Gender Differences in Cross-Generation Networks

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In later life, cross-generational networks are primarily among kin; friends are considered to be of the same cohort. Kin networks are likely to have an integrity of their own, independent of any of their members. Members are likely to share basic values or to avoid issues that might cause conflict or estrangement. Sex differences are profound. Mother–daughter bonds are both strongest throughout life and most complex, serving to link household units into modified extended family networks. Major life events like marriage of a daughter, birth of a child, or illness of a parent alternatively loosen or strengthen these bonds. Critical conceptual/methodological problems abound, such as definitions of the basic constructs like "closeness," and "affect."

An axiom in developmental psychology is that social contact is necessary for optimal development and psychological well-being. This is sometimes interpreted in an all-or-none fashion: any kind of social contact will do. Sometimes it is interpreted as the more, the better. Sometimes contact with certain persons is considered better than with others: for a small child a mother is presumed better than a father; for a young or middle-aged adult an opposite-sex spouse is presumed better than a same-sex friend; for an old person a relative is presumed better than a nonrelative. Children surrounded by friends are presumed to be in better mental health than children who are loners. Old people's isolation activates programs in which school children are organized to visit senior centers and nursing homes, volunteers ("friendly visitors") are recruited, and recreation directors are hired. The validity of these assumptions need to be tested.

　　Programs to alleviate isolation generally ignore three relevant questions. First, is the quality or depth of human attachments variable, and if so, should

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outreach programs be geared to such differences? It may be comforting to provide friendly, and probably superficial, visitors to those who are satisfied with mere gregariousness, but irritating to those who need deeper, more meaningful relationships. Second, do lifelong patterns of social contact and connectedness influence old people's need for and comfort with their social life in old age? Do men, for example, whose patterns of sociability tend to be less affiliative than those of women, prefer to continue this style in old age? The third question follows from this second one. Should we be paying more attention to sex differences in sociability altogether?

The focus of this article is gender differences in the cross-generational social contacts of older adults; it excludes relations with spouse and with most friends.[2] Therefore, the discussion is limited to parent–child relations, and serves to review the largely descriptive and exploratory data available.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

The differentiation between kin and nonkin may be more important for cross-generational than for intragenerational network ties. Family relationships are presumed to be different from other relationships. In fact, many cross-generational ties that are nonkin, such as among work-mates, neighbors, or friends tend to be blind to generational and perhaps, to some extent, age differences, although not to sex differences. Except for mentor and supervisory relationships, those outside the family are usually seen as among peers.

Hagestad (1984) points out that parents and their adult children, although from different age cohorts, may be very similar in lifestyle and values, while others argue that the lifelong "stamping in" of hierarchical differences, even in the most egalitarian families, is difficult to erase. Even though both generations can be employed, even though both can be married, divorced, or widowed, even though both can dress alike and like the same music and recreational pursuits, it is unusual to find no recognition among them as to who are the parents and who are the children.

There are subcategories within kin and nonkin groups. Co-workers or colleagues are different from neighbors, comembers of formal organizations, and friends. Parent–child relationships are different from grandparent–grandchild relationships, and certainly from great-grandparent–great-grandchild relationships (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986), as all of these are from aunt–niece, uncle–nephew, uncle–niece, and in-law relationships. Beyond this, parent–child relationships can be different depending upon which

dyad is involved; the mother–daughter bond is the strongest parent–child linkage throughout life, for example (Troll, Miller, & Atchley, 1979), different from mother–son, father–daughter, and father–son.

The myth that older parents and their adult children are essentially estranged from each other in today's Western society is widespread and persistent, and it is difficult to convince the general public that it is untrue. Research suggests that adult children keep in close touch with their parents (the reverse is not questioned so often), live not too far away from them, and visit them frequently. They also help each other in many ways, including care giving when that is needed. Abandonment of parents in old age is extremely rare, as is "elder abuse" (Troll, 1986).

