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Personal and community issues networks in small town Iowa: the importance of gender, marital status and the presence of children

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Personal and community issues networks in small town Iowa: The importance of gender, marital status and the presence of children

by

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

"A life without people, without the same people day after day, people who belong to you, people who will be there for us, people who need us and whom we need in return, may be very rich in other things, but in human terms, it is no life at all."  
Harold Kushner

Social networks are an important aspect of our daily lives. They encircle us and influence our behaviors. An extensive body of literature documents the existence and maintenance of social networks. In sociology, social network studies include a wide variety of research from urban sociologists studying the effects of city life on networks (Fischer 1977) to research relating size of individual networks to self-reports of health (Pilisuk, et al. 1993). Social networks have been investigated as both dependent and independent variables. This study seeks to expand the understanding of social networks and differences in network size and composition related to gender and life course variables.

Most of what is known regarding social networks is limited to personal or friendship networks. The bulk of studies have focused on this one aspect of an individual's total social network. Studies that focus on multiple aspects of social networks are rare. Little attention has been given to other components of networks such as community issues networks, comprised of individuals with whom one discusses important community matters. This study is unique because it examines two aspects of the total network: the personal (friendship) networks and community issues networks of individuals in small Iowa communities.

These small town networks are of specific interest due to the struggles some rural communities have undergone since the farm crisis of the 1980s. These
struggles include natural decline or the loss of population (Chang 1974), economic recession as evidenced by drops in retail sales and increases in farm families receiving food stamps (Davidson 1987), and a decreasing sense of community in rural towns (McBride 1987). The community issues network has the potential to be an important indicator of interest in and informal involvement of residents in their community. As the agricultural markets continue to fluctuate the status and vitality of these communities remain a concern.

In addition to the timely relevance of the sample, this study provides further insights into social factors that may affect network variations. Past research has found patterned variations in social networks based on life course and demographic variables. In other words, characteristics of individuals and the their places in the larger social structure influence the size and composition of their networks. One variable of significance is gender. “Doing gender,” fulfilling the sex-role expectations established by society and internalized by individuals, has implications on social networks. These implications will be tested in this sample with special interest on community issues networks. Although the research has investigated gender implications for networks, it is less clear from the literature how gender, in conjunction with life course and demographic variables, affects networks. These life stages place additional structural limitations on the individual. The presence of children and marital status are two variables which may influence the relationship between gender and networks.

The research questions for this study include: Is gender related to community issues networks similarly to the way it has been shown to be related to personal (friendship) networks? Will the size or composition of community issues networks vary by gender? Are both of these social networks sex segregated? Do life course stages, such as marital status and the presence of children, affect men's
and women's social networks differently? Lastly, do basic demographic variables influence size and composition of social networks more than gender and life course variables? The remainder of this chapter clarifies concepts and reviews the importance of social networks.

**Social Networks**

This section provides a working definition of social networks, an argument for studying multiple components of an individual’s “total” network, and introduces the importance of structural factors on individual networks.

**Defining Social Networks**

Social networks refer to links, both social and psychological, between individuals. Another way to conceptualize social networks is as an individual’s “personal community.” This terminology has been used by social scientists such as Fischer (1982). He used the term personal community, but also defined networks as “people with whom one is directly involved” (2). Feiring and Coates (1987:611) defined an individual’s network as “an index of the person’s social world or life space.” Social networks have been studied in terms of their size, composition, density (how many network members know each other), durability (how long the individuals have been in the network), and frequency of contact.

This study focuses on two types of social networks: 1) personal networks, which refer to the individuals a respondent is closest to, and 2) community issues networks which are made up of individuals with whom a respondent discusses relevant community issues. Size of social networks refers to the number of network members (alters) listed by an individual. For example, network size could be the
number of close friends a respondent reports. Network composition refers to the make-up of the network alters. Networks typically include immediate family, kin, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and acquaintances. Composition can be defined in terms of the percent of the members who are kin, the percent who are male or female, the percent who are coworkers, etc.

Investigating Multiple Components of the “Total” Network

The bulk of social network studies have focused on personal or friendship networks examining the characteristics of those with whom the subject is “close to” or with whom the subject “discusses important matters.” These studies are useful in beginning to understand the number and types of connections individuals have to their social environment. Very few studies have investigated multiple components of an individual’s total social network; instead, what is common is a focus on one aspect or one component.

The focus on personal networks does not fully assess an individual’s social ties. Many researchers point to this weakness in the literature. McCallister and Fischer (1978:133) advocated studying the “whole” network, not just aspects like kin networks and friend networks. Similarly, House and his colleagues (1988) stated that to truly understand social networks all connections maintained by individuals need to be addressed. According to Smith-Lovin and McPherson (1992), the inability of researchers to capture the “whole” or “total” network in some ways diminished the intended contributions of these studies. They concluded, “to ignore the differentiated nature of people’s connections to one another misses the embedded nature of economic and social life that is the major insight of the network perspective” (Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1992:244).
The literature on social networks attempting to go beyond personal networks mainly has dealt with job-related networks. Although these connections with coworkers and colleagues are interesting, they provide limited information with regard to an individual's social connections to other community residents. This study will expand the literature by looking not only at personal networks, but also studying community issues networks — consisting of all those with whom the respondent discusses important community issues. The size and composition of both personal and community issues networks will be the dependent variables. Two aspects of network composition, the kin composition (percent of kin in the network) and the gender composition (percent same-sex alters), are of interest.

**Structural Determinants**

In addition to assessing community issues networks, the research presented here will also contribute to the continuing goal of understanding how structural determinants impact social networks. House (1988) proposed an increase in the study of "the macro-social structures and processes that give rise to these more micro-social relationships" (301). Research consistently illustrates that networks differ among individuals by social traits (Feiring and Coates 1987; Fischer and Oliker 1983; Gerstel 1988; Ishi-Kunz and Seccombe 1989).

Marsden's analysis of Americans' core discussion networks summarized networks as, "small, centered on kin, comparatively dense, and homogeneous" (1987:130). In describing networks as homogeneous he noted that network characteristics were very much related to the individual's characteristics. For instance, the racial group an individual identified with or belonged to had implications on network composition. Typically, whites had a high proportion of other whites in their network. Fischer stated, "the most striking fact about personal
relations from an actuarial point of view is how similar people are to one another" (1982:179). He used age to make his point tracking how similar in age young respondents are to their associates. He found a very narrow age gap between them (an average of 5.1 years) (184). The importance of studying networks includes understanding the influence personal and life course characteristics have on our connections to others. In Marsden’s words networks are “patterned by respondent characteristics” (1987:130).

Social traits or characteristics such as marital status (Huribert and Acock 1990), education (Marsden 1987), and community size (Fischer 1982) have been shown to influence the number of individuals in the network and its composition. Gender is another variable of interest. According to Munch, McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1997) the effects of gender are not fully understood. Specifically, certain life stages (such as widowhood) have been examined regarding the effects of gender on networks while other life events and stages (such as parenthood) remain understudied. This research attempts to further our understanding of gender and social networks by recognizing the role marital status and children in the home also play in the size and composition of networks. Gender, marital status and children in the home are independent variables in this research.

Significance of Social Networks

Social networks are important for the following reasons: 1) most individuals create and maintain a social network and are embedded in a social network, 2) researchers deem social networks an important indicator of an individual's environmental and social context, and 3) social networks fulfill important functions for the individual and are an avenue to resources as a part of the social exchange process. Each of these reasons will be discussed in greater depth.
Marsden (1987) using the General Social Survey (GSS) data, examined networks of Americans and found most individuals had at least two members in their personal network. Approximately 25 percent of respondents had no one or only one person with whom they “discuss important matters.” In other words, three-fourths of respondents had a network made-up of three or more individuals. Using a less intimate measure for social networks, Wellman (1990) concluded that while adults may had approximately 400 potential ties with others, most had around 20 active ties. According to his own work and a review of others, individuals, on average, knew 35 kin (165). Kin were a substantial part of networks and withstand separation and/or distance better than nonkin. Wellman also noted friends make-up about half of active and intimate connections and three-fourths of active ties extended beyond an individual’s neighborhood. These findings suggest the presence of social ties and maintenance of social networks is common among individuals.

Placing Individuals in Context

In 1985 researchers voted unanimously to include network items in the GSS. Burt (1984) chronicled these questionnaire items and the reasons why the study of networks is of enough sociological importance to be included in this widely used and nationally recognized social survey. According to Burt, social networks were important because they provided indicators of a person’s environment and surroundings, as well as allowed researchers to look at how networks influence (either distorting or enhancing) the respondent’s attitudes and behaviors. This line of thinking was explored further in a chapter entitled, “You Are Who You Know” by Smith-Lovin and McPherson (1992). They pointed out that differences in attitudes and behaviors were, in fact, determined by relationships in which individuals were embedded and that there was little “choice” in these network members due to the
social location of the individual. Hirsch (1985) theorized that networks illustrate what is important to us because of who we have in our network.

The basic argument made by these researchers and theorists was that the study of networks is important because it places individuals into the larger social setting. Part of a person's identity, attitudes, and behaviors is influenced by those immediately around them. By including questionnaire items regarding social networks in the GSS, the study of networks gained further legitimacy and status in the field of sociology.

Functions of Networks

Social networks fulfill specific functions for the individual. Throughout the literature networks appear to be important in the acquisition of information and job contacts (Campbell 1988; Lin, Walter, and Vaughn 1981; Lin and Dumin 1986; Lin, Dayton, and Greenwald 1978), social development (Cochran and Brassard 1979; Feiring and Lewis 1991) and the facilitation of social support (House, Umberson and Landis 1988).

A large body of literature explores social support as a function of social networks. Social ties play an important role in how people experience and respond to negative and traumatic life events such as job loss, death of a spouse, or victimization. Brown and Harris (1978) in their study of depression found the presence of an intimate tie (husband or boyfriend) reduced a woman's vulnerability for depression when negative events occurred. Social scientists need to better understand the vehicles through which support comes to the individual: social networks. While many studies deal with the social support approach to networks, a smaller body of research focuses on how contacts in a network can fulfill other functions. Wellman (1985) viewed the focus on a social support function of
networks as problematic because it downplayed other important functions such as the flow of information or resources.

Resources such as power, money and the occupational position of network members can be actively utilized by other network members to produce a desired result. Lin, Ensel and Vaughn’s (1981) research supplied an example of how networks can provide important information and resources. In a study of 399 males the relationship between an individual’s network contacts and the types of positions he obtained was examined. According to their findings, the status of the contacted network member a man used was significantly related to the job he obtained. Men who had network members in higher status positions and utilized these contacts obtained better jobs.

Campbell (1988) expanded on the functional value of network job contacts and added the variable of gender. In her study of 186 persons in white-collar jobs, she found men were more likely than women to know persons in diverse occupations. Thus, women may be limited in receiving job-related information or position openings. Another study examining the importance of connections looks at the voluntary organizations to which individuals belong. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982) found men and women belonged to approximately the same number of organizations; yet, men were exposed to almost twice as many individuals. The organizations men belonged to were more extensive and had larger memberships providing greater exposure to potential resources.

This line of research leads to a discussion of Granovetter’s 1973 idea regarding the strength of weak ties. He argued it is the weak, peripheral ties, in networks which provide key links to new ideas and information. Because close alters tend to be homogeneous, what they know and who they talk to is similar to the subject. On the other hand, a weak tie is more likely to have contacts to social
circles and information different from the respondent. Going a step further, these differences in networks between men and women resulting in varying levels and sources of information may continue certain societal inequalities. Molm (1993:303) stated, “the network perspective is most useful in explaining the maintenance, perpetuation, and strengthening of existing inequalities.”

This literature reveals that networks function to provide individuals access to important resources. Certain people appear to have networks that allow them greater access to these resources. The weak ties argument further illustrates the importance of studying network composition and size because larger, less homogeneous networks may provide an individual with diversity in resources and information.

Chapter two will review aspects of gender research as it relates to the family and communities and will discuss possible consequences “doing gender” has on social networks. Specifically, the division of labor in families is patterned by gender and this pattern has potential network consequences. After reviewing the role gender plays in family and community, research findings dealing with factors that influence social networks are discussed followed by theoretical foundations and research hypotheses for this study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Significance of Gender

Gender continues to be of considerable interest for many theorists and researchers. The literature has expanded as social scientists study how "doing gender" affects men and women in everyday life. The process of fulfilling societal and/or internalized expectations based on gender has been examined in relationship to many aspects of social life including: working in corporations (Kanter 1977), the implications of divorce (Wallerstein and Blakeslee 1989), and Christianity (Cook and Lee 1992). The goal of the literature review is two-fold. First, the literature review will illustrate the importance of gender in both families and communities. Second, the literature on gender and social networks is reviewed. The literature review confirms that for women "doing gender" in families means investing time and energy into maintaining the house, caring for children (when present), and encouraging family solidarity and continuity through kin ties.

Gender and Families

The study of the family was one of the first areas of research to incorporate gender. Although the literature has expanded beyond the confines of the institution of the family, there continues to be interest in research exploring how gender affects families and visa versa. In what was considered a classic study, Bernard (1982) found the experience of marriage to be different by gender and coined the idea of "his and hers marriage." More recent studies range from the influence of gender role attitudes on marital quality (Amato and Booth 1995) to studies of patriarchal terrorism – severe violence toward and control of wives by abusive husbands.
Thompson and Walker (1991) in a decade review of research on gender and families stressed that the findings on work and families is one of the areas that has seen significant advances. The findings regarding family and work (both housework and kin work) are of primary interest due to the potential ramifications this work may have on social networks.

**Family and Household Work**

Feminist authors and researchers have demonstrated women's work is two-fold: 1) household duties such as cleaning, cooking and laundry along with child care, and 2) working for pay in the labor force. It is important to note these two aspects of work are intricately connected. Women tend to move in and out of the work force more than men. Three-fourths of employed women had work interruptions of 6 months or more (U.S. Census Bureau 1985). These interruptions are often after the birth of a child. This pattern illustrated that women still view their role in family and household maintenance as important.

Family work includes household duties such as cleaning and cooking, as well as caring for children. Studies continue to show women spend more time doing housework than husbands (Ferree 1991; Rexroat and Sheehan 1987). For example, in a sample of over 1,000 husbands and wives, women spent almost seven more hours per week on housework than men (Rexroat and Sheehan 1987:740). Child care also shows a pattern by gender. Mothers spent three to five hours actively involved with their children for every one hour that fathers spent (Lamb 1987). Hochschild (1989) coined this dual work day as the “second shift.” Hochschild’s interviews with middle-class couples also revealed a pattern of cognitive work wives did to maintain a myth of equality in their families. Further
research concluded women are not only actively involved in paid work and family work, but also invest time and energy in kin work.

