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Post-solidarity and postmodern intergenerational relation(ship)s

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Post-solidarity and postmodern intergenerational relation(ship)s

by

Michael-David Alphonsus Rodriguez Richardson Kerns

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Iowa State University
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2000

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This is to certify that the Doctoral dissertation of

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For the Major Program

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For the Graduate College
For Richard H. Leach, Ph.D., Emeritus and
In memoriam: Crispin Crispian, alias ‘Mr. Stitch’:
‘Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy.’

‘To-day, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.’

‘Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.’

‘So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up,
The still-defended challenge cup.’
A.E. Housman

Bu po so en
Jo raku ga jo.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: METHOD</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: RESULTS</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

An alternative set of constructs for intergenerational relation(ships), Post-Solidarity, is presented and empirically tested. Post-Solidarity comprehends not only traditional positive and consensual dimensions of within-primary-group (or “family”) relation(ships) but also the ambivalence, conflict, fluidity, and indeterminacy so characteristic of social life in Postmodern America (and, perhaps, Western Europe). A series of measurement, mean-comparison, and regression analyses, evaluating the nomothetic and predictive viability of Post-Solidarity against the currently dominant conceptualization of intergenerational relation(ships) as either solidary or fatally conflictual, generated results that suggest preliminary support for Post-Solidarity as an alternative and more appropriate conceptualization of contemporary intergenerational relation(ships).
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past half century, profound shifts in our ways of perceiving, valuing, and feeling about ourselves and our world have radically altered American society and reconfigured the American family. We find these changes—which have been described as the movement from modernity to (P)ostmodernity—both liberating and stressful. The modern nuclear family...is fast disappearing. In its stead we now have a structure—the (P)ostmodern permeable family—that mirrors the openness, complexity, and diversity of our contemporary lifestyles (Elkind, 1994, p. 1).

Prologue

The following is an inquiry into intergenerational relation(ship)s (The use of the term "relation[ship]s" is pointedly deliberate. The author wishes to highlight the unfortunately ubiquitous and egregious use of the term "relationship" to describe "relations" among/between inanimate things. Only sentient beings can have "relationships."). The inquiry is guided by the thesis that parents and adult children born before the end of World War II (WWII) experience different kinds and intensities of intergenerational relation(ship)s than do those parents and adult children born after the end of WWII. Moreover, the inquiry builds upon and extends the well-established finding that intergenerational relation(ship)s, namely, relation(ship)s between parents and their adult children, are characterized by enduring behavioral-perceptual differences (see Bengtson & Harootyan, 1994; Roberts, Richards, & Bengtson, 1991; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997).

Modernist notions of the primacy and unity of the nuclear family and of the inviolate nature of intergenerational relation(ship)s perpetuated by such influential researchers and social-gerontological theorists as Bengtson and colleagues (see Bengtson & Harootyan, 1994;
Bengtson, Olander, & Haddad, 1976; Parrott & Bengtson, 1999; Roberts et al., 1991; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997; Treas & Bengtson, 1988), I suggest, no longer sufficiently comprehend the lived experience of contemporary kin relation(ship)s. Such notions, which Luescher and Pillemer (1998) term as constitutive of the ‘solidarity perspective’ of intergenerational relation(ship)s, I argue, inadequately capture both the content and tone of contemporary intergenerational relation(ship)s. Bernardes (1993) has gone so far as to observe that the Modernist view that family and intergenerational relation(ship)s are dominated by one socially ‘normative’ model (i.e., the enduring nuclear family) is an ‘oppressive practice.’

In the following study, therefore, I propose a construct of intergenerational relation(ship)s that goes beyond the Modernist paradigm asserted by the ‘solidarity perspective’ and that comprehends the Postmodern conceptualization of the “contemporary family as filled with doubt, ambivalence, and insecurity” (Stacey, 1991, p. 17). In addition, I will empirically evaluate the proposed primary-group set of constructs, Post-Solidarity, and test it against the Solidarity set of constructs of the solidarity school (i.e., Bengtson and colleagues) in its ability to account for observed variability in relation(ship)s between a sample of parents and adult children born before and after the end of World War II (i.e., 1945).

Introduction

Relations among generations—and within families, constitute an integral theme of human history and have enjoyed a ‘privileged’ status in social-scientific theories purporting to account for the “transmission of material and immaterial values” in the development and continuity of societies and cultures (Garms-Homolova, 1984, p. 1). The essential problem of generations, according to such Modernist sociologists and social gerontologists as Bengtson and colleagues (cf. Bengtson, Cutler, Mangen, & Marshall, 1985; Marshall & Bengtson, 1983), concerns the
ramifications of succeeding birth cohorts (i.e., generations), particularly the extent to which societies—and their 'normative' institutions, manage to integrate persons of different ages. As with other social divisions, the social integration of age-differentiated groups indicates cooperation and (at least) the potential for conflict among age strata (Henretta, 1988).

In addition, social scientists have frequently treated intergenerational relation(ship)s as catalysts of social change, social change that has on occasion marked periods of very public stress, conflict, and turmoil (see Datan, 1986; Feuer, 1969; Mannheim, 1928/1952). Bengtson and colleagues (see Bengtson, 1970; Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971; Bengtson et al., 1976; Giarusso, Stallings, & Bengtson, 1995) have theorized that differences in behavior and values between generations, differences that on occasion have led to social disruption and upheaval, can be partly attributed to the perceived tenor of relations between generations.

The basis of such differences, Bengtson and colleagues have suggested (see Bengtson, 1970; Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971; Bengtson et al., 1976; Giarusso et al., 1995), is the contrasting 'stake' or long-term (existential) interest that parents and children have in their intergenerational relation(ship)s. Parents, the argument goes, are most concerned with the perpetuation of values they deem important; children, however, regard autonomy from parents and their belief systems as paramount and abiding (Giarusso et al.).

Intergenerational relation(ship)s within families (i.e., primary groups) have been conceptualized as special cases of close relation(ship)s that are, however, subject to commitments or requirements of a distinctly formal and binding nature, commitments that are often inscribed in cultural-social sanctions and codified in public policy and civil law.
(Levenger, 1965, 1976). These relation(ships) are subject to the same forces of ceaseless and accelerating change that permeate all of the familiar structures and relation(ships), mores, and meanings of social life in America in the early twenty-first century (Noble, 1998).

Changes in the patterns and values of contemporary intergenerational relation(ships) have been posited to reflect the erosion of the nuclear family as the ascendant model promoted and idealized by Modernist family sociologists and social gerontologists (Stacey, 1991). The erosion of the preeminent status of Modernism, the nuclear family as the 'normative' paragon of Modern society, and the image of an integrated cultural system founded in core (and universal) values has resulted, on one hand, in "images of decanonization, dispersal, chaos, and indeterminacy" (Cheal, 1996, p. 13) and, on the other hand, in changes that "do not seem to be serving as a transmission belt from one cultural definition of normal family life to another" (Cheal, p. 11).

The emergence of the "(P)ostmodern permeable family" (Elkind, 1994), that is, of a primary-group structure distinguished by its fluidity, flexibility, and exquisite sensitivity to cultural-social change, I would argue, coincided with the 'collision' of pre-World-War-II (WWII) Modernist sensibilities with the post-WWII legacy of cultural and environmental destruction, holocaust, moral indeterminacy, chaos, potential nuclear annihilation, political turmoil, and the interjection of a new economic world system (Jameson, 1997).

In periodizing phenomena of this kind, it is necessary to distinguish between the gradual setting in place of the various preconditions for the new structures and the "moment" when they all coalesce as a functional system (Jameson, 1997). This moment is itself less a matter of chronology than it is of retroactivity: People become aware of the operation of a new system, in which they are themselves implicated, only subsequently and incrementally (Jameson). Thus, I
will argue that the basic technological innovations of the 'new long wave' (Mandel, 1975) of capitalism's third stage, i.e., Postmodernism, were available by the end of World War II (1945), which also occasioned a radical reorganization of international relations, decolonization, and the emergence of a new economic world system.

In addition to the economic preparation of Postmodernism, a cultural transfiguration unfolded in the Post-World-War II era that swept away so much of (Modernist) tradition on the level of 'mentalités' (Jameson, 1997). By virtue of the cultural-social dissolution of the Modernist 'structure in dominance' (Althusser, 1965) set-off at the end of WWII, the psychic habitus of Postmodernism, strengthened by a generational rupture achieved primarily in the late 1950s and 1960s, permeated both the infrastructure (i.e., the economic system) and the superstructures (i.e., the cultural structure of 'feeling') (Jameson) of American society.

For parents and children born into post-WWII America, in addition to behavioral-value differences (e.g., conflicting 'stakes') associated with their within-family kin status—I will argue, living with and negotiating the 'Postmodern family revolution' (Stacey, 1991) has translated into an evermore difficult juggling of the needs of the parents with the needs of the children. In the Modernist nuclear family, the firmness and 'rigidity' of the boundaries between public and private lives, between the homeplace and the workplace, between children and adults, made possible the envelopment of the young (i.e., younger generations within primary-group units) in well-defined limits and standards (Elkind, 1994). This 'envelope' of security and protection made it possible for the young to devote much of their energies to the demands and conflicts of growing up. In this way, the Modernist 'nuclear family' clearly served the needs of the children to a greater extent than the needs of the parents (Elkind).
The Postmodern permeable family (Elkind, 1994) could be argued to be faced with a continuously evolving set of needs which, however, seem to be balanced more in favor of the adults/parents. Adults/parents currently have many more lifestyle options than did parents living in Modernist nuclear families: Childcare is increasingly provided by paid professionals as more than 50% of working-age women participate full-time in the work-force (Elkind). Relief from the stresses of primary-group life that have accumulated in the Postmodern era can be attributed—in part, to the loosening of the ‘old’ constraints of the Modernist nuclear family (Elkind).

Modernist conceptualizations of intergenerational family relation(ships) emphasize solidarity, i.e., “the ‘glue’ which overcomes the (centrifugal) tendencies of human self-interest” (Roberts et al., 1991, p.12). The concept of solidarity comprehends such dimensions as shared (ethical-moral) values, interdependence, and reciprocity (Rosenmayr, 1984). Although the ‘solidarity’ perspective posits a multi-dimensional model of intergenerational relation(ships), it emphasizes the positive and consensual bases of intergenerational relation(ships). In this conceptual scheme, any ‘negative’ aspects of intergenerational relation(ships), e.g., ambivalence and/or conflict, are treated as indicators of an absence of ‘solidarity’ (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998).

The concept now proposed, Post-Solidarity, characterizes relation(ships) between parents and adult children as fluid, contingent, and reflexively determined. It is a conceptualization of intergenerational relation(ships) that is ‘useful’ to the extent that it recognizes the presence of ambivalence (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998) and conflict (Rosenmayr, 1984) in relation(ships) that have sometimes been portrayed as ‘immunized’ against the vicissitudes and temporal stresses of other close, non-kin relation(ships) (Luescher & Pillemer,
1998; Sprey, 1991). Furthermore, Post-Solidarity is a concept derived from the Postmodern recognition of the displacement of the Modernist nuclear (family) pattern without the substitution of another dominant or 'normative' form or pattern. Rather, the Postmodern perspective admits the most striking feature of contemporary primary-group and intergenerational relationship(s): their radical diversity (Rapoport, 1989; Stacey, 1990, 1991).

The acknowledgement and incorporation of ambivalence, conflict, and change in relationship(s) between parents and adult children signify the theoretical salience of attitudinal irresolution, or the "unstable dialectic of positive and negative evaluations" (Thompson & Holmes, 1996, pp. 497-498)—a Postmodern cultural characteristic that comprehends the presence and coexistence of a range of very different, yet subordinate, features (Jameson, 1997). Such a conceptual scheme represents a radical departure from the totalizing framework asserted by the solidarity theorists (cf. Bengtson & Harootyan, 1994; Bengtson et al., 1976; Black & Bengtson, 1973; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997).

I begin my inquiry with a discussion of the theoretical antecedents of social and familial solidarity. Following this discussion, I review the currently dominant concept of intergenerational relationship(s), namely, family solidarity. Next, I propose an alternative construct, Post-Solidarity. I conclude the first chapter with an exposition of the hypotheses to be tested in the present study.

The ABCs of Intergenerational Relationship(s): Antecedents, Bengtson, and Colleagues

Since the 1970s, Bengtson and colleagues have advanced a program of research that emphasizes a conceptualization of intergenerational relationship(s) as predominantly solidary, positive, and consensual (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998). Throughout Bengtson and colleagues's influential series of articles and books (e.g., Bengtson & Harootyan, 1994; Bengtson et al., 1976;
Bengtson & Schrader, 1982; McChesney & Bengtson, 1988; Roberts et al., 1991), Durkheim’s (1893/1933) construct of social solidarity, and the conditions that contribute to its emergence in society, figure prominently.

