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CONTACT, SUPPORT, AND FRICTION: GENDER
DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

by

Lori A. Cramer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Sociology

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1988

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Lori A. Cramer

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ABSTRACT

Contact, Support, and Friction: Gender
Differences in Social Networks

by

Lori A. Cramer, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1988

Major Professor: Dr. Pamela J. Riley
Department: Sociology

This paper examines the extent to which personal social network ties serve as support or conflict systems, or both. It investigates the differences in perception of the extent of supportive/antagonistic ties by size of community of residence and by gender of network ties cited. It was found that both support and conflict networks were more extensive for the smallest and largest communities than for a second small community which recently experienced very rapid growth. This suggests that growth patterns may be more significant in understanding network relations than community size. The findings also indicate that range of contacts reported does not differ by gender but female support and conflict networks are somewhat larger than those of males. Overall, males were identified more often as a tie in emotional support contexts and females in instrumental support contexts. Females were more likely to be

identified as requesting support from both genders. Women reported more duplication of support and conflict ties than men. Both males and females are far more likely to designate same-gender individuals as contact, support or antagonistic ties. The study clearly supports the notion that networks include both supportive and nonsupportive ties.

(80 pages)

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Social networks link individuals to their society by virtue of the position each individual holds relevant to other members in their network (Burt, 1976; Fischer, 1977b). However, the role of these networks is unclear. The network ties may be supportive, antagonistic or both. The supportive functions of network ties are often seen as serving several purposes such as assisting one in finding a job, providing another to turn to in times of need, and offering friendship. However, network ties also place demands on individuals. For example, an individual may be asked to provide material support in the form of money, or emotional support in the form of advice or a shoulder to cry on. It is the extent to which these network ties are used as support systems, antagonistic systems, or both, which will be the focus of the present study.

Background of the Problem

Existing research on social networks provides various definitions of the composition and function of a social network. However, there tends to be a consensus that an individual's social network refers to the interaction between that person and other social actors. In particular, a consistent theme throughout the literature is that one's personal social network consists of

co-workers, friends, kin, fellow club members, and so on. However, there is less agreement regarding the operational functions of social networks.

One traditional viewpoint is that social networks are necessarily supportive; that is, they provide comfort, information, material aid, etc. (Procidano and Heller, 1983). For example, Caplan identifies three major contributions that network relations have on people's well-being:

The significant others help the individual mobilize his psychological resources and master his emotional burdens; they share his tasks; and they supply him with extra supplies of money, materials, tools, skills, and cognitive guidance to improve his handling of his situation (1974:6).

More specifically, social networks have been strongly linked to the stress-buffering hypothesis (Gore, 1981). The buffering hypothesis generally implies that large social networks tend to reduce an individual's stress and potential conflict; whereas limited or smaller networks are more likely to promote stress and conflict within individuals. Existing research tends to support the buffering hypothesis (Caplan, 1974; Cassel, 1974; Cobb, 1976; Cooley, 1929; Wellman, 1981). These researchers have found that support networks function to reduce stress and increase cohesion and cooperation. In research on neighboring, Bulmer noted that "virtually all the studies reviewed focus on . . . the positive forms of such activity typified by acts of helpfulness" (1986:28).

In contrast, other recent studies have disclosed the potential conflict enmeshed in social networks (Belle, 1983; Cohler and Lieberman, 1980; Fischer, 1977a; Gillespie, Krannich and Leffler, 1985; Leffler, Krannich and Gillespie, 1986; Lein, 1983; Swann and Predmore, 1985; Tietjen, 1980; Wilcox, 1981). According to Lazarus and Folkman, "social network measures make the key assumption that having a relationship is equivalent to getting support from it" (1984:247). Nevertheless this may not be the case. For example, Croog (1970) found that although a network such as a family or neighborhood acquaintance can provide support, it does not necessarily follow that they do in all cases.

More recently, studies have begun to investigate the possibility of both conflict and support flowing through the same network tie. In particular, the studies by Gillespie et al. (1985) and Leffler et al. (1986) attempted to ascertain whether support systems can act simultaneously as antagonistic systems. In 1983 Gillespie et al. examined a sample of sixty residents of one rural Western community with a population of approximately 2,000. The results indicated that regularized patterns of conflict, as well as social support, persisted within a person's social network. In addition, they found differences due to gender -- females tended to have more network ties providing both friction and amiability than males.

In a study of four rural communities of relatively similar population size, Leffler et al. (1986) also found that the channels of support contained avenues of conflict. In addition, they found that the gender of the individual and of members of their social network affects the extent and type of friction associated with their relationship. It was found that "each sex reserves its most ardent antipathies for its own" (1986:349). Therefore, the nature of social networks, and more specifically the extent to which social networks contain support and/or friction, requires further investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The present study is an extension of the research conducted by Gillespie et al. (1985) and Leffler et al. (1986). This analysis will examine support networks, conflict networks and the potential overlap of the two in network relationships. However, rather than using communities of relatively similar populations, as examined previously, the present study will compare three communities with different patterns of growth and sizes (1500-30,000).

In Wirth's classic 1938 article, "Urbanism as a way of life," it was posited that large, heterogeneous populations lead to the weakening of interpersonal ties. The present investigation will examine whether this

hypothesis holds true for large nonmetropolitan communities.

In addition to investigating the variable of community size, the circumstances surrounding supportive and negative interactions will be examined. For example, this study will analyse not only how often males and females provide support or friction (as examined by Gillespie et al. and Leffler et al.), but also under what circumstances males and females are identified as providing support or friction, in particular. The relationship between gender and provision of support in times of emotional need and/or in times of instrumental deprivation is of interest. Instrumental support refers to material support such as tangible goods or services, and emotional support refers to behavior which allows the recipient to feel comforted, cared for, secure, and so forth. In sum, the major objectives of this study are a determination of the extent to which:

- (1) Network ties contain avenues for both support and friction.
- (2) Males and females differ in the amount and types of support and friction they provide and receive.
- (3) Respondents living in larger communities differ in their supportive and antagonistic ties from respondents living in smaller communities.

Research Design

To make reasonable comparisons with the findings of Gillespie et al. (1985) and Leffler et al. (1986), a

similar methodology is employed. Gillespie et al. used sixty randomly selected households from one rural western community and Leffler et al. studied sixty households from each of four nonmetropolitan western communities. The present study includes adult members of 100 randomly selected households in each of three nonmetropolitan communities in the Western United States. To be eligible, as in the studies by Gillespie et al. and Leffler et al., respondents were required to be currently living with a spouse or partner. Of the 100 households in each community, 40 respondents were the adult female in the household, 40 respondents were the adult male in the household, and in 10 households both the adult male and female were interviewed (20 respondents). The data were gathered via standardized personal interviews in 1985, and the survey instrument was identical to that used by Gillespie et al. (1985) and Leffler et al. (1986).

Significance of the Study

Sociologists have increasingly called for more research on the manner in which social network relations develop and function within communities (Rappaport, 1977; Sarason, 1974; Wellman, 1979). Efforts to understand the factors influencing social networks have focused on the effects networks have on individuals in terms of help-seeking and mental health (e.g., Mitchell and Trickett, 1980; Swann and Predmore, 1985). In addition,

Gillespie et al. (1985) noted that community studies have lacked examination of non-consensual interaction in everyday life, as well as lacked attention to gender stratification in social relations. The present study is an attempt to illuminate this gap. The aim of this study is to go beyond the existing knowledge of social networks by examining the structure and function of network relationships in nonmetropolitan communities.

A test of the Wirthian (1938) hypothesis, that an increase in population produces isolated individuals, will also be conducted. Through gathering data from communities of varying size, information will be obtained to refute or support the belief that small rural communities are cohesive and amiable; whereas larger communities are milieus for anomie and loose network ties.

The view that social networks provide supportive interactions and are beneficial to mental health is widely shared. If social networks have such an impact on the lives of individuals, then the study of the operation and composition of social networks becomes extremely significant.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present chapter is devoted to the review of the extant literature related to social networks, and particularly to the previously stated objectives of this study. This chapter is organized as follows: (1) a review of the sociological literature pertaining to the theoretical background of social networks; (2) a review of the literature which regards social networks as support networks; (3) a review of the literature which regards social networks as avenues of potential conflict; (4) a review of the literature examining the effects of community size on individuals' personal social networks; (5) a review of the literature examining the effects of gender on social networks; and (6) a formulation of hypotheses.

Theoretical Background

The study of social networks stems from several theoretical frameworks rather than from one particular theory. In addition, the often used phrase of "network theory" or "network theory analysis" is often misleading, suggesting that this research orientation constitutes a theory (Fischer, 1977a). According to Fischer (1977a:19-20), "network analysis is a style of social science research that focuses on people's social networks

as a means toward understanding their behavior." In addition, Fischer (1977a) points out that network analysis lacks a necessary qualification for a theory -- propositions. Because network analysis lacks propositions, it is more accurate to treat it as an approach or orientation. Two of the major theoretical frameworks which have contributed to research on social networks, are role theory and exchange theory.