**Kin Work**

DiLeonardo (1987) conceptualized “kin work” as organizing family reunions and other get-togethers, sending birthday cards, buying anniversary and wedding gifts, etc. This type of work sometimes is not thought of as “work,” but rather is perceived as part of family life that is enjoyable. Yet, DiLeonardo stated maintaining kin relationships takes “time, intention and skill” (443). DiLeonardo noted women who do not take on these tasks may feel somewhat guilty about failing this social expectation.

Rosenthal’s (1985) research of 458 respondents found 74 percent of kinkeepers were women and most kinkeeping was done by women between 50 and 60 years of age. Results from this study indicated “having a kinkeeper makes a difference in most of the investigated areas of family life and gender plays a qualifying part in this” (971). Kin work is a continual process of connecting generations.

The work of connecting and providing assistance to multiple generations is also conceptualized and researched as the “sandwich generation” or “women in the middle” (Brody 1981). These concepts include the idea of demographic elements combining to cause hardship for individuals who are middle age and are being pressed for social, emotional, and financial support from generations above them (elderly parents) and below (their own children). Stack (1996), in a study of African-American families, found evidence of kin work in multiple generations families. Taking in a grandchild and sending money back to family members in the South were two ways she illustrated variations kin work takes.
Demography indicates these trends will only be more widespread as baby-boomers age. As this phenomenon grows, so will the need for understanding how women in the middle (constrained by both their family of orientation and their family of procreation) remain connected or become disconnected to friends, coworkers, and neighbors.

**Implications: “Doing Gender” in Families**

Society still holds role expectations based on gender and these expectations apply to the family. Working for pay in the labor force, doing household work, taking care of children, and kinkeeping all demand an individual's time and energy. The more time women spend maintaining their family and extended family ties the less time they may have to maintain other non-kin ties and initiate new relationships. Societal level expectations and internalization of these expectations may restrain women from making non-kin connections in their communities.

Coser's (1974) and Gallagher and Gerstel's (1993) view of the institution of marriage supports this idea. Coser noted that institutions compete for an individual’s attention and some institutions make what he called “total claims” (1974:4) on individuals. These theorists approached marriage as a “greedy” institution which demands time and energy to be focused internally on other family members. “Marriage is socially isolating and imposes structural limits on helping networks” (Gallagher and Gerstel 1993:675). Although Gallagher and Gerstel spoke only about “helping networks” the same argument can be made for community issues networks.

This idea is expanded to include families with children at home and women who have children, but are not married. The family, as defined as both an individual's family of procreation and his or her family of orientation, can also be seen as a
“greedy” institution.

The research reviewed up to this point illustrates the position of women in the family. Next, a review of gender and communities places individuals in their broader social context.

**Gender and Communities**

The importance gender plays in marriage and family has been widely studied, but the work on gender and communities is sparse by comparison. Women’s role in maintaining communities has been, for the most part, ignored by social scientists (DeSena 1994) and under-appreciated by the communities themselves (Wells and Tanner 1994). Stoneall (1983) reviewed 29 articles about community research that appeared in American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review and Social Forces from 1977 to 1981, and only two of these studies discussed women.

Stoneall proceeded to interview individuals from small mid-western towns and concluded that although women were involved in women’s organizations that contribute to the community, researchers had not focused on these organizations or contributions. Women also did “behind the scenes” or “invisible” political work like helping husbands in official local positions with campaigning.

DeSena’s (1994) research found women to be very involved in the working class urban community she observed. Women were involved informally through conversations at social and religious functions as well as civic meetings. Even though women did not hold formal positions they were active, especially when local events would affect their families. She found women were building community through the exchange of information regarding available housing and neighborhood surveillance –keeping an eye on each other’s homes and property.
In a community study of Syracuse leadership, findings suggested women's role in decision making on major community issues (such as the formation of a downtown association) was limited. Freeman stated, "for the most part, women seem to be denied access to participation except in decisions concerning culture-arts, health and education" (1968:77). In support of these findings, a more recent sample of 17 rural communities found most community leaders were men. Yet, the most viable places had the greatest number of women in leadership positions (O'Brien, Hassinger, Brown and Pinkerton 1991).

This trend of formal community roles not being occupied by women, can be illustrated in a more local context. Women who resided in the Des Moines area were not actively seeking positions in municipal government in recent elections. More than three-fourths of the candidates for city council seats were men. According to a survey of city clerks in Iowa, women held 1,045 of 4,800 council positions (approximately 21%) and of Iowa's 949 community mayoral positions women held 101 (Carter 1997).

The involvement of women in local organizations Stoneall eluded to is an important aspect of understanding the roles of women in their communities. Women tend to belong to smaller organizations (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986). Smith-Lovin and McPherson (1992) noted that because women belonged to fewer organizations and to organizations with smaller membership "women's organizations may be less salient and politically powerful in the community" (238). In one study, men were exposed to 600 individuals through their occupational memberships; women were only exposed to 185 (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982:901).
Implications: “Doing Gender” in Communities

The condition of some rural communities provides ample reason why the study of gender in communities should be expanded. In Iowa, small rural communities are struggling to slow or halt the loss of jobs, money, and people (especially young people) brought on by ongoing changes in the agricultural economy (Ryan, Terry, and Besser 1995). Natural decline (when deaths in a county outnumber births) is also a potential threat to vitality in small communities. This phenomenon is more likely to be present in rural, farm-based counties compared to other rural counties and is primarily the result of younger individuals leaving the area (Chang 1974). As the more “traditional” individuals who would be involved in formal roles of community maintenance leave, understanding women’s informal role in communities becomes increasingly salient.

Since women are less likely to hold public office in their respective community, the community issues network has the potential to be an important indicator of their interest and “invisible” involvement in community. The importance of studying these networks can be supported by Beaulieu and Ryan (1984) who stated, “although formal structures such as local governing bodies have influence, informal structures characterized by reference to ‘behind-the-scenes’ leaders and ‘old-boy’ networks continue to play a major role in local decision making” (113).

According to the functions of social networks laid out in Chapter One, community issues networks place individuals in their broader social context and also have the capability to impact attitudes and behaviors of members. In general, these networks are presumed to influence an individual’s opinion on certain relevant local issues, but also could impact attitudes toward the community as a whole and how they see themselves. These attitudes could have potential ramifications on their
behavior such as community improvement activities.

While previous studies focus on aspects of networks related to paid work, information and access to resources are important in other aspects of social life. One of these is community life. Network contacts also may hold information concerning locally available services, community social gatherings and knowledge of and access to the formal and informal community leaders. These network members may themselves hold positions of power that would provide access to additional community resources or influence decision making.

**Gender and Social Networks**

Gender is a widely researched variable in the analysis of social networks. In 1987, a whole edition of the academic journal, "Sex Roles" was dedicated primarily to the differences and similarities between girls and boys, men and women in their network composition and size. Overall, findings in the area revealed little to no difference between men and women in the size of social networks (Moore 1990; Fischer and Oliker 1993; Fischer 1982). Network composition, however, did vary by gender. Significant findings indicated women were more connected to kin while men had broader, less kin based networks (Feiring and Lewis 1991; Fischer 1982; Fischer and Oliker 1983; Ishi-Kunz and Seccombe 1989; Marsden 1987; Moore 1990; Oliveri & Reiss 1987; and Troll 1987). These network differences also were visible early in the life cycle. Girls tended to have more kin in their networks than did boys of the same age (Feiring and Lewis 1987, 1991; Oliker and Reiss 1987).

Women and men's friendship preferences also differ with women preferring a few, close same-sex friends and men preferring numerous, yet less-intimate friends (Aukett, Ritchie, and Mill 1988). In other words, men are more group oriented when it comes to their friends than are women (Stokes and Levin 1986). A more detailed
review of specific findings regarding size, kin composition and gender composition of social networks relating to gender follows.

Size

As mentioned, the majority of the research indicated network size was unrelated to gender. These findings come from studies that are both geographically specific and nationally representative. Findings remained similar even when researchers operationalized social networks differently and used a variety of name generating methods. Moore (1990) used the GSS data which included 1,534 individuals to provide a national view of network variation between adult men and women. Men and women cited a similar number of network members. On average, women reported 3.02 individuals and men cited 3.00.

Kin Composition

Fischer's work on social networks is widely cited by other social scientists. Although his main focus concerned rural/urban differences in social networks, he and his associates recorded some results on gender and networks. Men cited more non-kin (friends, coworkers, etc.) and fewer kin than women. Women were more likely to have intimate ties and be more involved with kin (Fischer 1982:253). Fischer and Oliker (1983) also found that women named more relatives than men, 8.2 and 7.2 respectively (127). They stressed much of the difference in composition between men and women was diminished when controlling for the structural variables of education and employment.

In a study of 33 East Yorkers, Wellman (1985) categorized respondents based on gender and their work status. He defined three categories of respondents:
producers, reproducers and double loaders. Wellman found women who stay at home with their children (reproducers) had the greatest percent of neighbors in their network, while women that worked at home and in the labor force (double-loaders) focused on kin relationships. This occurred, according to Wellman, because these women had such a limited amount of time for other types of network ties. These findings and Wellman's explanation of the findings support the perspective of marriage and family as "greedy."

More recently, in a national sample, Moore (1990) found women discuss important matters with a higher proportion of kin compared to men. Women's networks, on average, contained 58 percent kin compared to 51 percent kin in men's networks (Moore 1990:729). In another study, Marsden (1987:129) found the proportion of kin was 7 percent higher for women than men.

Gender Composition

The social network literature has not investigated sex segregation as thoroughly as it has kin composition. For example, Fischer (1982), who has conducted large network studies, did not even mention same sex composition of personal networks when he discussed homogeneity in personal relations from his classic study of over one thousand northern California residents.

The existing research indicates respondents, regardless of gender, cite more same-sex than opposite-sex alters in their confiding relationships. This pattern was found in children's play groups (Thorne 1993). One study of adolescent friendship pairs found that of 1,879 best friend dyads in New York public high schools, 91 percent were same-sex dyads (Kandel 1978:307). Marsden (1990) researched dyads that included a respondent and an alter from his or her network. His interest was in how these network members were similar to the respondent who listed them.
Thirty-eight percent of all the dyads were male/female dyads. In other words, 62 percent of these dyads were either both men or both women (403).

In addition, Marsden breaks these dyads down further. He found coworker dyads to be the most sex-homogeneous while kin were the most sex heterogeneous. He argued that the opportunities for interaction between the sexes or different races was limited by the social structure. Given what is known about sex segregation in the labor force it is not surprising that men and women are more likely to have same-sex alters as coworkers producing the presence of high sex-homogeneity in these dyads.

Sex segregation of networks is predominate in a smaller, life stage specific sample. Recently divorced women reported 63 percent of individuals in their networks were other women. Almost half of these women had networks that were 70 percent or more sex homogeneous (Leslie and Grady 1985:667). These studies are helpful because they specifically deal with gender composition of social networks; there are other studies of volunteer associations and organizations that also illustrate gender segregation in social ties. [See McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1996].

It is important to recognize variables that influence the relationship between gender and networks. When exploring the relationship of gender to social networks most researchers noted the importance of structural variables. When controlling for social structural or location variables the effects of gender have been shown to be reduced. Location variables which have been studied include: work, family and age. Moore (1990) argued from a structural perspective and concluded the differences in men and women's personal network has a lot to do with their location in the social structure. Similarly, Marsden (1987) noted network differences between men and women were most clearly seen when demographic and life-course variables (age,
marital status, and the presence of children) were included in the analysis.

- **Life Course Variables and Social Networks**

  Social scientists use life course to describe both a framework that guides research and a concept that speaks to the importance of life stage variables (Elder 1992). Life course, as a perspective, includes elements of developmental theory and life span psychology, focusing on age-graded patterns, historical analysis, and the impact of social institutions and structures on individual lives (Elder 1993, 1996). Life course variables, on the other hand, deal with stages in the life cycle or life transitions that are short term changes such as the transition to marriage, the transition from being a couple to being a family (the birth of a first child), and the time following a divorce or the death of a spouse.

  Research indicates social networks are influenced by an individual's developmental stage in the life course. Stueve and Gerson (1977:79), reported “a major, if not the major influence on individuals' networks was their position in the life-cycle.” One example of this influence on networks is the significant changes in network composition following divorce (Hirsch 1985; Leslie and Grady 1985; Wilcox 1981). Two important life course variables included in this study are: marital status and the presence of young children in the home.

**Marital Status**

Marital status is related to network composition. Hurlbert and Acock (1990) used data from the GSS to test for differences between married, widowed, divorced or separated, and never married individuals. Respondents from the GSS who were married or widowed had a higher density (network members who knew one another) in their networks compared to the never married, divorced or separated individuals.
Divorced, separated and never married individuals had a lower percentage of kin than those currently married or widowed.

Gallagher and Gerstel (1993) in a study focusing on social interaction and support among older women found support for the perspective that marriage is “greedy.” Those who were married were more likely to limit their interaction and support to spouses or other close kin, and married women help almost twice the number of kin when compared to widows (678).

Parenthood

Parenthood, and more specifically the transition to parenthood, has been called, “the family life cycle transition requiring the most adjustment” (Norris and Tindale 1994:25). A large number of studies testify to the impact of this transition. Studies of the parenthood transition range from the required changes in identity and social roles of new parents (Cowan and Cowan 1992) to the impact of social relationship provisions on postpartum depression (Cutrona 1984). Parenthood also has network implications (Stueve and Gerson 1977).

In a cross-sectional study of over a thousand adults in California, Fischer and Oliker (1983) found life course effects on network size and composition by gender. In the early stages of marriage and during parenthood a woman’s friendship network shrinks, whereas a man’s network shrinks during the post-parental years. Fischer stated, “children clearly restricted the social involvement of their parents, especially of their mothers” (1982:253). These findings should be viewed with some caution because the data were not longitudinal and no causal implications could be determined. The research does, however, illustrate the importance of the life course in combination with gender.
Ishi-Kunz and Seccombe (1989) also researched the impact of children on networks. Although they dealt primarily with the social support functions of networks and the subjects in the study were all married, the findings were consistent with expectations based on past research. Parents with preschool-age children reported the most frequent interaction with kin. In a more recent study, parenthood along with marriage caused constraints on non-kin network ties for women (Moore 1990).

In a review of the literature no research on the presence of children and its impact on community issues networks was found. DeSena (1994) theorized that family may be a main reason women become involved in community issues; yet, research also noted women's networks are constrained by family and are more kin based. This seeming contradiction between familial factors that would both encourage and discourage community networks needs further exploration.

