

By now the family of origin is often unable or unwilling, and by and large no longer expected, to continue supporting the young adult. Those without well-off, generous families must work or otherwise find means to subsidize further studying or training. Those who enter the work force do so at the lowest levels, receive beginning wages and benefits (if the latter exist at all) and have the least job security. So although the young adult has largely outgrown the privileges and confines of childhood dependence, a real measure of economic attachment to the family of origin is not uncommon.

For the young adult, the basic insecurity and vulnerability in the economic sector is matched by much newness and uncertainty in the emotional domain. Because individuals are in transition between the family of origin and the family of procreation, the peer group is available in a way it has not been before and will not be later. Opportunities for meeting others outside of the family are generally at an all-time high. Many white young adults live in "digs," often with mixed gender groups of peers. In a more serious fashion than in adolescence, peer relationships are important vehicles for learning more about oneself and others, for exploration and experimentation. This goes on more often as well in a one-to-one setting. One young woman recounted this experience with great clarity:

This year I have been living with two other girls -- Maria and Isabel. John and William are always stopping by. They almost live with us. Isabel's

values are very similar to my own. Maria is really terrific person too. She will sometimes come in late at night and say, "Is it o.k. to talk?" And she'll sit on my bed and share everything she's feeling. I think I'm important to her as a listener.

Matthew is a really good listener for me. He rarely opens up and shares of himself, his childhood and growing up and so forth. When he does occasionally share, it's very special.

Last year I felt quite lonesome. John and William have made a big difference this year. We are head of a Christian youth group. William and I were driving back alone from Port Alfred last weekend. It was just super being together. We weren't even talking much...[#120].

Such accounts are not restricted to women. Men are also moving in and out of important relationships with other men as well as women. A fourth-year B.Comm. student said,

Michael and I are always together. We'd be lost without each other. We share and have shared so much together. We even complain about the same things! Sometimes I can help Michael with his courses. I feel closest to him when we're alone in my room, talking about our work or anything else.

Gillian is a newish girlfriend, but I met her years ago through her older brother when we were surfing. I've seen her off and on holidays for a long time at her home in Port Elizabeth. Now we're just getting it together. We're quite close physically, but I can't say where our relationship is going. It's very new [#95].

Quite unusual amongst the young adults was a very lively and sociable white female who wanted to delay sexual involvement:

What's great about so many of my friends is that they feel they can come to me and talk. I'm friendly with lots of guys, but they are inevitably older because young ones are less mature. There's a problem, however, in that so

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many of them want the friendship to take on sexual meaning. I want to have fun, travel a lot, enjoy a wide circle of acquaintances. Last year I visited Namibia, Zimbabwe, a Karoo Farm, and Port Elizabeth. In all those places I travelled to, I met a guy who had a crush on me. They wanted to write, establish closer contact, but I wasn't interested in making "boyfriends" but "friends" [#115].

The rarity of cross-gender friendships which are not proto-conjugal is discussed at some length in section 6.2.2.

Almost all young adults in the sample were, or had been, sexually active. The experience of a second young woman was far more typical:

My ex-boyfriend owned a garage here in town. I would feel closest to him waking up in the morning, between 6 and 7, before he would have to open up the pumps and business would take over. We broke up a few months ago. I'm a bit between boyfriends at the moment, but I'm going with Brian more now [#117].

Young women and men dream of an ideal future even as they confront some of life's often harsh early disappointments with little experience. The testing of relationships during this stage, along with the uncertainties of the world of work, can often produce cruel let-downs as well as moments of idyllic satisfaction. Indeed, during this time when young adults are establishing, or thinking to establish, a family of procreation, they seem to achieve more objective distance from their own families of origin. While almost all of them were critical of some close family member, they seem to use their insights to envisage a different future.

4.1.2.2 Middle Adulthood

While young adulthood is essentially a period of transition, middle-age adulthood is a time of productive consolidation. A mother of two children said,

I have now come to terms with the trauma of divorce and have entered my expansive period. Our last place was small and closed in. Here it's big, lots of space and garden, rather like a small estate [#158].

This is preeminently the age of accomplishment, when people are preoccupied with work and their family of procreation. A 36-year-old Xhosa husband and father expressed his central concerns:

Now I have a big family....I am always saying to my wife it's best if we leave town while our children are still young. There is good for them in the country, but if they grow up here, they won't like staying on the farm when they are big. The place I'd choose is Peddie - my father's mother's home town. Though my wife was born on a farm, she likes town life. Yet she understands when I think of the children's future. I don't want to force her. I'd like her to understand and accept my ideas. We are one person. We have to do things together, understand each other, and help each other and we will succeed. That way our children will follow our example and do things as we'd like them to [#128].

In mid-life, friends are important but subsidiary to demanding family commitments (cf. Reisman, 1981:219). A white businessman told how he makes a conscious effort not to compromise family for friends:

Yes, I need friends in a broad sense, but not a particular friend. We see a lot of friends over the weekend, but I don't bring my friends into my personal life. I don't have a boys' night out. Motor biking, sailing, and so forth we do together as a family. Just last weekend we took a 160k trip on motorbikes with friends, but all four of us were together [#133].

Another father described his compromise between family obligations and friends as follows:

In the evenings before my children go to bed, I help them with their homework. On Saturdays when I'm not working and after I've finished my chores at home, I go to drink with my friends Motongwana, Bobby, and Finkie. We get tipsy, but my wife doesn't shout about that. On Sundays I don't drink at lot because my son Jings sometimes wants me to come with him to church [#122].