Decline in joint family households is often used as an index of "death of the family." Indeed, less than 10% of parents over the designated "old age" of 65 live with their children, in accord with prevailing values in our society that adults should live in separate households unless they are couples or raising young children. Intergenerational households consist of women more than men, as we would expect from women's greater probability of surviving a spouse and lesser probability of finding a new one. Incidentally, almost a quarter of Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 also live with their parents (Troll, 1985). Both figures fluctuate with economic conditions. When times are good, more adults of all ages move into their own homes. When times are bad, families double and triple up. When people 65 and older do live with a child, that child is likely to be a daughter rather than a son, an unmarried daughter rather than a married one, and it is more often the parent who is the "head of the household" than the child. Finally, these multigenerational households are more likely to be two-generation than three-generation.

Networks can be large or small. They can consist of relationships that overlap. Contacts can be frequent or infrequent, in person, in writing, by telephone, or in thoughts. They can be graded in importance, from those essential to life to those that could be discarded with little consequence. They can be reciprocal or not. They can extend over time or have been formed yesterday. Ties can vary in directness or in strength. There is a suggestion that men's family bonds are more contingent, women's more integral (Lamb & Lamb, 1976). That is, men's connection with others, particularly their family members, operate through other members — their wives or parents. Women form and maintain more dyadic bonds. Mother–daughter bonds persist regardless of other relationships; mother–son bonds are substantially weaker and can be fragmented or at least altered by other connections.

When Harris and his associates (1975) surveyed Americans over the age of 65, they found that three-fourths of them had living grandchildren and three-fourths of those who had grandchildren saw them at least once every week. Since only about 8% of American households include both grandparents and

grandchildren, not only must this contact be voluntary but the motivation for it has to be strong enough to induce members of one generation to go out of the home to visit the members of the other generation. The connecting link between grandparents and grandchildren is the intervening generation; it is rare for them to be connected independently (Gilford & Bengtson, 1977; Thompson & Walker, 1987). In fact, grandparents whose son has divorced the mother of their grandchildren often maintain close ties with their daughter-in-law to preserve their contact with the children (Johnson, 1985). In many states, legal battles have been needed to secure grandparental visiting rights.

Cross-generational kin networks differ from nonkin networks in several ways. First, they are more likely to have an integrity of their own, independent of any network member. They are not organized around any one individual, although particular individuals may have strategic roles or positions therein. These strategic positions vary by both generation and sex. Thus, the oldest women, or one of the older women, is often a "kinkeeper," spreading the news, smoothing relationships, and organizing get-togethers. Kinkeepers maintain contact among family members, but some are seen everyday and some only once or twice a year. Some kinkeepers are highly influential in the lives of their children and grandchildren, beloved and revered, and others are hated or almost ignored. Daughters and granddaughters of the kinkeepers may be "in training" to assume that role when the incumbent can no longer perform it (Troll, 1984). Within their own households, they may act as the household kinkeeper, forming a cross-household network with sisters, cousins, and sisters-in-law to carry out the organization within the network of the "modified extended family" (Litwak, 1961). On the other hand, the oldest man, or one of the older men, is often head of the family (Marshall & Rosenthal, 1982), advising on financial and other instrumental matters.

Kin networks are likely to be more durable than nonkin networks, to last for longer stretches of time. It is true that most old people's friends have been their friends for many years, but their parents and children and siblings are there for life. In fact, changes in the geographic or occupational location of any member are not likely to influence family network characteristics the way they do friendship and other nonkin networks. Another difference is the voluntary nature of nonkin networks as compared with the more obligatory, ascribed nature of kin relationships.

THE FUNCTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social contacts among adults could contribute to (or detract from) their mental health, feeling of well-being, or general life satisfaction. Such utili-

zation of networks can also provide economic benefit and support, as well as physical and instrumental care when needed. But what is it about them that works? Are only overt services of significance? Does just being there for each other also serve?