Demographic Variables and Social Networks

It was previously noted that social network characteristics have been viewed as patterned by the individual's personal characteristics (Marsden 1987). Education, age and residential location are all demographic variables shown to be related to size and/or composition of social networks. Most studies included multiple demographic variables in their analysis. The effects of education, age, and community size on social networks will be briefly reviewed and will be included in the correlation and regression analysis. The potential effects of location (rural or urban) on networks is important because this sample consists of small town respondents.
Education

Education, according to Fischer, "most consistently" (1982:251) affect social networks. Education was one of a few variables that affected network size as well as composition. Individuals with higher levels of education, holding other variables constant, had a larger number of individuals in their networks when compared to individuals with low levels of education (Fischer 1982). This relationship was confirmed by Marsden (1987) and Moore (1990). They both found those with higher educational levels cited more non-kin in their networks and had larger personal networks.

In Marsden's research, the mean network size of individuals with college degrees was 1.8 times larger than those who did not finish high school (1987:129). Moore (1990) found a similar trend. Respondents with more education had larger networks and had more non-kin ties when compared to individuals with lower levels of education. In her regression analysis, education was significant in personal network size and the percent non-kin in the network (730). From a review of the literature, education appears to have a powerful influence on social networks.

Age

Fischer's (1982) work concluded a respondent's age influenced social networks. Overall network size dropped as age increased. A similar finding was reported by Marsden (1987). He found individuals over 65 averaged a network size of just over two people (128). The effects of age were complicated by gender. Older men had fewer friends in their network compared to young married men. In early stages of the life course (under 36 years of age, married and with a child) women's networks were smaller compared to men's networks (Fischer and Oliker 1983).
Both age and age squared — used for a possible quadratic effect — were significant predictors of the percent of kin in an individual's network (Moore 1990:730). As age increased the percent kin decreased and as age squared increased the percent kin in the network increased. This finding provided support for a curvilinear effect.

**Location (Rural/Urban)**

A respondent's location has been investigated as a factor in the size and kin composition of social networks. Since this study deals with a rural population the potential effects of location are noted after a brief review of work in this area. Sociologists have long held that the residential location of an individual is important for a host of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (O'Brien, Hassinger and Dershem 1994). According to these researchers, the population context which surrounds individuals provides differing social settings. Toennies (1957) introduced sociology to the concepts of "gemeinshaft" and "gesellschaft" to describe the predicted differences in rural and urban environments. Researchers such as Wellman (1979) debated the influence of urbanization on individual integration and social networks. Studies predominately focused on this rural/urban difference as a predictor of differences in network size and composition.

Mirande (1970) researched two communities comparing the size and make-up of social networks among residents. As hypothesized, rural residents had a higher proportion of kin in their networks while urban residents had a larger proportion of friends. Using data consisting of 1,050 respondents from California, Fischer (1982) found urban and rural respondents had similar size networks; however, the content or composition of the networks was quite different. Urban residents' networks consisted of less kin (especially extended kin) and more friends
Hoyt, Mack, and Whitbeck (1995) also noted differences between rural and urban network composition when focusing on an elderly population. Small town elderly had smaller networks when compared to elderly respondents in the General Social Survey. Rural males were more likely than non-rural males to have no network ties and a higher percent of kin in their networks.

Studies focusing on network differences between rural and urban residence also included the amount of interaction one had with network members and the consequences of those interactions. In a study of nearly 3,000 respondents, rural residents had more interaction between friends, neighbors and family, and yet they received no overall significant benefits of these differences in terms of combating feelings of loneliness (Lee and Whitbeck 1987).

In general, findings are pretty consistent regarding the relationship between location and kin composition of networks. These researchers often used a structural constraint approach to explain network difference. Mirande (1970) theorized the reasons for the existence of personal network differences included the number of eligible friends in different size towns, as well as norms that place an importance on kin in rural areas. Because this sample is rural the expectations include finding a high percentage of kin reported by respondents. The choices of associates in small towns are presumed to be greatly constrained.

**Theoretical Foundations**

The theoretical bases for this research is three-fold. First, exchange theory provides the theoretical foundation for the establishment and maintenance of social networks. The existence of networks is explained through the assumptions of exchange theory. Second, structural explanations aid in the understanding of
network differences regarding size and composition. Specifically, the life course and gender research provide support that marital status, household composition, and gender (the independent variables in the study) are variables with structural implications. Lastly, the middle-range theory of family as a greedy institution (discussed previously in the chapter) leads to specific hypotheses regarding the implications of gender and life course variables on social networks.

The Existence and Maintenance of Social Networks

Many theories have been utilized in studies of social networks. These include: loneliness theory (Rook 1985) and convoy theory (Bowlby 1969; Antonucci 1985) that incorporate elements of attachment theory, life course theory (Ishi-Kunz and Seccombe 1989), structural functionalism (Mitchell 1973) and exchange theory (Cook 1982; McCallister and Fischer 1978). This study is guided by the assumptions of exchange theory, specifically the motivations for instigating and maintaining social ties.

Exchange Theory

Exchange theory and the assumptions the theory are based on have been widely utilized, although rarely acknowledged, by social network researchers. Exchange theory emphasizes the reciprocal nature of human interactions and how relations between individuals develop and change (Molm and Cook 1995). Exchange theory has its roots in behaviorism and in its original form, such as the work by Homans, was criticized as being a reductionist approach. Subsequently, other exchange theorists including Blau, as well as Thibault and Kelley, have added more social elements to the theory of exchange (McClintock, Kramer and Keil 1984).
Homans (1958) used a cost-benefit approach to analyze relationships noting that the profit of the exchange is measured by subtracting the costs of the action from the benefits. Exchange theorists make the following assumptions: 1) individuals try to maximize their benefits and reduce their costs, 2) exchange requires social interaction, 3) valued commodities or events obey principles of saturation and diminishing utility, and 4) individuals in inequitable relations will experience distress (Emerson 1981; Stewart 1989).

Motivations for Establishing and Maintaining Social Networks

Following an exchange perspective, Waite and Harrison (1992) proposed two motivations for social contact. First is the acquisition of social resources that an individual needs or wants; second is a sense of well-being individuals gain from their interactions with others. These benefits are gained though network members whether they are family, friends, coworkers or acquaintances. The authors reasoned that families provide both resources and a sense of well-being; although they view families as predominantly a provider of resources such as shelter and economic support. Friends, on the other hand, may be more likely to provide the sense of well-being.

Waite and Harrison reminded readers that social exchange was not limited to material or tangible goods; it also included the exchange of love, acceptance, and personal satisfaction. Social exchange is not the same thing as economic exchange because in a social setting there are unspecified obligations (not everyone verbalizes what he/she wants or needs), exchange is based on underlying feelings not merely cold calculations (Blau 1964), and benefits can be "generalized" to bystanders or those not directly involved (Emerson 1981).
Because of the family related variables examined in this study, including marital status, presence of children, and kin composition, it is important to recognize the theoretical ideas of exchange theory have been expanded into the study of family and intergenerational relations. Carol Stack’s 1974 anthropological field study of poor, African-American families was one such work that utilized exchange theory. When applying this theory to family it is important to note the closeness of relationships can impact the exchange process. “The intimacy of the relationship allows some latitude and it appears that reciprocity (among family members) is assumed over time” (Antonucci 1985:30). In addition, the exchange of benefits “need not be identical or of an equal amount” (Ishi-Kunz and Seccombe 1989:780). Flexibility is a part of the exchange process in kin relationships. Exchange theory also can be used to understand how this process of reciprocity can be expanded across an individual’s life course (Norris and Tindale 1994).

Exchange theory provides reasons for the impetus of the development and maintenance of personal and community issues networks. Structural and personal characteristics can affect the exchange between individuals regarding the level of reciprocity and what people have to offer or gain through exchange.

**Structural Explanations**

A structural approach to networks is also popular in the literature. Blau (1982) noted that analyzing social networks is by its nature utilizing structural theory. This means by studying social networks one is recognizing that individuals are embedded in a society; networks are structures that connect individuals to one another and to the larger society. Two theoretical positions have been developed to explain the impact of the larger social structure and personal characteristics on the size and composition differences in networks.
Fischer and Oliker (1993) noted two distinct explanations for why differences between individuals were found: dispositional and structural. Dispositional factors include inclinations to maintain social networks due to biological instincts, cultural factors and/or early socialization. On the other hand, structural factors in the composition of social relationships result from occupying different positions in the social system. Although characteristics such as marital status are inherently personal, they are social because they place individuals into the social structure. An individual's opportunities or barriers to pursue links to others are based on where they are in the social structure (Fischer 1977).

Peoples position in the social structure – their educational and financial resources, status in the labor force, family commitments, residential locations, and so on – expose them to varying opportunities for forming personal relations and provide them with varying means for taking advantage of those opportunities (Fischer 1982:254).

Subsequently, Moore (1990) described the structural perspective as attributing gender differences in networks to dissimilar structural locations of men and women.

**Theoretical Summary**

In review, this study employs the ideas of Waite and Harrison (1992) that are based on exchange theory and indicated two main motivations for social interactions: the acquisition of resources and to promote personal well-being. Personal (friendship) networks and community issues networks are instigated and maintained because they provide an individual with resources and promote well-being. It is assumed that different aspects of an individual's "total" network fulfill different needs and provide different functions for the individual.

Second, because the research will focus on personal and life course characteristics that have structural implications for networks, the dichotomy presented by Fischer and Oliker (1993) is used to explain the importance of these
characteristics. Recall Fischer and Oliker summarized two positions on network differences: dispositional and structural. Structural explanations for differences in networks are expected to be influential.

This research will study both the personal and community issues networks of individuals relying on a structural argument to illustrate projected similarities and differences between men and women. Gender, as well as the marital status of respondents and the presence of children in the home, are predicted to affect the size of networks, the percent kin in networks, and gender composition. These theoretical assumptions, in conjunction with the previous theoretical position on the "greediness" of the family, lead to hypotheses and conclusions regarding the impact of the independent variables on networks.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are based on the literature review presented earlier. Dependent variables include the size of both personal and community issues networks, as well as the percent kin and percent same sex in these social networks. The hypotheses and predicted relationships presented here will be tested using t-tests, zero-order correlation and regression analysis.

**Gender**

The literature consistently indicated that the size of social networks did not vary based solely on gender (Marsden 1987; Moore 1990). The first hypothesis will re-test if this finding is evident in the current sample. **Hypothesis 1: Men's personal network size will not be significantly different from women's personal network size.**

The lack of research on community issues networks leads to predictions and
hypotheses based on literature regarding other types of social networks such as the personal networks or job-related networks. Size of social networks has not been found to be significantly different by gender in personal networks, and therefore, the same hypothesized relationship will be tested for community issues networks.

**Hypothesis 2:** Men and women will have similar sizes of community issues networks. No significant difference in the size of the community issues networks by gender is expected.

Common to the literature is the finding of gender differences in the composition of social networks, specifically the proportion of kin in networks. The literature concluded women were very involved in family maintenance activities, including both family work (Hochschild 1989) and kin work (Rosenthal 1985). These activities limited the time women had available to foster non-kin relationships. The next hypothesis is based on previously mentioned research which concluded women’s networks were more kin based than men’s (Fischer 1982; Marsden 1987; Moore 1990; and Oliveri and Reiss 1987). **Hypothesis 3:** Women’s personal networks will have a significantly greater proportion of kin when compared to men’s personal network composition.

Job-related networks may provide insight to the composition of community issues networks. Findings from studies of job-related networks and voluntary organizations indicated men’s networks and contacts were broader (more heterogeneous) than women’s (Campbell 1988; McPherson, Miller, and Smith-Lovin 1986). **Hypothesis 4:** Women’s community issues networks will have a significantly larger percent of kin than men’s networks.

Hypotheses regarding size and kin composition have been supported in previous literature and findings will provide a baseline to compare this sample of
rural lowans to the work based on other regional and national representative samples. This also provides an opportunity to test the reliability of the instrument used in data collection.

**Marital Status**

Marital status is a life course variable that has been included in past studies of network size and composition. Specifically, Moore (1990) found marital status to have large effects on network composition with married individuals having more kin in their personal networks and fewer non-kin, especially friends. Viewing marriage as a "greedy" institution predicts a higher percent of kin in networks of those respondents who are married. It is important to remember Hurlbert and Acock (1990) findings that individuals who were married and widowed had a similar network composition.

Since the literature found differences in network composition, not size, based on marital status, the following hypotheses are proposed regarding marital status and network composition. **Hypothesis 5:** Individuals who are married or widowed will have a greater percentage of kin in their personal networks than those who are divorced, separated, living with someone or have never been married.

Marital status is also expected to be significantly related to the percent of kin in community issues networks. **Hypothesis 6:** Individuals who are married or widowed will have a greater percentage of kin in their community issues networks compared to those who are divorced, separated, living with someone or have never been married.
Presence of Children

As the literature indicated, the demands of child care and household duties associated with children present in the home are time and energy consuming. The literature confirmed the existence a relationship between being a parent of young children and the size and composition of social networks (Fischer 1982; Fischer and Oliker 1983). This relationship will be further tested using this sample. The presence or absence of children is predicted to be related to personal network size. Stueve and Gerson’s (1977) study, although based solely on male subjects, found a similar relationship between parenthood and networks. Having a family puts constraints on social networks by limiting the time individuals have for a “public life.”

Hypothesis 7: Individuals with children under the age of 18 living in their household will have smaller personal networks when compared to respondents from households without children.

Again, it is predicted the presence of children will have similar effects on the second type of social network investigated: community issues networks. Hypothesis 8: Individuals with children under the age of 18 living in their household will have smaller community networks when compared to households without children living in their household.

Having children is also predicted to have an impact on percent kin in the network. Parents with children in the home will perhaps maintain kin ties in their network turning to their own parents or siblings for companionship and child-rearing advice. This predicted relationship is tied to exchange theory. By turning to parents and other family members for help in child-rearing they become indebted to their parents due to the nature of exchange relationships. Creating reciprocity and balance in these relationships may leave little time for non-kin interactions.
Hypothesis 9: Individuals with children under the age of 18 living in their household will have a greater proportion of kin in their personal networks compared to those without children at home. Hypothesis 10: Individuals with children under the age of 18 living in their household will have a greater proportion of kin in their community issues networks.