Role Theory. Role analysts center on the roles or positions individuals fulfill in everyday interaction. Roles are requirements placed on behaviors according to the social position the individual holds in the social structure. "A role is generally defined as a cluster of duties, rights, and obligations associated with a particular social position" (Hewitt, 1984:77).

According to role theorists, behaviors are the result of institutional norms defining obligations and expectations of interaction. Obligations are behaviors that alters can expect egos to perform; whereas expectations are behaviors that egos can expect alters to perform. However, as noted by Fischer (1977a: 24-25), "role analysis does not stress the interpersonal relation per se Nevertheless, role analysis has provided an important entree to network analysis." This has been demonstrated through the work of anthropologists. For example, anthropologists have examined kinship systems

and cultural rituals through institutionalized role structures.

A key aspect of role theory is the reciprocal characteristic of roles. As noted earlier, roles outline certain legitimated obligations and expectations linked to positions in social structures. This reasoning can also be applied to social networks, as social networks are a part of social structures. Thus, roles and the use of role analysis allows researchers to examine social situations as "comprised of a network of social positions, each with its associated role" (Hewitt, 1984:77).

Exchange Theory. Exchange theory is directed more towards interpersonal relations than is role theory (Fischer, 1977a). A basic assumption of exchange theory is that people attempt to maximize rewards and reduce costs, and that this process is what motivates behavior. In addition, exchange theorists argue that exchange only occurs when rewards are expected and received from designated others. This involves the key concept of reciprocity, or the receiving and giving of equally valuable goods or services (Gouldner, 1960). It is through this exchange process that many social networks are formed. In addition, exchange theory acknowledges the fact that people use social reinforcements (e.g., love, approval, acceptance, etc.) as rewards and punishments.

Three of the leading proponents of exchange theory who have strongly influenced network analysis are George Homans, Peter Blau, and Richard Emerson. Homans places more interest in the small group as the unit of analysis than do Blau and Emerson. According to Homans (1974) all social structures, from the small group to societies, are founded on basically the same processes of exchange. Homans contends that the basis for exchange involves some people having the resources others need, whether the resources be material such as money, or non-material such as emotional support. Through this process social organization is built.

According to Homans (1958:606), "social behavior is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non-material ones." In addition, the extent to which people receive rewards for their behavior will be indicative of the extent to which they are willing to perform these activities in the future. In other words, motivation to perform a particular behavior consists of not only material goods such as money, but of non-material goods such as praise, love or other symbolic tokens.

Blau followed Homans and argued that beyond money, people seek social approval and compliance with their wishes. Blau's (1977) theoretical strategy discusses social structure and the relations that integrate diverse groups. Blau referred to social exchange as

all actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others and that cease when these expected reactions are not forthcoming . . . [S]ocial exchange can be observed everywhere once we are sensitized by this conception to it, not only in market relations but also in friendship and even in love (1964:6,88).

In his discussion of social structure, Blau (1977:27) notes "that there are differences in social positions, that there are social relations among these positions, and that people's positions and corresponding roles influence their social relations." Thus, the position an individual holds will influence subsequent network ties. Blau (1977) suggested examining social structure through the different social positions occupied by many persons rather than identifying all relations between individuals. This could be accomplished via the study of common attributes of people (e.g., gender, religion, occupation, etc.), and then further studying their rates of association.

Another distinction Blau (1964) makes is between economic exchanges and social exchanges. The basis for distinction was the notion of reciprocity, which is found in social exchanges. This is due to social exchanges, more than economic exchanges, taking many forms (e.g., direct or indirect). Although a return is expected in a social exchange, it differs from economic exchange in that it involves "diffuse future obligations, not precisely specific ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the

discretion of the one who makes it" (Blau, 1964:63). Thus, Blau's approach is concerned with how various different groups and social positions form consensual or non-consensual macrostructures. Macrostructures refer to larger social units such as entire societies, large groups (e.g., corporations), and social institutions (e.g., education); whereas microstructures refer to smaller social units, particularly individuals and small groups.

Emerson, more than Blau and Homans, focuses on the forms of exchange relations. Emerson's (1962) strategy suggests that the unit of analysis can be either micro or macro. The two basic processes examined by Emerson were the use of power and balancing. A proposition used by Emerson states that over time an imbalanced exchange will tend toward a balanced exchanged relationship. One of the many ways to balance an exchange relationship is through the division of labor. If an ego is involved in several different interactions, then specialization of resources that alters provide can occur. This decreases the power ego has over alters and restores the relationship to a balanced state. Thus, Emerson further supports the effects exchange relationships have in network interactions. Through the use of power and balance, Emerson demonstrates the nature of exchange relationships and their potential effects on personal social networks.

In sum, social network approaches can be linked to existing theoretical frameworks - in particular, role theory and exchange theory. Role theory suggests that it is the positions or roles individuals hold which lead to network ties. Exchange theory suggests that it is through the exchange of material and nonmaterial goods that network relationships emerge. Although this brief overview of role theory and exchange theory by no means exhausts the literature, the review of their major contributions affecting the work on social networks provides a necessary foundation for research in the area of social networks.

Networks as Support Systems

In the past twenty years or so, social support research has shown that personal well-being is related to the presence and availability of supportive ties. These results are primarily based on the assumption that social networks are necessarily support networks. In particular, recent studies have focused on the impact support systems have on perceived stress (Antonovsky, 1974; Caplan, 1974; Caplan and Killilia, 1976; Cassel, 1974; Cobb, 1976; Dean and Lin, 1977; Eckenrode and Gore, 1981; Kuo and Tsai, 1986; Mechanic, 1974). The main reason that social support has been considered an important part of the stress environment is due to its stress-buffering characteristics (Eckenrode and Gore,

1981). Thus, the principle hypothesis of most current work in the area of social networks has been the assumption that supportive interventions function to moderate or buffer the impact of life stresses.

The issue of primary relations and the reduction of social ties was incorporated into the theories of Durkheim, Cooley and Tonnies. For example, Durkheim's anomie theory suggests that psychological health is maintained through social integration. According to Durkheim (1951), social integration protects people from despair that may lead to anomie; thus, social support should have an impact on mental health. Similarly, Cooley (1929) argued that a person's self-identity had its foundation in social interaction. According to Cooley, primary groups are the foundation for the development of cooperation and cohesion in a society.

Finally, Tonnies (1887/1957) emphasized collective community and identity as central to individual and community well-being. He posited two ideal types of society: the *Gemeinschaft* and the *Gesellschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* referred to a type of community where solidarity among its population was strong. A *gesellschaft* society referred to an "artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings" (Tonnies, 1887/1957:64). In other words, as communities expand via urbanization and industrialization, the relationships

that bind people together become less common while more anonymous interactions become more common. Thus, early sociological theorists anticipated the impact of social support systems on the health of individuals and on communities.

Although the impact of primary relations was incorporated into early sociological theories, its application to the specific health issue of stress was not elaborated until fairly recently. One of the early researchers to deal with the stress buffering aspects of social networks was Cassel. Cassel (1974) examined the relationships between stress and social processes and noted several processes which he referred to as health protective. These processes were defined as "the strength of the social supports provided by the primary groups of most importance to the individual" (1974:478). In other words, an individual's primary network ties are important factors in reducing or preventing stress. The possibility of primary relations preventing stress was elaborated further by Cassel in his subsequent research. For example, Cassel later pointed out that "it seems more feasible to attempt to improve and strengthen the social supports rather than reduce the exposure to stressors" (1976:121).

During this same period of time, Caplan also made reference to the effects social support systems have on the amelioration of stress; and in particular, to the

importance of primary groups. Caplan (1974) worked with the concept of perceived support; he noted that perceived support could be defined as the extent to which a person feels that their need for support will be fulfilled. As noted previously, Caplan (1974) identified three major contributions social networks make to a person's well-being: the provision of help with emotional burdens, provision of material goods, and cognitive guidance.

Since the early works of Cassel and Caplan, numerous studies have supported the notion that there is a stress-buffering phenomenon associated with social support systems (e.g., Carvath and Gottlieb, 1979; Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend, 1981; Fischer, 1976, 1977a; Gore, 1981; Gottlieb, 1981; Hirsch, 1980; Kaplan, 1983; Mitchell and Trickett, 1980; Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, Mullan, 1981; Thoits, 1982; Unger and Powell, 1980; Wellman, 1981; Wilcox, 1981). A few of these studies will briefly be reviewed and discussed.

In 1979, Carvath and Gottlieb demonstrated a relationship between social support and stress among 99 mothers who recently gave birth. Three indices of social support were used in conjunction with two measures of stress (subjective indicators and objective indicators). The results showed a positive relationship between the social support measures and the measures of stress. The authors suggest that the increase in social support is

due to the increase in stress. Although this contradicts the work of Cassel and Caplan, Carvath and Gottlieb point out that longitudinal studies over "the entire course of a stressful life event are likely to reveal an inverse correlation between earlier measures of support use and later measures of stress" (1979:185).