Most research on the functional aspects of cross-generational relations considers them to be unidirectional. When the focus is on the beginning of life, parents and grandparents are studied almost exclusively as givers. Likewise, when the focus is on the end of life, it is children and grandchildren who are presumed to be the only givers. Interactive, bidirectional, and even multidirectional aspects are ignored. But care giving or help from one family generation, one family member to another — or others — is not unidirectional (Hill, 1965). Parents of adults give instrumental services and money, more services and money than they receive, while the younger generation gives parents emotional support, household help, and care during illness — again, more than they receive. Over life, total help is likely to be reciprocal, flowing more toward younger generations at first and shifting toward a flow toward older generations as circumstances change (Troll, 1986).

One important counterstereotypic finding is the clear tendency for financial aid, including money and gifts, to go down the generational line more than up (Troll, 1986). In the United States, very little economic support is given older parents by their children, sometimes because the parents are able to manage on Social Security and pensions, sometimes because giving money up the generational ladder is not normative. There are class differences. In the middle class, considerable financial assistance continues to flow from parents to children into advanced old age — and beyond if wills and inheritance are considered (Cheal, 1983). In the working class, however, more financial assistance goes from the middle generation to both older and younger generations because the middle generation has usually had more opportunity to accumulate assets (Hill, 1965). This pattern may change in the future, of course, if it become more difficult for youths to find jobs or for their middle-aged parents to have built up assets. Unfortunately, this line of research has paid little attention to sex differences. Do grandmothers give more to their children than grandfathers, or are they likely to be more on the receiving end? Is more money given to daughters and granddaughters than to sons and grandsons? We do not know.

The most salient kind of help, of course, is taking care of old parents who become sick and feeble. In part, this impresses itself upon our consciousness because this assistance is not antipated as is child care. Yet surveys show that, when a spouse is not available, a child (usually a daughter) is the care giver (Broady, 1985; Shanas, 1979). Contrary to myth, when older Americans need care, 80% of them get it from their family. Brody's study of three generations of Philadelphian women found that both daughters and granddaughters believed if their mothers or grandmothers needed help, they

would be ready and willing to give it. As a matter of fact, the grandmothers were much less likely to say that children should care for aged parents than their daughters and granddaughters were to say that children and grandchildren *should* help parents and grandparents. Essentially, the old women did not want to "be a burden" to their children while their daughters did not want to desert their mothers.

Does reciprocity of help or balancing of services make a difference in the feelings of network members toward each other? A few recent studies have looked at this question, with somewhat ambiguous findings. Thompson and Walker (1984), for instance, found that, when female college students and their mothers helped each other a lot, they were more "attached" to each other than when they either did not help each other or were unbalanced in their helping — one helping more than the other. Of course, mothers and daughters may help each other a lot because they are attached to each other. In other studies of middle-aged women and their mothers, the issues of autonomy and attachment may have been resolved over the years, because imbalances in the exchange of help were *not* associated with lower attachment. Thompson and Walker found that the factor of "attachment" is orthogonal to that of "intimacy," or affection, replicating a wide variety of studies that failed to find a connection between parents' and children's feelings about each other and either their sharing values or their concern about each other (Troll & Bengtson, 1979). Neither aid nor contact were predictive of intimacy. The only significant predictor of intimacy was the kind of help that required physical presence, "proximal aid," and this interacted with contact — visiting and telephoning — in a complex way. Exchange of aid between old parents and their children does not seem to make a difference in the parents' morale (Lee & Ellithorpe, 1982). Curiously, when old parents who live in the same household as their care giving children try to help with household work, the parent–child relationship is worse instead of better (Stoller, 1985).