Predicted Relationships Between Variables

In addition to these hypotheses predictions are made regarding the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. These relationships will be tested through zero-order correlation and regression analysis. Gender (dummy coded 1=female) should be positively correlated with the percent kin in the networks. Marital status is predicted to be positively related to kin composition; married and widowed individuals are predicted to have greater proportion of kin in their networks. Also, it is predicted that as the number of children in the home increases the size of networks will decrease and the percent kin in the network will increase. Lastly, the independent variables in the study (gender, marital status, and children in the home) will explain more of the variance than the other demographic variables (i.e. years the respondent has lived in the community) included in the analysis.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The data for this research was acquired through interviews conducted for the Rural Development Initiative (RDI) study. RDI is a continuing research project undertaken to assess the social and economic conditions of small rural Iowa communities. Recent changes in agriculture and demographic trends have negatively impacted rural communities and their viability. While economic strategies and solutions are being employed by communities, the social ramifications are less often discussed (Ryan, Terry and Besser 1995). Funding for this project was made possible through the Iowa State University Agriculture Experiment Station. Results of the study have been well-utilized in both the local, popular media and academic circles and subsequent waves of RDI already have been funded.

Sample

The sample included 973 individuals from 30 communities across Iowa. Randomization in sample selection was used at both the community and household level. This section provides details regarding the sample selection procedures regarding communities, households and adults within the household.

Communities

One community was randomly chosen from each of the 99 Iowa counties. Since the goal of the study is to focus on "rural" communities, those cities with populations under 500 and over 10,000 are excluded from consideration. The data used for this research is a subset of these original 99 communities. Thirty
communities were randomly selected from the original 99 communities to provide more detailed information than the data gathered in a mail survey sent to the larger sample of communities. Specifically, network items to elicit these individuals' connections in both friendship and community issues networks were included.

The sampled communities range in population from 590 to 7,894 and the average population was 2,398. Half of the 30 communities experienced less than a 5 percent population change from 1990 to 1994. Populations of these 30 communities averaged a 3.9 percent increase according to census projections. The population trend of these sampled communities is very similar to that of all incorporated Iowa communities in recent years (Goudy and Burke 1995).

Households and Individuals

Forty-five households were randomly selected from each community using local telephone directories. The goal was to successfully interview 30 respondents per community. However, in some cases additional household numbers were drawn to reach the desired 30 interviews.

Randomization of respondents was incorporated to diminish sampling error. Participants within the household were randomly selected through the most recent birthday method. Household adults were asked "Who had the most recent birthday?" Subsequently, the person who had celebrated their birthday most recently was then asked to complete the interview. This approach is time saving compared to enumerating all adults in the household and has been called the "simplest and least threatening" (Salant and Dillman 1994:65) method of selecting adults within households.
Procedures

Of the 1,459 households contacted, 973 telephone interviews were completed. Some households were not reached due to non-working numbers. In other cases respondents exhibited language barriers or were hearing impaired. Household telephone numbers were dialed on up to 21 separate dates, often with multiple attempts each day. Typically, interviewers tried to reach individuals in the evenings; however, after several unsuccessful evening attempts these numbers would be dialed during morning or afternoon hours. The overall response rate was 82 percent. Individual community response rates ranged from a low of 69 percent to a high of 94 percent.

Quality Control in Data Collection

The phone interviews were conducted by trained computer-assisted telephone interviewers at the Center for Family Research in Rural Mental Health at Iowa State University. Before starting the project, telephone interviewers were trained in proper interviewing techniques and taught relevant aspects of survey research design. They were also required to do homework (studying an interviewing manual, as well as filling out an interviewing techniques and telephone interviewing protocol worksheet). Interviewers also spent at least one interviewing session (3 hours) practicing and doing mock interviews with other Center employees. New interviewers were monitored during actual interviews and provided with feedback on their interviewing techniques. Supervisors were available for questions and monitoring during each interviewing shift. Interviews lasted, on average, between 20 and 25 minutes.
Measures

This study includes the dependent variables of network size, percent of kin and percent same sex in both personal and community issues networks. Gender, the presence of children and marital status are the independent variables. Age, education, population of each community and how long individuals have resided in the community are utilized in the multiple regression models.

Personal and Community Issues Networks

Defining the network parameters and the operationalization of the social network are critical to the validity and reliability of any data collection of network information. A name generator refers to the way that names of the respondents' social network members are collected. Throughout the literature respondents are prompted in a variety of ways to list their network members. Name generators that have been used include asking individuals to whom they felt close (Wellman 1979), with whom they were "in touch" (Wellman 1985), with whom they discussed personal matters (Burt 1984) or with whom they discussed important matters (Marsden 1988). As an example, Marsden (1987) specified he used the phrase "discuss important matters" as the method to elicit names because it suggested a "middle ground between acquaintanceship and kinship" (123).

The size of networks people report and the number of kin they report in those networks is related to the wording of the name generator questions. Wellmen (1990) noted, "The stronger the relationship used to define a network, the higher the proportion of the network who are kin" (202). It has even been suggested that asking about friends is too vague and researchers should be "wary about using the term" when they want precise measures of involvement. (Fischer 1982:306)
McCallister and Fischer (1978) laid out the two main problems with past operational definitions of network. First, by asking people to list their “best friends” the results tended to include an under-sampling of kin and those the subject just see socially. Second, people interpreted the concepts of “friend” or “close” differently which leads to measurement error. These authors subtly recognized that a social network encompasses not only individuals that one is especially close to and consider to be friends, but also those with whom respondents discuss community issues with and see socially.

Two distinct questions (name generators) were used for the personal network and the community issues networks. To elicit names for the personal network respondents were read the following:

I would now like to talk to you about your closest friends, that is, people whom you trust and depend on the most for companionship. Please do not include individuals whom you live with. However, they may be relatives or non-relatives, who live in [community]. What is the name of your closest friend?” and “Who else would you consider a close friend?”

By not including household members we may be eliminating some of the potential effects of marital status highlighted in the literature review, and although the wording “closest friends” may decrease the amount of kin, the instructions to the respondents that network members could be relatives or non-relatives should limit this problem.

A limit was set at recording up to six friends. Based on the literature and the wording of the name generator an assumption was made that six names is large enough to get a distribution of responses without limiting too many individuals. Burt’s GSS network questions predict an average of three names using a “discuss
important matters with” name generator and they limit the number of names recorded to five (Burt 1984). In the GSS data the vast majority listed between 1 and 5 persons and only 5.5 percent of over 1,500 respondents listed 6 or more persons in their network (Moore 1990:728).

For the community issues network a screener or contingency question was first asked to exclude individuals who do not discuss community issues with anyone. Seventy-three percent of respondents have talked to someone about community issues. These individuals were then asked:

What is the first name of a person you most commonly discuss community issues with? followed by, Who else do you discuss important community issues with?

The wording of this question, “discuss important community issues”, is comparable to wording used by personal network researchers. This particular wording allows flexibility in response because it is distinct from work, kin, friends or acquaintances (Burt 1984). However, gathering data on community networks is rare in the literature and there is no precedent on which to base the wording. A maximum of six names was also placed on this name generator.

The dependent variables of percent kin and percent same sex were computed once the data were collected. In both cases, the new variable was computed based on the existing data including the number of alters in each of the two networks and the total number of network members who were either related to the respondent or the same sex as the respondent.
Life Course and Demographic Variables

Respondents were asked demographic information during the last section of the interview. Gender was recorded by the interviewer, or in a few cases, if the interviewer was unclear, they asked the respondent if she/he was male or female. The following question was used as a measure of marital status: “What is your current marital status?” Response categories included: married, divorced or separated, never married, widowed and living with someone. Respondents were also asked, “How many of the people living in your household are under 18 years of age?” This question was used to measure the presence or absence of children living in the home. By asking this question toward the end of the interview even those considering the question intrusive may have been more likely to respond due to the rapport developed with the interviewer. Questions were also included to obtain their age on their last birthday and the highest level of education they have completed. The population of the selected communities was not collected from the respondents; instead, the 1990 Census information was utilized and each community's population was entered into the data at a later date.

Analytical Strategy

Hypotheses one through ten involve a comparison of two groups, including comparing men and women or respondents with children to those without children in the home. T-tests will be used to test for significant differences in the means of these groups. T-tests are considered an appropriate test for comparing the means of two independent groups when the data are interval or ratio level (Sproull 1988). In some cases, the original variables were re-coded. For example, the marital status question was originally a close-ended question with five categories. Re-
coding collapsed marital status into a dummy variable consisting of a value of one equally married/widowed and a value of zero for separated, divorce, living with someone, or never been married.

Zero-order correlation determines the relationship between each of the variables of interest and regression is used to measure the simultaneous effect of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable (Babbie 1998). Regression will be used to see what influence gender, marital status and children under 18 living in the home have on size, kin composition and gender composition of both personal community networks. Regression models include both a reduced and a full model for each dependent variable. The reduced models test if gender, having children at home and being married/widowed cause changes in the size and percent kin and percent same sex in personal and community issues networks.

The full models include control variables. These variables are hypothesized to influence or confound the relationship between the proposed dependent and independent variables. Age and education have been illustrated in previous studies to affect social networks and will be included in the current study. Researchers have also included an age squared variable in case of a quadratic effect. The length of time respondents have lived in a community could have an effect on the size and percent of kin one may have in both the personal and community issues network. The size of community may also influence size and composition of networks.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis to examine the characteristics of the sample (using ranges, means and standard deviations), uncover potential important relationships between variables of interest (utilizing chi-square, t-tests, zero-order correlations and multiple regression), and determine if the data support the hypotheses presented in chapter two. The first section provides background information for the reader including basic demographics of the sample.

General Frequencies

In order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the sample, general frequencies of some demographic variables are presented. Demographics include frequencies on variables such as: gender, age, marital status, education and income. This information will be followed by frequencies regarding respondents’ perceptions of their community and their memberships in voluntary organizations located in their community. Providing this background data from the sample sets the context for the presentation of the dependent variables.

Demographics

As reported in the methods chapter the sample consisted of 973 individuals from 30 Iowa communities. Sixty-three percent (611 individuals) of those who completed the interview were females. Individuals ranged in age from 18 to 92 with the average age being 51. A majority of respondents were married (68%) and employed full-time (53%). Approximately three out of four respondents lived within
the selected community's city limits (72%) and most owned their residence (83%) (see Table 4.1).

Over 20 percent of respondents had a college or advanced degree and only 10 percent had not completed high school. A total of 64 percent of the sample were either employed full or part-time and 85 percent were satisfied with their present employment situation. A considerable number of respondents (26%) were retired. Respondents reported a wide variety of occupations with no single occupational category accounting for more than 15 percent of the total sample. Seven percent were farmers.

### Table 4.1: Demographics of the Sample

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 79</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 +</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = 52, SD = 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/separated</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with someone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school diploma</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or some college</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate or more</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 973  
Note: Total number and percentage values may not total 973 and 100, respectively, due to non-response or missing data.
Approximately 60 percent reported their household incomes to be above $25,000 and over a third (38%) reported having a household income between $25,000 and $45,000. Household size ranged from one to eight members and the average size was 2.6. The mode for household size was two (353 responses).

Respondents and Their Communities

Length of residence in communities ranged from less than a year to 92 years. The average length of residence was 30 years. A small number of respondents (14%), at some point had lived in a city with a population of 250,000 or more. Approximately half of all respondents (51%) had been involved in a community improvement project in the past year. The vast majority of respondents (96%) reported they felt at home in their community and 81 percent would be very or somewhat sorry if, for some reason, they had to leave (see Table 4.2). Ninety-two percent were interested in knowing what is going on in their community.

The three previously mentioned questions (feeling at home, sorry to leave and interested in knowing what is going on) have been used together by other community researchers to measure local sentiment (see Goudy 1990). For the most part it seems the respondents are comfortable with and interested in their respective communities. In other words, the sampled residents appear to have a high level of local sentiment.

Questions also asked sampled individuals about their membership in local voluntary organizations to get an idea of their attachment to the community. Respondents, on average, reported membership in 1.48 local voluntary organizations including church, civic, fraternal, job-related and recreational
organizations. The range was large from belonging to no local organizations to belonging to 20. Sixty-four percent reported belonging to at least one local organization. Church and recreational organizations were the most common types of memberships reported (46% and 30% respectively). Service and fraternal organizations were the least popular; 17 percent of the sample had a membership in organizations such as the Lions or Kiwanis.

Table 4.2: Respondents and Their Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 years</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 29 years</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 49 years</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 years of more</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = 29.9, SD = 20.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you be.....if, for some reason you had to leave.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very/Somewhat Sorry</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wouldn't Make a Difference</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very/Somewhat Pleased</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in Local Voluntary Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = 2.6, SD = 1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 973
Note: Total number and percentage values may not total 973 and 100, respectively, due to non-response or missing data.
Bivariate Analysis on Background Variables

To explore basic sample characteristics in greater depth bivariate analysis was completed focusing on gender and other important background variables. The potential relationship between gender and education, employment, occupation, and voluntary organizational membership was examined. The presence or absence of these relationships between variables will help to create a more thorough understanding of the sample before reviewing the dependent variables.

Based on chi-square results, there was no significant difference in education by gender. Approximately one-fifth of both women and men obtained a college degree. A chi-square test revealed there was a significant relationship between gender and employment status $\chi^2 (1, N=969) = 20.98, p < .01$. Seventy-three percent of men were employed compared to 58 percent of women. No relationship was found between gender of the respondent and occupation when collapsing all occupations into two categories professional/managerial and other (including sales, clerical, laborers, etc.) Approximately one-third of both men and women who were employed have professional or managerial type positions.

Men and women both reported membership in approximately two local organizations. Differences were found between men and women in the types of voluntary organizations to which they belonged. Men were more likely to report being a member of fraternal and job related organizations while women were more likely to report being members of church groups. Membership in political/civic organizations was not significantly different by gender. Twenty-three percent of females were members compared to 18 percent of men. A chi-square test revealed no significant difference between men and women in their participation in community improvement activities. Half of both men and women in the sample had
been involved in community improvement activities in the past year.

**Network Characteristics (Dependent Variables)**

Before reviewing the results from more advanced analysis, the basic frequencies of the dependent variables (network size, kin and gender composition) are presented. T-tests are used to check for mean differences in these variables between key groups of individuals.

**Size**

Respondents reported an average 3.3 close friends in their personal networks (see Table 4.3). Only 4 percent of respondents indicated they had no close friends. At the other extreme, 17 percent reported they had at least six close personal friends. Recall, the name generator for both networks limited the number of members a respondent can report to six. As a result the range for both social networks was zero to six.