**Antecedents: The Long Shadows of Durkheim and Parsons**

In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim (1893/1933) elaborated a theory of social order rooted in the transformation of traditional (read: non-industrial) societies by rationalism, industrialism, and individualism. His principal concern was with the identification of the constitutive bases of a ‘new’ social order in the throes of forces (i.e., rationalism, industrialism, and individualism) which had undermined the bases of the ‘old’ social order.

In this project, Durkheim (1893/1933) differentiated mechanical solidarity, which he argued is characteristic of traditional societies and based on shared (and dominant) social values and undifferentiated social structures, from organic solidarity, which he deemed as characteristic of ‘new’ or Modern societies, which is based on the division (and specialization) of labor and the differentiation of social structures and functions. The transformation of traditional societies—which are regulated by a common normative system (of values-morals) enforced by coercive sanctions, to modern or industrial societies—which are characterized by the division of labor and restitutive sanctions, Durkheim (1893/1933) asserted, is an emergent process that is inherently moral and institutionally-embodied. The most visible symbol of social solidarity in modern societies, Durkheim maintained, is ‘the law.’

Durkheim’s (1893/1933) theory of social solidarity was integrated into the sociology of the (American) family by Parsons (1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955). Parsons framed solidarity at the level of the family through his stipulation of social integration, that is, the functional-transformative prerequisite integral to the development and maintenance of any social unit,
including the family. Social integration refers to the “compatibility of the components of a system (e.g., a family) with each (sic) other so that change is not necessitated before equilibrium can be reached”; and to the “maintenance of the conditions of the distinctiveness of the system..." (Parsons, 1951, p. 36).

Social-functional integration in families, according to Parsons (Parsons, 1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955), involves integration and differentiation in and across familial structures and functions. This means the distinction between differentiation as comprising the processes involved in the disintegration of 'old' structures (within a social system/unit) and the motivational reorganization preceding the development of the 'new' and integration as the building up and then the consolidation of the 'new' structures and functions (Parsons). Over the course of the lifespan, social systems/units are repeatedly challenged to dissolve 'old' structures and functions and to evolve 'new' structures and functions. In this way, Parsons integrates and expands upon Durkheim's (1893/1933) notion of social solidarity within the canon of Modernist family sociology.

Parsons's (1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955) treatment of family systems/units as systems of action, dynamic systems of action that are predicated on social-functional integration, comprehends, therefore, structural and functional differentiation. Such a treatment of the development of family systems/units is consistent with Durkheim's (1893/1933) Modernist theory of solidarity and the division—and specialization, of labor. Social solidarity, Durkheim argued, is only possible in a social system animated by interdependence (of labor and the products of labor) and common commitment to normative principles and behavioral protocols. Underlying Parsons's view of the family as a system of action is his contention that all such (social) systems “consist as structures of the ‘crystallization’ of symbolically generalized (or
mediated)...orientations of actors to objects in their situations and the organization of the systems in these terms" (Parsons & Bales, 1955, p. 32). As such, the structural and functional development of family systems derive from the interaction of the within-family components and the without-family (i.e., environmental or extra-social) components (Parsons; Parsons & Bales).

(More) Antecedents: Homans's Social-Interactional Model

In addition to informing their conceptualization of intergenerational solidarity with the sociological traditions of Durkheim (1893/1933) and Parsons (1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955), Bengtson and colleagues (see Bengtson et al., 1976; Roberts et al., 1991) availed themselves of the behavioral-psychological tradition addressing small-group behavior and dynamics. Romans and colleagues (Homans, 1950, 1961; Homans & Schneider, 1955) initiated one of the most influential lines of research in this tradition.

Homans and colleagues (Homans, 1950, 1961; Homans & Schneider, 1955) developed what Bengtson and colleagues (Roberts et al., 1991, p. 15) have characterized as “one of the more cogent taxonomies of the elements of group solidarity.” ‘Group solidarity,’ in Homans and colleagues’s ‘taxonomy’ (or social-interactional model), derives from ‘face-to-face’ interaction between individuals that is characterized by four categories of social-psychological phenomena: activity, defined as a kind of behavior; sentiment, operationalized as an observable indicator of attitudes and feelings; interaction, conceptualized as an activity of one person that is either rewarded or punished by an activity of another; and norm(s), defined as common standards or sanctions regulating the behavior of individuals in certain situations (Homans, 1950; 1961).

In the course of face-to-face interaction, Homans and colleagues (Homans, 1950, 1961; Homans & Schneider, 1955) proposed, persons in small groups develop stronger sentiments of
liking for one another the more frequently they interact; that “persons who feel sentiments of
liking for one another will express those sentiments in activities over and above the activities of
the external system” (Homans, 1950, p. 134); and that “persons who interact with one another
are more like one another in their activities than they are like other persons with whom they
interact less frequently” (Homans, 1950, p. 141).

Bengtson and colleagues (Bengtson et al., 1976; McChesney & Bengtson, 1988; Roberts
et al., 1991) explicitly adopted Homans and colleagues’s (Homans, 1950, 1961; Homans &
Schneider, 1955) social-interaational explanans in their conceptualization of intergenerational
solidarity. The development and maintenance of intergenerational solidarity, or the formulation
of the properties that “render a (family) an ordered group” according to Bengtson and
colleagues (cf. McChesney & Bengtson, 1988, p. 15), derive from face-to-face interaction of
family members that lead to feelings of liking (affection or sentiment) which, in addition, lead to
higher frequencies of interaction and to the establishment of solidarity and norms that regulate
how family members are to behave with/toward one another in the course of their interactions
and relation(ships).

Bs and Cs of Intergenerational Relation(ships): Bengtson and Colleagues

Bengtson and colleagues’s concept of intergenerational relation(ships), or family
solidarity (see McChesney & Bengtson, 1988; Roberts et al., 1991), represents an elaboration of
two traditions of social-scientific inquiry that have been historically quite disparate. On the one
hand, Bengtson and colleagues inform their conceptualization of intergenerational solidarity with
extensive reference to Durkheim’s (1893/1933) The Division of Labor in Society. From
Durkheim’s treatise on the bases of social order, Bengtson and colleagues (see McChesney &
Bengtson, 1988) obtained the construct of solidarity, and term Durkheim’s contribution a
'macro-social' antecedent of their model of intergenerational solidarity. In addition, Bengtson and colleagues (see McChesney & Bengtson; Roberts & Bengtson, 1990; Roberts et al., 1991) reference Parsons's (1951, 1955, 1973; Parsons & Bales, 1955) interpretation of solidarity within a family systems/unit frame.

On the other hand, Bengtson and colleagues (see Bengtson et al., 1976; Bengtson, Mangen, & Landry, 1988; McChesney & Bengtson, 1988) reference Homans's (1950, 1961; Homans & Schneider, 1955) model of social-interactional processes within small groups as a 'micro-social assessment of solidarity' (McChesney & Bengtson). Intergenerational, namely, within-family, solidarity, accordingly, is argued to derive from the interaction among/between family members 'in those spheres of life that involve association, consensus, and affection' (Bengtson et al., 1976, p. 247) and exchange, norms, and (family) structure (Bengtson & Schrader, 1982).

Affection, or Affectional Solidarity, indicates the "nature and extent of positive sentiment" expressed between/among family members (Bengtson et al., 1976, p. 247). Affection is an analogue of Homans's (1950, 1961) sentiment variable in his social-interactional model of small-group behavior and reflects feelings of closeness, trust, and respect (Bengtson Mangen, & Landry, 1984). Items assessing affection focus on the quality of interaction between/among family members, including the degree to which affection is reciprocated (Bengtson et al., 1984).

Association, or Associational Solidarity, in Bengtson and colleagues's scheme (cf. Bengtson & Schrader, 1982), indicates the frequency of interaction between/among family members across certain domains of activity (e.g. family reunions, visits, and telephone conversations). As a measure of 'objective' behavior, association is intended to operationalize a
form of interaction stipulated by Homans and colleagues (Homans, 1950, 1961; Homans & Schneider, 1955) in their social-interactional model of small-group behavior. Items assessing association quantify the level of such interaction (Bengtson & Schrader).

Consensus, or Consensual Solidarity, indexes the extent to which family members share belief- and/or value-systems: It is described as an “emergent aspect of family relations” (Mangen, 1988, p. 50) because it references evaluative behavior within the context of certain role relation(ship)s within the family, e.g., parent-child beliefs regarding premarital sex (Landry & Martin, 1988). Items assessing consensus also emphasize the presence (or absence) of differences between/among generations within the family (Bengtson et al., 1984).

Exchange, or Exchange Solidarity, assesses the material give-and-take between/among family members (Mangen, 1988). Exchange activities include the giving and receiving of financial assistance and gifts. Items index both the level of exchange and the degree of reciprocity within the exchange activity (Hancock, Mangen, & McCchesney, 1988).

Norms of familism, or Normative Solidarity, refer to expectations held by family members regarding their loyalty and obligations to one another (Mangen & Westbrook, 1988). Items assess the extent to which family members expect one another, for example, to establish households near to or provide support for one another (Bengtson et al., 1984).

Structure, or Structural Solidarity, is “primarily descriptive in nature, detailing the number, sex, and geographic proximity” (McCchesney & Bengtson, 1988, p. 45) of family members. These descriptive items are often deployed as moderator variables in the estimation of (overall) family solidarity (Bengtson & Schrader, 1982).

Bengtson and colleagues have presented a body of empirical results that suggests intergenerational family members who report moderate to high levels of affection, association,
consensus, exchange, norms, and structure experience (or report experiencing) moderate to high levels of family solidarity. For example, Bengtson et al. (1984), in a meta-review of findings from several American surveys—including their own study of three-generation families, found that parents and adult children are in frequent contact with one another, with up to 80 percent of the parents reporting regular contact with at least one of their adult children (i.e., parents report high levels of Associational Solidarity).

In addition, Bengtson and colleagues have obtained findings that suggest intergenerational attitude and value continuity in the family. For example, they obtained low-to-moderate positive relations between the opinions and value-expressions of elderly parents and their adult children regarding materialism, humanism, and social conservatism (Bengtson et al., 1984; Roberts et al., 1991). However, they also observed differences in the overall level of ‘objective’ (i.e., the observed correlation) consensus between generations (Bengtson et al.; Roberts et al.).

Moderate to high levels of Affectional Solidarity between elderly parents and adult children have also been observed: In general, both parents and adult children report high levels of affection for one another (Bengtson et al., 1984; Roberts et al., 1991). However, as with consensus, the parents consistently reported higher levels of affection for their adult children than did the adult children for their parents (Richards, Bengtson, & Miller, 1989). The observed disparity in perceived affection between parents and adult children has been termed the ‘intergenerational stake phenomenon’ (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971; Giarusso et al., 1995). Notwithstanding such differences in intergenerational affection, Bengtson and colleagues maintain that Affectional Solidarity is present in and important to intergenerational solidarity (Giarusso et al.; Roberts et al.).
Moderate to high levels of Exchange Solidarity have also been observed: Although moderated by gender and level of affection, Bengtson and colleagues (Silverstein, Parrott, & Bengtson, 1995) found that service and financial assistance are given and received by both parents and adult children. Moreover, exchange occurred even in those families reporting intrafamilial conflict and lower levels of affection (Parrott & Bengtson, 1999). These results would seem to suggest that Exchange Solidarity derives from dimensions of family solidarity other than affection.

Support for the role of norms of familism in intergenerational relations has also been obtained: Parrott and Bengtson (1999) found that a past sense of ‘duty’ or ‘obligation’ to the family (members) is associated with moderate to high levels of exchange and solidarity. However, anomalies were also observed across certain domains: Adult children with a lower level of reported familism (or sense of ‘duty’ and/or ‘obligation to the family) reported higher levels of expressive (i.e., sentimental) and financial assistance received from their fathers (Parrott & Bengtson). Familism, from an intergenerational perspective and in this sample, appears not as determinative of intergenerational exchange as has been previously assumed (Parrott & Bengtson).

Structure, or the gender, number, availability, distance, marital status, and ages of intergenerational family members, has (have) often been observed to influence patterns of intergenerational solidarity. For example, Bengtson and colleagues (see Bengtson et al., 1984; Mangen & McChesney, 1985; Parrott & Bengtson, 1999; Roberts & Bengtson, 1990; Roberts et al., 1991) reported that gender of both the parent and the adult child differentially determine level of intergenerational support (exchange) given and received, and that the level of intergenerational support varies depending on the kind of support and level of affection,
familism, and history of conflict experienced within the family and between the generations. Structural factors, therefore, often moderate relations among the other dimensions of Bengtson and colleagues construct of family solidarity.