By middle age, people have a story line for their lives which has real narrative consistency. They describe the present very much as an organic development of their remembered past. Although they may by no means have attained all their youthful ideals, they have gained visible confidence through having coped with a great many different situations and problems. One woman whose numerous losses caused her to say, "I am always hurt in this world," nonetheless was able to act decisively and autonomously when her brother-in-law killed her sister in Johannesburg:

I went to fetch my sister there and buried her here so that her children would see her. She had two young ones who said that they would never be happy if they couldn't see their mother for one last time. When I told my father that I was thinking of going and bringing my dead sister home for the sake of her children, he was against it, saying it was a waste the money. But with my husband, I did my best and went to fetch her. Every preparation for her funeral was arranged by us [#141].

Middle-age adults generally enjoy a position of superior earning power relative to younger and older family members and acquaintances. Many have already lost their

parents to death and see the older generation failing in health and vigor and becoming more dependent. The authority of which they were once in awe and which they sometimes sought to challenge, middle-age adults now themselves represent. One individual's story expresses that sense of place in the world:

Both my brother and I have gone farther than our parents, as they hoped we would. My dad was a simple clerk. Both he and my mom wanted us to get further training to do better than they had.

At age 40 I'm just getting my master's. I'm self-motivating. I like being master of a house. I know the boys all well...I've been head of the house for seven years, and I can say I do a better job of it now than before. I have to give the jacks for other teachers. That means sorting out the question and giving a punishment impartially. I don't mind that job.

I could spend more time writing papers, getting them published where my contributions will be recognized. There are about three things I have in mind to do right now. But where would a headmastership lead? It's important spending time with my youngsters. I'm satisfied with what I'm doing. Perhaps if the deputy headmastership came available, I'd apply for that. But that's all [#136].

4.1.2.3 Senior Adulthood

The term "senior adulthood," rather than "old age," is used in this study to apply to those 62 years or older because old age is linked less with a certain chronological age than a particular physical condition and social situation. For example, two widowed women in the sample, one 70 and the other 72, differed greatly in terms of health and involvement in the community. While one [#191] was a very lively, energetic director of an old-age home, a position she had recently acquired, the

other [#192] behaved as an invalid, heavily dependent on the daily ministrations of her neighbours.

Retirement after age 60, whether or not it is mandated by the condition of one's employment or health, is a matter of serious reflection for older persons (cf. Matthews, 1986, for an excellent overview). To many, retirement represents a welcome relief from long years of hard work. It becomes a possibility because one has fewer family responsibilities and typically in South Africa, a state or private pension. Seventy-five percent of the senior sample, all but two of the blacks and all but eight of the whites, were on some sort of pension, however minimal.

There is also the expectation that one has earned a rest and the right to support from younger generations whom one has reared, especially in African society. Indeed, for traditional Xhosa society the maintenance of children is looked upon as a kind of insurance for old age -- hence, large families and a willingness to adopt children from the extended family or clan. One woman lamented the separation from her son "by custom." The father of this son paid damages to her mother but made a contract with the grandmother not to take the child away while she lived. The grandmother died when the child was 14. His mother then "decided to leave home and start a new life in Grahamstown" because she was so hurt: "I couldn't stand the separation from my son." She also mourned her

separation from her daughter, who had "passed" for a Coloured, adding,

I stayed at home because I was not well from all that worry. My husband and I were all alone, so my nephew's girlfriend came and gave me her boy Simphiwe when he was just ten days old. I looked after him. My husband and I were getting a pension, living very happily and trying to forget our daughter. Simphiwe is eight years old now, and we both depend on him though he is young. We want to educate him. He loves us and regards us as his parents. So he keeps us happy. We give him all our love, and he also enjoys us [#184].

However, for some males of the white elite or single, white career women, mandatory retirement demands what is often a major adjustment to a new life-style (cf. Matthews, 1986:113-120). A retired female teacher who had worked for 20 years in a voluntary capacity as a Red Cross administrator said, "In retirement one can either have sports or work. I have work [#197]." Another well-to-do retiree echoed a theme of loneliness common to many in their senior years:

There are relatively few people with whom one can strike an affinity. I long for others with whom to share the war experiences I have had. It was a large chunk in my life -- even as it must have been for other men. People often come to me for advice -- even people I don't know well. I wish I had someone who could answer that role for me [#171].

This phenomenon takes a different form in African society not only because people invest less into employment and more into their family, but also because elders invariably expect a better return on their investment in the younger generations than they generally receive. The

words of one 82-year-old woman are but a variation on the common theme:

We loved our children very dearly. When they were growing up, my husband was selling milk and manure. When they were old enough to go to school, we paid for everything for them with this money. We loved our children. It's a pity that when they grew up, they forgot our love for them. Now their wives are better than their parents [#181].

Within the family, the central enduring close relationship is typically with one's spouse, where the couple have not been parted by divorce or death. In middle age, responsibilities of work and child-rearing necessarily lead to a degree of role segregation. This is reinforced by the patriarchal tradition of both white and especially African society. As one's children take up productive and reproductive obligations, gender distinctions are often softened and genuine companionability is more possible. As an 86-year-old man said:

Everything I do, I do with my wife. Even when I go to the bank, I go with her. How can I do without her? We had children together, we raised them, even this house we built together [#164].

Those who have not established enduring familial ties typically find themselves at a loss in their senior years, such as a retired Xhosa 62-year-old:

I am doing everything myself -- cooking, washing. Sometimes I ask my grand-nephew Simon to give me a hand. I have no girlfriend, and I don't need one. I had many women when I was young. I have retired now. I go to church now, preparing my way for death. My friend Samente and I have no wives. He is staying with his children. His

life is better than mine. He is not so lonely. My other friend Canzibe, a divorcee, is younger than me. He is mad about women, exactly as I used to be. Everything is like a dream now. I wasted my time for useless things which have no reward. Now I am a lonely man with nobody loving and caring for me. I had seventeen children altogether, but none of them are with me. I am just like those who had no children [#161].