In general, the size of community issues networks was slightly smaller. On average, respondents cited two individuals with whom they commonly discuss community issues. (Recall, a screening question was asked in the questionnaire to allow those without a community issues network to skip out of that series of questions regarding each of their network members.) Approximately one-fourth of respondents had no one with whom they discuss important community issues. The average size of both social networks was not surprising given past research findings on GSS data (Marsden 1987; Moore 1990).
Table 4.3: Social Network Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal network</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = 3.3, SD = 1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community issues network</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = 2.0, SD = 1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items in the questionnaire allowed for the creation of an additional variable to examine the amount of overlap respondents had between their personal network and their community issues network. This variable included only those with at least one network member in both the personal and community issues network. Overlap was quite high with 48 percent of friends also being listed as individuals with whom the respondents discussed important community issues. Researchers have argued for the study of “total networks” instead of just focusing on “core networks”, this finding suggests that although there is considerable overlap, different network components do tap into additional or different social ties. Interestingly, both men and women had approximately 50 percent overlap between these two types of networks. In other words, half of those mentioned as community issues network members were also listed as personal close friends, regardless of gender.
Potential Variations of Network Size

Past research indicates that education is an influential macro-social characteristics related to the size of social networks (Fischer 1982; Marsden 1987). However, the results show no significant difference in the size of the personal network or the number of individuals in a respondent’s community issues networks between those in the sample with a college or advanced degree and those with high school diplomas or less education.

Employment status, on the other hand, was related to size of the personal networks. Employed individuals had an average of 3.3 individuals in their personal networks compared to 3.7 individuals in networks of those who were not employed. This difference was significant (p < .05, two tailed t-test). Retired individuals were included in the “not employed” category. Logically, these individuals may have more time available to maintain personal network ties and were also more likely to have lived in the area longer. Both time available and length of residence could be salient factors in this finding.

The size of personal and community issues networks was explored further by dividing the sample into age categories and the presence of children in the home. Respondents who did not have children under 18 living in the home had slightly larger networks than those individuals with children present in the home (see Table 4.4). This provides preliminary support for the constricting of social ties due to the demands of child rearing. Findings also show as age increased so did the size of both the personal and community issues networks with the exception of the oldest of the respondents (over 75). These differences were very small, but the predicted trend was present.
Table 4.4: Network Size – With Or Without Children By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th></th>
<th>Community</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Children</td>
<td>Without Children</td>
<td>With Children</td>
<td>Without Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 35</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 50</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 64</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or &gt;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kin Composition

Thirty-five individuals reported no “close friends” they were excluded from the analysis of percent kin in personal networks. A much larger number of respondents (262) reported they did not have a community issues network, and subsequently were excluded.

Percent kin in the personal network averaged 17 percent, while the average percent kin in community issues networks was 10 percent (see Table 4.5). The range for both networks was zero (meaning no kin in the network) to one hundred percent (meaning everyone in the network was kin). Over half of respondents (62%) did not have any kin in their personal network and an even larger percent (81%) had no kin in their community issues network. Personal networks were more kin based than the community issues networks. Since researchers such as Fischer (1982) noted that relatives tend to be considered more “close” by respondents compared to non-relation. This finding was consistent with expectations.
Table 4.5: Social Network Kin Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kin in personal network</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.01 - .33</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.34 - .66</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.67 - 1.00</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = .17, SD = .26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Kin in community network**       |           |         |
| .00                                | 578       | 81      |
| .01 - .33                          | 40        | 6       |
| .34 - .66                          | 43        | 6       |
| .67 - 1.00                         | 49        | 7       |
| Mean = .10, SD = .26               |           |         |

Potential Variations of Kin Composition

T-tests allowed further examination of the network composition. Those with lower levels of education (high school diploma or less) reported a significantly greater proportion of kin in their personal networks when compared to those with high levels of education (t=9.49, p < .01). Individuals who were not employed had a higher percentage of kin composition than those individuals who were employed. The mean difference between employed and unemployed was four percent. These findings agree with previous findings (Marsden 1987; Moore 1990).

T-tests for both education and employment status comparisons with percent kin in the community issues networks resulted in non-significant findings. On average, the percent kin in these networks was very similar regardless if the respondent was employed or not or a professional/manager compared to other occupations.
The percent kin in networks was also examined by age and presence of children. Generally, respondents with children in the home reported higher percentages of kin in both their personal and community issues networks (see Table 4.6). No clear trend in the percent kin in networks was apparent by age.

Table 4.6: Percent Kin – Those With or Without Children by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Children</td>
<td>Without Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 35</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 50</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 64</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 75 or >   | -        | .20       | -         | .12       

Gender Composition (Percent Same Sex)

The percent of network members who are the same gender as the respondent was calculated to determine the sex homogeneity of both personal and community issues networks. For example, if a man in the sample had four individuals in his personal network and three of them were men the percent same sex in the network would be calculated as 75 percent. Ranges included the two extremes of having no one in the network the same sex as the respondent (0%) to having only individuals of the same sex in the network (100%). In this sample, gender segregation in social networks was common. Seventy-nine percent of respondents with personal networks had all members of the same gender as themselves or 100 percent sex homogeneity (see Table 4.7). On average, 92 percent of an individual’s total personal network was made-up of alters of the same gender.
Table 4.7: Social Network Gender Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same sex in personal network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.01 - .33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.34 - .66</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.67 - 1.00</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean .92, SD = .17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same sex in community network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.01 - .33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.34 - .66</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.67 - 1.00</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean = .70, SD = .38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community issues networks were also gender segregated. On average, 70 percent of a respondent's community issues network was sex homogeneous and the standard deviation was .38. There appeared to be more diversity in the gender composition of the community issues networks compared to the personal networks. Over half (56%) of the respondents had completely sex homogenous community issues networks. At the other extreme, 17 percent of the respondent's had networks made-up of all members who were the opposite sex.

T-Test Results by Hypothesis

T-tests allow for the comparison of two independent groups of respondents on a dependent, ratio level variable. The average size, percent kin and percent same-sex in social networks was examined. These test results will determine if the data support the hypotheses of this study. Results are presented in three main sections: gender, marital status and household composition.
Gender

Six t-tests were conducted to determine if the means of men and women differ significantly on network size, kin composition and gender composition. In each section personal networks are discussed first followed by a discussion of results for community issues networks.

Size

Results from the t-tests concerning gender and personal networks were consistent with past studies. Hypothesis one predicted no significant difference in personal network size based on gender. This hypothesis was supported. There was no significant difference in the size of the personal networks by gender. Women’s average size was 3.4 compared to men’s average size of 3.5 close friends (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Gender and Social Network Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th></th>
<th>Community Issues</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall size</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of kin</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion same sex</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.87*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, two-tailed t-test

Similarly, men and women did not differ significantly in the size of the community issues network. The predicted absence of a relationship between gender and network size (hypothesis two) was supported. Men and women in the sample reported an average of 2 individuals in their community issues networks. Both hypotheses regarding gender and the size of social networks were supported.
Kin Composition

Hypothesis number three stated women’s personal networks will have a significantly larger percentage of kin compared to men’s networks. This prediction was supported (p < .05, two-tailed t-test). Men’s networks, on average, are made up of 16 percent kin. Women, on the other hand, averaged 19 percent kin in their personal networks. Although the test produced statistically significant results the actual difference was quite small. However, this sample of rural Iowans provided similar results regarding gender differences in kin composition of personal networks to those obtained in other geographically specific studies (Fischer 1982; Wellman 1985), as well as a larger, nationally representative study (Moore 1990).

Hypothesis number four was also supported. As predicted, women have a higher percentage of kin in their issues network when compared to men. Thirteen percent of the members these women discuss community issues with were their relatives compared to only 7 percent for men.

Gender Composition

Men and women both had highly sex segregated personal networks. The average proportion of same sex individuals in their networks was 92 percent. T-test results indicate there was no significant difference in the proportion of same sex alters in men’s and women’s personal networks. In other words, the percent of sex homogeneity in friendship networks did not differ significantly by gender.

Community issues networks present a very different finding regarding sex segregation. Men had a higher concentration of same sex alters in this type of network than women. On average, men had 87 percent sex homogeneity in the issues network compared to 60 percent gender homogeneity in women’s networks.
Marital Status

Hypotheses five and six address the predicted relationship between marital status of respondents and their social networks. In order to run t-tests for marital status re-coding was completed and a dummy variable grouped those currently married and widowed together with a value of one and the remaining marital status together with an assigned value of zero. This categorization was based on previous research by Hulburt and Acock (1990) who found married and widowed individuals have similar network composition. T-tests were also conducted separating married respondents from all other respondents. These tests produced no significant results.

Size

The literature is quite limited on the relationship between marital status and the size of personal networks. Since no hypotheses were stated regarding this relationship t-tests were completed to explore if there were differences in the mean number of network members respondents had by marital status. No significant difference was found in the average size of the personal or community issues network by marital status, although it does appear from the data that the married and widowed respondents tend to have slightly larger networks than those who were divorced, separated, never married or living together.
Table 4.9: Marital Status and Social Network Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th></th>
<th>Community Issues</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married/Widowed</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Married/Widowed</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall network size</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of kin</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of same sex</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.88*</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.73*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, two-tailed t-test

Kin Composition

Hypotheses five and six regarding the implications of marital status on network kin composition were supported. In both personal and community networks, respondents who were married or widowed had a statistically significant larger proportion of kin in their networks compared to individuals who were divorced, separated, living with someone or had never been married. While kin composed 18 percent of the personal network of those who were married or widowed, kin made up 14 percent of all other statuses. Similarly, a significantly higher concentration of kin was found in the community issues networks of married/widowed respondents compared to their separated, divorce and never married counterparts (see Table 4.9).

Gender Composition

Although no hypotheses regarding marital status and gender composition were initially stated some interesting findings emerged from t-tests comparing the percent of same sex in networks by marital status. Married and widowed respondents had, on average, significantly higher percent of sex homogeneity in their personal network compared to the others. However, they had a significantly lower percent of same sex alters in their community issues networks. Close friends
in the personal networks of those who were neither married nor widowed were less sex segregated (88 percent compared to 93 percent) (See Table 4.9).

**Household Composition**

Household composition refers to the presence or absence of children under the age of 18 living in the home. To conduct t-tests the original variable asking for the number of children in the home was re-coded as a dummy variable with zero meaning no children present and one meaning one or more children under age 18 present in the home. T-tests were conducted on size, kin composition and gender composition of the social networks.

**Size**

The presence or absence of children in a household was predicted to be related to social network size. The t-tests showed support for hypothesis number seven which predicted individuals with children in the home to have significantly smaller personal networks. Those with children in their home had an average personal network made up of 3.09 members compared to those without children who averaged 3.47 (See Table 4.10).

A significant difference in size was also found in the community issues network. Hypothesis eight was supported. Individuals with children present had, on average, smaller issues networks (2.5) compared to those without children who averaged closer to three alters per issues network. While the hypotheses are supported, a difference of less than one person may not be substantively impressive.
Table 4.10: Household Composition and Social Network Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Community Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence of children</td>
<td>Absence of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall network size</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of kin</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of same sex</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.91*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, two-tailed t-test

Kin Composition

Hypotheses nine and ten addressed the predicted relationship between those with and those without children in the home and the percent kin in their networks. Although the percent kin in personal networks was not significantly different by household composition, community issues networks were affected. A t-test indicated a mean significant difference of 6 percent. The absence of children from the home translated to a greater percent of non-kin reported in the community network. Those without children in the home had, on average, less then 10 percent of their network made up of kin (see Table 4.10).

Gender Composition

The proportion of same-sex alters in personal networks was statistically significant by household composition. Those with children present had a slightly higher level of sex segregation (only 2 percent). No significant difference in the average proportion of same sex was found in the community issues networks based on household composition, both averaged approximately 70 percent sex homogeneity in the network (see Table 4.10).

In review, the presence of children appears to be related to smaller social networks, a higher percent of kin in the community issues networks and greater sex
segregation in personal networks.

**Zero-order Correlation Coefficients**

The zero-order relationships between network size, network composition and structural variables are shown in Table 4.11. As would be expected, age and age squared were positively correlated with the size of both personal and community issues networks, gender (1 = female), marital status (1 = married/widowed), and years they have lived in their community. Age was negatively correlated with number of children living in the home and educational attainment. Some of these findings reflect common societal level trends in the United States such as life expectancy patterns (females living longer than males) and the increase in educational opportunities and expectations for younger individuals in the sample. Also, since 60 year olds potentially have lived in the community longer it makes sense they would have more individuals with whom they discuss important community issues.

Gender, one of the key variables in the study, correlated more so with community issues networks than with personal networks. Specifically, gender was correlated with composition, not size of community issues networks. Correlations indicated gender was correlated with the percent of same sex (-.34) and percent kin (.11) in respondents' community issues networks. Beyond these relationships, gender was not strongly correlated to the other dependent variables of social network size and composition. Even the correlation between gender and sex segregation in community issues networks (-.34) can not be interpreted as a high or moderate correlation (Sproull 1988).
### Table 4.11: Correlation of Independent Variables and Social Network Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age Squared</th>
<th>Size Personal</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Size Issues</th>
<th>Percent Kin in Friend Network</th>
<th>Percent Kin in Issues Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Squared</td>
<td>.99**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Kin in Friend Network</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Kin in Issues Network</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Same Sex in Friends</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Same Sex in Issues</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>-.55**</td>
<td>-.56**</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.11: (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percent Same Sex in Friend Network</th>
<th>Percent Same Sex in Issues Network</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Marital</th>
<th>Town Size</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Lived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Same Sex in Friends</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Same Sex in Issues</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Size</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .05  ** p < .01
The Correlations between personal networks and marital status are stronger than Correlations between marital status and community issues networks. The percent of kin in personal networks and the percent of same sex in the personal network both are significantly correlated with marital status (.07 and .12, respectively). This indicates being married or widowed increases the kin and the percent sex homogeneity in their personal networks.

One of the few independent variables correlated with the size of personal networks was household composition. The number of children in the home was negatively correlated to the size of the personal network. In other words, the more children at home the fewer the number of friends a respondent reported. This provides additional support for the argument of family as a “greedy” institution.

Other Correlations of interest included findings between other network and structural variables. The size of personal networks was positively correlated with the size of their community issues network (.28). This means respondents with larger personal networks were also individuals with larger community issues networks. Also, the more years one had lived in the community (lived) the larger the size of the community issues network (.10). Education was negatively correlated with kin in the network (-.10) meaning as levels of education increased the percent of kin in the personal network decreased. The population of the community was only significantly correlated with one variable: the percent of same sex alters in the issues networks. The larger the town size, the greater the sex segregation in community issues networks. As previously reported, this type of segregation was especially pronounced for the men in the sample.
Regression Analysis

Regression models were run for each dependent variable including both a reduced model and a full model. Measures of network size, kin and same sex composition were regressed on gender, life course and demographic variables. The reduced model included only the independent variables of gender, marital status and number of children living in the home. The full model included the control variables including, age, age squared (to account for possible curvilinear effects), the number of years the respondent had lived in the community, education and the size of the community. Interactions were tested in both the reduced and full models.