In general, the body of research conducted and reported by Bengtson and colleagues (e.g., Bengtson, 1999) supports the multi-dimensional character of their intergenerational solidarity model and suggests that intergenerational families who report moderate to high levels of affection, association, consensus, exchange, and norms experience moderate to high levels of intergenerational (or family) solidarity. Structural characteristics, in addition, modulate the intensity or degree of intergenerational solidarity reported by intergenerational families and their members.

Proposed: Post-Solidarity in Postmodern Intergenerational Relation(ship)s

The ‘solidarity school’ (i.e., Bengtson and colleagues) emphasizes the positive and consensual bases of intergenerational relation(ship)s (termed: ‘family solidarity’) (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998). Moreover, the ‘solidarity’ perspective regards families (primary groups) as phenomenological exemplars of the “axiom of equity” (Farber, 1989, p. 307), which embodies the notion of prescriptive altruism toward kin. Kin-constituted primary groups, according to the axiom, perform a variety of acts of benevolence ranging from expressions of good will and sharing festivities to generous acts of charity and actions involving personal sacrifice (Farber). The ritualized expressions of amity appear to stabilize kinship bonds and to reinforce commitment to the existing structure of kin statuses (Farber).

Bengtson and colleagues’s (see Bengtson et al., 1976, 1984; Roberts et al., 1991) construct of ‘family solidarity,’ in addition to its roots in Durkheimian (1893/1933) and Parsonian (1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955) theories of solidarity and social integration, bears a
remarkable resemblance to the axiom of amity’s ‘ethic of (kinship) generosity’ and integrative reinforcement of commitment to kinship ties (Farber, 1989; Fortes, 1969). Furthermore, Bengtson and colleagues insinuate the centrality of the axiom’s principles of generosity and kin-commitment through the incorporation of the dimensions of Consensual and Normative Solidarity in their ‘family solidarity’ model. Accordingly, intergenerational relation(ships) are idealized, in the ‘family solidarity’ framework, as fundamentally benevolent, other-oriented, and inherently constituted to distribute primary-group resources (e.g., attention, good will, money, and time) in ways that achieve an optimal system balance (Litwak, 1985).

Although conflict is acknowledged in the ‘solidarity’ perspective (see Parrott & Bengtson, 1999), it is treated as an independent variable incidental to the probability of instrumental exchange within a primary group. Such ‘negative’ behaviors are interpreted in the ‘solidarity’ perspective as nothing more than the absence of solidarity (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998). Farber (1989) has demonstrated, however, that the positive and consensual parameters of amity and/or intergenerational solidarity are circumscribed by and juxtaposed with another axiomatic intrafamilial dynamic: the norm of kin-distrust.

Farber (1989) observed in a cross-cultural sample of intergenerational primary-groups (or families) that the behavioral rules regulating the management of primary-group surplus resources comprehend both a tendency to distribute (and/or re-distribute) and a tendency to limit the extent of distribution (and re-distribution). The conjoint operation of these two distributional axioms, according to Farber, arises from and results in ambivalence in primary-group members as to the extent to which they can trust other kin to adhere to the axiom of amity. Such indeterminacy in assessing the equivalence or reciprocity of amity rituals (exchanges) often leads to an overvaluation of a kin member’s own contributions and/or sacrifices and a sense of dis-
trust (Farber). Ultimately, the ambivalence and distrust impart a 'braking' effect on intra-familial and intergenerational interaction and exchange (Farber).

Notwithstanding the 'solidarity' perspective's (e.g., Bengtson et al, 1976, 1984; & Bengtson, 1999; Roberts et al., 1991) "overly positive and consensual bias" (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998, p. 414), Postmodern marital and primary-group structures and values have changed from the "modern two-parent, male-breadwinner female-homemaker ideal type to widely diverse marital and family structures and competing ideologies (my emphasis), multiple employed adults in post-industrial organizations, and values which either recognize the fluid uncertain (my emphasis) nature of marital and familial relationships or lament the passing of the 'traditional' family" (Jacques, 1998, p. 383). A new 'generation' of intergenerational researchers has suggested that the field must move beyond the reduction of intergenerational relation(ships) to a simple "love-hate" polarity (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998, p. 414).

Rather, the 'new' intergenerational/primary-group theorists argue that simple and static conceptual dichotomies should be abandoned in favor of conceptualizations that capture the wide-ranging dynamism and plurality of forms of contemporary intergenerational relation(ships) (see Ferree, 1990; Luescher & Pillemer, 1998; Scanzoni & Marsiglio, 1993). Such conceptualizations would comprehend the "contested, ambivalent, and undecided" nature of intergenerational relation(ships) (Stacey, 1990, p. 17), relation(ships) in which it is not only possible but also likely that primary-group members experience and express ambivalence, change-irresolution, commitment, conflict, investment, love, and trust—contemporaneously.

The alternative—and incremental, construct I now propose is termed Post-Solidarity, and it marks a substantive enhancement of the 'solidarity' perspective of intergenerational relation(ships), one that moves beyond the "myth of a unitary 'family interest,' of a family as a
unitary whole, i.e., 'a glued-together family'" (Ferree, 1990, p. 867). Post-Solidarity is intended to index the 'unstable dialectic' of positive and negative evaluations, feelings, and cognitions (Zanna & Rempel, 1988) that often characterizes close, namely, intergenerational, relation(ship)s. Moreover, Post-Solidarity speaks to the conditions of primary-group relation(ship)s that are culturally determined and reflective of the contingency and multivocality of ethical and 'moral' systems in Postmodern America. The 'normative' conformity insinuated by the 'solidarity' perspective conceptually fails to account for the diversity (or variability) and complexity of primary-group interactions and structures, both of which have direct consequences for the nature and quality of the evaluative attitudes held by primary-group members toward themselves, one another, and the 'group' as a whole.

The hypothesized historical-period effects of Postmodernism on contemporary primary groups and intergenerational relation(ship)s issue from a veritable font of Postmodern critique of the inevitability of human destiny, the triumph of reason, and the temptation to think of the world, or the human self, as possessing an intrinsic nature, an essence (see Martin & Sugarman, 2000; Rorty, 1989)—otherwise known as Modernism. An essential component of the Postmodern critique is the rejection of historicism (i.e., the tendency to regard historical development as the most basic aspect of human existence) and of all historical notions of human mastery and teleology (Dosse, 1997). Postmodernism, in this analysis, is the point at which humanity begins to no longer worship anything, where it treats nothing as a quasi-divinity (including ourselves), where it treats everything as a product of time and chance. Moving forward into a fuller realization of the absolute contingency of everything would be, paraphrasing Freud, to recognize chance as capable—and worthy, of determining humanity's fate (Rorty).
Among those social scientists who no longer embrace Modernism as the operative interpretive paradigm, several have positioned the considerable critical resources of Postmodernism to 'see' primary groups—such as the family, and their behavioral dynamics as "something(s) which just happened rather than as something(s) which was (were) the point of the whole process(es)" (Rorty, 1989, p. 16). Scanzoni and Marsiglio (1993) have presented a theory of primary-group interaction that purposes to account for "persons's creative struggles to enhance their own lives as well as the lives of others" (p. 126). Their 'New Action Model' (Scanzoni & Marsiglio) focuses on the formation, maintenance, and gain or loss of the sense of "we-ness" (Cooley, 1909, p. 23) within one or more primary groups. 'New Action Theory' addresses the ongoing construction of dynamic primary-group/social patterns, patterns that are not motivated by concerns about reproduction but by concerns about production (Scanzoni & Marsiglio). In the view of New Action Theory, primary-group members—and persons in general, produce and/or create the conditions of their lives within the context of their social environment, i.e., what persons 'produce' is the result of a great number of sheer contingencies (Rorty; Scanzoni & Marsiglio).

Another social scientist of the 'new generation,' Jacques (1998), engaged in 'skeptical reflection' of Modernist (family) values and theories by examining the changing primary-group (family) patterns within the context of Postmodernism's growing emphasis on open and free communications among primary-group (and group) members where "cooperation, friendship, and involvement (i.e., affectivity) are valued highly, individual choices (i.e., self) rather than traditional group standards become more accepted, and expressive communications...become(s) paramount" (Jacques, p. 382). Jacques found support for a Postmodern perspective on these changes: an increase in structural marital status diversity (e.g., single vs. married; married vs.
divorced; divorced and single; divorced and remarried; divorced more than once and single; divorced more than once and remarried; Gay or Lesbian and single; Gay or Lesbian and married; Gay or Lesbian and married heterosexually, etc.) as well as a shift in attitudes supporting more diverse organizational and interactional primary-group patterns; traditional roles of women and men are less salient, and less settled; and with such changes, primary-group members increasingly emphasize "affectivity, particularism, and achievement and the broad social dynamics of constant communications, organizational flexibility and tentativeness; and 'normative' change produced, in part, from the constant re-examination (and critical questioning) of traditional values" (Jacques, p. 406). All these findings, Jacques observed, are consistent with the Postmodern ideation of "the contemporary (primary group) as filled with doubt, ambivalence, and insecurity" (Jacques, p. 384).

Inglehart (1997), in a massive survey of the worldviews (e.g., economic, political, and social views) of individuals from 43 countries, reported that throughout advanced industrial (or post-industrial) societies the traditional two-parent family (i.e., the nuclear pattern or the unity-of-the-conjugal-couple model) has been (and is likely to continue) breaking down. Furthermore, Inglehart found evidence for the systematic decline in traditional values toward authority, sexual and marital (family) norms, civil norms, and religious norms. The ramifications of ascendant Postmodern modes of behavior occasion, according to Inglehart, declining respect for authority—of virtually very kind, eroding confidence in government and growing resistance to government intrusion, increasing emphasis on subjective well being and quality of life, increasing flexibility for individual self-expression and choice in sexual behavior, including a dramatic increase in the acceptance of homosexuality and unmarried parenthood, and rapidly advancing
secularization of society, secularization, however, that does not correlate with a decline in spiritual concerns or with ultimate ends (Inglehart, 1997).

The construct of Post-Solidarity is devised to reflect the “fluid and unstable familial culture” (Stacey, 1996, p. 17) of contemporary (and Postmodern) intergenerational relation(ships). There is good reason to believe that parents and their adult children do experience some level of ambivalence, conflict, and change within their relation(ships). Even research conducted by those affiliated with the 'solidarity school' (see Clarke, Preston, Raskin, & Bengtson, 1999; Parrott & Bengtson, 1999) has revealed instances of conflict between elderly parents and their adult children. The scope of inquiry, however, for the 'solidarity-school' researchers has tendentiously dichotomized the typology of intergenerational relations as either solidary or (fatally) conflictual (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998).

Post-Solidarity is intended to comprehend the dichotomous typology of the 'solidarity' perspective as well as the indeterminacy, fluidity, contentiousness, and ambivalence of Postmodern intergenerational relation(ships). Constituent components of the proposed Post-Solidarity construct are Ambivalence-Conflict, Commitment-Investment, Love-Trust, and Change-Irresolution.

The proposed conceptualization of intergenerational relation(ships) encompasses diverse and, at times, contradictory attitudes that are hypothesized not only to be persistent but also to be essential to the continued development of close ties between parents and their adult children. Such a conceptualization, I argue, more accurately mirrors the tenor of intergenerational relation(ships) than does the 'solidarity' perspective by emphasizing the “intensification of internal contradictions (my emphasis)....” (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998, p. 415) constitutive of the
themes of "difference, plurality, peculiarity, and irregularity" so characteristic of Postmodernity (Martin & Sugarman, 2000, p. 398).

Research Hypotheses

1. The Post-Solidarity variables:

   • Ambivalence-Conflict, Commitment-Investment, Love-Trust, and Change-Irresolution are significantly correlated with one another.

   • Ambivalence-Conflict, Investment, Love-Trust, and Change-Irresolution significantly predict Commitment; Ambivalence-Conflict and Change-Irresolution are negatively related to Commitment; Investment and Love-Trust are positively related to Commitment.

2. The Solidarity variables:

   • Affectional, Associational, Exchange, and Normative Solidarity are significantly correlated with one another.

   • Affectional, Associational, Exchange, and Normative Solidarity are positively related to Commitment.

3. Post-Solidarity is a more efficient and comprehensive predictor of Commitment than is Family Solidarity: All of the variables of Post-Solidarity significantly predict Commitment; moreover, the effect-size estimates of the Post-Solidarity variables are of a greater magnitude than those of Family Solidarity and account for more of the observed variability in the outcome variable, Commitment.