The specter of ultimate loss looms over relationships both with one's spouse and other peers. "Always I ask myself why I am left behind when all my friends have died," said one old man [#164]. Indeed, many of the people in the sample, especially women, were widowed. In the words of another senior adult, "The reaper is in our part of the field."

Against these losses that leave one increasingly alone, grandchildren provide new hope and tangible continuity to life. In fact grandchildren eminently symbolize their senior status symbol, and are almost universally cherished. Indeed from this perspective in life, most pleasures are felt in greater intensity and take on a deeper significance.

This period in life generally allows more time again for friends, though one is often less mobile. In the words of a very sociable pensioner who still manages to golf nearly every afternoon, "As you get older, you have fewer friends, you know. You can't get out and about the same [#176]." Another commented, "My old friends Fuzile and Temba visit me, as I don't go anywhere on account of my

health [#170]."

However, a long, shared past with one's oldest friends makes them especially meaningful. An old man who had worked on the mines described the occasion of getting his pension as follows:

I got together with these old friends of mine -- Gumenge, Bhasi, Samente, and Mongesi, and we threw a party. We celebrated the day we got our pensions by roasting meat and drinking. It was altogether pleasant. We reminisced about our boyhood, when we were growing up, and even about our manhood, although we had not enjoyed it together because of different places of work [#163].

4.2 LIFE STAGES: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Homogeneity across the Life Course

The foregoing qualitative description of age stages needs to be measured against the statistical findings. A logical place to start is with the homogeneity count across all relational questions.

TABLE 22

Homogeneity by Age

Mentions	Years				
	9-11	16-17	22-25	36-46	62+
Same person mentioned 25% or less of the time	7.5%	10%	17.5%	10%	22.5%
Same person mentioned 25% to 50% of the time	87.5%	80%	65%	47.5%	42.5%
Same person mentioned more than 50% of the time	5%	10%	17.5%	42.5%	35%

Mentions of the same person between a quarter to one half of the time decreased with increasing years, while mentions over 50% of the time increased with age, with the high point in middle age. The first trend might be explained by the relative prominence of their parents for children and adolescents. However, the power imbalance of parent-child relationships keeps them from being so exclusive as conjugal relationships, which probably accounts for the highest concentration of single-person mentions in middle age. The appearance of lowest concentrations of same-person mentions in senior adulthood and young adulthood, respectively, supports the notion that these are often stages of transition. However, the transition is different for the two periods, with young adults moving from the family of origin into the family of procreation. Senior adults, on the other hand, who like middle-age adults are heavily conjugal in

orientation, lose the homogeneity of their intimate world upon the death of their spouse.

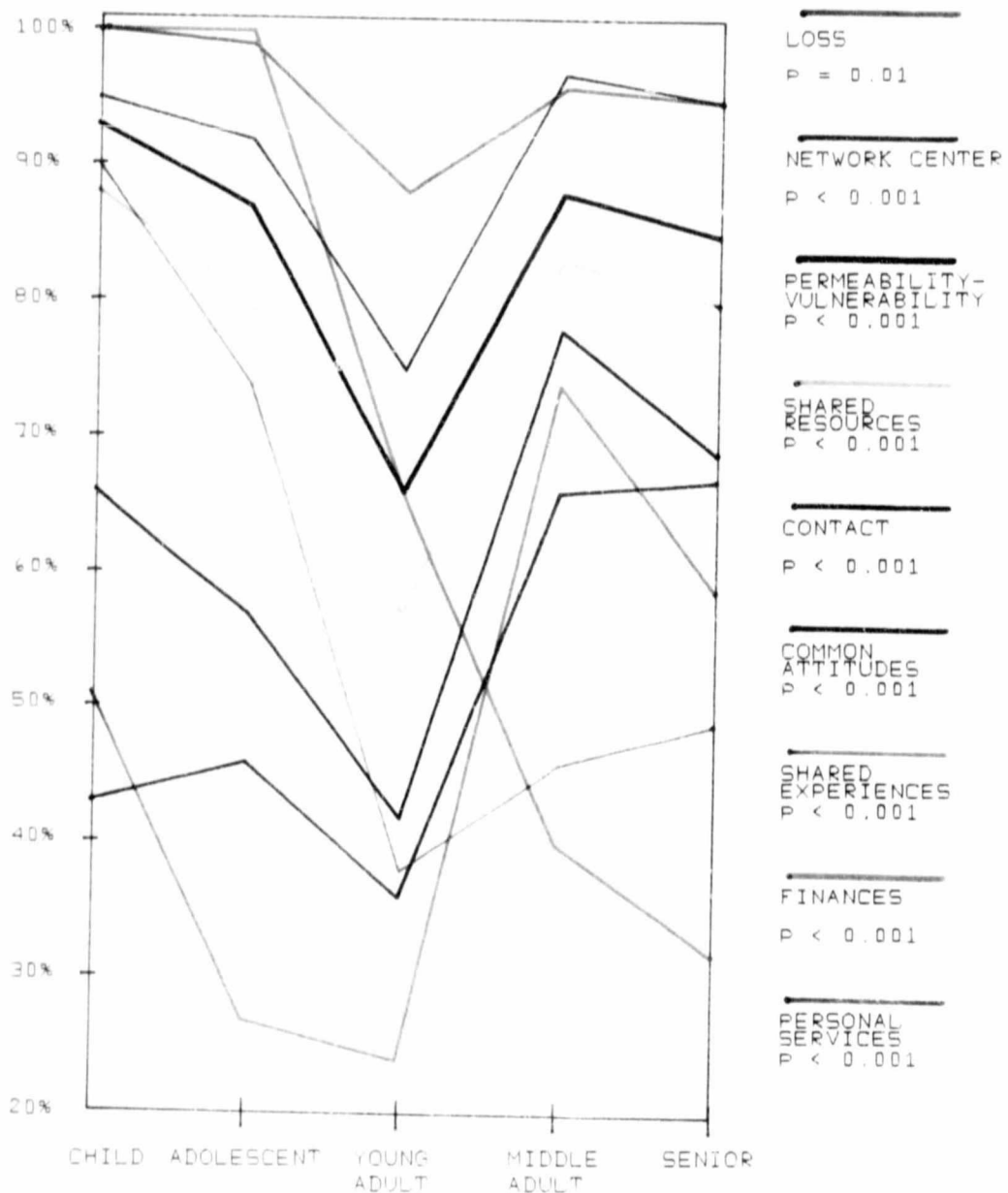
4.2.2 Family Mentions across the Life Course

