Q39b) or "Whom do you spend most of your money on?" (Q55) were designed to test financial dependency.

Trust, which denotes faith in the continuity and essential benevolence of another (Erikson, 1959:61-65), may (like dependency) be further qualified as financial, emotional, physical, or material. To probe financial trust, for instance, subjects were asked, "Whom would you most want to share a bank account with?" or for a child, "Whom would you let open your money box if you were not there?" (Q26). Physical trust, on the other hand, was assumed in the question, "If you couldn't wash youself without help from someone else, whom would you prefer to have helping you?" (Q38).

The domain of shared experiences was presumed to include sharing that is not only habitual and everyday but also that which is occasional and special, as in recreational

or highlight events. Everyday sharing was the focus of such questions as "Outside of work/school, whom do you talk to most?" (Q3), or "Who usually sleeps in the same room as you? -- in the same bed?" (Q49). On the other hand, one's company in recreational, celebratory events was tested by "When you have a free day, whom do you usually spend it with?" (Q35), or "What was the most special day for you in the past year? Whom did you spend it with?" (Q8).

As opposed to shared experiences, questions designed to tap the area of shared sentiments sought to explore perceived commonality of attitude. Subjects were asked to identify others whom they feel most closely agree with their own ideals and whose reactions to life are most similar. Hence they were asked "Whom do you know who wants the same things out of life that you want?" (Q10), or "Who likes most to do the kinds of things you enjoy?" (Q20), or again "Whose ideas about God are most like your own?" (Q32).

Caring, like dependency, was hypothesized to involve dialectic interaction. (Indeed, a measure of reciprocity was presumed to be typical in all six factors of normal close relationships.) It denotes both giving solicitude for another and the special concern of another for one's self. Questions designed to tap each aspect of caring, respectively, included "Whose looking nice and dressing smartly is most important to you?" (Q12), or "Whose dying

would upset you most deeply?" (Q11), and "Whom would you choose to pick out a big surprise present for yourself -- assuming everyone had the same amount of money?" (Q16).

The ambivalence factor set out to tap tolerance of conflict and the desire for change or greater closeness in a relationship. It was hypothesized that intimacy would increase the potential for conflict because deep layers of the self are exposed and hence vulnerable. Acknowledgement of ambiguity and friction that may be inherent in closeness was purportedly tested by such questions as "Whom do you have most disagreements with?" (Q13), or "When you do things and make choices every day, whom do you keep most in mind?" (Q37).

In the interest of precision of response, subjects were in most cases asked to answer questions by naming a person (which might be "nobody"). Each question was specifically designed to probe one or another aspect of the closeness factors. The order of questions for the interview were scrambled in such a manner as to present first those items deemed least threatening or potentially embarrassing. The questions were tested on a small pre-sample of ten persons of different age, gender and ethnicity to ensure their general practicability.

At the start of the interview and as a general orientation to the topic, subjects were asked to list all those to whom they felt very close, along with the

occupation and age of those persons. (That information was noted also for any others named later but not identified in this first list.) This data was designed to provide an indication of the "spread" of close relationships so that possible differences by gender, age, or culture/class might be later examined. A life history focusing on significant others was also obtained to provide qualitative data as clues for interpreting the quantitative findings.

The majority of questionnaire items required that respondents name a person. In addition, subjects in all age groupings quite spontaneously designated the relationship to themselves of each named person. In fact, the more private respondents replied with relationship categories only, such as "my elder brother" or "my employer."

The readiness and ease with which the subjects used these relational appellations indicate that they not only recognize but to some degree operate within a common universe of meaning. To be sure, only married adult males mentioned "wife," while "clan-aunts and -uncles" or "clan-cousins" were absent relationship categories for the English-speaking population. However, even the youngest respondents were fluent with a technical language of relationship: sister, grandfather, nephew, friend, maid, teacher. For instance, a nine-year-old offered how he became acquainted with his first friend at

school: "Gordon is the younger son of friends of my parents. Gordon's grandpa knew my parents and introducted them to his son Jeremy -- Gordon's Dad [#20]." Sometimes the answers to the questionnaire items were compound, as "my parents," or "my cousin and friend." Plural answers were frequently prioritized by the subjects, as "my elder sister first, then my younger sister," in which case, the first mention only was scored. In response to these open-ended relationship questions, subjects mentioned some 235 relationship categories in all (see Appendix B).

Not only were the relationships coded, but also the gender, generation (in relation to the subject), and occupation of all the named persons. For cases where the subject mentioned more than one individual of both genders, the item "both" was created.