4. Participants born after the end of WWII evince:

   • Higher levels of Ambivalence-Conflict and Change-Irresolution than participants born before the end of WWII
• Lower levels of Investment and Love-Trust than participants born before the end of WWII.
• Lower levels of Commitment than participants born before the end of WWII.
• Lower levels of Affectional, Associational, Exchange, and Normative Solidarity than participants born before the end of WWII.

5. Parents evince:

• Lower levels of Ambivalence-Conflict and Change-Irresolution than adult children.
• Higher levels of Commitment and Investment; Affectional, Associational, Exchange, and Normative Solidarity than adult children.
CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Participants

Participant-recruiting efforts focused on parent and adult-child dyads, which were the units of analysis. Focusing on parent and adult-child dyads enabled the identification and differentiation of period-of-birth (pre-WWII vs. post-WWII) and generational-role (adult child vs. parent) effects and facilitated the testing of the predictive validity of the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity constructs.

One-hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed, with 75 questionnaires given to each of the two targeted generational-role (members) groups (i.e., adult children or parents). Out of the 150 questionnaires distributed, 114 were completed and returned. Ultimately, of these 114 questionnaires, 94 were retained for the study. To be included in the study, the questionnaires had to be complete (i.e., no more than 10% of the items from any one instrument could be missing) and each member of the adult-child and parent dyad had to return her/his completed questionnaire. The ultimate sample (N = 94), therefore, consisted of 47 adult-child and parent dyads.

Descriptive statistics for the overall sample, and for the two groups of adult children and parents, indicate that the participants were unique in terms of at least of two characteristics: level of educational achievement and religious affiliation. For the overall sample, participants had a mean age of 52.76 years (SD = 19.63 years); over 92% had completed some college, college, or graduate school; over 51% identified themselves as Christian Roman Catholics (over 35% identified themselves as Christian Protestant); and almost 95% reported being in either good or excellent health.
The adult children had a mean age of 40.25 years ($SD = 15.08$ years); almost 96% had completed some college, college, or graduate school; over 46% identified themselves as Christian Roman Catholic (over 31% identified themselves as Christian Protestant; over 2% as Buddhist; over 2% as Other; and 17% as None); and over 95% reported being in good of excellent health.

Parents had a mean age of 65.80 years ($SD = 14.77$); over 88% had completed some college, college, or graduate school; over 56% identified themselves as Christian Roman Catholics (over 39% identified themselves as Christian Protestant; over 2% as either Other or None); and over 93% reported being in good or excellent health.

Pre-WWII participants (i.e., both parents and adult children) had a mean age of 70.02 years ($SD = 11.41$ years). Post-WWII participants (i.e., both parents and adult children) had a mean age of 37.92 years ($SD = 10.18$ years).

**Procedure**

Several voluntary organizations, namely, religious communities and organizations, were contacted and invited to participate in the present study. Administrators, particularly religious leaders, of these community groups were especially helpful in publicizing and encouraging members (and visitors) of the religious communities to volunteer as participants.

The researcher attended a series of church services and set up an intercept station outside the entrances of each of the religious organizations/congregations. As members of the organizations/congregations entered and exited their respective churches, they were asked to participate in the study and, if they agreed to do so, were given self-addressed, stamped envelopes that included the survey questionnaire and instructions. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the researcher as soon as possible.
Questionnaires were categorized, sorted, and distributed according to the period of birth (pre- vs. post-WWII) and generational role (adult child vs. parent) indicated by the person volunteering to participate. For example, a person identifying herself as a mother born in 1918 was given a packet of two questionnaires: one packet included instructions and a questionnaire assessing the pre-WWII mother’s perceptions of her relation(ship) with one of her adult children (who, in this example, was probably born in the period preceding the end of WWII). The pre-WWII mother was instructed to complete her questionnaire without consulting with or receiving advice from any other family member. The pre-WWII mother, continuing with this example, was also instructed to forward the other questionnaire, the questionnaire assessing the adult child’s perceptions of her/his relation(ship) with her/his parent, to one of her adult children.

The questionnaires for the adult children and parents were identical but for the referent and/or relation(ship) whom/which the items addressed; that is, the questionnaires for the adult children referred to their perceptions of their relation(ship)s with their parents; the questionnaires for the parents referred to the parents’s perceptions of their relation(ship)s with their adult children.

Missing Data

The choice of method for dealing with missing data depends on many factors, including sample size, the frequency and pattern with which missing data occur and how missing data are patterned across the variables, the ability to devise statistically justifiable and accurate imputation strategies, and whether the data are missing randomly or systematically (Jaccard & Wan, 1996).

Remarkably, and fortunately, out of the 94 questionnaires retained, only 20 items were missing. Given this almost astonishing low number of missing items, it seemed reasonable to use an imputation strategy. Roth (1994) has reviewed the literature on strategies for dealing with
missing data. In general, there appears to be little difference in the (statistical and substantive) conclusions one reaches when 10% or less of the data are missing completely at random. For those cases in which missing data were obtained (all of which were under 10%), a linear-interpolation method, one which replaces missing values with the last valid value before the missing value and the first value after the missing value, was used (Norusis, 1993).

**Instruments of Measure**

**Post-Solidarity**

Post-Solidarity is hypothesized to index several domains in which the 'unstable dialectic' of positive and negative attitudes coexists in intergenerational relation(ships). **Ambivalence and conflict** are regarded as fundamental characteristics of all close relation(ships) (Braiker & Kelly, 1979; Brown & Farber, 1951; Epstein, 1980; King & Emmons, 1990). Recent research has shown that persons are likely to possess both positive and negative attitudes toward a range of personal and interpersonal issues. Moreover, those persons who have ambivalent attitudes (i.e., attitudes that are at odds or contradictory; e.g., love and hate), for example, have been observed to react to environmental stimuli in predictable ways: Parisi and Katz (1986) found that attitudes concerning organ donation are characterized by positive and negative sentiments. Those individuals who indexed more highly on ambivalence were also systematically less likely to commit to organ donation (Parisi & Katz).

Furthermore, individuals’s goals about expression of emotions/feelings, or their "personal strivings" (Emmons, 1989, p. 1059), often conflict with one another and can result in a wide range of psychological outcomes (e.g., low subjective wellbeing and/or depression). An important, if not overlooked, aspect of ambivalence and conflict in close relation(ships) is that not only are ambivalence and conflict parts of 'normative' relation(ships), but also that they may
play a positive role in relationship development and growth (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Braiker & Kelly, 1979; Brickman, 1987).

To model ambivalence and conflict in an alternative and supplementary theory of intergenerational relationships seems warranted. For persons in some primary groups, it may well be that the discomfort provoked by ambivalence and conflict leads to more focused efforts to resolve relational inconsistencies and to move the relationship(s) further along in its (their) development (Brickman, 1987). A measure developed by Braiker and Kelly (1979) was used to assess ambivalence and conflict in intergenerational relationships. For each of the domains, there are five items. The ambivalence subscale (see Appendix) includes, for example: "I am ambivalent or unsure about continuing to be close to (name of parent or adult child)"; and "I feel 'trapped' or pressured to continue in the close relationship with (name of parent or adult child)". Responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "Disagree" to "Agree."

Conflicts was also measured with a subscale developed by Braiker and Kelly (1979). The subscale has five items, including the following examples: "I often argue with (name of parent or adult child)"; and "When I feel them, I express negative feelings toward (name of parent or adult child)". These items are scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "Disagree" to "Agree."

Although Braiker and Kelly (1979) reported findings from extensive factor analyses, they apparently did not conduct or report results from reliability analyses. However, Mancini and Blieszner (1992) administered the conflict subscale to a sample of elderly parents and their adult children: They obtained a satisfactory reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .69$. Because the ambivalence and conflict items of the Braiker and Kelly (1979) subscales address behavioral components
hypothesized to be integral to intergenerational relation(ship)s as represented in the Post-Solidarity construct, I used both subscales in the study—notwithstanding the lack of previous validation of the ambivalence subscale.

Investment was measured with Lund's Investment Scale (IS; Lund, 1985), which assesses how 'large' an 'investment' (tangible and intangible) a person makes in a close relation(ship). Investments in a close relationship, such as spending time together, purchasing gifts, or doing favors for another, are hypothesized to be motivated by the desire for immediate or near-immediate rewards in a relation(ship) (Lund). In addition, investments are argued to represent 'irretrievable' resources 'spent' on a close relation(ship) and that lead to the formation of expectations that the relation(ship) will continue (Lund). Investment is conceptualized as an ongoing process that proceeds in conjunction with commitment in close relation(ship)s (Lund). Examples of the IS items include: “I share important personal feelings, problems, and beliefs with (name of parent or adult child)”; and “I put effort into seeing (name of parent or adult child)”. Responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from “Disagree” to “Agree.” Reliability measured by Cronbach’s alpha was $\alpha = .93$ (Lund).

Commitment was assessed with Lund’s Commitment Scale (CS; 1985). Commitment is operationalized as the “intention to continue a relationship” (Lund, p. 3) that is both an assessment of and a private pledge to the future of a close relation(ship). The motivation to ensure the continuity of a close relationship is argued to emanate from commitment, particularly in times of (dis)stress (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult & Van Lange, 1992). Furthermore, commitment is regarded as the result of the ongoing resolution of ambivalence, a resolution posited to be possible only after contradictory or opposing relational forces have been encountered and negotiated (Brickman, 1987).
The items of the CS (Lund, 1985) focus on the effort, sacrifice, resources, and demonstration of the intent to continue in a close relationship. The CS has been primarily applied to samples of persons identified as sharing “close” and/or “intimate” relation(ships), though not necessarily within a marriage and/or primary group. Item examples include: “In my opinion, (name of parent or adult child) is very committed to our relationship”; and “In my opinion, (name of parent or adult child) will continue our relationship no matter what happens”. Responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from “Disagree” to “Agree.” Reliability measured by Cronbach’s alpha was $\alpha = .82$ (Lund).

To assess love in intergenerational relation(ships), a shortened version (9 items) of Rubin’s Love Scale (LS; 1970) was used. Although functionally similar to commitment, love has been conceptually distinguished from commitment as a temporally-sequenced derivative of the circular process of past and present influences on a relation(ship) and as a causal condition for the future of a relation(ship) (Kelly, 1983). As a derivative, love is conceived as a reward and positive attitude that ‘pulls’ the relation(ship) forward (Lund, 1985).

Items on the LS include: “I would do almost anything for (name of parent or adult child)”; and “It would be hard for me to get along without (name of parent or adult child)”. Responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from “Disagree” to “Agree.” Reliability measured by Cronbach’s alpha was $\alpha = .88$ (Lund, 1985).

Another hypothesized component of intergenerational relation(ships) is trust, or interpersonal trust. A large and diverse body of literature has demonstrated the centrality of trust in the development and growth of many kinds of close relation(ships) (see Erikson, 1963; Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985; Rotter, 1971).
Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985) developed and validated a measure of trust, the Trust Scale (TS), that operationalizes trust in close relation(ship)s as “the degree of confidence you feel when you think about...relationship(s)” (p. 28). The TS is an 18-item Likert-type scale with three factors: Predictability, Dependability, and Faith. Predictability refers to “our ability to foretell...(the) specific behavior(s), including things we like and dislike (Rempel & Holmes, 1986, p. 29). Dependability is regarded, however, as more central to trust: It is associated with a developing belief that the partner(s) can be relied on irrespective of a given circumstance (Rempel & Holmes, 1985). Faith “enables people to go beyond the available evidence and secure that...partner(s) will continue to be responsive and caring” (Rempel & Holmes, 1986, p. 31).

Examples of items from the TS are: “I know how my (parent or adult child) is going to act. (She)/He can always be counted on to act as I expect”; and “I feel completely secure in facing new situations because I know my (parent or adult child) will never let me down” (Rempel et al., 1985). Responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from “Disagree” to “Agree.” Responses are totaled and internal consistency of the scale as measured by Cronbach’s alpha is $\alpha = .81$ for the total scale, $\alpha = .70$ for Predictability, $\alpha = .72$ for dependability, and $\alpha = .80$ for faith (Wrightsman, 1991).

Another measure of trust, the Specific Interpersonal Trust Scale (SITS; Johnson-George & Swap, 1982), addresses varieties of interpersonal trust held by one person for a specific other (i.e., person). The SITS consists of 19 items and has four identified underlying factors: General Trust, Emotional Trust, Reliableness, and Dependability (Johnson-George & Swap). General Trust refers to trusting another (others) with material possessions. Emotional Trust represents a belief in another’s (other’s) discretion with personal confidences. Reliableness reflects the
keeping of promises and commitments. Dependability is characterized by the confidence in another's (others's) help or support when it is most needed (Wrightsman, 1991).