Hirsch conducted a study to help "identify those natural support systems that enhance coping with major life changes" (1980:159). A natural support system (NSS) consists of an individual's significant others, as well as non-mental health professionals (e.g., clergy, physicians). Subjects consisted of 20 young widows and 14 women recently returned to college. The NSS measures consisted of tangible assistance, such as helping with chores, socializing, social reinforcement, praise or criticism regarding a specific behavior; emotional support or interaction which made one feel better; and cognitive guidance or information, advice, or explanation of something troubling. Results support the stress buffering hypothesis with cognitive guidance emerging as the most critical type of support.

Unger and Powell (1980) examined the role that families play in ameliorating the effects of stress. These researchers reviewed the types of support given, as well as conditions surrounding the use of networks. It was found that family members typically went to informal sources, particularly relatives, for advice; and formal

agencies were not usually used. In addition, families utilized a wide variety of social network members for different services (e.g., neighbors were used for short-term emergencies and kin groups for long-term commitments). Overall, Unger and Powell (1980) found that social networks, though varied in content, serve as support systems in times of crisis.

Consistent with Unger and Powell, Wellman (1981) noted that social ties vary in content. In addition, Wellman found that the intensity with which social ties manifest that content also varies. For example, one tie may provide more financial aid or emotional support than another. Wellman also did research on the density of social networks. In a random sample of community residents Wellman (1979) found that high-density networks were correlated with increased perceived support. Thus, Wellman contributed information regarding density and intensity to the growing literature on social networks acting as support networks.

In assessing the effects that perceived social support has on stress, many researchers have taken a life events approach. This approach consists of obtaining from a respondent a list of major life events which have occurred in the last 12 or 24 months (e.g., In the past 12 months have you experienced a death in your immediate family?). For example, Wilcox (1981) examined the hypothesis that social support acts as a mediator between

life events and psychological distress. Subjects in this study consisted of 320 residents who responded to questions pertaining to two measures of support, two psychological distress scales, and a stressful life events scale. The results support the stress-buffering hypothesis in that network ties helped reduce the stress involved in their everyday interactions. In addition, it was found that "the amount of variance accounted for was much greater when the support measure used tapped quality of support rather than quantity of supportive ties" (Wilcox, 1981:371).

In sum, there is an abundance of research supporting the notion that social networks act as support systems. These studies primarily demonstrate how support systems buffer the effects of stress and discomfort for an individual. Support ranges from instrumental support to emotional support. However, these studies lack the examination of potential antagonism enmeshed in these same network relationships.

Networks as Antagonistic Systems

Although the positive effects of social support systems have been well documented, evidence is mounting which suggests not all social ties are supportive. The impetus of this perspective owes its origin to conflict theory. Scholars of social conflict have looked to conditions and changes in the social structure for the

keys to its causes. For example, Karl Marx (1848/1964) turned to class structure as the central element; whereas Parsons (1951) viewed conflict as a pathological by-product of existing social structures. The concept of conflict, from a Parsonian perspective, referred to a situation in which the components of the system no longer functioned smoothly.

Of particular interest to social network researchers is the work of Dahrendorf and Coser. From Dahrendorf's perspective, the prelude to conflict can be found in situations where there is potential conflict. However, conflict does not necessarily occur. In addition, Dahrendorf (1959) argued that conflict consists of social groups of unequal power and diverse interests. These social groups consist of a relationship containing both conflict and cooperation.

Coser (1956), however, felt that Dahrendorf underemphasized the positive functions of conflict. Coser emphasizes the integrative functions of conflict. Coser has developed an image of society that stresses how the social world can be thought of system consisting of variously interrelated parts and that all social systems exhibit imbalances and conflicts among these interrelated parts. Thus, early conflict theorists believed that conflict could be found in all interactions, either at a micro level or macro level, thereby providing a foundation for network analysts to examine the

possibility of conflict, or lack of support, being an active part of interpersonal interaction.

More recently, network analysts have chosen to examine the possibility of conflict being enmeshed in supportive ties (Cohler and Lieberman, 1980; Croog, 1970; Fischer, 1977a; Gillespie et al., 1985; Leffler et al., 1986; Lieberman and Mullen, 1978; Pearlin and Schooler, 1978; Suls, 1982; Swann and Predmore, 1985; Tietjen, 1980). Applying the principles of Marx, Dahrendorf, and Coser, these researchers have challenged traditional consensus models of social networks in favor of a more comprehensive analysis of network processes. A few of the more recent studies applying potential conflict or the lack of support in network relationships will briefly be reviewed and discussed.

In 1978, Lieberman and Mullen conducted a study of Chicago residents in which ambiguous results were found. The researchers examined three transitional periods and/or four crises (e.g., birth of a child; death of a spouse). Subjects were divided into two groups: those who sought help and those who did not. In addition, a variety of measures of adaptation were used to group subjects. In their analysis, the authors found no evidence to indicate that seeking help led to positive adaptational consequences. In other words, those who obtained help expressed symptoms of stress similar to those who did not seek help.

During this same period of time, Pearlin and Schooler (1978) conducted a study which revealed negative effects. In their study of 2300 people, interviews were conducted asking about a series of life strains (e.g., related to occupation, marriage). According to Pearlin and Schooler, an unexpected finding was that self-reliance rather than seeking help was more effective in reducing stress.

Cohler and Lieberman (1980) found that for middle-aged women who were members of particular ethnic groups, the existence of an extensive social network was associated with an increase in psychological distress and an overload of responsibility. Apparently, the demands placed on these women by members of their social network were more draining than rewarding. Thus, network ties are not necessarily supportive ties.

Jerry Suls (1982) examined the overemphasis on the positive aspects of social networks. He noted that:

The present emphasis [of network analysis] misses the mark for two reasons: (1) it ignores well-intended behaviors that may have harmful effects; (2) there has been a tendency to overlook behaviors and effects accompanying supportive actions . . . which may have serious consequences for the individual's health (1982:256-7).

Thus, a social network brings with it the possibility of detrimental effects on health and adaptation.

Gillespie et al. (1985) pursued another aspect of potential conflict in social networks. Rather than

determining if a network tie is either supportive or a source of conflict, they examined the possibility that a network tie was an avenue for both support and conflict. Subjects were selected from 60 randomly drawn households in a rural community in the Western United States. Thirty female respondents and 30 male respondents were interviewed. The authors' findings support the hypothesis that networks can represent sources of both potential support and conflict. In addition, gender differences were noted. It was found that each sex experiences the most conflicts with those alters of the same sex.

In an extension of the work of Gillespie et al. (1985), Leffler et al. (1986) expanded the study to include four rural communities of relatively similar population. The sample consisted of a total of 240 randomly selected households (30 male and 30 female respondents from each community). In both studies, measures of general contact, support, and friction were utilized. Leffler et al., consistent with Gillespie et al., found that social networks are channels for both conflict and support. Additionally, gender differences were again evident. It was found that each gender perceives their own sex as more antagonistic than the opposite sex.

In sum, recent evidence suggests that network systems not only serve as support systems, but as

potential antagonistic relationships as well. The research discussed in this section demonstrates that social network relationships may not always act in a supportive manner. Thus, conflict and antagonism may travel along the same network ties believed to be solely supportive. The studies described provide evidence that future research examining potential conflict generated by network ties is needed.

Community Size

The social effects of urbanism have been examined by sociologists for over a century (e.g., Tonnies, 1887/1957). The possibility of a loss of cohesiveness and a sense of anomie (Durkheim, 1902/1960) are commonly believed to be the results of urbanism, and the transition of a *Gemeinschaft* society to a *Gesellschaft* society (Tonnies, 1887/1957).

The impetus of this perspective was heightened by the work of Tonnies in 1887. As mentioned previously, in his writing of *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*, Tonnies (1887/1957) used the term *Gemeinschaft*, which translates into "community", to refer to an "ideal type" of social relation which is small and where social networks are cohesive and amiable. However, the processes of urbanization and industrialization, or the movement toward a *Gesellschaft* society, may decrease the number of cohesive networks. It would be virtually impossible to

know everyone in a very large community on a personal level. Therefore, Tonnies argues individuals turn toward impersonal and formal interactions for their emotional and material needs.

Consistent with the ideas of Tonnies, Durkheim (1902/1960) associated the weakening of primary relationships and social ties with the processes of urbanization and industrialization. He argued such a situation may result in anomie and alienation. Durkheim noted that as density increases, specialization and differentiation follow, thereby increasing the complexity of social structures. As the division of labor increases, anomie spreads and people feel less attachment to members of their social networks. This division of labor, according to Durkheim (1902/1960), encourages individualism while simultaneously weakening community ties.

Whereas Tonnies (1887/1957) referred to communities as *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, Durkheim used the concepts of mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity to describe types of social structures and social relations. Mechanical solidarity describes a form of social attachment based on the similarity of its members. There exists little individuality due to people regarding themselves primarily in terms of their membership to a group. Organic solidarity refers to a form of cohesion wherein the differences among group members leads to

interdependency. Individualism becomes more prevalent because people think of themselves as individuals first, group members second.