Reduced Model

The reduced models provided little support for the affects of marital status, the presence of children and gender on personal network size or composition (see Table 4.12). The adjusted r squared was modest in all models ranging from .00 to .02. Marital status had a significant effect on the level of sex segregation in the personal network (.13) and the presence of children negatively effected the size of the personal network (-.09). Gender was not significant in the reduced model for personal networks.

Conversely, gender was especially important in its effects on the composition of the community issues network in the reduced model. Neither marital status nor children in the home caused a significant change in the composition of the network. Gender was positively associated with the percent kin (.10) and negatively associated (-.26) with percent of same sex in the community issues networks. In
other words, women's networks were less sex homogeneous and had greater kin composition. Twelve models with interaction variables (gender and marital status, and gender and children in the home) were tested. No significant interactions effects were found.

Table 4.12: Regression of Network Size and Composition on Gender, Marital Status and Household Composition. (Reduced Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal Network</th>
<th>Community Issues Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Network Size</td>
<td>% Kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.35)</td>
<td>(1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.85)</td>
<td>(1.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in the Home</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-2.57)</td>
<td>(-.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05     ** p < .01
Notes: Unstandardized coefficients, t-statistics are in the parentheses.

Full Model

The full models consisted of five additional variables including age, age squared, education, years in the community and community size. Similar to the reduced model, the full model produced modest adjusted r squares (see Table 4.13). Marital status remained significant in the percent of sex segregation in personal networks. Education was negatively associated with the percent kin in the personal network (-.12). In other words, as education increased the percent kin in the personal network decreased. This was consistent with previous findings.
Table 4.13: Regression of Network Size and Composition on Gender and Structural Variables. (Full Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal Network</th>
<th></th>
<th>Community Issues Network</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Network Size</td>
<td>% Kin</td>
<td>% Same Sex</td>
<td>Network Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.44)</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
<td>(-.22)</td>
<td>(-.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.19)</td>
<td>(1.99)</td>
<td>(3.57)</td>
<td>(-.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in the Home</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.83)</td>
<td>(-1.28)</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td>(-.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.39)</td>
<td>(-.03)</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td>(.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Squared</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(-.55)</td>
<td>(-.27)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
<td>(-3.01)</td>
<td>(.55)</td>
<td>(2.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the Community</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.44)</td>
<td>(1.30)</td>
<td>(.24)</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the Community</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.37)</td>
<td>(-1.44)</td>
<td>(.40)</td>
<td>(-1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  ** p < .01

Notes: Unstandardized coefficients, t-statistics are in the parentheses.

A greater number of significant coefficients was found in the models for community issues networks. Again, education was a significant variable in network size. As the level of formal education increased so did size of the community issues network. The model for kin composition resulted in three significant coefficients. Gender remained significant at the .05 level and both age and age squared were also significant. Age was negatively associated (-.66) with the proportion of kin in
the network and age squared was positively associated (.53). This reflects a curvilinear pattern which was also found by Moore (1990) and Fischer (1982) illustrating that non-kin ties peak around age 30. As age increases the proportion of kin in the network decreases; however, in the networks of the oldest respondents the proportion of kin in the network increases.

Lastly, gender composition of the community issues network was tested. The results indicated gender was still significant even after including education, age, and years in the community in the model. The only other variable that produced a significant coefficient was the size of the community. The association was positive; meaning as community size increased the percent of sex segregation in the community issues network also increased. The total adjusted r squared for the full model was .13 (see Table 4.13).

In review, both models produced modest r squared. In the reduced model personal network size was significantly affected by one variable: children in the home. This confirms the prediction made in Chapter Two. Percent kin and percent same sex in the community network were influenced by gender. In the full model the additional variables of education, age, age squared and community size also significantly affected the network composition. Originally the independent variables in the study were predicted to have more explanatory power than these demographic variables. However, with the exception of the models regarding percent same sex in networks, all the other models indicate that demographic variables explain more of the variance in the dependent variables than gender, marital status, and number of children.

Gender’s effect on the percent kin and sex homogeneity in the networks remained consistent. The effect of gender on percent kin supports past research and the predications made in this study. Although the correlation between gender
and sex homogeneity was not predicted, it provides for interesting debate regarding the causes and ramifications of this relationship.

**Results Summary**

The size of the personal networks was slightly larger than community issues networks. The average size of these personal networks was consistent with previous findings. Gender and marital status did not affect the size of either type of social network. Network size was significantly different for households with children compared to those without children.

On average, the percentage of kin in the social networks was relatively small (less than 20%) and the percentage of sex segregation in both networks was large (70% and above). Findings indicated differences by gender and marital status on the percentage of kin and the percent same sex in the networks. Marital status was more influential on the personal network and gender more influential on the community issues network.

Zero-order correlations and the regression models indicated that gender had the most impact on the composition of community issues networks. Women were more likely to have higher percentages of kin in this type of social network and men were more likely to have highly sex segregated community issues network. Chapter Five provides a discussion of these and other significant findings.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The discussion portion of this chapter places the findings presented in Chapter Four into a broader context linking them to theoretical perspectives and comparing them to previous research findings reviewed in Chapter Two. Findings of this study which deviate from, as well as support the literature will be highlighted. The conclusion portion of the chapter will review the importance of this work based on the original questions posed in Chapter One, especially how this work advances the study of social networks. In addition, this work's relevance is addressed in terms of the significance previous theorists and researchers have attributed to social networks.

Greedy Institutions

Earlier it was indicated networks are instigated and maintained through a process of exchange. The process of exchange requires time and effort due to principles of reciprocity and balance. The maintenance of social networks is only one of the many social demands on individuals. Marriage and family are viewed as "greedy" institutions (Coser 1974; Gallagher and Gerstel 1993) because of their great demands of time and energy. This perspective led to specific predictions regarding both the size of networks and the percent kin in social networks.

The following findings reiterate the relevance of this approach towards marriage and the family. Respondents with children had smaller personal and community issues networks than did those without children in the home. The absence of children may result in more time for developing close friendships and
conversations regarding community resulting in larger networks. The presence of children means more household maintenance and less time available for social relationships. Similarly, the conceptualization of marriage as "greedy" was reinforced with significant differences in percent kin among married/widowed respondents compared to those who were divorced, separated, never married and living together. The presence of kin was stronger for married and widowed.

**Importance of Gender**

Since time is a limited resource, individuals must make decisions on whom to spend that time. Societal expectations regarding gender turn women inward, both voluntarily and involuntarily, toward family through family work and kin keeping (Rexroat and Sheehand 1987). For example, Wellman (1985) found women that work and had children spent most of their available time maintaining family ties. Literature on gender that theorized women as kinkeepers encouraged hypotheses predicting a higher percent of kin in women's networks. Kin composition findings in this study supported these predictions. In both types of networks women had higher percentage of kin compared to the men in the sample. This finding can also be linked to a "strength of weak ties" position.

**The "Strength of Weak Ties" Argument**

Weak ties, according to Granovetter (1973), tend to produce non-repetitive information and a greater variety of resources. This variety was considered beneficial to the individual. Women in this study were less likely to have these weak ties due to a larger percentage of kin in their personal networks.

This lack of weak ties occurred because family ties were most often
considered "close" and homogeneous (race, religion, class, etc.) ties (Fischer 1982). On the other hand, weak ties, according to the literature, may be less "close" and the alters more heterogeneous which provide more in the way of diverse information and resources (Granovetter 1973). These theoretical premises, in conjunction with the finding of a greater percentage of kin in women's networks and high levels of sex segregation in both networks, lend themselves to some interesting, yet tentative conclusions.

Due to the greater percentage of kin in personal and community issues networks, women may not be getting as much or as diverse information compared to men. In the case of community networks, men and women may not be fully exposed to what is happening in the community or to varying opinions regarding community issues due to their reliance on same-sex residents. Keep in mind past research that found women less likely to occupy formal positions within the community (Beaulieu and Ryan 1984, Des Moines Register 1997). Due to the limitations of both men's and women's social networks and the lack of formal positions held by women as a group they may be left out of some important forms of community building.

Findings in Relation to Previous Studies

Previous literature has examined personal or friendship networks considerably more than other types of social networks. Variation in the size and composition of personal networks has been studied using both nationally representative and geographically specific samples. Studies of community issues networks are virtually non-existent. Therefore, this study's findings are compared when possible to previous personal network studies. Each of the dependent variables are discussed starting with network size.
Social Network Size

The size of the two social networks examined in this study can be compared to the network sizes reported by other researchers. GSS data produced personal networks averaging around three individuals (Marsden 1987; Moore 1990). This was very close to the 3.3 average size for personal networks found in this geographically specific data set, and the average size of two alters in the community issues networks. While other findings could be compared, most of these additional studies utilized wording and name generators significantly different from the wording of the RDI study, and therefore provide less comparable data. Due to the relatively unstudied area of the community issues network, the size of the community issues networks can not be compared to other studies.

Variation in network size by the independent variables of gender and presence of children can also be compared to a few previous studies. Similar to the findings of Moore (1990) and Fischer and Oliker (1993) the size of personal and community networks did not vary significantly by gender. Previous findings that parenthood constrained networks was supported by this study. Stueve and Gerson (1977), as well as Fischer and Oliker (1983) found children restrict the size of social networks. Findings presented here also indicated this constraint on the network size of both personal and community issues networks. In sum, the findings regarding network size were consistent with past research on this topic.

Kin Composition

Recall network composition included percent kin and the percent of sex homogeneity in each social network. The number of respondents from which these variables were created decreased for both personal and community issues networks.
due to the fact that some individuals listed no one in these networks. Values for both percent kin and percent sex homogeneity ranged from zero to one hundred.

Percent kin in the personal network averaged 17 percent while the average percent kin in community issues networks was 10 percent. These results can be compared to past studies. Marsden's (1987:126) findings from the GSS data indicated an average network had proportion of kin at 55 percent. Fischer (1982) found 42 percent kin in personal networks (41). Researchers have divided the GSS data from 1985 into regions of the country and found personal networks in the Midwest averaged 69 percent kin (O'Brien, Hassinger and Dershem 1996:66). The findings presented here indicate this sample had a lower percent of kin than both the national and the Midwest subset of GSS data.

One probable reason for the lower percentage of kin named in the personal networks is the wording of the name generator. Individuals were asked to name their "closest friends," excluding individuals they live with. The first implication of the wording is the possible exclusion of a spouse from the network. Second, although the generator mentioned they may be relatives or non-relatives, researchers such as Fischer (1982) previously warned that the concept of "friend" is often times not associated with relatives. He found when asking individuals to label associates as friends they were much less likely to call one of their extended kin a friend than they were to label a non-kin associate a friend (Fischer 1982:215). Therefore, RDI respondents may have been less likely to include kin due to the question wording.

Another possibility to consider regarding the low percent kin reported in these networks points to the changing make-up of small rural communities. Results may be reflecting the reality in these small towns. Out-migration and natural decline means fewer family members or relatives residing in these small towns than in previous decades. Individuals who are left in these small towns no longer have
extensive kin connections in their personal and community issues networks.

The average percent of kin in the personal network was significantly larger for both women and married/widowed individuals. Numerous studies (including Feiring and Lewis 1991; Fischer 1982; Ishi-Kunz and Seccombe 1989; Troll 1987) found women have a greater percentage of kin in networks compared to men. This study reached similar conclusions. In both the personal and community issues networks women reported a larger percent of kin (on average) than men.

Fewer studies have examined how marital status impacted the kin composition in networks. The most notable study was completed by Hurlburt and Acock (1990). Again, findings from past research were supported illustrating that married and widowed respondents reported higher levels of kin in their networks. Although the presence of children was predicted to be related to larger percentages of kin in personal networks, the t-test findings did not support this hypothesis. This is the only hypothesis not supported. Since this prediction was based on very few studies further investigation and research is needed.

**Gender Composition**

Gender composition or the percent of alters who are the same gender as the respondent, can be compared to a limited number of previous studies. One such study by Leslie and Grady (1985) found approximately 60 percent same sex alters in personal networks. On average, gender segregation was higher in this sample of small town Iowans. The percent of same sex alters was especially high (92%) in personal networks. The high level of sex segregation can be linked to structural and cultural aspects of a rural sample. A structural explanation would include focusing on the overall sex ratios in the community as well as focusing on the gender composition of formal organizations in the community. Culturally, small town Iowa
may still be considered more “traditional” in its gender expectations leading to fewer social ties between men and women compared to large urban areas.

Although there are limited studies specifically addressing gender composition in networks, the findings of high sex segregation in community issues networks parallel the findings in the voluntary associations literature previously addressed. This literature found voluntary organizations to be highly sex segregated. The nature of these organizations has been theorized to benefit men more so than women because traditionally men’s organizations have been larger and allowed greater access to diverse ties. In this sample, women were more likely to be involved in church organizations and men in fraternal and job related organization. The social connections formed in these organizations have been labeled as instrumental. Community issues networks can be viewed in a similar manner.

Wording may assist in explaining the higher percent of sex segregation in this sample. Because respondents were asked about their “closest” friends they may have only included individuals with whom they had a high level of intimacy. This, in turn, may have caused the increase in sex homogeneity. There is no source to compare the findings concerning the percent of same sex in community issues networks. In general, it was somewhat lower than in personal networks with an average of 70 percent sex homogeneity.

In Chapter Two, it was mentioned that the presence of kin in social networks may have decreased the proportion of same sex alters in these networks. Marsden (1990) explained why kin composition was important to consider. He noted that kin were more likely to be different from the respondent in both age and gender. Recall women in this sample had more kin in their community networks compared to the men, suggesting this may be the reason for women having a lower percent of sex segregation in the network. However, only in the community issues network was
there a gender difference in sex homogeneity. If the kinship argument was valid, it would make sense that the findings would have included significant differences in both personal and community issues networks and this was not the case in this sample. The cause or process influencing the gender difference in sex segregation remains unclear. Further research should be conducted to clarify what network or social structural factors influence the sex homogeneity in community issues networks. The size of community is one of these structural factors in need of further study. Recall sex segregation increased as population increased; the larger the community the higher the percent same sex in the community issues network. Smaller towns may offer fewer choices for network members due to population decline. The structure may be containing on individuals leading them to include individuals that, if given more choice, they would not discuss community issues with.