Items from the SITS include: “I could rely on (name of parent or adult child) to mail an important letter for me if I (were not able) to get to the post office”; and “I would be able to confide in (name of parent or adult child) and know that (name of parent or adult child) would want to listen” (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982). Responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from “Disagree” to “Agree.” Reliabilities for the four subscales range from $\alpha = .71$ to $\alpha = .83$ (Wrightsman, 1991).

Change-irresolution is a construct intended to index the ongoing construction, creativity, processes, and struggles of primary-group members to nurture and sustain their intergenerational relation(ships). As a dynamic and ongoing set of phenomena, change-irresolution suggests that intergenerational relation(ships) are never ‘finalized’ or completed. Rather, it is argued that they are frequently amended or negotiated and reflect the contingencies of the changing circumstances in which intergenerational relation(ships) are embedded.

Although there is no extant instrument devised to assess change-irresolution in intergenerational relation(ships), a careful reading of the literature on Postmodernism and primary-group (or intergenerational) relation(ships) (see Cheal, 1993, 1996; Jacques, 1998; Luescher & Pillemer, 1998; Noble, 1998; Scanzoni & Marsiglio, 1993; Shorter, 1975; Stacey, 1991, 1996) suggests that the instability of contemporary primary-group relations, i.e., the seemingly ceaseless construction of intergenerational relation(ships), does not seem to be necessarily a part of a progressive or teleological trend of development. Rather, the general direction of change appears to be toward greater individual discretion and/or freedom; that is, intergenerational relation(ships) evince continued behavioral and developmental variability.
(Hofley, 1990) and contradictions between collective and individual responsibilities (Cheal, 1996) and between the needs of parents and their adult children (Elkind, 1994).

I have devised the following indicators/items to assess change-irresolution in intergenerational relationships based on my close reading of the literature on Postmodern primary-group dynamics and relations (see Cheal, 1993, 1996; Jacques, 1998; Luescher & Pillemer, 1998; Noble, 1998; Scanzoni & Marsiglio, 1993; Shorter, 1985; Stacey, 1991, 1996): “I find that I must frequently adjust or change how I interact with (parent or adult child)”; “Although we both remember many of the same family events and experiences, my (parent or adult child) and I find that our assessments of their influence on our individual and family development change with some regularity”; “With the passing of time, my (parent or adult child) and I have to re-negotiate our understanding of the responsibilities and obligations we have toward each other”; “I find that I sometimes must guess what my (parent or adult child) expects from our relationship”; and “Although my (parent or adult child) and I sometimes have contradictory opinions about our responsibilities to each other, we consider such differences as normal or as a natural part of our relationship”. Responses to the change-irresolution items are scored on a seven-point Likert scale.

Solidarity

Bengtson and colleagues (e.g., Bengtson, 1999; Bengtson et al., 1976; Bengtson et al., 1984; Bengtson & Schrader, 1982; Clarke et al., 1999; Mangen et al., 1988; Parrott & Bengtson, 1999) have employed the five dimensions—and combinations thereof, of their Solidarity set of constructs in a number of studies. Recently, however, the ‘solidarity’ theorists (i.e., Bengtson and colleagues) have limited their application of the Family Solidarity model to a number of constructs (see Giarusso, Feng, Wang, & Silverstein, 1996; Silverstein et al., 1995; Parrott &
Bengtson, 1999). In a very recent article, Parrott and Bengtson (1999) employed Affection, Familism, Family Conflict, Intergenerational Contact, Need of Parent, and Structural Solidarity in their assessment of the relations among these Solidarity variables as predictors of intergenerational exchange. Furthermore, Bengtson and colleagues have recently limited the number of items used to assess some of these domains (see Giarusso et al.; Parrot & Bengtson; Silverstein et al.).

In keeping with the recent focus in the line of research conducted by the 'solidarity' school and in the interest of parsimony, the following four dimensions of Family Solidarity have been applied and evaluated in the current study: Affectional, Associational, Exchange, and Normative Solidarity. **Affectional Solidarity** was measured with Bengtson and colleagues's proprietary scale (Parrot & Bengtson, 1999). This most recent version has 5 items that index feelings of love, affection, and liking. Scale items include: “How well do you feel your (parent or adult child) understands you?”; and “How well do you and your (parent or adult child) get along together?”. Reliability as measured by Cronbach’s alpha has been reported to range from $\alpha = .89$ to $\alpha = .94$ (Gronvold, 1988).

**Associational Solidarity** was assessed with selected items from a scale developed by Bengtson and colleagues (see Mangen & Miller, 1988; Parrot & Bengtson, 1999). The version of the scale in the present study has 3 items that index the extent to which intergenerational family members 'share activities' with one another. Items include: “About how often do you get together with your (parent or adult child)?”; and “About how often do you speak on the telephone with your (parent or adult child)?”. Reliability as measured by Cronbach’s alpha has averaged $\alpha = .61$. 
Exchange Solidarity was indexed with the Exchange Solidarity Scale (Hancock et al., 1988). It has five items that assess the amount of giving and receiving of assistance (primarily material) that occurs among/between intergenerational family members. Scale items include: “In the past year, have you given your (parent or adult child) any financial assistance?”; and “How often do you help your (parent or adult child) with chores or errands?” (Hancock et al.). There are no reported reliability estimates for Exchange Solidarity measured as a latent construct with multiple indicators.

Normative Solidarity was assessed with the five items from a recent version of the Normative Solidarity Scale (Bengtson & Harootyan, 1994; Silverstein et al., 1995). Scale items include: “How much responsibility should a (parent or adult child) have to provide companionship or spend time with (her/his) (adult child or parent) in the (adult child or parent)’s time of need?”; and “How much responsibility should a (parent or adult child) have to provide housing for (her/his) (adult child or parent)’s time of need?” (Bengtson & Harootyan). Reliability has been estimated at $\alpha = .63$ (Mangen & Westbrook, 1988).

Analyses

Measurement Analysis

To determine the psychometric viability of the instruments of measure (scales) employed in this study, each scale was analyzed for its reliability properties. Measurement implies a theory about the operations of or the relations among a set of variables relevant to the phenomenon (or phenomena) being investigated (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). All but one of the scales, i.e., change-irresolution, has been more or less “well standardized” (Nunnally, 1967, p. 2); that is, all but the change-irresolution scale has been employed by multiple and/or different researchers who have obtained similar results.
Estimates of the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and the normality (or non-normality) of the distribution of the observed data were obtained. Specifically, these basic measurement analyses were executed to discern whether the items or subparts of each of the scales measure the same underlying phenomenon or construct and whether the observed data evince distributional (location and dispersion) characteristics reasonably consistent with normal models of theoretical distributions (Nunnally, 1967).

**Frequency and Descriptive Analyses**

Frequency distributions were calculated to describe the classes of variables and the frequency of observed scores on the variables. Grouping the classes of variables according to the frequency of their observation helps to determine whether the data is distributed in a way that is amenable to statistical analysis and reduction (Hays, 1994).

Descriptive analyses involving the central tendency and variability of the data were conducted to map out the sample space and help determine whether the data obtained from the 94 respondents reasonably satisfies the requirements of the central limit theorem. In addition, such preliminary analyses often furnish information about what subsequent and more sophisticated statistical analyses will uncover.

**Correlational Analysis**

Conducting zero-order correlational analyses reveals what, if any, statistically significant relations may exist among/between variables. Correlational analysis is itself a preliminary kind of inferential analysis: It provides a cursory summary of the form and degree of (imperfect) functional relations in the data, one that can crudely gauge the degree to which the observations are consistent (or not) with the hypotheses.

**Comparison of Means**
To determine the influence of the categorical variables of period of birth (pre- vs. post-WWII) and generational role (parent vs. adult child) on the variables of both the Post-Solidarity and Family Solidarity constructs, a series of t-tests to compare means were executed.

For the analysis of period of birth across the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity constructs, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine if those participants born before the end of WWII (1945) evinced responses that were significantly different from those evinced by participants born after the end of WWII. Given the size and relative normality of the sample across variables, the independent-samples t-test is well-suited for such an analysis.

To assess the hypothesized differences between generational roles (i.e., adult child vs. parent), a paired-sample (or matched-pairs) t-test was executed. As in the case of the independent-samples t-test, the paired-sample t-test requires a normal (or near-normal) distribution. It is a simple yet effective way to make direct comparisons between the means from each of the two groups without squandering analytical power on effects that are not of critical importance to the present study (e.g., interaction effects). In both the independent- and paired-samples t-tests, the analyses evaluated mean differences assuming both equal and unequal variances across the groups (sample).

**Regression Analysis**

To compare the predictive validity of the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity models, multiple linear regression models were estimated with commitment deployed as the criterion (or outcome variable). Commitment has been conceptualized as a construct or variable evincing stable causal features, features which distinguish it from other variables such as love and satisfaction (Kelly, 1983; Lund, 1985; Rusbult, 1983). It is argued to “shape tendencies to engage in pro-relationship behaviors, even when such behaviors are ‘costly’ or stand in opposition to primitive
self-interest, or to some degree fly in the face of reality” (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1992, p. 5). As an important dimension, therefore, in multi-dimensional models of the structure of experience in close relation(ship)s (Thompson & Holmes, 1996), namely, intergenerational relation(ship)s, commitment functions as a critical motivational factor in the resolution of problems and in the preservation of intergenerational relation(ship)s.

The variables from the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity models were entered simultaneously to determine which variables and which models most efficiently balance bias and variance in the estimation of the criterion, or commitment. The hypotheses stipulate the significance and direction of both the inter-variable and criterion relations.
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Measurement Analysis

Initial estimates of internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) indicated that a number of scales had less-than-optimal levels of reliability. Among the Post-Solidarity measures evincing either unsatisfactory or marginal levels of internal consistency, the investment ($\alpha = .66$), commitment ($\alpha = .66$), love ($\alpha = .84$), and change-irresolution ($\alpha = .84$) scales contained certain items which if deleted would improve the estimated level of the alpha coefficient.

Deleting item 6 ("I put effort into seeing my [adult child or parent"] from the investment scale improved the internal-consistency coefficient from $\alpha = .66$ to $\alpha = .70$. For commitment, deleting items 3 ("Ending the relation(ship) with my [adult child or parent] would be more trouble than its worth") and 4 ("I am obligated to continue the relation(ship) with my [adult child or parent]") improved the internal-consistency coefficient to $\alpha = .92$. For love, deleting item 6 ("I would forgive my [adult child or parent] for practically anything") improved the internal-consistency coefficient to $\alpha = .91$. And for change-irresolution, deleting item 5 ("Although my child and I sometimes have contradictory opinions about our responsibilities to each other, we consider such differences as normal or as a natural part of our relation(ship)") improved the estimate of internal consistency to $\alpha = .92$ (see Table 1). The results presented in Table 1 reflect the measurement properties of the scales after the above-mentioned items were deleted. Subsequent analytical analyses employed the modified scales.

Among the Solidarity measures, all but the exchange scale ($\alpha = .54$) evinced satisfactory levels of internal consistency (see Table 1). Unlike the scales in the Post-Solidarity model, however, none of the Family Solidarity scales was amenable to improvement to internal
Table 1. Measurement Properties: Internal Consistency, Skewness, and Kurtosis: All Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach’s</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.182</td>
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<td>.91</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.97</td>
<td>.161</td>
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<td>.97</td>
<td>.179</td>
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<td>.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-.089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
consistency estimates by item deletion. Other studies (e.g., Martin, Kerns, Long, Mercier, & Cook, 1999) have also reported mixed results on the internal consistency and item-deletion amenability of some of the Solidarity scales. Given the long record of publications by Bengtson and colleagues in which the Family Solidarity measures were employed, however, it seemed reasonable and consistent with recommended protocols to use the scales as they are reported in the literature and without modification.

The results of the assessments of the normality of the distributions of the Post-Solidarity and Family Solidarity variables are reported in Table 1. Most of the variables evinced heavy-tailed distributions (i.e., they were either strongly positively or negatively skewed). However, of all the variables, only exchange from the Family Solidarity construct had a skewness value more than twice its standard error—a rough indication of a departure from symmetry (or normality) (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). The kurtosis values suggest that, generally speaking, the Post-Solidarity observations were less clustered and had shorter tails (West et al.).