Greater precision is given to these observations if one looks at significant age variations within and between each of the closeness dimensions. The percentage of family responses in each dimension of closeness for all of the five age categories is graphed in Figure 1. With the exception of friendship results for the "Finances" dimension, all patterns of family and friendship responses are significant at or below the .01 level (see Appendix E for tables in support of Figure 1).

As was established in the chapter on dimensions, the more ascribed ones (including Loss, Network Centre, Permeability/ Vulnerability, Shared Resources) have a higher percentage of family responses than the more voluntary (Contact, Common Attitudes and Shared Experiences). However, the relationships between the different age groups for these dimensions reveal essentially similar patterns amongst themselves. Mentions of family are highest for children, drop off somewhat for adolescents and to their lowest point in young adulthood, then rise steeply for middle age, and drop off slightly for seniors. This overall pattern conforms to the general qualitative account outlined

FAMILY BY AGE

(SIGNIFI ANCE BY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR EACH DIMENSION ARE REPORTED IN THE KEY TO THE GRAPH.)



Family Mentions by Age Groups
Figure 1.

above that emerges from the life histories of the subjects.

4.2.2.1 Childhood

The results for children corroborate the descriptive model, that they are deeply imbedded in the nexus of family relationships, to which, indeed, they owe their very psychological being and material preservation.

Some children, in fact, show surprising insight into their relationships with their parents. For example, a Xhosa 11-year-old reported that:

When my father comes home, he calls me by my nickname, and then I know he has something for me. He jokes with me, and I feel very close to him. Sometimes he is quiet and I think there is somebody who has upset him, so I talk to him. Sometimes he is just tired. No one is like him here at home. He really loves me [#2].

It is hardly surprising that at the ascribed end of the Closeness Continuum, this age group has overall the highest percentage of family responses. Family responses are by no means restricted to parents (54%). Grandparents (17%) and siblings (7%) also figure importantly. In the words of an English-speaking boy nearly 10 years old:

Ouma looked after me every morning, and my sister and I got picked up later in the afternoon. Ouma was very special to me. She took care of me and loved me. I was sad when she died. I went for her funeral. When I stayed with her with my sister, she'd even give us breakfast. That granny who died was the nicest with me [#15].

Children's mentions of familial authority are often framed in a moral context. They express firm and clear judgements about the behavior of those around them. For example, an 11-year-old commented:

I am close to my mother because I stay with her all the time. My father works, and when he is at home, he has no time for us children. He is always with his friends [#29].

Another 11-year-old remarked:

My mother is of no use to us. She drinks. So my grandmother is the most important person to me. My mother doesn't care about us at all, so we too don't worry about her. Even if she were sick we wouldn't worry [#9].

The moral economy of these children also allows for a certain playful defiance of adult strictures:

When my friends go home, I play with my brother and sister. We sleep in the same room. We play till my mother shouts at us to go to sleep. Sometimes she comes into the room and blows the candle out. But we play and laugh in the darkness. Sometimes she gets angry. I am very happy with my brother and sister [#10].

By 9 to 11 years of age, however, children have typically been at school for several years and have formed clear neighbourhood and school networks. In fact, it would seem from the graph that they tend to regard the two worlds of family and friends as relatively dichotomous, indeed more so than does any other age group. The story of a 10-year-old boy illustrates this family/friends distinction:

In 1979 I started school. My friends there are Mathanzima who is 11 years old and Luvuyo also 11 years and Bongani 10 years. We are very friendly, play together at "break," and in the

afternoon we come home together. But they stay in C Street. I'd never go there and play, because my grandmother doesn't like that. So I play with Monkey and Phumule, my cousins [#1].

The gap of 37 percentage points for children between responses on the lowest of the Ascribed dimensions (Shared Resources) and those on the highest friendship dimension (Shared Experiences) is larger than at any other stage in the life course. The size of the discrepancy in childhood between familial- and friendship-oriented areas of closeness may be explained in several different ways -- which are not mutually exclusive.

First, with children's family answers so very high for the Ascribed dimensions, their family responses to the Voluntary dimensions will necessarily seem low, though in real terms adolescents and young adults mention family even less for the "compatibility" dimensions.

In the second place, a child's intimate world is peopled with many powerful others who are older and stronger than he or she is. The family is the site par excellence of these asymmetric close relationships. While they are often benevolent, the awe and obedience or conflict they inspire is not conducive to the kind of egalitarian comradeship elicited by questions in the "friendship" dimensions (cf. Furman, 1985, and French, 1987). For instance, an 11-year-old child said, "I share my secrets

with my friend Xolo." His relationship with his older brother is more distant, however, with mutually recognized obligations:

If my brother, who is 16, were a little bit younger, I would share my secrets with him. But he is very nice to me. One day my mother didn't give him food because he came home so late from school. I gave him my food. We are friends. For instance, when somebody upsets me, I tell him. Sometimes he comforts me and sometimes he goes to the boy who has upset me and sorts things out [#2].

Hence it might be expected that children would turn more readily to the world of non-familial peer friends in response to "compatibility" questions. A 9-year-old thus expressed her solidarity with friends:

Marianne and I sometimes pretend we're Bach or Tchaikovsky and compose music on the piano, or we change into Alexander Graham Bell. She likes olden-times games, as if we lived in the woods years ago. Lisa likes swings and bikes. She also likes reading, like I do. I feel closest to Lisa when she picks me out of all her friends, and to Marianne when we're both in trouble with our teacher and can draw ugly pictures of her - teeth sticking out, hair sticking up, and like that [#31].