Another issue to be explored is why men appear to discuss community issues almost exclusively with other men. Sociologists should be especially interested in structural factors which may relate to or explain men's sex segregated community issues networks. Examining the employment status, community leadership structure, and distribution of family work are just a few of the possible structural factors that may influence gender segregation in networks. For example, perhaps men with highly sex segregated community issues networks are more likely to be full-time professionals who are not sharing the family work and who live in communities with "traditional" leadership structures. The social structure's impact means this individual is more likely to be surrounded by other men at work, have more time to network outside the home and seek out men who hold formal power in the community.
Comparisons of the Two Types of Social Networks

Very few studies have investigated multiple types or components of the "total" network simultaneously. This study provided the opportunity to compare two components of networks and the variables which influence them. Based on the regression analysis it was clear that variables with a significant impact on the composition of personal networks did not affect community issues networks in the same way. For example, while marital status affected personal networks, it was not a significant variable in community issues networks and while size of the community impacted the percent of sex segregation in community issues networks population was not significant in the personal networks. This lends further support for the study of individuals' "whole" or "total" social networks and echoes the concerns of other researchers. More work is needed to understand other aspects of an individual's social network including community issues networks and occupational networks.

Limitations

As with any social research it is important to highlight key limitations of the study. These limitations often lead to suggestions for future research. The main limitations to be discussed are the exploratory nature of the concept of a community issues network and the lack of a measure regarding formal leadership positions of respondents in their respective communities.

Conceptualization of the Community Issues Network

Before examining the limitations of the conceptualization of the community issues network it is important to explain the impetus for including questionnaire items regarding this type of network. The inclusion of the concept of community
issues networks attempted to serve a dual purpose for researchers. First, it allowed for a deeper understanding of the sorts of connections and social ties individuals have to others; specifically, to others in their community. The research presented in this study has focused on that purpose; however, it is important to recognize that this is not the only reason for the inclusion of these items. Researchers also may attempt to use the issues network to predict community level variables such as attachment to and social capital in the community. Characteristics of the community issues networks may become an independent variable. For example, some communities may have, on average, larger issues networks and these communities, in turn may report better local services, stronger leadership or overall happiness with community living. Wording and follow-up questions regarding community issues networks were geared to fulfill both these research functions.

It is common for researchers in the domain of social networks to discuss "total" networks and to distinguish them from a "core" network (being those who are "close" to the respondent) or a specific network components (job related or community issues networks). A smaller number of researchers actually try to tap into and enumerate the total network or obtain data on multiple types of networks. Up until now the literature was basically void of measures of community issues networks. Because of the lack of prior research on the concept of community issues networks the results of this study need to be replicated using other samples. Specifically, the name generator used to obtain the list of community network members should be tested in other studies to improve the reliability of the measure.

Also, being able to compare smaller communities to larger metropolitan areas would allow further examination of the finding of higher levels of sex segregation in men's community issues networks.
Due to the exploratory nature of the operationalization of community issues networks some findings should be viewed with caution. One such finding of interest was the large percentage of respondents (27%) who did not have a community issues network. Based on the reports of interest in the community (92%) and the relatively high level of involvement in improvement activities (50%), the findings appeared somewhat contradictory. One explanation is the abstract nature of the community issues network. Respondents may have found it easier to answer direct questions about whether or not they were involved in improvement activities, but may have had a harder time conceptualizing their community issue network.

Another explanation is certain individuals are more likely to lack these community connections. The frail elderly may have lost network members to death, new residence may have yet to make these connections and commuters may be more connected to their coworkers or their work place community rather than to their residential community. Future study can explore demographic and structural factors that could lead to the absence of a community issues network.

The inclusion of a community issues network is vital to better understanding the total network. As Burt (1984) mentioned, these networks provide us with an indication of our surroundings and environment. Who surrounds us, in turn, impacts the attitudes we hold and the behaviors we exhibit. Therefore, future studies incorporating this idea will lead to a more complete picture of how individuals are connected to their communities and the larger social structure.

Formal Leadership Positions

While the study gathered detailed information on community issues networks and the voluntary group membership of these respondents, one area of community connection or involvement was left unmeasured. No question or series of questions
was asked regarding the leadership positions of these residents. It is unknown how many or which of these individuals held positions of authority or had some formal decision making power in the community. The exclusion of questionnaire items regarding the respondent’s former or current leadership positions in the community prohibited a more in-depth understanding of some important findings.

A logical question for future study is, do individuals in leadership positions have more diverse networks than other community residents? The question of sex homogeneity in the community issues network becomes especially interesting. The network composition of local leaders may impact the types of decisions supported and made by that individual. Do highly sex segregated community issues networks impact the amount and type of information and resources exchanged between individuals? Since men are more likely to be in formal community positions and more likely to have highly sex segregated networks, do they encourage or maintain the disenfranchisement of certain community members? A previous study by DeSena (1994) found women to be informally involved in matters affecting their family; yet, if men in formal positions do not have women in their community issues networks, decisions may be made without adequate input from women or a full understanding of the issue. In the future, learning the respondent’s past and present community leadership status would help to show if in fact men are limiting diversity of opinions or protecting social status.

On a broader level another interesting issue involves the make up of community leaders as a whole. Does gender composition in community issues networks vary by a community’s gender composition of formal leadership positions? In other words, is there a relationship between sex segregation of networks and sex segregation of leadership? Perhaps towns with women in leadership roles are communities in which men have greater sex heterogeneity in their networks. Also,
the positive correlation between the town size and sex segregation of networks suggested as structural limitations decreased, or choice of network members increased, networks were more sex segregated. This finding should be replicated and the pattern explored looking at formal leadership positions in the community.

Conclusions

In conclusion, a brief review of the significance attached to social networks provides the avenue to discuss how the study presented here supports pointed made by previous researchers. This is followed by the original questions posed by the research and the answers the data provided.

Significance of Social Networks

In the introduction the significance of social networks was broken down into three factors: 1) most individuals in our society are embedded in social networks, 2) networks are limited by the social setting and provide indications of an individual’s environment and social context, and 3) networks are an avenue to important resources as a part of the social exchange process. This research pointed to the relevance of these factors by either providing support for the factor or illuminating future directions of study.

First, of the 973 respondents nearly all (96%) had a personal network and 73 percent had a community issues network. Clearly, these findings support the idea of personal networks as universal. Most individuals were embedded in social networks. Only 13 individuals or less than 1 percent of respondents reported having no close friends (personal network) and no one in a community issues network.

Second, findings on the composition of networks based on gender and life
course variables indicated that location in the social structure impacted social ties. For example, being married and having children influenced choice of conversation partners and friends. Using a structural argument it is important to note the limitations in choice of network members that respondents may have available to them. Societal expectations encourage women to be kinkeepers and more family orientated and encourage men to focus on the public sphere. As Smith-Lovin and McPherson (1992) noted, individuals can only have social connections and network ties with those they meet in their day-to-day social setting.

Third, although the data did not provide reports of what functions the network provides for the respondent, the data appear to have ramifications regarding the maintenance of networks and the exchange of information. The highly sex segregated networks lead one to presume that the type of information traveling through the networks may be influenced. This is a weak ties argument. While women may be limited in the type and breadth of the information they received because of their greater reliance on or connection to kin, men, on the other hand, may be limited by the type and breadth of information they received because they tended to have more sex segregated community issues networks.

Questions Proposed and Answers Obtained

Questions posed in Chapter One mapped out the goals of this research. These questions and the subsequent findings illustrated how this study expands on the current literature regarding social networks. The first three questions related to gender and can be grouped together. They were as follows: Is gender related to community issues networks in a similar manner to how gender has been shown to be related to personal networks? Will the size of community issues networks or the composition of these networks vary by gender? And lastly, are these social networks
sex segregated?

It appears that gender produced a similar pattern regarding size and percent
kin in community issues networks to that produced in personal networks. Women's
networks were similar in size to men's networks and women's networks were
composed of slightly more kin. These findings were true for both personal and
community issues networks. However, the pattern for sex homogeneity varied by
network type. Both men and women had a high percent of sex segregation; there
was no significant gender difference in the amount of sex homogeneity in personal
networks. Community issues networks, on the other hand, found men had a
significantly higher percent of sex segregation. Ramifications of this finding which
have been previously discussed revolved around social exchange and the idea that
information and resources are passed through these networks. The lack of diversity
or weak ties in these networks suggested limitations in the type and amount of
information residents obtain about their community and the important issues
residents face.

The next original research question asked, do life course stages, such as
marital status and the presence of children affect men's and women's social
networks differently? The answer according to this research appears to be no.
Interactions tested (gender and marital status, and gender and the presence of
children) in the regression models found no significant interaction effects. Moore
(1990) also found the lack of an interaction effect. Neither marriage nor parenthood,
in conjunction with gender, made a significant impact on network composition (733).
On the other hand, using a smaller and geographically specific sample, Munch and
colleagues (1997) found significant gender interactions with all other independent
variables including marital status and the number of children when predicting
network variables (513). Due to conflicting findings this question needs to be
pursued in future research.

The last question asked if basic demographic variables affected size and composition of social networks more than gender and life course variables. The answer here was complex. For personal networks, marital status influenced the percent same sex in the network more than any of the demographic variables. Marital status was also significant in predicting the percent kin in the network however, education (a demographic variable) produced a stronger result.

With community issues networks the findings were different. Education most strongly affected the size of the network. Age and age squared produced large unstandardized coefficients for percent kin in the network compared to gender. However, the percent sex segregation in the community issues network was most strongly affected by gender of the respondent. It is clear that gender and life course affected networks differently depending on what part of the total network the researcher focuses on. This finding reinforces the demand for further study of components of an individual's total network including community issues networks.

The study of social structure, in this case networks, and how it affects individuals continues to be a vital contribution of sociology. This study expands our knowledge of social networks and how people are connected to others in their community. Future studies are needed to verify these findings and should explore how highly sex segregated or kin dominated community issues networks influence the attitudes and/or behaviors of those who instigate and maintain these types of networks.
APPENDIX
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Rural Development Initiative Community Survey

TOWN

Enter the town from the call record.

Form
1 = Form A
2 = Form B

Q1b

I will first be asking you questions about where you now live and where you have lived in the past.

Do you currently live ..... 

1 = Within the city limits of town [goto q5]
2 = Outside city limits of town, on a farm
3 = Outside city limits of town, not on a farm
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Miles

How many miles do you live from [town]?

_______ MILES

comm

What community other than [town] do you live closest to?
How many miles do you live from [comm]?  
_______ MILES

Q5

When somebody asks you where you live, do you tell them you are from [town]?

1 = Yes [GOTO Q6]
2 = NO
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q5B]
9 = REFUSED [goto q6]

COMM2

What community do you say you are from?

ccomm2

Codes for communities
Q6

Now we are interested in the different community sizes you have lived in or around. Thinking about where you have lived in the past, have you ever lived in or around a community....?

YES = 1  NO = 2  DK = 8  REF = 9

6a) of less than 500
6b) of 500-2500
6c) of 2500-10,000
6d) of 10,000-50,000
6e) of 50,000-250,000
6f) of 250,000 or more

Q8

Now we are interested in knowing how you feel about the services and facilities available in (town). Would you rate the overall quality of services and facilities located in (town) as...?

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Or Poor
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q7

I will now read a list of services and facilities and ask if you feel it is very good, good, fair or poor in (town).

VERY GOOD = 1  GOOD = 2  FAIR = 3  POOR = 4  DK = 8  NA = 5

7a) Jobs
7b) Medical services
7c) Public schools
7d) Shopping facilities
7e) Adequate housing

Q7A

VERY GOOD = 1  GOOD = 2  FAIR = 3  POOR = 4  DK = 8  NA = 5

7aa) Recreation/entertainment
7ab) Child care services
7ac) Senior citizens programs
7ad) Programs for youth

Q9

Now, we are interested in knowing if you acquire the following services in (town) or if you go mostly outside of (town) to acquire these services.

Where do you go for your primary health care? Is it...

1 = Mainly in TOWN
2 = Mainly out of TOWN
3 = DO NOT USE
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q10

Where do you go for specialized health care? Is it...

1 = Mainly in TOWN
2 = Mainly out of TOWN
3 = DO NOT USE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q11

Where do you do your shopping for your daily needs? Is it...

1 = Mainly in TOWN
2 = Mainly out of TOWN
3 = DO NOT USE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q12

Where do you do your shopping for big ticket items? Is it...

1 = Mainly in TOWN
2 = Mainly out of TOWN
3 = DO NOT USE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q13

Where do you participate in recreation and entertainment activities....

1 = Mainly in TOWN
2 = Mainly out of TOWN
3 = DO NOT USE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q14

Where do you attend church ....

1 = Mainly in TOWN
2 = Mainly out of TOWN
3 = DO NOT USE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q16

Next we are interested in how good you feel the government services available in (town) are. For each service I will ask if it is very good, good, fair, or poor.

Do you feel the police protection is ...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q17

Do you feel the condition of the streets in (town) is ...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q18

Do you feel the condition of the parks in (town) is ...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q19

Do you feel the water is ...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q20

The fire protection is ...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q21

Garbage collection is...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q22

Emergency response service is...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
5 = DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICE
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q15

How good would you rate the overall quality of government services in (town)? Would you say...

1 = Very Good
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q24

Now, I want to change the subject to find out how you feel about (town) as a place to live. I will read several statements about (town). For each statement, I will ask if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or are undecided.

Most everyone in (town) is allowed to contribute to local governmental affairs if they want to. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q25

Being a resident of (town) is like living with a group of close friends. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q26

When something needs to get done in (town),
the whole community usually gets behind it. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q27

If you do not look out for yourself, no one else in
(town) will. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q28

I am trusted by the people in (town) who know me. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q29

Community clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q30

Residents in (town) are receptive to new residents taking leadership positions. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q31

If I feel like just talking, I usually can find someone in (town) to talk to.

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q32
If I had an emergency, even people I don't know would help out.
1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q33
People living in (town) are willing to accept people from different racial and ethnic groups. Do you...
1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q34
I think that every person for themself is a good description of how people in (town) act. Do you...
1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q35

Differences of opinion on public issues are avoided at all costs in (town). Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q36

If I called a city office here with a complaint, I would likely get a quick response. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q23

Overall, (town) has more things going for it than other communities of similar size. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
friends

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS

Q39

Now thinking about your close friends you mentioned, [frnd1], [frnd2], [frnd3], [frnd4], [frnd5], [frnd6].

Do you feel equally close to all of these individuals?

1 = Yes, ALL [GOTO Q41]
2 = Yes, SOME
3 = No
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED [GOTO Q41]

Q40a - Q40f

Who do you feel especially close to? Is it ...