In addition to the relationship questions testing the six hypothesized dimensions of closeness, a number of others sought to plumb qualitative factors, such as equity in close relationships. For example, after specifying the names of three to five closest others, subjects were asked (Q47) whether they got from each "more than, less than, or as much as they gave". Subjects were also asked to say when or under what circumstances they felt closest to those others (Q53). Further, they were queried about their ways of expressing affection to an intimate of the same age and gender as themselves (Q44). Some other

qualitative questions involved greetings (Q46), special needs of intimates (Q42), or sexuality (Q56).

2.2.4 Coding of Results

The coding process was on the whole very straightforward, although extremely time-consuming, because the data were kept in as raw a form as possible. Hence they could be recoded as required, using the SPSSX computer program for analytical purposes.

Many of the responses involved naming one or more individuals and their relationship to the subject. In the initial coding, no effort was made to narrow the range of relationship items, which resulted in an extensive list of relationships (see Appendix B).

Other questions required more conceptual categorizations in coding. For certain questions (as Q53), a larger number of categories was initially retained in order to remain as close as possible to the subjects' own language (cf. Tables 25 and 26). Two coders were used for such questions, for which agreement was at least 97%. Elsewhere (as Q44 or Q46), on the other hand, every answer was ranked "yes" or "no" on a whole range of items initially derived from subjects' responses. Coder agreement for this technique was 99%.

Several variables were created dealing with losses and gains of close relationships over the life course. Such data were drawn from spontaneous mentions in the autobiographical material. The particular statistical procedures used in the actual data analysis are discussed later at relevant stages in the text.

3. DIMENSIONS OF CLOSENESS

3.1 HOMOGENEITY

If the questionnaire does indeed measure a general notion of "closeness," which is also differentiated into various dimensions, there must be a certain homogeneity of persons mentioned in responses. Perfect homogeneity of response would imply that there are no dimensions to closeness or that all dimensions may be satisfied by a single individual. Total absence of homogeneity would mean that closeness has no common meaning. In order to test homogeneity of response, every mention of a particular individual (as "mother," "brother," "female friend") for each subject was counted. The table below sets out the number of times any relationship was mentioned more than one quarter or more than one half the time by any subject in response to all questions which required the name of an individual.

TABLE 6 **Homogeneity**

Mentions	Frequency	Percentage
Same person mentioned 25% or less of the time	27	13.5%
Same person mentioned 25% to 50% of the time	129	64.5%
Same person mentioned more than 50% of the time	44	22.0%

The results in the homogeneity table lead one to accept the null hypothesis that there is no perfect homogeneity in the concept of closeness. Subjects did not answer the same person to all closeness questions. Had the same response been elicited for all questions, one might conclude that the closeness questions all probe the same element. Yet although there is not perfect homogeneity, neither is there an absence of significant homogeneity, which would also have supported the hypothesis of no dimensions to the closeness concept. In fact, while 22% of the respondents mentioned the same individual for more than 50% of the questions, the largest percentage of respondents, 64.5%, mentioned the same person between one quarter and one half of the time. The smallest group of subjects, 13.5%, show most heterogeneity of response, mentioning the same person one quarter or less of the time. Thus the data are not inconsistent with the argument that the concept of closeness involves multi-dimensions.

3.2 CLASSIFICATION OF RELATIONSHIP RESPONSES

For purposes of analysis, it was then necessary to group the responses into more general categories. Categories were devised which would be neutral with regard to age, gender, and ethnic group. It was important too for statistical reliability that empty categories be avoided. The logical breakdown that met all of the above requirements was "family," "friends," and "other."

This organization of responses naturally affects the presentation and interpretation of the results. If one were to keep separate "extended family" from "nuclear family," the overall picture would be somewhat more precise and detailed. However, statistical constraints in treating the relatively few cases of "extended family" as a separate category were ultimately the deciding factor.

A similar dilemma arose over the treatment of the response categories "self" and "nobody," which are particularly important for questions dealing with financial and personal services. In order to maintain consistency in scoring across the questions, "self" and "nobody" were included in the miscellaneous "other" category. However, the high frequency of "other" responses to those questions which deal with economic support and personal, domestic services argues for their separate treatment, in which particular attention will be paid to "ego" and "domestic servant" responses.

3.3 DIMENSIONS

3.3.1 Procedure for Grouping

The response pattern for each question then became the unit of analysis for clustering the questions. The clustering technique combined a "goodness-of-fit" nonparametric chi square test (Fliess on et al, 1982: 434)

and a Cramer's V measure of association (for tables showing significant goodness-of-fit scores and Cramer's V values for each question with every other, see Appendix C). Only those questions were kept which had at least a moderately strong relationship to each other on both measures and, in cases where more than two questions clustered together, to at least two other questions in the cluster.