Along similar lines, Louis Wirth (1938) expanded and elaborated the expected results of urbanization. In the article "Urbanism as a Way of Life," Wirth (1938) hypothesized that large heterogeneous populations lead to the weakening of interpersonal network ties. Wirth believed that the differentiation resulting from urbanization threatens the solidarity and cohesiveness of the community. In particular, Wirth (1938) felt that increased personal and social differentiation lead to the dissolution of neighborhood, kinship, and family structure. According to Wirth, "formal control mechanisms furnish the substitutes for the bonds of solidarity that are relied upon to hold folk society together" (1938:11).

In sum, these early community theorists felt that as the size of communities increase, the possibility of the community remaining bound together by personal relationships among all its members decreases dramatically. Thus, individuals are left to rely on impersonal network systems, or formal associations, to meet their emotional and material needs.

More recently, however, researchers have challenged the Wirthian hypothesis that large, heterogeneous populations weaken social ties (Fischer, 1975, 1976;

Gans, 1962; Wellman, 1979, 1981). These researchers suggest that urbanization does not lead to the detrimental effects of interpersonal relationships described by Wirth.

Fischer (1975) rejects the idea that crowding necessarily has a negative effect on social interactions. He developed what he refers to as a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism. This theory makes reference to subcultures within urban areas where the composition of primary relationships are similar to those typically found in social networks of rural area residents. His hypotheses include: the more urban a place, the greater the subcultural variation, and the more urban a place, the more numerous the sources of diffusion and the greater the diffusion into a subculture. Thus, Fischer's subcultural theory of urbanism "argues that urbanism does not produce mental collapse, anomie; that urbanites at least as much as ruralites are integrated into viable social worlds" (1976:38). Further, in contrast to Wirth who contends as size increases, personal social networks decrease, Fischer maintains that as "size increases, the community becomes less united, not because people drift apart, but because distinctive, smaller groups emerge" (1976:102).

Bender (1978) also feels the traditional belief that large communities act as milieus for anomie is misleading. However, Bender's concern focuses on the

definition of community. He argues that the emphasis on a territorial definition is an oversimplification. He believed a more accurate definition should encompass the network of emotional relationships that are independent of a particular structure. Therefore, according to Bender, research based on territorial definitions of community eliminate "the experience of community" (1978:10).

Given the latter body of knowledge the assumption that large communities lack personal network ties may not be accurate. Non-rural communities may provide pockets of network relationships rather than a complete community network.

Network Ties and Gender

As noted earlier, recent research has found a gender differentiation within social networks (Belle, 1982, 1983; Defares, Brandjic, Nass, van der Ploeg, 1985; Eckenrode and Gore, 1981; Fischer and Oliker, 1983; Gillespie et al., 1985; Hobfall, 1986; Kessler and McLeod, 1984; Leffler et al., 1986; Lein, 1983; O'Donnell, 1983; Rosenthal and Gesten, 1986; Stueve, 1983; Wilcox, 1981; Wright, 1982). The literature suggests a strong association between the process of gender socialization and social network structure.

Socialization is the process whereby individuals learn the culture of a society and learn to become

functioning members of that society. Socialization occurs through the interaction, both verbal and nonverbal, with existing members of the society and subcultures within it.

During early childhood, the family plays a leading role in the socialization process. A young child learns appropriate sex-typed behavior through the processes of behavioral training such as rewards and punishment; as well as observation and imitation of adults -- in particular the same sex parent (Richardson, 1981; Tavris and Offir, 1977; Weitzman, 1979). During these formative years, significant differences in the socialization of males and females become apparent. As pointed out by Richardson, "the earliest months of the child's life are not gender-free. Differences in expectations, names, apparel, toys, and games treat the baby as belonging to either the male sex or the female sex" (1981:49).

Adolescence has been shown to be a time of differential socialization. During adolescence, gender differentiation in interpersonal relations emerges. In a study of nearly 2000 children and adolescents, Rosenberg and Simmons (1975) found that over time females are increasingly oriented toward people and sensitive to others' opinions, while males stressed achievement and competence. Consistent with this finding, Chodorow (1974) found that females emerge during adolescence with a stronger basis for empathy, or experiencing other's

needs, than males. Due to this differential socialization of adolescent girls to become attuned to the needs of others (Gilligan, 1982), females become better prepared than males to recognize others' needs and to further believe that these needs can be met (Miller, 1976).

The above findings are consistent over time. In a study by Kessler and McLeod, it was demonstrated that "female vulnerability is largely confined to 'network' events: life events that do not occur to the focal respondent but to someone in their social network" (1984;620). In addition, Dohrenwend (1976) found that a higher proportion of the life events reported by adult females had happened to friends or family members. Thus, females, throughout the life course, are socialized to be more concerned with the needs and opinions of others than males.

A further source of gender differentiation has been found in the network literature pertaining to marriage and occupation. Being married gives both males and females a broader social network due to the contacts each brings to the marriage. However, research suggests that the benefits of marriage and increased social networks may have different consequences for males and females (Barnard, 1981; Campbell, Converse, Rogers, 1976).

For example, in a study by Campbell et al. (1976), it was found that husbands more than wives reported that

their spouses understood them. In addition, wives were more likely than their husbands to report that they understood their spouses well. This is consistent with what has been mentioned previously: that women tend to be more people-oriented and concerned with interpersonal relationships and the needs of others than men. Consistent with Campbell et al.'s research, Barnard (1981) argued that males lack experience in supporting roles and found women in stress turning to other women, rather than to husbands, for understanding and emotional support.

Traditionally, males have held occupations outside the home, while females have stayed at home and become homemakers. However, in the past few decades, more and more married women are entering the work force outside the home. Yet, according to Clausen (1986) although there are increasing numbers of women entering the labor force, the number of women maintaining continuous occupational careers is still relatively small compared to men.

Women are socialized to treat their work as a job, while treating their family and homemaker role as a career. In addition, women are the primary caregivers to children at home. In traditional households women are home with the children, while men are at work outside the home. The major social contact a women experiences is with her children. Thus, it would appear that

traditional married males are in the best situation to create social ties. This is due to the fact that those married persons who work outside the home increase their social networks by having interactions at work and at home (Gove and Geerken, 1977).

Not only have gender differences in social network ties been attributed to the process of differential socialization, but gender differences have also been noted to the category of support each gender utilizes (Balswick and Averett, 1977; Jacobson, 1986; Gillespie, et al., 1985; Leffler et al., 1986; Rosenthal and Gesten, 1986; Thoits, 1982; Wright, 1982).

Support has typically been broken down into the following categories, or some similar category containing similar characteristics: emotional support, cognitive support, and material support (Jacobson, 1986; Thoits, 1982). Emotional support consists of behavior which allows the recipient to feel comforted, cared for, secure, and so forth. Cognitive support typically refers to advice, information, or knowledge leading to resolution of a problem experienced by the recipient. Material support refers to tangible goods or services which the recipient may need (e.g., money).

Using the categories of emotional support, instrumental support (similarly described as cognitive support), and nonintimate support, Rosenthal and Gesten (1986) found gender differences. In their study of

college undergraduates, they suggest gender differences are connected to traditional sex role expectations. These expectations discourage men from becoming involved in intimate sex-disclosing relationships while encouraging closeness and intimacy for women. That is, women were more likely to be involved in emotional relationships; whereas males were more likely to associate with others who provided nonintimate contact. Yet both males and females reported a stronger need for emotional support than instrumental support. Finally, Rosenthal and Gesten noted that women perceived emotional support as more available and reported greater satisfaction from that support than did their male counterparts.

In sum, research on gender indicates that network ties differ for men and women. These differences are consistent with traditional gender roles and are perpetuated through the socialization process. Traditional gender roles suggest that women are socioemotionally oriented; while men are task and instrumentally oriented.

Hypotheses

As noted earlier, there are basically three research objectives to be examined. These objectives can be elaborated in the form of hypotheses. Based on the literature review, four hypotheses are suggested.

First, it has been demonstrated through numerous studies that social network ties can serve as supportive ties. Currently, however, these studies have been challenged for failing to examine the possibility of these ties acting as avenues of conflict. Recent studies (e.g., Leffler et al., 1986) have demonstrated that network ties may serve as both support systems and antagonistic systems. Thus the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Network ties will contain avenues for both support and friction.

As noted earlier, social networks provide differentiations between males and females. From the beginning of childhood, females are encouraged to care for others and to express emotions; whereas males are encouraged to be more instrumental and nonemotional. Thus, it can be hypothesized that males and females will differ in the types of support and friction they provide and receive. More specifically:

Hypothesis 2: Both males and females will turn to males more often for instrumental aid than to females.

Hypothesis 3: Both males and females will turn to females more often for emotional aid than to males.