Another child's account of a close friendship similarly captures the element of egalitarianism and mutuality in children's friendships:

I have other friends, but Lindani is my best friend. From school I go to Lindani's house. On the following day, he comes to my house. We squabble sometimes, but that doesn't mean we are enemies. No, we are best friends. It [the argument] doesn't last even five minutes.

Lindani's mother is very nice. She works with my father at Settlers' Hospital. Lindani's father was killed in a car accident going to Kingwilliamstown with his friends. When Lindani talks about him, he is always near tears. I also feel very hurt and ask him not to talk about his

father anymore. Lindani hates cars since that accident. His brother has a car, but Lindani has hardly even had a ride in it.

I am in the same class with Lindani. We sit at the same desk. Our teacher, Miss Nkomonde sometimes separates us when she is teaching. Because we play in class, she punishes us [#4].

Third, according to Piaget, children tend to think in concrete terms (for an overview of cognitive developmental studies of children's friendships, see Selman, 1981). Indeed, a pilot study revealed that children were unable to handle the question "Who most agrees with you about what best friends should be?" (Nor, for that matter, could they answer, "If you could change anyone you know, whom would you change and how?") The "friend" question had to be changed to read, "Whom do you think is your really best friend?" The very notion of friendship for children tends to be confined to non-family relationships. Although none of the other questions in the "compatibility" dimensions even mentioned the word "friend," the sharp distinction in the minds of children between the world of family and that of friends might have caused them to discriminate more than did older subjects between "family" and "friend" arenas of interaction. In answer to the question "Whom do you think is your really best friend," not a single child mentioned a nuclear family relation.

It is ironic that most psychologists doing research on adult close relationships seem themselves not to have

reached the stage of formal operations in defining friendship (for example, cf. Reisman, 1981). They tend to restrict its meaning to non-familial others, apparently quite unaware that from adolescence on, most people conceive of friendship as a generic term. Questionnaires about friendship typically mandate by fiat that respondents not mention family relationships in a friendship context. The present, more open-ended study, however, elicited even in the more Voluntary dimensions roughly half family answers.

4.2.2.2 Adolescence

The responses for adolescents indicate that the family is still the primary locus for the more intensely emotional relationships, probed by the Ultimate Loss, Network Centre, Permeability/ Vulnerability dimensions.

Nonetheless, a process of gradual detachment from the family of origin, which is manifest in the model with biographical examples discussed above, has clearly begun.

A boy in standard 9 summed up his new vantage point:

I was closer to my brother when he was five and I was seven than now, when he is 14 and I am 16. The age difference is much greater now. I played and fought with him a lot. I had lots of friends, but was not so attached to them as the few I have now. I think you have more friends when you are little, but they don't mean so much, and when you're older, you have fewer friends but are more attached to them [#56].

There is one dimension, however, where adolescents remain as totally bound to the family as children -- Finances.

It is perhaps this combination of total financial

dependence and gradual disengagement from the family on all other indicators, especially Personal Services and Shared Experiences, which explains some of the turbulence characteristic of this age period.

On the other hand, this potential conflict is sometimes off-set by a far more nuanced understanding of friendship. Thus in response to the "best friends" question, 12 of the adolescents mentioned parents and half mentioned nuclear family members. As a 17-year-old observed, "I'm at that stage now where I'm friends with my mom. I don't think of her so much as a parent but as my best friend [#80]." Clearly the identification between friendship and non-familial others so characteristic of children, has been disaggregated by the time of adolescence. This helps explain why on the Common Attitudes dimension, adolescents mention family members slightly more often than do children.

At the same time, however, more adolescents than children seem to spend considerably less out-of-school time with family members. This is dramatically demonstrated by the 24% drop from childhood to adolescence in the Shared Experiences dimension, which corresponds with adolescents' increasing personal self-sufficiency as indicated in the Personal Services dimension. Thus although many adolescents are sharing more time and physical space with non-familial others, family members

pervade their emotional arena only slightly less than for children.

4.2.2.3 Young Adulthood

The impression obtained from the life histories that young adulthood is a time of transition is fully confirmed by the quantitative data. By this point, individuals demonstrate less familial attachment than any of the age groups younger or older. This trend away from family responses toward those of friendship is striking. Nonetheless, one quarter of the young adults had already married, two thirds named family members on the emotional Permeability/ Vulnerability dimension, and more than one third mentioned family in Common Attitudes.

While at this stage there is radically less dependence on family for personal services than in adolescence (38% as opposed to 74%), and indeed less than at any of the other stages, two thirds of the sample's young adults still remain economically dependent on family members. Thus the impression that young people over 21 years old are "off the nest" is belied by this objective data on financial dependence. Indeed, even the single white male who was married with children lived in a house provided by his father.

However young adults still typically like to think of themselves as relatively autonomous, as a given one of any number of stories indicate:

I only go [home] if I have something definite to report -- although awhile ago, I didn't used to. I made a point of not telling my mom any information. I think the family need me more now than I need them. I'll go there to relate a bit of information, but they will just drop by and sit on the bed -- not for any special reason
[#112]

The untypical configuration of responses in young adulthood compared to that of the other stages throws into question much social psychological research which draws its sample from this age group alone and claims universal application. Clearly young adults, in transition as they are, are hardly representative of the wider population. For those engaged in research on close relationships, it bears noting once again that despite the tendency of this age group to mention friends, a full two thirds in this study named family members on the emotionally central Permeability/Vulnerability dimension.