The contingent nature of grandparent–grandchild relations has been examined by Thompson and Walker (1987), using their three-generational data mentioned above. They found that granddaughters do have unique feelings of intimacy for their mothers and grandmothers (along with family feeling), but that grandmother sare more likely to have a generalized "family feeling" that encompasses both daughters and grandaughters. Cherlin and Fuerstenberg (1986) pointed to the diversity of grandparents' feelings, varying with different grandchildren, while Troll (1983) Tabeled grandparents "family watchdogs" to describe their removed feeling, their monitoring of family scenes in case they are needed, but reluctance to enter the family "fray" unless needed. Cases of a divorce and single parenthood are examples of the importance of their intervention when they are needed (Bengtson & Robertson, 1985).

SEX DIFFERENCES

Social psychologists have spoken about affiliative needs, and have raised the issue of trait state. Are basic social needs, if they exist, human traits that are part of the fabric of individual personality, varying among individuals but consistent within any person across situations or over time? Or are they consequences of situations? Do certain kinds of life experiences bring out affiliative needs and others not? Are women generally more affiliative than men because of their socialization or life situation rather than because they are genetically more prone to attach themselves to others?

There are four different parent–child dyads: mother–son, mother–daughter, father–son, and father–daughter (not counting in-laws and step-parents and children), and parent–child relationships are different for each. Only a few studies have actually compared these relationships directly (e.g., Troll, Neugarten, & Kraines, 1969), but longitudinal data and age comparisons suggest that the mother–daughter bond is the strongest, or at least the longest, throughout life. Families are held together by mother–daughter linkages, at least in the Western world (Troll et al., 1979).

From the beginning, apparently, mothers are likely to feel more comfortable with their infant daughters than with their infant sons (Rothbart & Maccoby, 1966). Different reasons have been suggested for this phenomenon. It may be that little girls are more familiar to mothers, more like themselves. It may be that girls, maturing earlier than boys, are easier to handle. It may be that, as Freud (1933) wrote, daughters can identify with their mothers in addition to becoming attached to them while sons can only become attached, and thus daughters have stronger bonds. Chodorow (1978) hypothesizes that this strong connection makes daughters in turn want to become mothers in order to repeat or continue the relationship, just as mothers see themselves over again in their daughters (cf. Olsen, 1984). Whatever the reason, it has been found that infant boys get better care from their mothers if their fathers are around-just around, not necessarily sharing the feeding and diapering (Lamb & Lamb, 1976). It is as if mothers need a man present to interpret the alien maleness. Further, the Lambs' report that early mother–child relationships are more dyadic than father–child, more contingent upon other family relationships. Unless the father is the primary caretaker, his interactions with this child are embedded in a network of all family relations and his role is often defined by the mother.

Sex differences are noticeable throughout childhood. As toddlers, girls stick to their mother's knee more than do boys (Shephard-Look, 1982). Later in life, boys and men wander from the household, girls and women stay closer to home. Mothers are more familiar to daughters throughout life and also stricter with daughters. They are probably less appreciative of daughters-at least they are when the daughters are adults (Hagestad, 1977). Reciprocally,

daughters find mothers familiar, and they see them as more demanding and less appreciative than to some (Turner & Huyck, 1982).

As will be noted later in this article, there is remarkable continuity in mother–daughter relationships throughout life. A Minneapolis study by Lucy Fischer (1981), however, found that adolescence was the time daughters held the most negative feelings toward their mothers. Fischer's older women, in their 20s and 30s, liked their mothers better than the teenagers did. However, this was not true in the Berkeley longitudinal data, (Weishaus, 1978). There was not abrupt change in mother–daughter relationships at any time.

Adult daughters are more likely to live close to their mothers, to visit them, and to exchange help with them than are adult sons (Cicirelli, 1983; Shanas, 1979). In fact, men, whose primary attachment is usually to their wife, are more likely to be in touch with their wife's parents than with their own (Troll et al., 1979). A New York study (Haller, 1982) found that middle-aged mothers and their young-adult daughters were more attached to each other than middle-aged mothers and their young-adult sons, and a North Carolina study of old fathers and their sons (Kivett & Suggs, 1985) found that their interactions were more obligatory and duty motivated than those of other dyads.