Finally, community size is expected to have an impact on network relationships. As noted earlier, there is conflicting evidence on the effects community size has on network associations. Early research suggests that community growth leads to weak primary relationships. More recent research, however, suggests that as communities increase in density, subcultures emerge which contain similar characteristics of small communities (e.g., homogeneity). However, evidence does not exist which indicates the extent to which support networks serve as avenues of conflict across populations gradients. Based on the results of both earlier and more recent research which indicates that individuals living in larger communities have larger social networks, the following hypothesis is derived:

Hypothesis 4: Respondents living in larger communities will have less duplication among their supportive and antagonistic ties than those respondents living in smaller communities.

In the following chapter, the methodology used to examine these hypotheses will be discussed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

To test the hypotheses stated in the previous chapter, data collected in a research project studying nonmetropolitan family stress will be analyzed. This study will utilize data gathered during the summer of 1985 in three nonmetropolitan Western communities. The present chapter addresses the following: (1) sample communities; (2) sample selection; (3) research questions; (4) statistical procedures; and, (5) limitations.

Sample Communities

As part of a larger study three communities were selected. The three may be characterized as: a small, stable rural agricultural community of relatively stable population; a small rural community which recently experienced rapid growth; and finally a medium-sized nonmetropolitan community which has maintained a relatively slow growth rate (see Table 1).

Community One (Agrarian) is a predominantly agricultural community with most of its service needs being met by larger communities ten to fifteen miles away. In recent years, this community has maintained a relatively stable population. This community is located in northern Utah near the Idaho border. It is a community where nearly everyone is familiar with the activities

Table 1

Population of Communities Census Years, 1950 - 1980; 1984

Community	1950	1960	1970	1980	1984*
Agrarian	1533	1336	1244	1438	1635
Boomtown	1029	787	857	2316	2587
University	16,832	18,731	22,333	26,844	28,766

1987 Statistical Abstracts of Utah, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 1987.

*Utah State Data Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, July 1, 1984.

of most community members. A newcomer is quickly identified right away and people at the far end of town tend to be aware of one's destination before one arrives. In such a community a high density of acquaintanceship is expected. Density of acquaintanceship refers to the proportion of residents who are acquainted with one another (Freudenburg, 1986).

Among the factors related to the density of acquaintanceship are population and length of residence. Respondents in this community can be characterized as white, residing in the community for long periods of time (\bar{X} =24 years), Latter-Day Saint (Mormon), with less than a college degree (see Table 2).

Community Two (University) is a medium sized community. A state-supported university resides in this

community; the university, as well as the community, has experienced a slow, steady growth. Community two is a larger community where it is impossible for each member to know every other member of the community, the density of acquaintanceship is relatively low. Freudenburg's description: "what had once resembled a relatively even 'blanket' of social ties might now be better represented as a patchwork quilt" (1986:56) of the communities he studied also applies to community two. In other words, similar to Fischer's perspective (i.e., subcultural theory of urbanism), areas within large communities take on small-town network characteristics. The residents in this community tend to be white, residents of the community for a period of time (\bar{X} =12 years), Mormon, and college graduates (see Table 2).

Community Three (Boomtown) is a predominantly industrial community. Up until the mid 1970s agriculture characterized the economic base of this community. The residents of this community tend to be white, residents of the community for a long period of time (\bar{X} =20 years), Mormon, and half have a high school degree or less. In the late 1970s, this community experienced rapid growth due to an increase in energy development. However, as of the early 1980s, the population has stabilized, with periods of slow growth (see Table 2). In research related to rapid growth communities both Freudenburg (1986) and

Table 2

Characteristics of Respondents in the Three Communities

	<u>Community</u>		
	<u>1. Agrarian</u>	<u>2. University</u>	<u>3. Boomtown</u>
Employed			
Yes	67%	69%	55%
No	33%	31%	45%
Length of Residence (mean in years)	24	12	20
Religion			
Mormon	90%	59%	75%
Non-Mormon	10%	41%	25%
Education			
Less than H.S.	16%	2%	18%
Completed H.S.	29%	9%	32%
Trade/Tech. School	10%	4%	13%
Some College	26%	38%	23%
College Degree	10%	14%	8%
Some Grad. School	8%	19%	5%
Completed Grad School	0%	19%	1%
Age (mean in years)	45	38	43
Ethnicity			
White	90%	90%	88%
Non-White	10%	10%	12%

Greider and Krannich (1985) refuted the generally accepted the notion that neighborhood interaction declines with rapid growth and increased heterogeneity. According to Freudenburg, disruptions were found in boomtowns, however, these disruptions did not lead to the dissolution of community.

As is the case with many towns in Utah, the majority of the population within these communities are affiliated with the Mormon church (see table 2), "which places a strong emphasis on the family and which encourages community integration via a neighborhood-based ward system and institutionalized channels of mutual support" (Gillespie et al. 1985:21). Thus, these communities, which can be characterized as consensus-oriented, are well suited to the examination of potential conflict enmeshed in personal social networks because if conflict is found here we can be confident that network ties are not always supportive. Coward and Smith (1981) have pointed out that religious integration and a strong emphasis on the family unit are regular features of other rural areas; and therefore, generalizations based on the findings should not be limited to Mormon communities.

Sample Selection

Within each community the sample was randomly selected from lists of residents with metered utility hook-ups. To increase the sample pool, supplemental

inclusions were used. This was accomplished through on-site mapping to include those who do not utilize separate municipal utility hook-ups, in particular, trailer park residents.

Once a sample pool was developed, randomly selected households from each community were drawn to ascertain whether they were eligible for inclusion in the study. The criterion for inclusion was that the respondent be currently living with a spouse or partner. The restriction was used to help fulfill the overall goal of this study which was to examine the nature of relationships between men and women living in family settings. It should be noted that by limiting the eligibility of respondents the sample selected is not representative of all community members. Rather they represent intact families in non-metropolitan communities. Therefore, generalizations should be restricted to these populations. In particular, the boomtown community is affected by the sample selection. This is due to boomtown communities being characterized by the influx of single males, a part of the population not sampled. Thus, results and generalizations from this sample to the larger community is limited.

Of the households meeting the eligibility requirement, a total of 100 residents were interviewed from each community. For each community 40 respondents were the adult female in the household, 40 respondents

were the adult male in the household, and in 10 households both male and female adults were interviewed (20 respondents). Thus, a total of 300 individuals were interviewed.

Data were gathered via personal interviews which averaged 55 minutes each. Respondents were reimbursed ten dollars for their time.

Research Questions

To adequately measure an individual's social network, their range of contacts needed to be assessed, in addition to their supportive and antagonistic ties. Three separate sets of questions were used to allow respondents to identify their alters in various contexts: 1) whom the respondent sees regularly, 2) whom the respondent perceives as supportive under varied contexts, and 3) whom the respondent perceives as antagonistic under varied contexts. The questions used were identical to those used by Leffler et al. (1986).

The first set of questions, to determine the composition of the respondent's contact network, included the following questions:

Who do you see most often when taking a break at work or from housework?

Who do you most often spend free time with at the end of the day or on weekends?

Who do you talk with most often before or after church activities or other voluntary groups you attend?

Thinking back over the people you have mentioned so far, is there anyone else who you know and see a lot of or hear from regularly? Who would that be? Anyone else?

Each respondent could name a maximum of 3 alters for each question. The sex for each alter named was also obtained. Interviewers were instructed to inform respondents to identify alters by first name and last initial to maintain anonymity. If two sets of initials were identical, interviewers were instructed to use a middle initial to avoid confusion. Throughout the interview respondents were reminded to exclude their children or spouse from their list of alters. This was done to eliminate the possibility of demand characteristic effects due to the profamily community environment (Leffler et al., 1986).

The second set of questions, used to assess the respondents' support networks, measured support via two groups of questions, each consisting of ten items. Items were selected that represent standard conceptualizations in previous studies (Leffler, et al., 1986). Questions included:

Who would you be most likely to call on in a pinch (not counting your spouse or kids) if you needed someone to help:

- a. Look after your children?
- b. Watch your house or possessions when you're away from home?
- c. With house or yard chores or repairs?
- d. Talk with you about problems you might have with your spouse or with other close relationships?

- e. Talk with you about problems you might have with your children or with someone else's kids?
- f. Talk with you about problems you might have with your relatives or in-laws?
- g. Be right there with you (physically) in a stressful situation?
- h. Loan you \$250?
- i. Help you understand a problem or confusing situation you faced?
- j. If you have a paid job, who do you talk about things that happen at work?

The second group of questions were used to assess who might ask the respondent for support. Respondents were asked:

Who would be most likely to call on you in a pinch if they needed someone to help:

This question was followed by the ten items (a-j) used above. Consistent with the first group of questions, respondents were asked to list up to three alters, excluding spouse and children.

Recalling that the second hypothesis to be investigated also refers to the types of support characteristic of each gender, the above questions (a-j) were broken down for analysis into the categories of emotional support and instrumental support. As previously noted, emotional support refers to behavior leading to comfort, security, caring, and so forth. Thus, questions d, e, f, g, and i were included in this category. Instrumental support refers to behavior resulting in the

solution to a practical problem. Therefore, questions a, b, c, and h constituted this category.