4.2.2.4 Middle Adulthood

What is immediately evident about middle age is the deep involvement with family, deeper than any of the other ages since childhood. The family here, of course, is largely the family of procreation (cf. Lips & Morrison, 1986). While 93% of this age group have been married, 78% still live with their spouse.

In fact, the Shared Experiences dimension alone points dramatically to the family centeredness of middle age, where the leap in family mentions a full 50 percentage points from young adulthood (from 24% to 74% in middle

age) represents the most dramatic difference between any two age stages on any dimension. That 65% of the family mentions in this most Voluntary dimension are a spouse suggests the companionate quality of many conjugal relationships.

Economic independence is dramatically increased by this stage in life. The number of family mentions drops here to 40%, and most of those are wives mentioning their husbands. There is something of a trade-off of services, however, since Personal Services, the domestic dimension, moves back slightly into the family with wives taking care of their husbands.

A minor anomaly may be noted in the Closeness Continuum for both middle-aged and senior adults. Family mentions in the category of Ultimate Loss are fewer than would be expected, thus converging with the next closest dimension. This is caused not by an increase in "friend responses," but in "other" responses because a few individuals offered that their own death would distress them more than any other's.

4.2.2.5 Senior Adulthood

These two trends both continue in senior adulthood but for different reasons. Because of pensions, both the state old-age pensions and the private pensions for which employees and their widows are eligible, even more people

claim to be financially independent in their senior years than in middle age.

At the same time, however, fewer senior adults are as self-sufficient with regard to personal services. An 82-year-old woman described her general dependence as follows:

I have 11 grandchildren, whom I love more than my children. They do everything for me. My younger son's wife also cooks and brings me food. Her children come and sleep with me. I am not alone because I stay with these children, but when I think of my deceased husband, I feel very lonely and am waiting for my time to come [#181].

On all but Common Attitudes in the Closeness Continuum, there is a slight drop off of family mentions in senior adulthood. This may be attributed to an increase of widowed status (28% of the sample) just at a time when individuals are more thrown back upon conjugal relationships for daily companionship. As one white widow said, "I've had no one to share my deeper secrets with since my husband's demise. It's sad and a definite lack. One doesn't replicate that relationship [#196]."

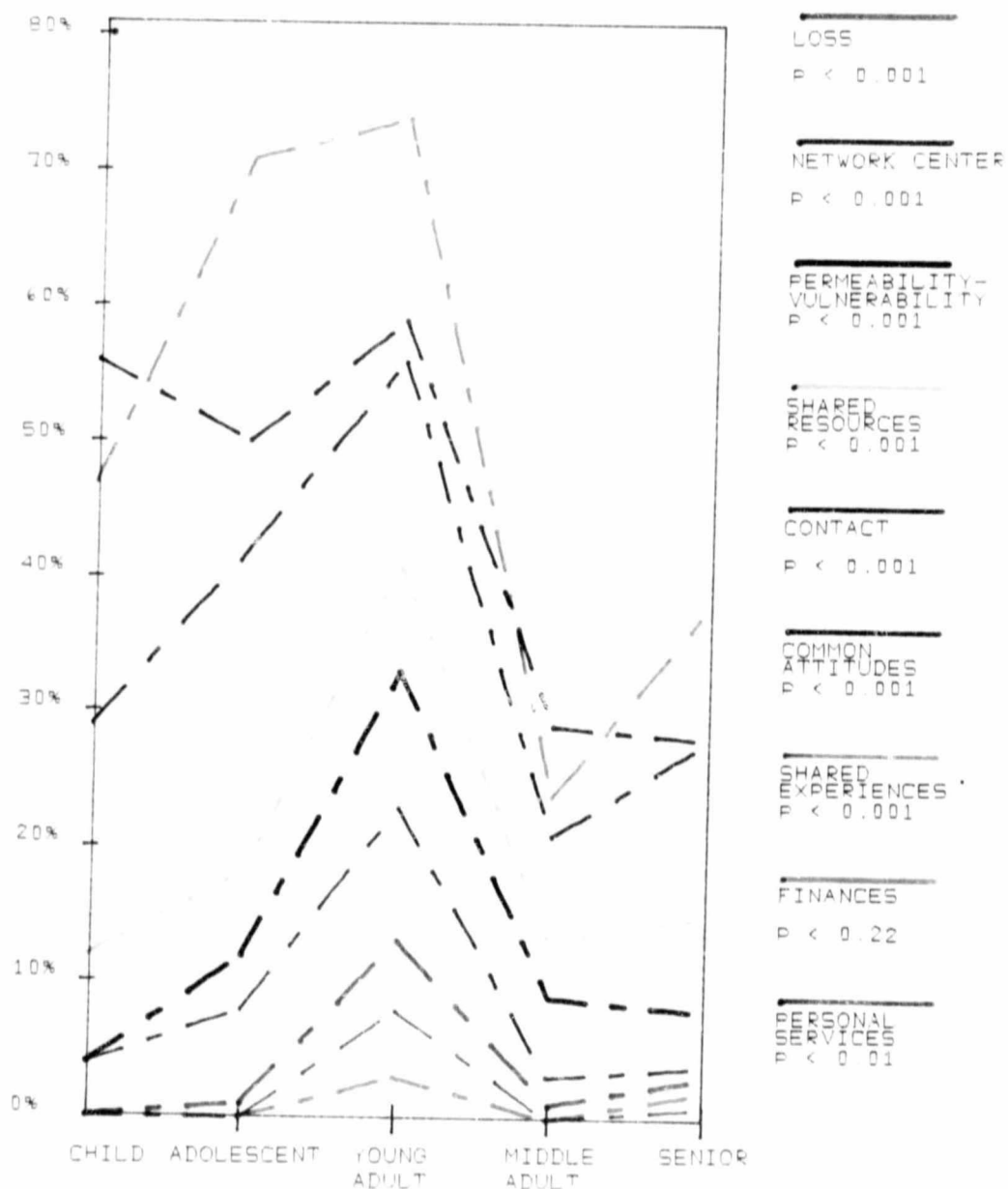
4.2.3 Friend Mentions across the Life Course

Friendship mentions by age are illustrated in Figure 2 (see Appendix E for tables illustrated in this graph).