Descriptive Analysis

Analyses were conducted for the whole data set (i.e., all cases) and for each of the periods of birth (i.e., pre- vs. post-WWII) and generational roles (i.e., adult children and parents). The results of the descriptive analyses for the whole data set are presented in Table 2; results for participants in each of the two groups are presented in Tables 3-6.
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: All Participants

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Norms</td>
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Table 3. Descriptive Statistics: Pre-WWII Participants

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Table 4. Descriptive Statistics: Post-WWII Participants

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Table 5. Descriptive Statistics: Adult Children

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<td><strong>Statistic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
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<td>16.67</td>
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</table>
Correlational Analysis

Partial correlational analyses were conducted for the constructs from the Post-Solidarity (ambivalence, conflict, investment, love, trust, SITS, and change-irresolution) and Solidarity (affection, association, exchange, and norms) models to assess the relations (controlling for period of birth and generational role) among and between each set of constructs and commitment (the outcome variable in the regression analyses) (see Tables 8-11).

Table 8. Partial Correlational Analysis of Post-Solidarity and Commitment Variables (All Participants)

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>.61**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.79**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITS</td>
<td>.81**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change-Irresolution</td>
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**p < .01
Table 9. Partial Correlational Analysis of Solidarity and Commitment Variables (All Participants)

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<td>Exchange</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>.48**</td>
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**p < .01

Table 10. Partial Correlational Analysis: Post-Solidarity with Post-Solidarity (All Participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Amb</th>
<th>Con</th>
<th>Inves</th>
<th>Com</th>
<th>Lov</th>
<th>Trus</th>
<th>SITS</th>
<th>Chirr</th>
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<td>.56**</td>
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<td>-.55**</td>
<td>-.79**</td>
<td>-.71**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment (Inves)</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<td>.53**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment (Com)</td>
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<td>.29**</td>
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<td>.64**</td>
<td>.82**</td>
<td>.83**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>-.50**</td>
<td>-.79**</td>
<td>-.70**</td>
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*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 11. Partial Correlational Analysis: Solidarity with Solidarity (All Participants)

<table>
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<th>Variables</th>
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<th>Exchange</th>
<th>Norms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01

Comparison of Means

Post-Solidarity

Period of birth (pre- vs. post-WWII) was highly significant across all 8 of the Post-Solidarity variables: ambivalence: $t (92) = -4.16, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = -7.32); conflict: $t (92) = -6.47, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = -8.72); investment: $t (92) = 3.92, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = 4.84); commitment: $t (92) = 3.82, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = 3.51); love: $t (92) = 5.19, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = 10.08); trust $t (92) = 5.58, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = 21.95); SITS: $t (92) = 6.55, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = 26.66); and change-irresolution: $t (92) = -6.63, p < .01$ (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = -8.14).

Generational role (parent vs. adult child) was also significant across all 8 Post-Solidarity variables: ambivalence: $t (46) = -5.95, p < .01$ (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = -6.59); conflict: $t (46) = -6.69, p < .01$ (mean difference between parent and adult-child
groups = -6.23); investment: \( t(46) = 7.25, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 7.06); commitment: \( t(46) = 4.42, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 2.81); love: \( t(46) = 6.79, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 9.09); trust: \( t(46) = 4.36, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 13.28); SITS: \( t(46) = 7.24, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 21.11); and change-irresolution: \( t(46) = -7.26, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = -5.96).

In both the independent- and paired-sample \( t \)-tests, none of the comparisons yielded significantly different results under the opposing assumptions of either equal or unequal variances.

**Solidarity**

Period of birth (pre- vs. post-WWII) was significant in two of the four Solidarity constructs: affection: \( t(92) = 3.59, p < .01 \) (mean difference between pre- and post-WWII groups = 2.66); and norms: \( t(92) = 2.68, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 1.65).

Generational role (parent vs. adult child) was significant in two of the four Solidarity constructs: affection: \( t(46) = 3.44, p < .01 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 1.66); and association: \( t(46) = 2.42, p < .05 \) (mean difference between parent and adult-child groups = 1.00).

In both the independent- and paired-sample \( t \)-tests, none of the comparisons yielded significantly different results under the opposing assumptions of equal or unequal variances.
Regression Analysis

Overall Model

Regression models were executed with the combined sets of the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity variables. The models deployed each of the variables from the respective construct sets as predictors and commitment as the criterion or outcome variable. For the estimated models, each set of variables was entered successively to test the discrete contribution of each set while controlling for the effects of all other variables. Table 12 presents the results for the regression analysis of the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity sets of constructs on all participants.
Table 12. Results of Regression of Commitment on Post-Solidarity and Solidarity Variables (N = 94)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-$R^2$</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITS</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change-Irresolution</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01
Both steps were statistically significant: Model 1 (Solidarity variables): $F(4, 89) = 15.12, p < .01$; Model 2 (Solidarity and Post-Solidarity variables): $F(11, 82) = 34.28, p < .01$. However, the number and combinations of significant parameters were different across the two models (two entry steps). In the first model, with only the Solidarity variables entered, affection ($t = 2.89, p < .01$) and norms ($t = 4.59, p < .01$) were statistically significant. In the second model, with both the Solidarity and Post-Solidarity variables entered simultaneously, the following combination of significant parameters was obtained: exchange: $t = 0.17, p < .05$; ambivalence: $t = -2.56, p < .05$; conflict: $t = -2.49, p < .05$; and SITS $t = 2.23, p < .05$ were the statistically significant parameters.

**Group Models**

Analyzing the regression of commitment on the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity variables across the four groups (i.e., adult child vs. parent; and pre- vs. post-WWII) also yielded mixed results. The results of the regression model estimated for pre-WWII participants are presented in Table 13.

Results of the regression of commitment on the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity sets of constructs within the post-WWII participants (see Table 14).

The regression of commitment on the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity variables within the groups of adult children and parents are presented in Tables 15 and 16.
Table 13. Regression of Commitment on Post-Solidarity and Solidarity Variables for Pre-WWII Participants (n = 43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted-R^2 = 0.33; R^2 change = 0.39</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITS</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change-Irresolution</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted-R^2 = 0.85; R^2 change = 0.49</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01; **p < .01
Table 14. Regression of Commitment on Post-Solidarity and Solidarity Variables for Post-WWII Participants (n = 51)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-$R^2$</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITS</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change-Irresolution</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-$R^2$</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>$R^2$ change</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01**
Table 15. Regression of Commitment on Post-Solidarity and Solidarity Variables for Adult Children (n = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted-R^2 = 0.26; R^2 change = 0.33</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITS</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change-Irresolution</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted-R^2 = 0.76; R^2 change = 0.49</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 16. Regression of Commitment on Post-Solidarity and Solidarity Variables Parents (n = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted-R^2 = 0.46; R^2 change = 0.51</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITS</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change-Irresolution</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted-R^2 = 0.88; R^2 change = 0.41</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01
Analysis of Control Variables: Level of Educational Achievement and Religious Affiliation

The obtained sample of adult children and parents is unique in terms of at least two characteristics: its unusually high level of educational achievement and its predominantly Roman Catholic Christian religious affiliation. Over 92% of the participants had completed some college, college, or graduate school; over 51% of the participants identified themselves as Roman Catholic Christian and over 35% identified themselves as Protestant Christian.

These data were collected from residents of a small Midwestern town in Iowa that is home to a major research and public land-grant university. The presence of the university undoubtedly accounts for the unusually high level of educational achievement of the study's participants. That the data-collection occurred on sites of religious organizations, two Roman Catholic parishes and one Protestant Christian church, accounts for the religious demographics of the participants.

Given these two unusual sample characteristics, it was necessary to test for the effects of educational achievement and religious affiliation. A regression model for both sets of constructs (Post-Solidarity and Solidarity), including level of educational achievement and religious affiliation, was estimated. In this way, it was possible to partial out, identify, and account for any variability in either the Post-Solidarity or Solidarity constructs attributable to not only period of birth and generational role, but also to educational achievement and religious affiliation.

Regression analyses, with each set of variables entered successively (Step 1: Solidarity; Step 2: Post-Solidarity; and Step 3: Educational Achievement and Religious Affiliation), revealed no significant effects for either level of educational achievement or religious affiliation.
CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Relations among Variables: Post-Solidarity vs. Solidarity

Post-Solidarity

All but two of the Post-Solidarity variables (ambivalence and investment) were significantly correlated with one another and, therefore, were largely consistent with Research Hypothesis 1 (see p. 23). Furthermore, the direction of the correlational effects was consistent with what was hypothesized: Ambivalence-conflict and change-irresolution were negatively related to commitment; investment and love-trust were positively related to commitment.

Such an obtained pattern of correlations suggests that the Post-Solidarity model might tentatively be conceived of as a higher-order factor model, with Post-Solidarity as the second-order factor and ambivalence-conflict, investment-commitment, love-trust, and change-irresolution as the first-order factors. A formal factor analysis, however, must yet be executed to substantiate further any claim that Post-Solidarity does indeed evince such a factor structure.

Solidarity

Solidarity evinced a slightly different pattern of correlations than forecasted in Research Hypothesis 2 (see p. 23). Affection, association, and norms were significantly correlated; however, exchange was significantly related with only association. These results must be considered, however, in the context of the low level of reliability that exchange evinced in this and other studies. Given an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .54$, it is not surprising that the exchange construct as it is currently structured would be unrelated to other Solidarity variables.
Affection and norms, however, were significantly correlated with commitment. That association and exchange were not correlated with commitment suggests that these two constructs have little to do with the private assessment of and pledge to the future of intergenerational relation(ships).

Furthermore, these findings fail to demonstrate support for the positive correlations of the Solidarity constructs (Research Hypothesis 2). The correlation of affection, association, and norms does suggest, however, that these three constructs derive, at least in part, from a common underlying factor. The application of the Solidarity constructs to a larger sample constituted (again) of pre- and post-WWII adult children and parents, with a modification to the item-construction of exchange would yield, perhaps, a more definitive understanding of its relation(s) to Solidarity and with affection, association, and norms.

Comparisons of Means: Post-Solidarity vs. Solidarity

Post-Solidarity

Period of birth (pre- and post-WWII) and generational role (adult child and parent) significantly accounted for variation across all 8 of the Post-Solidarity variables. Furthermore, the direction of the observed effects for each factor were consistent with those predicted in Research Hypothesis 4 (see pp. 23-24).

Specifically, participants born after the end of WWII evinced consistently higher levels of ambivalence, conflict, and change-irresolution than did those born before WWII; and post-WWII participants reported lower levels of investment, commitment, love, and trust than did those born before the end of WWII.

In addition, the observed generational-role differences across the Post-Solidarity variables were consistent with those predicted in Research Hypothesis 5 (see p. 24): Parents
evinced significantly lower levels of ambivalence, conflict, and change-irresolution than did adult children. Furthermore, parents reported higher levels of commitment, investment, love, and trust than did adult children.

**Solidarity**

Period of birth (pre- vs. post-WWII) and generational role (adult child vs. parent) were intermittently significant across the Solidarity variables. Period of birth was significant in the models with affection and norms deployed as the outcome variables: Pre-WWII participants reported higher levels of affection and norms than did post-WWII participants.

Generational role was also significant in two of the four Solidarity models: Adult children evinced lower levels of affection and association than did parents.

However, period of birth was not significant in the association or exchange models; generational role was not significant in either the exchange or norms models.

**Regression Analyses: Post-Solidarity vs. Solidarity**

**Overall Regression Models**

Regressing commitment on the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity data for the entire sample yielded further evidence of the alternative viability of the Post-Solidarity model. The Post-Solidarity model accounted for over 110% more of the observed variance (adjusted-$R^2$) in commitment (in the ultimate model with all variables entered simultaneously) than did the Solidarity model. Significance tests of individual parameters indicated that only a few variables from each of the models were significantly related to commitment: ambivalence, conflict, and SITS in the Post-Solidarity model; and exchange in the Solidarity model.

The direction of the effects of the significant variables in the ultimate model were consistent with the direction predicted in the hypotheses: ambivalence and conflict (Post-
Solidarity) were negatively related to commitment; SITS (Post-Solidarity) was positively related to commitment; and exchange (Solidarity) was positively related to commitment. Effect-size estimates for the significant parameters ranged from $r = .41$ to $r = .85$. In Cohen’s (1992) effect-size scheme, all of the regression coefficients approximately qualified as medium- and/or large-sized effects.

Regression Models by Period of Birth

Fitting regression models with the Post-Solidarity and Solidarity variables for each of the four groups (pre-WWII and post-WWII groups; adult-child and parent groups) produced variable results.

Pre-WWII Participants

Consistent with the hypotheses, the Post-Solidarity model evinced significantly greater predictive validity in commitment (the outcome variable) for the pre-WWII participants than did the Solidarity model: Over 148% more of the observed variance in commitment was accounted for by the Post-Solidarity than the Solidarity constructs. Interestingly, the SITS (Post-Solidarity) variable was the only significant parameter in the ultimate regression model (model with all variables entered simultaneously).