YES = 1 NO = 2 NA = 7 DK = 8 REF = 9

40a) [frnd1]
40b) [frnd2]
40c) [frnd3]
40d) [frnd4]
40e) [frnd5]
40f) [frnd6]

Q41

Now please think about the relations between the people you mentioned as your close friends. From your knowledge, are all of them acquainted with each other?

1 = Yes [GOTO Q62a]
2 = No
8 = DON'T KNOW [GOTO Q62a]
9 = REFUSED [GOTO Q62a]
KNOW1 - KNOW15

Do [NAME] and [NAME] know each other?

1 = Yes
2 = No
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

yrsknl - yrskn6

Now we'd like to find out a little about each of these people. Let's take [name].

About how long have you and [name] known each other?

_________ YEARS

Q631 - Q636

Is [name] a man or woman?

1 = MALE
2 = FEMALE

Q641 - Q646

Are you and [name] related to each other?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q65]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q65]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q65]

Rel11 - Rel16

How are you related?

Q64a1 - Q64a6

Codes for relationships
Q651 - Q656

Does [name] live in or around (TOWN)?

1 = Yes [goto q66]
2 = No
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q66]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q66]

---------------------------------------------

comm11 - comm16

In what community does [name] live?


---------------------------------------------

Q65a1 - Q65a6

community codes

---------------------------------------------

Q66a1 - Q66a6

In general, how active would you say [name] is when it comes to (town) improvement projects and events? Would you say...

1 = He/she is more involved than you
2 = He/she is less involved than you
3 = Or is your involvement about the same
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q671-Q676

On the average, do you speak with [name] ...

1 = Almost every day
2 = At least once a week
3 = At least once a month
4 = Or less than once a month
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q681-Q686

About how often, on the average, do you and [name] get together for companionship...

1 = Almost every day
2 = At least once a week
3 = At least once a month
4 = Less than once a month
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q104

Next we are interested in knowing about what proportion of the adults living in (town) would you say you know by name? Would you say...

1 = None or very few of them
2 = Less than half of them
3 = About half of them
4 = Most of them
5 = All of them
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q105

About what proportion of all your close personal adult friends live in (town)?

1 = None of them lives here
2 = Less than one-half of them live here
3 = About one-half of them live here
4 = Most of them live here
5 = All of them live here
6 = I really have no close personal friends
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q106

About what proportion of your adult relatives and in-laws, other than very distantly related persons, live in (town)?

1 = I have no living relatives or in-laws
2 = None of them lives here
3 = Less than one-half of them live here
4 = About one-half of them live here
5 = Most of them live here
6 = All of them live here
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q108

In general, in which of the following three types of communities would you prefer to live.

1 = Where people feel comfortable dropping in on each other without notice.
2 = Where people wait for an invitation before visiting
3 = Or where people pretty much go their own way with little contact with each other.
8 = DONT KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q109

What about (town)? Would you describe it as a community ....

1 = Where people feel comfortable dropping in on each other without notice
2 = Or where they wait for an invitation before visiting
3 = Or where people pretty much go their own way with little contact with each other.
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q110

Some people care a lot about feeling a part of the community they live in. For others, the community is not so important. How important is it to you to feel a part of the community? Is it...

1 = Very important
2 = Somewhat important
3 = Little or no importance
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q111

During the past year, have you participated in any community improvement projects in (town) such as a volunteer project or fund-raising effort?

1 = Yes
2 = No
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q112.

In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in local community improvement activities and events? Would you say you are...

1 = Very active
2 = Somewhat active
3 = Not very active
4 = Or not at all active
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q113

How interested are you in knowing what goes on in (town)? Are you...

1 = Very interested
2 = Somewhat interested
3 = Neither interested nor disinterested
4 = Not interested
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q107

In general, would you say you feel at home in (town)?

1 = Yes, definitely
2 = Yes, somewhat
3 = No, not much
4 = No, definitely not
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q114

Suppose that for some reason you had to move away from (town). Would you be ...

1 = Very sorry to leave
2 = Somewhat sorry to leave
3 = It wouldn't make any difference
4 = Somewhat pleased to leave
5 = Very pleased to leave
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q115

Now I will ask you some questions about community issues. When important community issues come up in (town), do you usually discuss these issues with any individuals other than those you live with?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q183]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q183]
9 = REFUSED [goto q183]

ISSUES

TOTAL NUMBER OF ISSUES INDIVIDUALS __________

Q122

Now, think in terms of the [issues] persons you mentioned, that is [afnd], [bfnd], [cfrnd], [dfnd], [efnd] and [ffnd]. Do you and some of these people generally talk together as a group, that is, as 2 or more individuals, when discussing community issues?

1 = Yes
2 = No [GOTO q126]
8 = DON'T KNOW [GOTO q126]
9 = REFUSED [GOTO q126]
Q124a - Q124f

Which of the [issues] people you mentioned are usually involved in these group discussions? Is...

YES = 1  NO = 2  DK = 8  REF = 9  NA = 7

124a) [afmd]
124b) [bfmd]
124c) [cfmd]
124d) [dfmd]
124e) [efmd]
124f) [ffmd]

Where do you usually meet as a group?

CMEET1 - CMEET2

Codes for meeting places

Q126b1 - Q126b6

About how often, on average do you and [name] discuss community issues? Would you say ...

1 = Almost every day
2 = At least once a week
3 = At least once a month
4 = Or less than once a month
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSES
Q1271 - Q1276

In general, do you and [name] more often agree or more often disagree on important community issues.

1 = Agree
2 = Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSE

Q138

Now, let's go back to the list of people you mentioned as persons whom you discuss community issues with.

Did you mention [afmd], [bfmd], [cfmd],[dfmd], [efmd], [ffmd] as also being close friends of yours.

1 = Yes, some were mentioned as close friends
2 = No [goto q141a]
3 = All were mentioned as close friends [goto q183]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q140]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q140]

frcom

How many of these individuals whom you discuss community issues with were not mentioned as close friends?
QYR1 - QYR6

Now, I have a few questions about those not mentioned as close friends.

About how long have you known [name]?

_________________ YEARS

Q1431 - Q1436

Is [name] a man or a woman?

1 = Male
2 = Female

Q1441 - Q1446

Are you and [name] related to each other?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q145]
8 = DON'T KNOW [GOTO Q145]
9 = REFUSED [GOTO Q145]

Qrel1 - Qrel4

How are you related?


Q144a1 - Q144a6

codes for relatives
Q1451 - Q1456

Does [name] live in or around (town)?

1 = Yes [GOTO Q146]
2 = No
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q146]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q146]

Q145a1 - Q145a6

Community Codes

Q146a1 - Q146a6

In general how active would you say [name] is when it comes to (town) community improvement projects and events. Would you say...

1 = More involved than you
2 = Less involved than you
3 = Involvement about the same
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q1471 - Q1476

On the average, how often do you speak with [name]? Is it...

1 = Almost every day
2 = At least once a week
3 = At least once a month
4 = Or less than once a month
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

nyrs

Next I have some questions about your neighborhood.

How many years have you lived in your present neighborhood?

_____ YEARS

Q185

I will now read a set of statements about your neighborhood. For each statement please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree or strongly disagree.

I can always count on my neighbors when I need help. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q186

I don't have time to visit with my neighbors. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q187

My neighbors can always count on me when they need help. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q188

Our neighborhood is closely knit. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q189

Compared to other sections of (town), my neighbors have more trust in each other. Do you...

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Undecided
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q184

Suppose that for some reason you had to move from your neighborhood into another section of (town). Would you be...?

1 = Very sorry to leave
2 = Somewhat sorry to leave
3 = Would make no difference
4 = Somewhat pleased to leave
5 = Very pleased to leave
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q190

The next questions are about your involvement in local groups and organizations.

Do you belong to any service and fraternal organizations such as Lions, Kiwanis, or Eastern Star?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q192]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q192]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q192]
Q191

How many times did you attend meetings or other activities of these groups during the past 12 months?

1 = Never
2 = One to five times a year
3 = Six to ten times a year
4 = Once a month
5 = Weekly or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q192

Do you belong to any recreational groups such as softball, bowling or card clubs?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q193]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q193]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q193]

Q192A

How many times did you attend meetings or other activities of these groups during the past 12 months?

1 = Never
2 = One to five times a year
3 = Six to ten times a year
4 = Once a month
5 = Weekly or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q193

Do you belong to political and civic groups such as PTA, PEO, or historical groups, local development organizations?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q194]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q194]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q194]

Q193A

How many times did you attend meetings or other activities of these groups during the past 12 months?

1 = Never
2 = One to five times a year
3 = Six to ten times a year
4 = Once a month
5 = Weekly or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q194

Do you belong to job-related organizations such as labor unions or professional associations?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q195]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q195]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q195]
Q194A

How many times did you attend meetings or other activities of these groups during the past 12 months?

1 = Never
2 = One to five times a year
3 = Six to ten times a year
4 = Once a month
5 = Weekly or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q195

Do you belong to any church-related groups such as church committees, or Bible study groups?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q196]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q196]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q196]

Q195A

How many times did you attend meetings or other activities of these groups during the past 12 months?

1 = Never
2 = One to five times a year
3 = Six to ten times a year
4 = Once a month
5 = Weekly or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
Q196

Do you belong to any other groups and organizations?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto Q197]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto Q197]
9 = REFUSED [goto Q197]

Q196A

How many times did you attend meetings or other activities of these groups during the past 12 months?

1 = Never
2 = One to five times a year
3 = Six to ten times a year
4 = Once a month
5 = Weekly or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Considering all of the types of groups and organizations we just discussed about how many total local groups do you belong to?

[org]_______ Groups/organizations

How many organizations that hold meetings outside of (town) do you belong to?

[grp]_______ Groups/organizations
Q199

Considering your total involvement with organizations, would you say you are more involved with local ones or those outside of (town)?

1 = More involved locally
2 = More involved outside community
3 = About the same
4 = Don't belong to any
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q200

Earlier, you indicated that [afrmd], [bfmd], [cfrmd], [dfmd], [efmd] [ffmd] are people that you discuss important community issues with. To your knowledge are any of these individuals involved in any of the groups or organizations that we just discussed?

1 = Yes
2 = No, none [goto q207]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q207]
9 = REFUSED [goto q207]

Q201

Are there any specific organizations or groups that both you and [afrmd] belong to?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q202]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q202]
9 = REFUSED [goto q202]

aorg1 - aorg2

Which groups?
Q202

Are there any organizations or groups that you and [bfmd] belong to?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q203]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q203]
9 = REFUSED [goto q203]

borg - borg2

Which groups?

cborg1 cborg2

codes for organizations

Q203

Are there any organizations or groups that you and [cfrnd] belong to?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q204]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q204]
9 = REFUSED [goto q204]

corg1 - corg2

Which groups?
ccorg1 ccorg2

codes for organizations

Q204

Are there any organizations or groups that you and [dfrmd] belong to?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q205]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q205]
9 = REFUSED [goto q205]

dorg1 - dorg2

Which groups?

cdorg1 cdorg2

codes for organization

Q205

Are there any organizations or groups that you and [efrmd] belong to?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q206]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q206]
9 = REFUSED [goto q206]

eorg1 - eorg2

Which groups?

ceorg1 ceorg2

codes for organization
Q206

Are there any organizations or groups that you and [ffmd] belong to?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q207]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q207]
9 = REFUSED [goto q207]

cforg1 cforg2

Which group?

__________________________

cforg1 cforg2

codes for organizations

respage

What was your age on your last birthday?

_____

Gender

RECORD GENDER

1 = Male
2 = Female
Marital

What is your current marital status? Are you...

1 = Married
2 = Divorced or separated
3 = Never married
4 = Widowed
5 = Living with someone
9 = REFUSED

lived

How long have you lived in the (town) area?

_____

Q209

Do you own or rent your current residence?

1 = Own
2 = Rent
3 = Have some other arrangement
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

MEM

How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

_____

YOUNG

How many of the people living in your household are under 18 years of age?

_____
Q211

What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

1 = Less than ninth grade
2 = Ninth to twelfth grade, No diploma
3 = High School Graduate (INCLUDES EQUIVALENCY)
4 = Some college, no degree
5 = Associate Degree
6 = Bachelors Degree
7 = Graduate or professional degree
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED

Q212

What is your present employment status?

1 = EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED ON A FULL-TIME BASIS
2 = EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED ON A PART-TIME BASIS
3 = RETIRED [goto spouse]
4 = FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER [goto spouse]
5 = STUDENT [goto spouse]
6 = UNEMPLOYED [goto spouse]

main

What is your main occupation?

occupational codes

comm

What community is your job located?

communities
TMILES

How many miles do you travel to work one-way?

Q215

Do you have a second job?

1 = Yes
2 = No [goto q217]
8 = DON'T KNOW [goto q217]
9 = REFUSED [goto q217]

secjob1 - secjob2

What is your second job?

---

cjob2

occupational codes

Q217

How satisfied are you with your present employment situation? Are you...

1 = Very satisfied
2 = Somewhat satisfied
3 = Somewhat dissatisfied
4 = Very dissatisfied
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED
SPOUSE

What is your spouse's employment status?

1 = EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED ON A FULL-TIME BASIS
2 = EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED ON A PART-TIME BASIS
3 = RETIRED [goto income]
4 = FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER [goto income]
5 = STUDENT [goto income]
6 = UNEMPLOYED [goto income]

SPOCCUP1 - SPOCCUP3

What is his/her main occupation?

__________________________________________

cspmain

__________________________________________

occupational codes

spcomm

What community is his/her job located?

__________________________________________

cspjbcom

community codes for spouse's job

SPMILE

How many miles does he/she travel to work one-way?

_______
Income

Considering all sources, was the combined income of all persons living in your household in 1993 above or below $25,000?

1 = Above [GOTO income2]
2 = Below
8 = DON'T KNOW [GOTO exit]
9 = REFUSED TO ANSWER [GOTO exit]

INCOME1

Which of the following groups is closest to your household income in 1993?

1 = 20,000 to 25,000
2 = 15,000 to 20,000
3 = 10,000 to 15,000
4 = 5,000 to 10,000
5 = Below 5,000
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED TO ANSWER

INCOME2

Which of the following groups is closest to your family income in 1993?

1 = 25,000 to 35,000
2 = 35,000 to 45,000
3 = 45,000 to 55,000
4 = 55,000 or more
8 = DON'T KNOW
9 = REFUSED TO ANSWER

Under

Respondents understanding of the questions was....

1 = Excellent
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor
INTEREST

Respondents interest in providing useful answers was....

1 = Excellent
2 = Good
3 = Fair
4 = Poor

RID

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
REFERENCES


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