While friendship responses are less frequent than family ones, the dimensional patterns for the five age groups

FRIENDS BY AGE

(SIGNIFICANCES BY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR EACH DIMENSION ARE REPORTED IN THE KEY TO THE GRAPH.)



Friend Mentions by Age Groups

Figure 2.

are more regular here, with Finances and Personal Services conforming to the typical pattern (although financial responses are so low that the differences between the age categories are not statistically significant). That pattern is for friendship responses to be low amongst children, to rise slightly in adolescence (with the exception of Finances and Personal Services) and more steeply in young adulthood before dropping sharply in middle age and rising again slightly for seniors. The single exceptions are in Common Attitudes where children start proportionally higher, and in Common Attitudes and Permeability/Vulnerability where seniors drop slightly rather than rise.

This friendship graph is essentially a mirror image of the graph for family responses with the exception of Finances and Personal Services, where the discrepancy may be explained by the prevalence of "self" and/or "domestic servants" in the response category "other." There is, in addition, a slight increase in "other" responses for seniors in the Permeability/Vulnerability dimension because of increasing intimate losses through death.

4.3 SUMMARY

Looking at the dimensions of closeness across five distinct life stages, one thus notes a pattern in which childhood and middle-age adulthood, respectively, are most firmly imbedded in intimate family relationships.

Young adulthood stands out as the period of transition between these two very family-centered developmental stages.

While the family still forms the emotional locus for adolescents, their everyday interactions and increasing domestic self-sufficiency presage the developments in young adulthood. It is as though in venturing forth into a world of extra-familial relationships, the adolescent still requires the emotional sheet anchor of the family. Closeness in adolescence is hence more rooted in ascribed relationships than modern psychological convention suggests (but cf. Rawlins & Holl, 1988). It is perhaps the beginning of movement away from the family in adolescence, with continued total financial dependence on them, that focuses attention on its iconoclasm.

In young adulthood, however, voluntary relationships are more significant than at any of the four other tested age stages. Young adulthood is truly the time of break from one's original field of intimates and for the inception of new family patterns, which are then expected to sustain the individual through his or her productive and reproductive years.

In senior adulthood, with their children reaching adulthood and retirement from employment, individuals are thrown back upon conjugal companionship. This comes at a time when many, especially women, find themselves

widowed, which reinforces the importance of friendship ties for people who have fewer productive and reproductive duties.

5. CLOSENESS IN TWO CULTURES

Apartheid characterizes not only the political structure of Grahamstown, South Africa, but also the intimate worlds of its inhabitants. In the entire sample of 200, no black or white mentioned a close other of the opposite race, except the occasional white child tended by a Xhosa domestic servant. In fact, one Xhosa-speaking woman [#184] referred to her daughter who had "passed" for a Coloured as "lost."

5.1 ETHNICITY AND HOMOGENEITY

A major reason for having the sample consist of half black and half white South Africans is that substantial differences were expected in the structure of close relationships for each group. However, when one breaks down the homogeneity count of overall closeness mentions by ethnicity there is surprisingly little difference between Xhosa- and English-speaking Grahamstonians.

TABLE 23 Homogeneity by Ethnicity

Mentions	Xhosa	English
Same person mentioned 25% or less of the time	13%	14%
Same person mentioned more than 25% to 50% of the time	66%	63%
Same person mentioned more than 50% of the time	21%	23%

$$\chi^2 = .198, df = 2, p < .95$$

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Amongst the Xhosa-speaking, 87% mentioned the same person more than one quarter of the time, compared to 86% for English-speakers. However in their initial list of close relationships, the Xhosa mentioned many more intimates than did English-speakers, with a mean of 11 compared to 6 for English-speakers ($p < .001$).

With a larger pool of intimates to choose from, one might have expected more heterogeneity in Xhosa answers. Looking at core closeness, though, there is little difference between the 13%, 66% and 21% for frequencies of black mentions and the 14%, 63% and 23% for frequencies of white mentions. Hence the number of persons subjects mentioned when asked to name intimate others is not a predictor of the number or "range" of others those individuals will choose when asked to name another person or persons in response to a series of questions relating to closeness. This is not to suggest, of course, that black South Africans do not have a wider network of close others -- they may have -- but rather to point out that when asked to select amongst them, they choose the same person about as often as English-speakers. This is so although the latter specify five fewer intimates on the average when asked to name them all. A supposed wide network of close others makes little difference then in the selection of one's most intimate network. The breadth of such core closeness varies much more with age, as we have seen, and somewhat more with gender, as we shall see.

The similarity in homogeneity of response for Xhosa and English-speakers here casts doubt on the methodology employed by Norman et al. (1981-82) in their cross-cultural study of inter-personal relationships in India and the U.S. The study asked individuals to list their close relationships, which yielded significant differences in numbers of mentions between the two cultures. These findings regarding cultural differences were replicated in the significant differences found between Xhosa and English-speaking subjects in their initial mentions of close others. However, when they were asked to mention individuals in response to specific questions regarding closeness, the differences between the two cultural groups disappeared. This suggests that the findings noted by Norman et al. do not necessarily imply differences in actual numbers of "active" close relationships in real-life situations.