The third set of questions were used to examine those contacts which cause conflict. To alleviate any reservation respondents had about listing alters causing conflict, they were reassured that friction is a part of everyday interaction. More specifically, respondents were told:

So far we've talked about times when people could help you, or you could help them. Another important thing is that sometimes some people who you see often let you down, bother you, or just plain rub you the wrong way. It is very natural to feel this way at times about friends and other people we know, and to say so. Considering not only people you have mentioned already, but also anyone else you know and see regularly, we would like to know which of them are the persons you'd be most likely to have the following kinds of friction? They may be people you also usually get along the best with, or they may not be.

This opening introduction appeared effective: of the 2700 times it was possible to identify an alter as antagonistic (300 respondents X 9 opportunities each) 56% of the time alters were identified. The specific questions following this introduction were:

What three people at times tend most to be overly demanding in asking you for help, your time or the loan of things?

Among the people who you see regularly, which three do you think would be most likely to let you down if you asked them for help, time, or the loan of something?

What three people at times tend most to make you angry or upset?

Once again up to three alters, excluding spouse and children, were obtained and gender characteristics were obtained for each alter cited.

Statistical Procedures

For comparative purposes, statistical procedures similar to those used by Gillespie et al. (1985) and Leffler et al. (1986) will be utilized. These will be descriptive statistics, consisting primarily of frequencies and percentages. Further, t-tests and Scheffe's S test for multiple comparisons will be conducted to test for significant differences between groups.

Recalling that the research objectives were to determine the extent to which antagonistic ties overlap with supportive ties, gender differences, and differences across community size, it appears that these statistical procedures adequately meet these objectives. In addition, as pointed out by Leffler et al. "Burt (1982) notes that "ego network" analysis like the sort we describe, is in a preliminary stage of development. Consequently, it is unclear what are appropriate statistical techniques for illustrating and testing claims" (1986:352). Since the present study is a partial replication of the work of Leffler et al., the statistical procedures chosen are appropriate.

Data will be analyzed to determine following: the extent to which respondents utilized the opportunity to name antagonists; the extent to which antagonists are also listed as support alters; the frequency of each gender acting as support alters, antagonistic alters, or both; the frequency of each gender providing and receiving emotional and instrumental support; and, the extent to which support and conflict networks differ across the three communities.

Limitations

As with most studies, there are limitations to this research. As suggested by Leffler et al. (1986:344), it would be preferable if respondents were not restricted to three alter names per question. Further, they describe only their own relation with alters, not alters' relation with one another. Another issue is the limited range of relational types - only certain forms of conflict are addressed, for instance. Another limitation is the exclusion of nuclear kin from all three kinds of networks.

Another limitation, specific to the present study, is that the range of community size is limited from 1600 to 29,000, thus limiting the ability to generalize the results to larger communities. In addition, there is a sample of one for each community size, thus an N of three. Further, within each sample only intact families were

selected therefore generalizations to the general population is limited.

Finally, the support typologies (emotional and instrumental) are not mutually exclusive nor comprehensive. For example, instrumental support consists of emotional overtones: assistance from others typically indicates a degree of caring (Thoits, 1982).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings of the present study. The following topics will be addressed: 1) overall contacts identified; 2) support networks; 3) conflict networks; 4) duplication of conflict/support networks; and 5) a summary of the hypotheses.

Range of Contacts in Networks

The range of contacts includes those alters identified as mere contacts, as well as those listed as supportive and antagonistic. The total contacts possible ranged from 0 to 78; however, alters cited were often listed more than once. Therefore, the numbers listed reflect the number of different alters cited. Table 3 shows that the extent of network relationships varied significantly by community with the agrarian community, the smallest of the three, identifying the most contacts ($\bar{X}=18.22$), followed by the university community ($\bar{X}=15.40$) and the boomtown community ($\bar{X}=12.51$).

It would be expected that the university community, based on the Wirthian hypothesis, would have the least number of contacts cited; however, this is not the case. The present findings are not surprising given that to be eligible for inclusion in the sample, respondents were required to be currently living in an intact family situation. By limiting the sample to intact families, the

Table 3

Contact Network by Community and Gender

Community	Ties Names					
	\bar{X}	Males (N)	\bar{X}	Females (N)	\bar{X}	Total (N)
1. Agrarian						
Males	13.72 ^a	(686)	4.18	(209)	17.90	(895)
Females	5.74	(287)	12.80	(640)	18.54	(927)
Totals	9.73 ^c	(973)	8.49 ^c	(849)	18.22 ^{bc}	(1822)
2. University						
Males	11.52 ^a	(576)	4.00	(200)	15.52	(776)
Females	4.08	(204)	11.20	(560)	15.28	(764)
Totals	7.80 ^e	(780)	7.60 ^d	(760)	15.40 ^d	(1540)
3. Boomtown						
Males	9.52 ^a	(476)	2.38	(124)	12.00	(600)
Females	3.56	(178)	9.46	(473)	13.02	(651)
Totals	6.54	(654)	5.97	(597)	12.51	(1251)
Total						
Males	11.59 ^a	(1738)	3.55	(533)	15.14	(2271)
Females	4.46	(669)	11.15	(1673)	15.61	(2342)
Totals	8.02	(2407)	7.35	(2206)	15.37	(4613)

Difference of Means (t) test:

^aDifference between male and female ties: $p < .01$.

^bDifference between ties in Communities 1 and 2: $p < .01$.

^cDifference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .01$.

^dDifference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .01$.

^eDifference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .05$.

Note: 50 male and 50 female respondents in each community.

expected lack of network ties due to size of community becomes less of an issue. Expectations based on community size alone ignore unique aspects of subgroups within a population. For example, the social network of intact families most likely differs from that of a single male due to the broader network that two people can bring to a relationship. Therefore, the present results of respondents in the university community having more contacts than the boomtown community may be a consequence of sample selection rather than community size. This supports Bender's (1978) notion that researchers should not have a preoccupation with territory as a sole definition of community.

In addition to the T-test comparisons, community differences were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance procedures. The F-ratio for between-group comparison was 27.52 ($p < .001$). Also, the Scheffe's S statistic indicated that there were significant differences between each pairwise comparison among the three communities.

Based on the characteristics of the communities, these overall differences should not be surprising. Recalling that the boomtown community recently experienced an economic "boom" and the population is now leveling off to a slow growth rate, the extent of residents' overall contacts might be expected to be lower there than in communities experiencing slow, steady growth. Thus, it

appears growth patterns or other community-specific sociocultural attributes may be better predictors of the extent of network ties than community size. As previously mentioned, Bender's (1978) study on boomtowns suggests such an avenue for further study.

With respect to gender of alters, significant differences were noted between the numbers of male and female contacts listed between the agrarian and boomtown communities, and between the university and boomtown communities. As in the case of total contacts cited, it was again the boomtown community demonstrating marked differences.

The difference between the total numbers of alters cited by male and female respondents in their networks is not a statistically significant one. The females demonstrated slightly more contacts than males ($\bar{X}=15.61$ and $\bar{X}=15.14$, respectively). Thus, the prediction that males would list more contacts than females was not supported. This result could also be a function of sample selection. Because intact families were studied, both genders are exposed to a broader contact network.

Significant differences are found, in the direction expected, with regard to the gender of those identified. That is, males primarily report more male contacts and females report more female contacts. This is consistent with the findings of Gillespie et al. (1985) and Leffler et al. (1986). Overall, more male contacts than female

contacts were identified, $\bar{X}=8.02$ and $\bar{X}=7.35$, respectively. Thus, all three of these communities segregate themselves by gender, with each gender having relatively independent sets of social networks. Overall, however, the size of networks is not significantly different for male and female respondents.

Support Networks

Support received by respondent. To ascertain the extent of their supportive network, respondents were asked to indicate who they would turn to for support in various situations. As indicated in Table 4, the number of support ties named varies slightly between communities, with the agrarian community indicating the most support ties, followed by the university and boomtown communities ($\bar{X}=21.61$, $\bar{X}=20.34$, and $\bar{X}=16.85$, respectively). Significant differences in the numbers named were found between the agrarian and boomtown communities and between the university and boomtown. The F-ratio for the between-group comparison was 10.879 ($p<.001$). Also, the Scheffe's S statistic indicated that there were significant differences between the agrarian and boomtown communities and between the university and boomtown.

Significant differences were also noted in the number of female support ties named, with significant differences found between the agrarian and boomtown communities, and between the university and boomtown communities. However,

Table 4

Mean Number of Ties Cited in Support Network by Community and Gender

Community	Ties Names					
	\bar{X}	Males (N)	\bar{X}	Females (N)	\bar{X}	Total (N)
1. Agrarian						
Males	16.04 ^a	(802)	3.80	(190)	19.84	(992)
Females	6.58	(329)	16.80	(840)	23.38	(1169)
Totals	11.31	(1131)	10.30 ^f	(1030)	21.61 ^c	(2161)
2. University						
Males	15.38 ^a	(769)	4.16	(208)	19.54	(977)
Females	4.58	(229)	16.56	(828)	21.14	(1057)
Totals	9.98	(998)	10.36 ^e	(1036)	20.34 ^d	(2034)
3. Boomtown						
Males	14.40 ^a	(720)	2.04	(102)	16.44	(822)
Females	3.88	(194)	13.38	(669)	17.26	(863)
Totals	9.14	(914)	7.71	(771)	16.85	(1685)
Total						
Males	15.27 ^a	(2291)	3.33	(500)	18.61	(2791)
Females	5.01	(752)	15.58	(2337)	20.59	(3089)
Totals	10.14	(3043)	9.46	(2837)	19.60	(5880)

Difference of Means (t) test:

^aDifference between male and female ties: $p < .01$.