When Hagestad (1984) examined three-generational influences and family themes, some sex-stereotyped patterns were revealed. For one thing, the grandfather–son–grandson line was more important than other studies had suggested, approaching in its influence that of the grandmother–daughter–granddaughter line. Hagestad also found that members of all three family generations admitted to trying to influence the others. But the content of the influence attempts, and the family themes that emerged from qualitative analysis, fit traditional feminine and masculine domains, although less in the young-adult grandchild generation than in the old grandparent generation. The members of the male line tried to influence each other over career and nonfamily, nonintimate matters. Grandfathers felt it appropriate to advise sons and grandsons on business matters, but not daughters and granddaughters. Grandmothers were readier to advise both sexes of children and grandchildren, but mostly with respect to interpersonal and intrafamily relations. There was much less sex stereotyping in either person of influence or content on the part of the grandchildren. Without longitudinal data, it is not possible to know whether this reflects historical change in sex roles or time of life.

Men and women differed by generation in how they responded to the poor health of the oldest generation, the affect they displayed, and the people they referred to in their conversation (Troll & Stapley, 1986). In an exploratory study of the relationships between gerontologist and their parents (Turner & Huyck, 1982), sex differences were profound. Both men and wom-

en reported more involvement with mothers than with fathers or in-laws. Of those men and women involved, 81% were involved with mothers, 12% with fathers, and 7% with in-laws. Part of these statistics, of course, is a demographic phenomenon.

Women marry older men. There are many more widowed women in later life than widowed men. When a man is widowed he usually remarries. When he needs care in old age, he usually has a wife to take care of him. When a woman is widowed, she usually does not remarry. When she needs care in old age, she usually turns to a child and that child, if possible, is a daughter. Those gerontologists who mentioned problems with a parent were likely to be women. Sixty-four percent of all the problems mentioned were cited by women. The problems were different by sex, too. Women mentioned physical, mental, and emotional illness or deterioration, while men spoke about retirement and personality conflicts. Again, demographic factors need to be considered because the women who gerontologists could be speaking about are significantly older people than the men. Although most of the respondents said they had positive feelings about their parents, particularly those parents they were most involved with, the men had more positive feelings than the women. What they said were the rewarding aspect of their relationships with their parents also differed. To begin with, over half the men listed some rewarding aspects but less than a quarter of the women did. Less than a quarter of the men were strongly negative about their parents, but almost half the women were. Finally, while almost all the men expected — and said they got — approval from their parents, only a little over half the women did. The men idealized their mothers. The women wre more likely to describe their mothers as critical, demanding, and controlling. However, it should be noted that they also felt their relationship with their mother was rewarding and important. They also felt they did not receive as much positive feedback as they would have liked. These findings are reminiscent of those reported by Hagestad (1977) when she studied Minnesota middle-aged women. These women said they expected a lot from their daughters and took whatever they got for granted. They did not expect much from their sons, but made a big fuss over everything they gave them.

Care giving, whether from parents to infants or adult children to old parents, assumes a different quality for men and women. Mothers still, in spite of enormous changes in parenting values, are much more likely to take on the total care of their children. They have the central responsibility, the day-to-day, hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute involvement with the practical details. They are caught in a never-ending repetitive, pedestrian role. This is true whether they are employed outside the home or not, whether they are absorbed in careers or not. Fathers are more often supplementary to mothers. They "help." They play more with their infants than mothers do,

and they appear more interesting, more novel (Lamb & Lamb, 1976). They are not around all the time and do not keep saying "Do this," or "No, don't do that." They are rougher. They throw children up in the air and elicit shrieks of delight. Mothers cuddle, and elicit feelings of security and comfort.