Those questions which met the criteria for retention clustered into nine separate dimensions. The ratio of "family-friend-other" responses to all questions fit together at a level of statistical significance greater than .05. On the other hand, the response ratios for each dimension (seen in Table 7) differ significantly from one another at a level less than .001. As indicated earlier, the two dimensions dealing with money and personal services will be dealt with separately because their relatively high "other" category places them outside of the family/friendship continuum.

TABLE 7 **Family/Friendship Continuum**

Response Category*	Dimensions of Closeness**						
	UltLoss	NetCtr	Per/Vul	ShRes	Cont	ComAtt	ShExp
Family	96	91	82	78	62	52	47
Friends	4	8	14	20	36	44	51
Other	2	2	3	3	3	4	2
Total	102	101	99	101	101	100	100

$X^2 = 111.84$, df = 12, $p<.001$

*Mean percentages for each dimension
**The five continuum dimensions are abbreviated as follows: UltLoss="Ultimate Loss," NetCtr=Network Centre," Per/Vul="Permeability/Vulnerability," ShRes="Shared Resources," Cont="Personal Contact," ComAtt="Common Attitudes," ShExp="Shared Experiences."

Excepting the areas of financial and personal service support, questions fall along a family-friendship continuum of seven dimensions. On the one end, kinship responses heavily predominate; on the other end, extra-familial friendship responses are as frequent as family ones. The results obtained by this empirical method involved a radical rethinking if not total abandonment of the theoretically derived dimensions set out in Section 2.3. Detailed discussion of these new dimensions follow below.

3.3.2 Ultimate Loss

The dimension with the highest percentage of ascribed relationships is comprised of two questions:

- "Whose dying would upset you most deeply?" (Q11), or for children, "Whose being very, very sick would upset you most?"
- "Whose dying would change your life most?" (Q45).

TABLE 8 **Ultimate Loss Dimension**

Category	Q11	Q45	Total
Family	191 96%	191 96%	382 96%
Friends	8 4%	6 3%	14 4%
Other	1 1%	3 2%	4 2%
Total	200 101%	200 101%	400 102%

$X^2=1.29$, df=2, $p>.50$

To view one's relationships through the dark glass of calamity or loss is perhaps an obvious method to sound their emotional depths and logistic breadth. The dislocation or dissolution of a key attachment figure would likely evoke painful feelings of abandonment (hence the different wording of the first question for the youngest subjects) for whom an idea may have frightening magical connotations, and would certainly threaten the

productive and reproductive shape and equilibrium of one's intimate world.

In that context, each of the two questions was intended to focus on a different disruptive aspect of death. Whereas the first question deals with the area of emotional upheaval, the second concerns the structural impact of a major relationship loss. Although it was stressed to every subject that the questions are quite distinct from each other, there was a notable congruence of responses, with a full 96% of subjects answering with names of family members. Indeed, at least nine times out of ten, subjects designated nuclear family for each question. Clearly the loss of "one's own" was commonly perceived by the subjects as more potentially disruptive in both emotional and material regards than the death of any other.

3.3.3 Network Centre

The dimension with the next highest percentage of ascribed relationship responses includes three questions:

- "If you were to be far away from everyone you know for a long time, whom would you most want to send messages to?" (Q23)
- "If you suddenly won a lot of money, whom would you tell first?" (Q1), and
- "When you do things and make choices every day, whom do you keep most in mind?" (Q37).

TABLE 9 **Network Centre Dimension**

Response Category	Q23	Q1	Q37	Total
Family	182 91%	183 92%	179 90%	544 91%
Friends	15 8%	16 8%	18 9%	49 8%
Other	3 2%	1 1%	3 2%	7 2%
Total	200 101%	200 101%	200 100%	600 100%

$X^2=1.48$, df=4, $p>.80$

The person named to receive messages, in answer to question 23, would logically be someone thought to have particular emotional concern about one's welfare. The subject might also care most about, or have most concerns about, that person. That individual might also best be able to represent the absentee subject's interests, as a kind of symbolic "power of attorney." Without a doubt, the one to receive messages would know others in the subject's network and serve as a vital link to them. Thus, a good deal of trust is implied in the relationship.

Trust is likewise implicit in the second question, (Q1), involving a large financial win. The informee might, for example, be expected to share in the windfall or possibly sanction its distribution. Bonding between the winner and confidant would likely be such as to warrant whole-hearted mutual celebration and absence of rivalry.

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