What then is the significance of the larger number of intimates for Xhosa-speakers on the first page if it does not reflect the breadth of truly close relationships? Several factors might be at stake here. In the first place, Xhosa typically have larger families. The mean number of siblings for the Xhosa sample was 3.7 as compared to 2.2 for English-speakers ($p < .001$). The number of siblings, of course, implies a correspondingly larger difference in numbers of cousins, aunts, uncles, grandchildren, and so on. The Xhosa also have a more discriminating kinship vocabulary. For example, because

of the clan system, words that are translated as "cousin" or "nephew" imply a potentially much wider range of relationships (cf. the table of kinship terms in M. Hunter, 1961/36:54-57). There is thus an extension of kin for Xhosa both by fact and by definition.

In the second place, Xhosa may keep alive a wider range of individuals considered "close" as a sort of safety net against the toll of adversities in their more marginal existence. In the event of tragedy, the more close relationships that can be activated, the better. This argument is one of class rather than of ethnicity, and may be found in poverty families world wide (cf., for example, Stack, 1974). It would be interesting to test this hypothesis with a larger Xhosa sample than the present one, containing but seven black elite. Although a comparison of means test measuring the sample's seven black elite members against its 93 black working-class and rank and file discovered a slightly smaller average of intimates for the former, the difference was not statistically significant. It may be, however, that with the achievement of greater material stability, elite Africans in South Africa consciously narrow their field of "close kin," as is masterfully evoked in Ndebele's story "The Story of the Violin":

"Relatives," the mother came out, "can be a real nuisance. Once you have opened the door, they come trooping in like ants. We cannot afford it these days. Not with the cost of living. These are different times. Whites saw this problem a long time ago. That is why they have very little time for relatives. The

nuclear family! That's what matters. I believe in it. I've always maintained that. If relatives want to visit, they must help with the groceries. There I'm clear, my dear. Very clear."

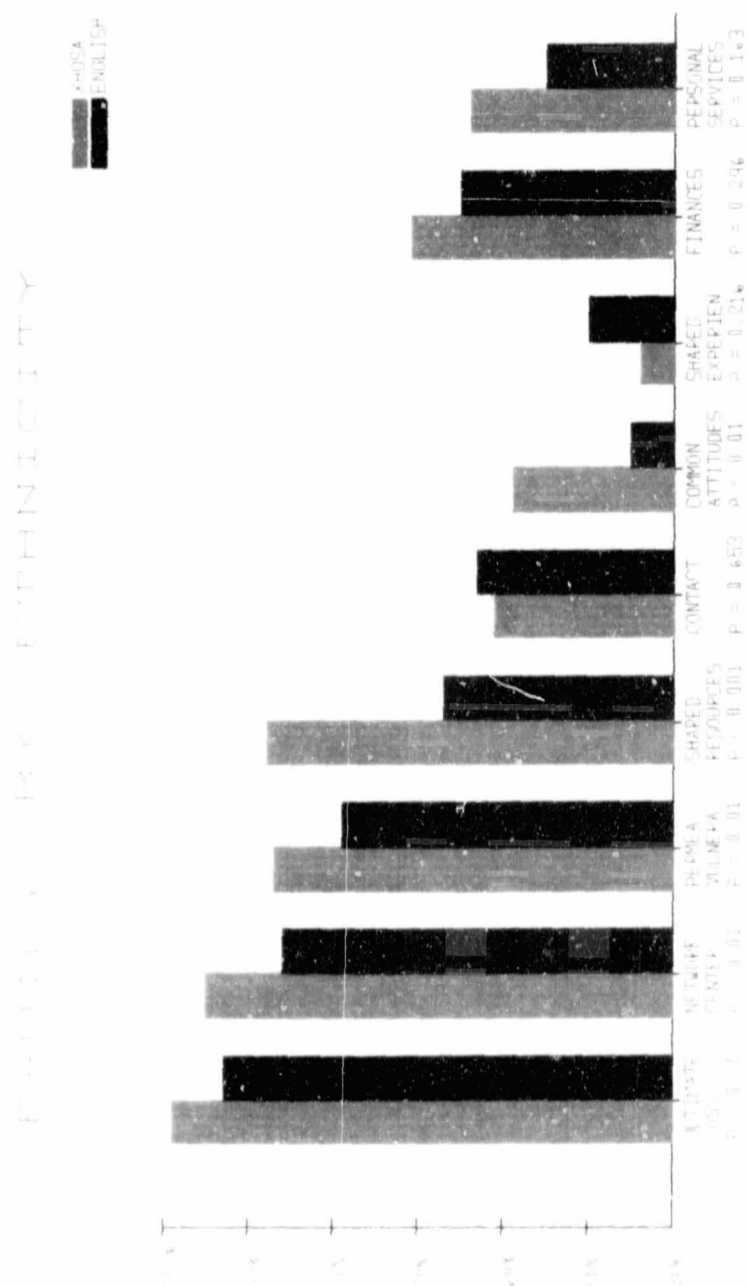
[On the other hand] Doksie [a friend of the child narrator from a traditional family] liked to say: "It's nice to have many relatives. Then when you are in trouble at home, you can always hide with one of them. And your father will go from relative to relative looking for you. When he finds you, he will be all smiles trying to please the relatives," [Hodge, 1984:263-4].

Not only do Xhosa mention more family, however, but more friends as well, a 3.8 average number of mentions compared with 2.07 by the English-speakers ($p < .001$). Whatever the explanation, Xhosa-speakers in the sample do spontaneously name a wider range of close relationships than they draw upon in answering specific questions. This would seem to support Bott's (1971/1957) notion of a "limited fund of sociability" which suggests that "the amount of time and emotional energy available to sustain close relationships must be finite" (Shulman, 1975).

5.2 ETHNIC DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE CLOSENESS DIMENSIONS

5.2.1 Family Mentions by Ethnicity

Comparing differences of family mentions by the two ethnic groups (Figure 3), Xhosa mention family more often than do English-speakers in all closeness dimensions save Contact and Shared Experiences (for tables in support of Figure 3, see Appendix F). The differences manifest in



Family Mentions by Ethnic Group
Figure 3.

Author Aldrich Meredith J

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