At the end of life, if there is no available spouse, daughters are the ones likely to take on the central responsibility, the day-to-day, hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute practical details. As noted above, old men are more likely to have a wife to care for them than old women are to have a husband. If a man has a wife to take care of him, other family members defer the caretaking and role nurturing to her (Johnson, 1985). She has first priority, first-access rights, even if she is a new wife. Like fathers of young children, it is possible that adult sons' caretaking of old parents is more unusual, perhaps more playful, than daughters. For one thing. it is likely to be their wives who take on the day-to-day work. If they do not have wives to do the daily work, sons are more likely to hire such help than are daughters, as is true, for custodial single mothers compared with custodial single fathers.

A distinction needs to be made between kin relations in crisis situations, like death of a spouse, and kin relations over time. Bankoff (1983) found that recent widows were comforted best by their mothers, but presumably they would want to turn to other people later. In her first study of Chicago widows, Lopata (1973) noted that sisters and daughters came to the aid of the new widow, but did not stay around very long. The same was true to brothers and sons, who came to give financial help and make arrangements for the funeral while the women were helping with emotional support, housework and cooking, and care of children. These findings have been replicated. Research has also shown that older people who are exclusively involved with their children and grandchildren have lower morale than those whose social life is abundantly outside the family circle (Troll, et al., 1979). And the large-scale survey of older Americans by Glenn and McLanahan (1981, 1982) found that having children per se did not make for greater life satisfaction — parents were not more satisfied than nonparents. Either non-parents could and did find other resources for satisfaction or having children does not bring unalloyed well-being in later life. It may be not only the deprivation of friendship and recreation that comes with heavy family involvement, but the fact that when grandparents in today's Western culture are so heavily involved with family it is because their children and grandchildren are in trouble, and that by itself is enough to sour life. It is good to have kin, particularly when you are in need, but it is also good to have friends with whom to share those thoughts and feelings that cannot usually be shared with children or parents. Your parents always remain your parents and your children always remain your children. Even when you are dying, I suspect, you try to present a model for correct socialization if you are a parent.

It has long been know that marital satisfaction of parents decreases after the birth of the first child (e.g., Feldman, 1964; Pineo, 1961). Younger married couples without children have higher marital satisfaction than their age mates who are parents, and at least some parents increase in marital satisfaction when their children leave home (Troll et al., 1979). Older people who enjoy their married life, therefore, are less likely to want to spend a lot of time with their children—and vice versa.

Cicirelli (1981) states that only 5% of Indiana parents and their adult children report any conflict. Like Hagestad (1984) and Troll (1972), Cicirelli suggests that the low incidence of conflict could be attributed to everybody's careful avoidance of troublesome issues. Hagestad found such "demilitarized zones" in family communications at all age levels.

AGE AND GENERATION DIFFERENCES

An analysis of the Berkeley longitudinal data (Weishaus, 1978) shows remarkable continuity in mother–daughter relationships over the first 40 years of life, as well as a high incidence of close, happy, comfortable contacts—although there were a couple of cases with almost no contact during adulthood. In spite of this stability, there was a gradual deterioration in their feelings, particularly during the ten years between the time the daughters were 30 and the time they were 40. Whether this change could be attributed to increased needs for help on the part of aging mothers, desire for freedom on the part of empty-nest daughters, or other factors is uncertain, but even when the daughters did not show as close and warm feelings as they had earlier, they continued to be interested, concerned, and involved with their mothers. Against such a background of continuity in relationships over the many years of association, separation, and reunion, feelings can wax and wane, or critical life events can produce more dramatic changes (Hess & Waring, 1978). The marriage of children and the birth of a next generation would be notable examples of such events. Haller's (1982) New York City young women respondents were more attached to their mothers if the young woman was unmarried than if she was married, particularly if she had children of her own. The marital status of the mothers, curiously, does not seem to make a difference. Thompson and Walker (1984) found the same thing for their younger mother–daughter dyads in Oklahoma.