Post-WWII Participants

In the regression model for the post-WWII participants, the Post-Solidarity set of constructs also evinced greater predictive validity than the Solidarity set of constructs: Over 141% more of the observed variance in commitment was accounted for by the Post-Solidarity than the Solidarity variables. In contradistinction to the results for the group of pre-WWII participants, however, ambivalence was the only significant parameter in the ultimate regression model (i.e., the final model with all variables entered simultaneously).
Regression Models by Generational Role

Adult Children

Consistent with Research Hypothesis 3, and with the results for the period-of-birth factor, Post-Solidarity exhibited greater predictive validity than did Solidarity: Over 188% more of the estimated variance in commitment was accounted for by the Post-Solidarity than the Solidarity variables.

In a departure from the results reported for the period-of-birth analyses, ambivalence, change-irresolution (Post-Solidarity), and exchange (Solidarity) were the only significant parameters in the ultimate regression model (i.e., the final model with all variables entered simultaneously). That ambivalence and change-irresolution were significant predictors in this model is consistent with both the specific and general import of the argument presented in the introduction, including the exposition of the hypotheses: i.e., that generational differences persist and are enhanced, in fact, with the ascendancy of a Postmodern intergenerational sensibility.

Furthermore, given the generational disparities reported by the Solidarity school, that is, that parents and their adult children consistently identify qualitatively different long-term goals for their involvement in intergenerational relation(ships), these findings from the present study may be argued to reflect in a very real sense the underlying and, perhaps, contradictory assessments identified with each generation. Moreover, finding meaning in existing relation(ships)—even conflictual intergenerational relation(ships), emerges as a central task in adulthood and becomes even more central later in life (Carstensen, Passupathi, Mayr, & Nesselroade, 2000).

Furthermore, the finding that exchange was also a significant predictor in the adult-child model (with ambivalence and change-irresolution) does not seem at odds with any of the
specific or general arguments advanced in this study. Rather, exchange can be construed—
however ill-conceived it may be in its current form (low reliability and, perhaps, questionable
validity), as more ‘Postmodern’ than the other Solidarity constructs. By this locution, I
emphasize the mediating effects of the tangible exchange of commodities between primary-
group members: Such an intergenerational circuit of goods represents the localization within
small social units, namely, primary groups, of processes of capitalism.

Intergenerational exchange in Postmodernity, concomitant with the globalization of the
market economy, is but a primary-group correlate of a new social and economic conjuncture in
which “the deep underlying materiality of all things has finally risen dripping and convulsive into
the light of day...” (Jameson, 1997). For adult children, intergenerational exchange may well be
more indicative of commitment than it was (and is) for their aging parents.

Parents

Results of the regression model within the group of parents were also consistent with
Research Hypothesis 3: Post-Solidarity accounted for over 89% more of the observed variance
in commitment than did Solidarity. However, in the ultimate regression model, a different
combination of significant parameters accounted for the variation in commitment: exchange
(Solidarity), SITs (Post-Solidarity), and change-irresolution (Post-Solidarity).

Question of Multicollinearity

For some of the obtained combinations of significant parameters across the group
models, results may seem a bit paradoxical given the absolute estimate of the standardized
coefficients, particularly across the step-to-step changes. For example, in the pre-WWII model,
conflict evinces a (relatively) larger absolute estimate in the standardized coefficient (0.29) than
does the standardized exchange coefficient (0.19) yet conflict is not statistically significant while exchange is significant.

Such a result raises questions, perhaps, about the possible effects of collinearity in the data. However, collinearity statistics, namely, the Tolerance statistics (Tolerance is the proportion of a variable's variance not accounted for by other independent variables in the equation), indicate that none of the analyses (across all four groups) exhibits a Tolerance value lower than 0.57. These Tolerance values suggest that multicollinearity is not, in all likelihood, a significant problem in any of the regression group models.

**Control Variables: Educational Achievement and Religious Affiliation**

Neither level of educational achievement nor religious affiliation was a significant predictor of commitment in the regression analysis of the models with the Solidarity, Post-Solidarity, and control variables entered successively and simultaneously.

**Conclusion**

As an alternative set of constructs to Bengtson and colleagues's Solidarity model, Post-Solidarity seems to accommodate and account for relational phenomena that are argued to figure prominently in Postmodern intergenerational relations: open and free communications among primary-group members who simultaneously experience a wide range of diverse and often opposing cognitions and feelings. As Gergen (1991) observed: “Under (P)ostmodernism, processes of individual reason, intention, moral decision making, and the like—all central to the ideology of (Modernist) individualism—lose their status as realities” (p. 241).

Consistent with the hypotheses of this study, the Post-Solidarity variables were observed to be correlated with one another, to be capable of significantly differentiating period and generational-role effects across diverse groups, and to be (relatively) efficient indicators of
commitment, an essential determinant of any ongoing close relation(ships), including intergenerational relation(ships).

The hypothesized effects on intergenerational relation(ships) of the cultural-historical shift from Modernism to Postmodernism, namely, the delegitimation of the Modernist view that family and intergenerational relation(ships) are dominated by one socially 'normative' model—that of the so-called 'nuclear family,' and the ascendancy of the Postmodern genre of primary-group and intergenerational relation(ships) characterized by ambivalence, conflict, contingency, trust, and change-irresolution, appear to exceed the auxiliary or epistemic viability of the thoroughly Modernist concepts and indicators constitutive of the Solidarity model. The increasing diversification and expansion of alternative and plural forms of primary groups and their interactional dynamics profoundly shapes the ways we perceive, value, and feel about ourselves and those with whom we share close relation(ships).

Overall, the Post-Solidarity model exhibited far greater sensitivity to the effects of period of birth (pre- vs. post-WWII) and generational-role (adult child vs. parent) than did the Solidarity model. These findings lend support to the 'new' generation of intergenerational theorists and theories who/that maintain that the dramatic social and cultural forces unleashed in the United States (and perhaps Western Europe) after the end of WWII have penetrated and revealed the inadequacy of Modernist sociological functionalism and ideology. I would argue that in doing so, Postmodernism permits contemporary and future researchers and theorists of intergenerational relation(ships) the freedom to disenthrall themselves from the monotony and parochialism of those researchers and theorists who persist in characterizing primary groups as 'nuclear families' constituted of heterosexual husbands and wives with 2.1 children who come together as a 'family' and remain so until the end of their natural lives.
Parents and adult children born into Postmodern America (and, perhaps, Western Europe), that is, members of the ‘Postmodern permeable family,’ face an emerging plethora of lifestyle choices, choices largely proscribed by the rigid boundaries characteristic of Modernist nuclear families. With the ongoing ‘blurring’ of the boundaries between public and private lives, between the homeplace and the workplace, and between children and adults, actors in intergenerational relation(ship)s are increasingly ‘free’ to strike a creative and fluid balance between individual development and expression and collective cooperation, friendship, and involvement.

The uncoupling of intergenerational relation(ship)s from the highly structured limited content and limited affective communication practices of the Modernist nuclear family has generated primary-group and social changes that continue to reverberate within and across culturally-constructed interactional prescriptions. Recent demographic trends reflect these ongoing changes: The shift in Postmodern America from high-mortality and low-fertility rates to low-mortality and low-fertility rates has radically re-shaped the “frequency of numbers and types of family units, as well as (changed) the amount of time spent in various family roles” (Farkas & Hogan, 1995, p. 1).

Moreover, these changes are manifested in the increasingly ‘competitive’ struggle that both parents and adult children face as they fashion a balance between their own interests and needs and those of others with whom they share close relation(ship)s—within and without primary groups. The struggle to evolve a balance between these sometimes opposing interests and needs is deemed ‘competitive’ because parents and adult children still live and function within a cultural-social super-structure that continues to impose—however ineffectually, ethical-
moral and institutional sanctions consistent with the Modernist 'fiction' of the nuclear-family 'ideal.'

Elkind (1994) terms this struggle the 'new imbalance' and argues that the rigid boundaries and ethical-moral impositions of the Modernist 'fantasy' of the nuclear family often confine and demean both parents and children. Parents in Modernist family structures were imposed upon—and indeed compelled, to sacrifice their own interests and needs for those of their children. Mothers, for example, were discouraged from (and continue to be fettered in their attempts to pursue) challenging and productive full-time careers. Couples were obliged—no matter how miserable the circumstances, to endure often insufferable marital relation(ship)s.

The Postmodern permeable family, Elkind (1994) suggests, shifts the balance of interests and needs more in favor of the caregivers or parents. However, Elkind unambiguously attributes to caregivers or parents implicated in the 'new imbalance' the fundamental responsibilities of nurturing and guiding the development of children and others who are not bio-psychologically capable of thriving on their own.

These findings do lend credence, in my estimation, to the argument that the modern nuclear family and its attendant intergenerational behaviors and relation(ship)s are fast disappearing. However, these findings are at best tentative and contingent: The relatively small and convenient sample, the cross-sectional and unbalanced design, and the relative insensitivity of OLS-based analytical procedures demand that all reported results be considered, interpreted, and generalized with extreme caution. For example, participants were recruited from convenient and extant groups of individuals and primary groups, groups distinguished by their affiliation with and practice in certain religious sects.
In addition to the inherent limitations associated with the sample and the sampling procedure, the nature of the design of the study calls for additional care in the interpretation of the results. Cross-sectional designs render the disambiguation of historical-period effects from cohort effects nearly (if not functionally) impossible. Results indicating significant period effects, therefore, must be interpreted as provisional and limited, and which reflect the confounding of historical-period and cohort effects.

Much work remains to be done. The replication of the study, with the incorporation of a balanced design with replication across adult-child and parents dyads, within demographically and geographically diverse groups, would dramatically extend our understanding of intergenerational relation(ships) and the extent to which the Post-Solidarity set of constructs is more or less able to account for variability in Postmodern America and Western Europe. As an initial effort, however, the results from the present study suggest lines of inquiry that are—in my estimation, at once provocative and compelling.

So compelling, in fact, that I regard the Post-Solidarity model, and lines of inquiry that expand upon the processual, reflexive, relational, and fluid dynamics of primary-group relation(ships), intergenerational or otherwise, to mark an irreversible departure from the Modernist conceptualization of such close relation(ships) as essentially concerned with reproduction and inherently teleological. Rather, Post-Solidarity in particular, and Postmodernism in general, herald the inadequacy—or anachronism, of teleological notions of intergenerational and primary-group relation(ships).

Any model of human behavior, including models of intergenerational relation(ships), that ascribes authoritative or hegemonic or ‘normative’ status to itself (and the human behavior it is purported to account for) is utterly inconsistent with the logic of evolutionary
adaptationism, i.e., the goal of evolution is fitness-maximization or gene propagation (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990). To argue, therefore, as many Modernist Family Sociologists have done, that a certain constellation of kin relation(s) is 'normative' and 'adaptive' is to disregard the very logical core of Darwinian explanation, i.e., that past conditions are causally linked to present biological design (Tooby & Cosmides).

Any adaptive correspondence between the Modernist 'family' and present conditions is contingent, derived, and incidental to Darwinian and—more topically, to Postmodern explanation. The 'contested, ambivalent, and undecided' nature of contemporary intergenerational relation(s) is embodied—however provisionally, much more dynamically in the Post-Solidarity Model than in the Solidarity Model. I would advocate, therefore, that such Modernist tropes as Family Solidarity be recognized as important but anachronistic conceptualizations of human behavior in the early twenty-first century.

Furthermore, I would argue—and hope—that established senior scholars in the fields of family sociology and social gerontology (many of whom also function as editors or reviewers of social-scientific journals dedicated to these fields of inquiry) should consider the considerable critical and analytical resources which the genre of Postmodernism offers as an alternative to the hidebound eccentricities of an intellectual 'ism' that is not only irrelevant but also expired.
APPENDIX

Survey Instrument

Intergenerational Relations

Questionnaire (P)

2000 Survey

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Parent Questionnaire
Welcome to the 2000 Survey of Families

I hope you enjoy participating in this phase of the Longitudinal Study of Intergenerational Relations. The research document you are about to fill out is part of a long-term study of the changing nature or relations among/between intergenerational family members. The purpose of this study is to examine how parent-child relations change over time, as individual family members develop and age.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY. Each parent and child is important to this research. Every completed survey is crucial to help us understand change and continuity across generations and time.