^bDifference between male and female ties: $p < .05$.

^cDifference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .01$.

^dDifference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .01$.

^eDifference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .05$.

^fDifference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .05$.

Note: 50 male and 50 female respondents in each community.

no significant differences among male ties were found between communities. Thus, size of community did not appear to be a factor in identifying males as perceived supportive ties.

For the combined sample, female support networks are slightly larger overall than male networks, $\bar{X}=20.59$ and $\bar{X}=18.60$, respectively. In all three communities, female respondents identified more supportive ties than males. However, as in the case of overall contacts, the difference between male and females in number of ties listed as supportive is not statistically significant.

Significant differences were found between the gender of the support ties named, with respondents tending to seek support from their own gender. This difference was significant among respondents within all three communities. The university community was the only one to identify more female than male support ties overall (this is the same community where males reported larger contact networks than females). Therefore, it appears that males in the university community are more willing to seek support from females than males in the agrarian and boomtown communities.

Type of support received. Type of support received was categorized as instrumental or emotional. Instrumental activities, such as yard work, repairs around the house or the loan of money, are often thought of as male dominated activities; whereas emotional activities,

such as discussion of personal problems, are often viewed as female dominated. However, a perusal of Table 5 suggests otherwise. Contrary to expectations, significant differences between the gender of ties was found, with both sexes relying on their own gender for both instrumental and emotional support. It was anticipated that both males and females would turn to females for emotional support; and that both males and females would turn to males for instrumental support. A possible explanation for the current findings may be related to a measurement issue wherein the categories used were not mutually exclusive. In other words, the content of the instrumental items may have contained characteristics of emotional indices.

Between communities, significant differences were found, for both instrumental and emotional support differences were noted between the agrarian and boomtown communities for total ties named. The F-ratio for the between-group comparison for emotional support was 7.37 ($p < .001$). Also the Scheffe's S statistic indicated that there were significant differences between the agrarian and boomtown communities. With regard to instrumental support a significant difference was also found between the university and boomtown communities for total ties named. The F-ratio for the between-group comparison for instrumental support was 10.34 ($p < .001$). The Scheffe's S statistic indicated that there were significant differences

Table 5
Mean Number in Support Network by Type of Support, Community and Gender

Community	Instrumental Support Ties Named						Emotional Support Ties Named					
	Male \bar{X}	(N)	Female \bar{X}	(N)	Total \bar{X}	(N)	Male \bar{X}	(N)	Female \bar{X}	(N)	Total \bar{X}	(N)
1. Agrarian												
Male	8.20 ^a	(410)	1.62	(81)	9.82	(491)	6.20 ^a	(310)	1.98	(99)	8.18	(409)
Female	2.88	(144)	9.72	(486)	12.60	(630)	3.38	(169)	6.10	(305)	9.48	(474)
Totals	5.54	(554)	5.67 ^f	(567)	11.21 ^c	(1121)	4.79 ^f	(479)	4.04	(404)	8.83 ^c	(883)
2. University												
Male	8.02 ^a	(401)	1.88	(94)	9.90	(495)	5.76 ^a	(288)	1.98	(99)	7.74	(387)
Female	1.68	(84)	9.56	(478)	11.24	(562)	2.64	(132)	5.72	(286)	8.36	(418)
Totals	4.85	(485)	5.72 ^e	(572)	10.57 ^d	(1057)	4.20	(420)	3.85	(385)	8.05	(805)
3. Boomtown												
Male	7.16 ^a	(358)	.90	(45)	8.06	(403)	5.84 ^a	(292)	.98	(49)	6.82	(341)
Female	1.76	(88)	7.32	(366)	9.08	(454)	1.96	(98)	5.56	(278)	7.42	(371)
Totals	4.46	(446)	4.11	(411)	8.57	(857)	3.90	(390)	3.27	(327)	7.17	(717)
Total												
Male	7.79 ^a	(1169)	1.47	(220)	9.26	(1389)	5.93 ^a	(890)	1.65	(247)	7.58	(1137)
Female	2.11	(316)	8.87	(1330)	10.97	(1646)	2.66	(399)	5.79	(869)	8.45	(1268)
Totals	4.95	(1485)	5.16	(1550)	10.11	(3035)	4.30	(1289)	3.72	(1116)	8.02	(2405)

Difference of means (t) test:

^aThe difference between male and female ties: $p < .01$.

^cThe difference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .01$.

^dThe difference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .01$.

^eThe difference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .05$.

^fThe difference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .05$.

Note: 50 male and 50 female respondents in each community.

between the university and boomtown communities and between the agrarian and boomtown communities.

Significant differences for instrumental support were found between the boomtown and the agrarian and university communities for female support ties named. Emotional support, on the other hand, demonstrated a significant difference for male ties named between the agrarian and boomtown communities. In addition, in all three communities, total male ties outnumbered female ties for perceived emotional support; whereas total ties identified for instrumental support varied, with the university and agrarian communities naming more female ties and the boomtown community naming more male ties. Overall, in contrast to expectations, males were viewed as more supportive in emotional circumstances and females in instrumental circumstances in all three communities.

Support provided by respondent. Data was also collected to determine to whom the respondent is likely to provide support. As indicated in Table 6, significant differences between communities were found. In particular, the boomtown ($\bar{X}=18.34$) was found to be significantly different from the agrarian ($\bar{X}=22.94$) and university ($\bar{X}=22.32$) communities with respect to both total numbers requesting support and for female requesters named. The F-ratio for the between-group comparison was 7.95 ($p<.001$). Also, the Scheffe's S statistic indicated that there were significant differences between pairwise

Table 6

Mean Number of Ties Cited as Likely to Request Support by
Community and Gender

Community	Ties Names					
	\bar{X}	Males (N)	\bar{X}	Females (N)	\bar{X}	Total (N)
1. Agrarian						
Males	15.58 ^a	(779)	5.60	(280)	21.18	(1059)
Females	3.28	(164)	21.42	(1071)	24.70	(1235)
Totals	9.43 ^b	(943)	13.51 ^f	(1351)	22.94 ^c	(2294)
2. University						
Males	15.84 ^a	(792)	5.42	(271)	21.26	(1063)
Females	2.30	(115)	21.08	(1054)	23.38	(1169)
Totals	9.07 ^b	(907)	13.25 ^e	(1325)	22.32 ^d	(2232)
3. Boomtown						
Males	15.10 ^a	(775)	2.84	(142)	18.34	(917)
Females	2.52	(126)	17.58	(879)	20.10	(1005)
Totals	9.01	(901)	10.21	(1021)	19.22	(1922)
Total						
Males	15.51 ^a	(2326)	4.62	(693)	20.13	(3019)
Females	2.70	(405)	20.03	(3004)	22.73	(3409)
Totals	9.13	(2731)	12.23	(3697)	21.43	(6428)

Difference of Means (t) test:

^aDifference between male and female ties: $p < .01$.

^bDifference between male and female ties: $p < .05$.

^cDifference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .01$.

^dDifference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .01$.

^eDifference between ties in Communities 2 and 3: $p < .05$.

^fDifference between ties in Communities 1 and 3: $p < .05$.

Note: 50 male and 50 female respondents in each community.

comparisons among the the boomtown community and the agrarian and university communities. However, the numbers of male requesters of support cited did not differ significantly between communities.

Within each community significant differences were found between gender of those requesting support. Each gender identified their respective gender as potential recipients of support. In other words, females expected other females to request support and males expected other males to request support. As predicted, in all three communities females were more likely to be cited as requesting support from the combined totals of male and female respondents. Significant differences were noted between male and female ties identified in the agrarian and university communities.