A loosening of mother–daughter bonds on the marriage of the daughter has been attributed primarily to the intrusion of competing involvements. For example, a daughter's marriage interupts the mother–daughter attachment and interdependency (Walker, Thompson, & Morgan, 1987). This Oklahoma study of three generations of women has examined the importance of amount and kind of help exchanged and marital status on mother–daughter

relationships at two times of life. Neither employment of the middle-aged women nor widowhood of the old women affected the dyadic attachment, just marriage of the young-adult granddaughters. Baruch and Barnett (1983) also found that middle-aged Massachussets mothers and their young-adult daughters were closer if the daughters had fewer social roles and commitments. Walker and Thompson (1983) comment that, when married daughters work during the day, their mothers do not feel as close to them because evenings and weekends are "husband's time," and should not be intruded upon. The power of the daughter–parent attachment is demonstrated in father–child relations as well (C. Nydegger, personal communication, 1987); older fathers are closer to their daughters than to their sons.

At the end of life, the intense, exclusive process of terminal care can cement the attachment between the care giver and the patient so strongly that widows and care-giving daughters have been known to grieve more severely than survivors of those who have died quickly (Osterweis, Solomon, & Green, 1984; Zarit, Reever, & Bach-Peterson, 1980). The "women in the middle" caught between caring for their immediate families and for their older parents describe the hours they gave up responding to their mother's needs, time they may have spent relaxing (Brody & Lang, 1982). Their mothers wanted the affection and emotional support that only women can give. They said that their daughters were their chief confidants and yet stated that they did not want to burden them and expected help only when they really needed it.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Serious problems of conceptualization and measurement exist in this literature. Problems of conceptualization have been alluded to earlier. If the mothers and daughters remained highly involved and concerned in later adulthood, as they did in the Berkeley longitudinal data analyzed by Weishaus (1978), why did they not feel close? In other words, what do we mean by *close?* Do we mean *identity* like Nancy Friday implied in the title of her best seller, *My Mother Myself* (1981)? Are we talking about the feeling of being a clone of one's mother? Do we mean love? Do we mean dependency?

A variety of relationship constructs have been used in the literature. These include "closeness," "attachment," "good relationships," "intergenerational solidarity," "intimacy," "affective quality," "filial anxiety," "stress," "strain," "conflict," "burden," "guilt," "psychological distance," and "positive relationships." Some of these terms are probably synonyms (e.g., good relationships and positive feelings). Some include others (e.g., intergenerational solidarity and positive sentiment), and some are undoubtedly different (e.g., attachment and intimacy). What is needed is an analytic approach

like that of Sternberg (1985), who conceptually teased out three components of "love" from the relevant array of constructs: passion, intimacy, and commitment. Passion, he believes, is salient in sexual love but ephemeral. Intimacy or friendship lasts longer than passion and is more salient than commitment as well as more subject to conscious control. Commitment is the most stable component over time. It is also subject to conscious control and characteristic of long-term relationships like the ones discussed in this article.

An important beginning has been made by Walker and Thompson (1983), who factor analyzed a variety of mother–daughter relationship scores and obtained the following five factors: general intimacy or affection, attachment, disclosure, tension, and worry. Only when we have a valid or at least reliable lexicon of such relationship constructs, can we proceed to measure their stability and change over time.

Over and above construct reliability, we need more sophisticated ways of measuring change. Cross-sequential or time-sequential data are patently better than the prevailing cross-sectional information. Schaie (1973) and other life-span developmental methodologists have shown the sources of error in both cross-sectional and longitudinal research. Measuring people of different ages at the same moment in time can only give us age differences because different age cohorts grow up in and experience historically different periods that influence everything about their lives. Following one cohort over their lives, as was done with the Berkeley panel that Weishaus (1978) analyzed, only tells about one cohort and does not permit us to generalize to earlier or later ones. Only time or cross-sequential methods can follow different cohorts over life and allow us to venture true developmental hypotheses.

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