Statement on Protection of Information

Data from participants in this study are protected under provisions of the Human Subjects Policy of Iowa State University. The information given for this study will be kept entirely confidential. You should be aware that:

♦ All information gathered will be used only for research purposes; only the principal investigator (Michael-David Kerns) and his supervisory faculty member (Jacques Lempers, Ph.D.) will have access to the questionnaires.
♦ The information provided by the two family members will be analyzed for overall and group patterns, not for individual responses.
♦ At no times will names or identifying characteristics be used to describe any study participant.
♦ Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any questions.

If you have any questions concerning the purpose of this study, OR IF YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE in filling out any part of this survey, please call me collect at 1-515-292-6859 or e-mail me at mdkerns@iastate.edu.
Instructions for Filling Out the Survey

The survey asks for your perceptions and evaluations on a variety of issues related to your relationship with one of your children. The survey should take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Completion of this survey implies that you understand the nature of the study and participate voluntarily.

In completing the survey, you should remember:

♦ I want YOUR opinions and feelings; please do not discuss your responses with other family members.
♦ There are no “right” or “wrong” answers to these questions. Answer as quickly as you can, giving the answer that first comes to mind.
♦ If you wish to explain the responses you have selected or to add something, please WRITE COMMENTS in the margins or on the last pages; or enclose a letter when you return your survey.
I. General/Demographic Information: Parent-Respondent (i.e., the person filling out this survey)

1. Participant numerical code: __________
2. Date of Birth: _______________________
3. Sex: _______________________________
4. Birth Order (e.g.: First Born, Second Born, etc.): ________________
5. Number of Siblings: ________________
6. Number of Living Siblings: __________
7. Level of Educational Attainment: Check next to the number of years of schooling you completed:
   ♦ 0 – 4 years: _____
   ♦ 5 – 8 years: _____
   ♦ Some High School: ______
   ♦ Completed High School: _____
   ♦ Some College: ______
   ♦ Completed College: _____
   ♦ Graduate School: _____
8. Religious Affiliation:
   ♦ Christian: Protestant _____
   ♦ Christian: Roman Catholic _____
   ♦ Jewish _____
   ♦ Muslim _____
   ♦ Buddhist _____
   ♦ Other _____
   ♦ None _____
9. How would you rate your overall health at the present:
   ♦ Poor: ______
   ♦ Fair: ______
   ♦ Good: ______
   ♦ Excellent: ______
Please respond to the following statements about your relationship with ONE of your living Adult Children. Please record the following information about the child you will be referring to for all questions:

First Name of Child: __________________________
Date of Birth of Child: ________________________
Birth Order of Child (e.g., first, second, etc.): ______________
Sex of Child: ______________
Number of Siblings of Child: __________
Number of Living Siblings of Child: __________

A. Part One (Ambivalence)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

I rarely am on bad terms with my child.


1. I am very confused about my feelings toward my child.

2. I think and/or worry about losing some of my independence by remaining close to my child.


3. I am ambivalent or unsure about continuing to be close to my child.


4. I feel that my child demands or requires too much of my time and attention.


5. I feel trapped or pressured to continue in a close relationship with my child.


B. Part Two (Conflict)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

   Sometimes I do tell my child what I am really thinking.


1. I often argue with my child.

2. I often try to change things about my child that bother me (for example, behaviors, attitudes, etc.).

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

3. I often feel angry or resentful toward my child.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

4. When you and your child argue, the problems or arguments are serious.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

5. When I feel them, I express negative feelings toward my child.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

C. Part Three (Investment)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

I am comfortable asking my child for help.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

1. I would rather spend my free time with my child than doing other things or seeing other people.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree
2. I share important personal feelings, problems, and beliefs with my child.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

3. I share income and expenses with my child, such as transportation costs, food costs, or having a joint bank account and debts.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

4. I contribute financially to my child and to our relationship in general.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

5. I put effort into seeing my child.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

6. I change things about myself to please my child, such as my habits, attitudes, and/or appearance.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

7. I put effort into making the relationship with my child to work where/when there are problems.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

8. I invest emotionally in my child in general.

   Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree
D. Part Four (Commitment)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

I would never think of betraying my child.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

1. It is very likely that the relationship with my child will last as long as we both live.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

2. There is no doubt that my relationship with my child will remain as it is six months from now.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

3. Ending the relationship with my child would be more trouble than it is worth.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

4. I am obligated to continue the relationship with my child.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

5. In my opinion, my child is very committed to our relationship.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree
6. In my opinion, my child will continue our relationship no matter what happens.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

E. Part Five (Love)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents "undecided" or "neutral," then moving out from the center, "slight" agreement or disagreement, then "moderate," then "strong" agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

My love of my child will last forever.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

1. I feel I can confide in my child about virtually everything.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

2. I would do just about anything for my child.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

3. If I could never again be with my child, I would feel miserable.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

4. If I were lonely, I would first think of seeking out my child.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

5. One of my primary concerns is my child's welfare.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree
6. I would forgive my child for practically anything. 

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

7. I feel responsible for my child’s wellbeing. 

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

8. I greatly enjoy being confided in by my child. 

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

9. It would be hard for me to get along without my child. 

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

F. Part Six (Trust)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

My child is always accountable to me... 


1. I know how my child is going to act. She/he can always be counted on to act as I expect. 

2. I find that my child is thoroughly dependable, especially when it comes to things that are important.


3. My child's behavior tends to be quite variable. I cannot always be sure how she/he will surprise me next.


4. Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I have faith that my child will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support, come what may.


5. Based on past experience, I cannot with complete confidence rely on my child to keep promises made to me.


6. It is sometimes difficult for me to be absolutely certain that my child will always continue to care for me; the future holds too many uncertainties and too many things can change in our relationship as time goes by.


7. My child is an honest person and, even if she/he were to make unbelievable statements, people should feel confident that what they are hearing is the truth.


8. My child is not very predictable. People cannot always be certain how my child is going to act from one day to another.

9. I am never concerned that unpredictable conflicts and serious tensions may damage my relationship with my child because I know we can weather any storm.


10. I am very familiar with the patterns of behavior my child has established, and she/he will behave in certain ways.


11. If I have never faced a particular issue with my child before, I occasionally worry that she/he will not take my feelings into account.


12. Even in familiar circumstances, I am not totally certain my child will behave the same way twice.


13. I feel completely secure in facing new situations because I know my child will never let me down.


14. My child is not necessarily a person others always consider reliable. I can think of some times when she/he could not be counted upon.


15. I occasionally find myself feeling uncomfortable with the emotional investment I have made in my relationship with my child because I find it hard to set aside completely my doubts about what lies ahead.

16. My child has not always proven to be trustworthy in the past, and there are times when I am hesitant to let she/he engage in activities that make me feel vulnerable.


17. My child behaves in a consistent manner.


G. Part Seven (SITS)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

I would like to see my child more frequently...


1. If my child gave me a complement, I would question if she/he really meant what was said.


2. If we decided to meet somewhere for lunch, I would be certain my child would be there.

Disagree: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 : Agree

3. I would go on a trip with my child to an unfamiliar place if my child assured me she/he knew the area.

4. I would not want to buy something valuable from my child because I would not believe her/his estimate of its worth.


5. I would expect my child to play (e.g., a game) fairly.


6. I could rely on my child to mail an important letter for me if I could not get to the post office.


7. I would be able to confide in my child and know that she/he would want to listen.


8. I could expect my child to tell me the truth.


9. If I had to catch an airplane, I could not be sure my child would get me to the airport on time.


10. If my child unexpectedly laughed at something I did or said, I would wonder if she/he were being critical and unkind.


11. I could talk freely to my child and know that she/he would want to listen.

12. My child would never intentionally misrepresent my point of view to others.


13. If my child knew what kinds of things hurt my feelings, I would never worry that she/he would use them against me, even if our relationship changed.


14. If my child promised to do me a favor, she/he would follow through.


15. If my child did not think I handled a certain situation very well, she/he would not criticize me in front of other people.


16. If I told my child what things I worry about, she/he would not think my concerns were silly.


17. If my alarm clock was broken and I asked my child to call me at a certain time, I could count on receiving the call.


18. If my child could not get together with me as planned, I would believe her/his excuse that something important had come up.


19. If my child were going to give me a ride somewhere and did not arrive on time, I would guess there was a good reason for the delay.

H. Part Eight (Change-Irresolution)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your child. The 4 or middle position on the scale represents “undecided” or “neutral,” then moving out from the center, “slight” agreement or disagreement, then “moderate,” then “strong” agreement or disagreement.

For example, if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would circle 7:

The more my relationship with my child changes, the more it remains the same.


1. I find I must frequently adjust or change how I interact with my child.


2. Although we both remember many of the same family events and experiences, my child and I regularly have different opinions about how the events/experiences affected family members and the family as a whole.


3. With the passing of time, my child and I have to re-negotiate our understanding of the responsibilities and obligations we have toward each other.


4. I find that I must sometimes guess what my child expects from our relationship.

5. Although my child and I sometimes have contradictory opinions about our responsibilities to each other, we consider such differences as normal or as a natural part of our relationship.


III. Please answer the following questions about your relationship with the SAME ADULT CHILD referred to in the previous section.

Please circle the response that most accurately reflects the status of the relationship with your child.

For example, if you are extremely comfortable sharing things with your child, you would circle the response “A great deal” to the question: “How comfortable are you sharing your innermost secrets with your child?”

♦ Not at all
♦ A little
♦ Some
♦ Pretty much
♦ Quite a bit
♦ A great deal

A. Part One (Affection)

1. Taking everything into consideration, how close do you feel is the relationship between you and your child?
♦ Not at all close
♦ Not too close
♦ Somewhat close
♦ Pretty close
♦ Very close
♦ Extremely close
2. How is communication between you and your child?

- Not at all good
- Not too good
- Somewhat good
- Pretty good
- Very good
- Extremely good

3. Overall, how well do you and your child get along together?

- Not at all well
- Not too well
- Somewhat well
- Pretty well
- Very well
- Extremely well

4. How well do you feel you understand your child?

- Not at all well
- Not too well
- Somewhat well
- Pretty well
- Very well
- Extremely well

5. How well do you think your child understands you?

- Not at all well
- Not too well
- Somewhat well
- Pretty well
- Very well
- Extremely well
B. Part Two (Association)

1. About how often do you get together with your child?

   ♦ Almost never
   ♦ About once a year
   ♦ Several times a year
   ♦ Every other month or so
   ♦ About once a month
   ♦ About once a week
   ♦ Several times a week
   ♦ Almost every day

2. About how often do you speak on the telephone with your child?

   ♦ Almost never
   ♦ About once a year
   ♦ Several times a year
   ♦ Every other month or so
   ♦ About once a month
   ♦ About once a week
   ♦ Several times a week
   ♦ Almost every day

3. About how often do you do things together with your child?

   ♦ Almost never
   ♦ About once a year
   ♦ Several times a year
   ♦ Every other month or so
   ♦ About once a month
   ♦ About once a week
   ♦ Several times a week
   ♦ Almost every day
C. Part Three (Exchange)

1. In the past year, have you given your child any financial assistance?
   - Not at all
   - Occasionally
   - Regularly—I partially support her/him
   - Regularly—I give her/him most of her/his support

2. In the past year, have you received any financial assistance from your child?
   - Not at all
   - Occasionally
   - Regularly—She/he partially supports me
   - Regularly—She/he provides me with most of my support

3. How often do you help your child with chores or errands?
   - Almost never
   - About once a year
   - Several times a year
   - Every other month or so
   - About once a month
   - About once a week
   - Several times a week
   - Almost every day
4. How often does your child help you with chores or errands?

- Almost never
- About once a year
- Several times a year
- Every other month or so
- About once a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week
- Almost every day

5. How often do you exchange gifts with your child?

- Almost never
- About once a year
- Several times a year
- Every other month or so
- About once a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week
- Almost every day

D. Part Four (Norms)

1. How much responsibility should a parent have to provide companionship or spend time with her/his adult child in the child’s time of need?

- None
- Minor
- Moderate
- Major
- Total
2. How much responsibility should a parent have to help with household chores and/or provide transportation for her/his adult child in the child's time of need?

- None
- Minor
- Moderate
- Major
- Total

3. How much responsibility should a parent have to listen to the problems and concerns of her/his adult child and to provide advice and guidance?

- None
- Minor
- Moderate
- Major
- Total

4. How much responsibility should a parent have to provide financial support and/or assist in the financial and legal affairs of her/his adult child in the child's time of need?

- None
- Minor
- Moderate
- Major
- Total
5. How much responsibility should a parent have to provide housing for her/his adult child in the child’s time of need?

♦ None
♦ Minor
♦ Moderate
♦ Major
♦ Total

I am very grateful for your time and cooperation in this study.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY in the envelope provided AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU!
REFERENCES