Conflict Networks

As predicted, Table 7 shows female conflict networks to be slightly more extensive than male ones, $\bar{X}=5.44$ and $\bar{X}=4.65$, respectively. However, the difference is not a statistically significant one. The only statistical difference found in conflict networks is between male and female sources of conflict cited. As with supportive ties, antagonistic ties flow through same-gender ties. Significant differences were not found in total number of antagonistic ties cited nor between communities. Of the 2700 times it was possible to identify an alter as

Table 7

Mean Number in Conflict Network by Community and Gender

Community	Ties Names					
	\bar{X}	Males (N)	\bar{X}	Females (N)	Total \bar{X}	(N)
1. Agrarian						
Males	4.16 ^a	(208)	.70	(35)	4.86	(243)
Females	1.60	(80)	3.80	(190)	5.40	(270)
Totals	2.88	(288)	2.25	(225)	5.13	(513)
2. University						
Males	4.00 ^a	(200)	.78	(39)	4.78	(239)
Females	1.36	(68)	4.30	(215)	5.66	(283)
Totals	2.68	(268)	2.54	(254)	5.22	(522)
3. Boomtown						
Males	3.93 ^a	(182)	.68	(34)	4.32	(216)
Females	1.14	(57)	4.12	(206)	5.26	(263)
Totals	2.39	(239)	2.40	(240)	4.79	(479)
Total						
Males	3.93 ^a	(590)	.72	(108)	4.65	(698)
Females	1.37	(205)	4.07	(611)	5.44	(816)
Totals	2.65	(795)	2.40	(719)	5.05	(1514)

Difference of Means (t) test:

^aDifference between male and female ties: $p < .01$.

Note: 50 male and 50 female respondents in each community.

antagonistic (300 respondents X 9 opportunities each) 56% of the time individuals were identified.

Duplication in Conflict and Support Ties

Table 8 shows the duplications in support and conflict ties listed by respondents. No significant difference was found between the communities but the university community reported the greatest number of overlapping ties, followed by the boomtown community and the agrarian community. Thus, the research expectation was not supported.

As predicted, in all three communities women reported more duplication in ties than men. Overall, more female sources of both conflict and support were identified than male sources ($\bar{X}=1.19$ and $\bar{X}=1.13$, respectively). The agrarian community was the only community to report a slightly higher number of male sources than female sources. In addition, each gender identified their own as more frequently serving as both supportive and antagonistic which was also an expected finding. However, no statistically significant difference was found between the mean number of ties duplicated by males and females.

Summary

Of the four hypotheses identified, one was supported by the results and three were not. The first hypothesis predicted that network ties would contain avenues for both

Table 8

Number of Duplications in Respondents Conflict/Support
Network by Community and Gender

Community	Ties Names					
	\bar{X}	Males (N)	\bar{X}	Females (N)	\bar{X}	Total (N)
1. Agrarian						
Males	1.80 ^a	(90)	.22	(11)	2.02	(101)
Females	.50	(25)	1.96	(98)	2.46	(123)
Totals	1.15	(115)	1.09	(109)	2.24	(224)
2. University						
Males	1.88 ^a	(94)	.22	(11)	2.10	(105)
Females	.42	(21)	2.30	(115)	2.72	(136)
Totals	1.15	(115)	1.26	(126)	2.41	(241)
3. Boomtown						
Males	1.74 ^a	(87)	.22	(11)	1.96	(98)
Females	.44	(22)	2.22	(111)	2.66	(133)
Totals	1.09	(109)	1.22	(222)	2.31	(231)
Total						
Males	1.81 ^a	(271)	.22	(33)	2.03	(304)
Females	.45	(68)	2.16	(324)	2.61	(392)
Totals	1.13	(339)	1.19	(357)	2.32	(696)

Difference of Means (t) test:

^aDifference between male and female ties: $p < .01$.

Note: 50 male and 50 female respondents in each community.

support and friction and the data supported this claim. The second and third hypotheses predicted that respondents will turn to males for instrumental support and females for emotional support. These hypotheses were not supported by the results. The fourth hypothesis stated that the duplication of support and antagonistic ties would differ between the larger community and the two smaller communities and that the larger community would have less duplication of ties. The results indicated that the larger community (the university) reported more duplication than the agrarian and boomtown communities; however, these differences were not statistically significant. This is contrary to the original expectation based on the Wirthian hypothesis that larger communities are arenas for impersonal interactions. Possible explanations for these findings will be elaborated upon in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

Traditionally, network ties have been viewed as primarily serving as positive, supportive avenues for comfort and stress reduction. In contrast, recent studies have investigated the possibility of network ties producing conflict rather than support. In addition, studies have begun to examine the likelihood of both conflict and support emanating from the same network tie. It is this latter assertion which was the impetus for the present study.

Based on information gathered from personal interviews in three communities, data was analyzed to determine: the extent to which network ties serve as avenues for both support and friction, the influence of gender on the amount and type of network exchange, and the effect that size of community has on these ties. As indicated in the previous chapter, both support and conflict networks were found to be more extensive for the smallest (agrarian) and largest (university) communities than for the respondents from the boomtown community. The literature suggests that larger communities will be more heterogeneous and have larger networks with less overlap between supportive and antagonistic ties due to a larger population base from which to draw contacts.

The results do not support this assertion. Several arguments potentially account for this. The communities under investigation had populations of 30,000 and under; thus, even the largest community is not on scale with the very large American cities to which the literature refers. The community literature primarily focuses on urban areas with high population density as opposed to rural areas with relatively sparse density. This study could be viewed as a preliminary examination of rural-nonmetropolitan differences, rather than rural-urban differences.

The communities have some unique characteristics which may affect network relationships. For example, the boomtown may have had the smallest network system due to recent rapid population growth which has not allowed time for network relations to develop as fully as in more stable places. Although the samples were based on intact families, the choices of network ties in boomtown communities may be limited. Thus, even though there was a significant difference in total number of contacts between the agrarian and university communities and the boomtown, there was not a significant difference in overlap between supportive and antagonistic ties. The university community may experience population change due to students and faculty moving in and out of the area. This interpretation argues that growth patterns may be a more appropriate avenue of investigation. In other words, the

growth patterns of communities may be a more accurate measure for explaining social network differences in communities of varying size than population size alone.

In all three communities both males and females are far more likely to designate same-gender individuals as contact, support or antagonistic ties. This finding supports previous studies and was expected. Each gender is more likely to reserve its emotional and instrumental support for their own. Overall, females were more likely to be identified as instrumental supports and males as emotional supports. This was an unexpected finding. Perhaps this is due to a problem with the support typologies (emotional and instrumental) not being mutually exclusive nor comprehensive. For example, instrumental support (i.e., look after your children) contains emotional overtones: assistance from others typically indicates a degree of caring (Thoits, 1982). In addition, the typologies used in this study were based on their use in previous studies. Perhaps a re-examination of the items included is needed. It is clear that further operationalizations of these concepts are required.

Another explanation may be related to the tendency to accept stereotypical gender roles. Due to gender socialization, individuals tend to feel more comfortable with their own gender and therefore, in times of need (emotional or instrumental) same-gender interactions result. For example, if a woman finds herself in

financial trouble, she may turn to a female friend. However, her friend's husband may be the person who actually handles the family finances. Thus, the lending of money, typically viewed as a male-dominated activity, may be indirectly requested as an outcome of female interactions. In addition, if a man needs someone to discuss personal problems with, he may turn to a male friend, even though women are typically thought to be better listeners. Compounded with the lack of mutually exclusive categories, the contradictory or unexpected results are not surprising.

Given the results, it would benefit future researchers in this area to examine more fully several issues. First, the issues related to community characteristics could be more fully elaborated upon. In particular research communities should contain similar characteristics, or at least the researcher should be able to control for their uniqueness. In other words, conclusions drawn should reflect community differences or similarities based on common variables rather than those variables which make them unique.

In addition, the use of more than one community for each size category would lend more credibility to generalization of the findings. In this study only one community for each size category was used which allows for uniqueness to be a factor in drawing conclusions.

Another issue of concern is the limit placed on the number of alters which can be cited. In the present study a maximum of three alters could be cited. Perhaps if this were expanded, additional alters would be identified that would be unique to support or conflict scenarios. The relationship of alters to each other would also provide useful information. Similarly, a description of the characteristics other than gender of the alters indicated should be included to determine if a pattern exists (e.g., religion, co-worker, neighbor, friend, etc.). For example, are the alters which provide conflict all co-workers or all relatives?

Finally, future research should attempt to elaborate or clarify types of support and conflict identified. In the present study conflict refers to those alters who are demanding, disappointing, and upsetting. Are these true measures of conflict, or do they refer to other aspects of interaction such as causing stress? Alternatively, are they normal aspects of interaction producing indifferent or neutral feelings? Were the topics from the questionnaire used in this analysis examples of conflict, antagonism, and/or friction? In the present study the terms were used interchangeably; however, in the future finer distinctions may provide more precise conclusions regarding the role of "conflict" in social networks.

Another role conflict may be playing is to counter-balance the relationship. In many relationships

there exists the possibility that conflict and support keep each other in check. Or, referring back to exchange principles, the positive role that supportive ties play may outweigh the negative effects that conflict in network ties produce.

It is clear from this study that an assumption that network ties are necessarily supportive ties is an oversimplification. It is also observed that both males and females identify as antagonists those same individuals they previously identified as supportive contacts. Gillespie et al. (1985) point out that the percentage of antagonistic alters identified is likely to be under-reported given that naming antagonists in interview situations may be uncomfortable and perhaps risky in small towns where news travels fast. Further, the dominant religious orientation in these communities promotes accord and amiability, and discourages expressions of conflict. Thus, it seems both friction and support are regularized features of nonmetropolitan interactions, and portraying them as harmonious and supportive is questionable.

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