

STUDYING PERSONAL COMMUNITIES
IN EAST YORK

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ABSTRACT

Network analysis has contributed to the study of community through its focus on structured social relationships and its de-emphasis of local solidarities. Yet the initial surveys of community networks were limited in scope and findings. Our research group is now using network analysis as a comprehensive structural approach to studying the place of community networks within large-scale divisions of labour. This paper reports on the analytical concerns, research design and preliminary findings of our new East York study of "personal communities".

STUDYING PERSONAL COMMUNITIES IN EAST YORK¹

OLD AND NEW CAMPAIGNS

Generals often want to refight their last war; academics often want to redo their last study. The reasons are the same. The passage of time has made them aware of mistakes in strategy, preparations and analysis. New concepts and tools have come along to make the job easier. Others looking at the same events now claim to know better. If only we could do the job again!

With such thoughts in mind, I want to look at where network analyses of communities have come from and where they are likely to go. However, I propose to spend less time in refighting the past (in part, because the battles have been successful) than in proposing strategic objectives for the present and future. In this paper, I take stock of the current state of knowledge in three ways:

First, I relate community network studies to fundamental concerns of both social network analysis and urban sociology. I argue that while community network studies evolved easily out of the postwar realization that communities had continued to thrive since the Industrial Revolution, they have made unique contributions to the study of community through their focus on structured social relationships and their de-emphasis of local solidarities.

Second, I assess the current limitations of community network studies by discussing the one whose problems I know best: my own (cf. Wellman, et al., 1973; Wellman, 1979). Community network analysts have created a strong base for further research by establishing the importance of networks of community ties for providing sociability and informal aid to network members. They have used network analysis as a metaphor and method to demonstrate the persistence of community in contemporary societies. It is now time to move beyond these initial

achievements and use network analysis as a more comprehensive structural approach to studying how communities fit in large-scale divisions of labour.

Third, I report on my enactment of the generals' and scholars' dream. My research group has mounted a new study of community, using some of our original "East Yorker" respondents. We are investigating what kinds of community networks are likely to be prevalent under various structural conditions, analyzing how different kinds of community networks affect the quality of urban life, and discovering how variations in the personal situations of individuals (such as their stages in the life-course) affect the kinds of communities in which they are involved. I present this study's analytic concerns and research design, as well as preliminary findings about the composition and content of East Yorkers' community ties.

WHERE WE ARE COMING FROM

The Rediscovery of Community

Network analysts have made both incremental and revolutionary contributions to the study of communities. In the 1950s, many community scholars looked around and realized--contra Tönnies (1887), Simmel (1902-1903), and Wirth (1938)--that the large-scale social transformations of the past 150 years had not destroyed small-scale communities. Hanging around on streetcorners, sipping tea through interviews, and ringing doorbells in surveys, they found an abundance of useful community ties with kin, friends, neighbours and workmates (see the reviews in Craven & Wellman, 1973; Fischer, 1976; Warren, 1978).

Against all odds and arguments, urbanites had "saved" communities from the storm of the Industrial Revolution's large-scale changes. As urban scholars came to realize this in the 1960s, they made the

persistence of urban communities their new orthodoxy. Policy-makers shifted emphasis from slum-clearing, urban renewal and bureaucratic support services to Jacobsean (1961) urban preservation and informal support networks. Social network research fit easily into this movement, documenting the persistence and usefulness of community ties. In the common enterprise, network analysts evolved distinctive points of view, emphasizing the study of structures of communities rather than of solidary local communities.

Personal Communities - The Network Approach

Boundedness: Network analysts argued that sociologists should study community in terms of types of social relations and not look only at the local clustering of these relations. They suggested conceiving of a community as a personal community--a network of ties--and not as a neighbourhood--a local area containing sets of potential relations (cf. Tilly, 1974; Wellman & Leighton, 1979).

This switch in perspective encouraged sociologists to look for community ties and support systems extending beyond neighbourhoods. It helped dethrone local or group solidarity as the criterion for viable communities and opened up discussion of the alternative consequences of different network configurations. It encouraged analysts to evaluate different types of ties--kin or friends, strong or weak, local or long-distance, egalitarian or patron-client--in terms of the kinds of access to resources which they provide. On the debit side, it de-emphasized analyses of neighbourhoods as real ecological entities in which all inhabitants must rub shoulders. Moreover, the analysts' concentration on small-scale interpersonal networks often led them to neglect considering the larger institutional contexts in which such networks were embedded.

Ties or Norms? When they first started doing community research, many network analysts had treated structural patterns as just another set of intervening variables. They hoped, for example, that network density might increase explained variance a bit. In time, network analysts began to explain social behaviour more in terms of the structural pattern of community ties and less in terms of internalized norms and values. They increasingly treated all of social structure as a network phenomenon. They argued that the pattern of ties in a network ordered people's access to scarce resources; i.e., these patterns greatly determined the opportunities and constraints for their social behaviour (see Alba, 1981; Berkowitz, 1982; Wellman, 1982a). They showed how network patterns could affect the activities of network members: densely-knit networks, for example, could mobilize resources more rapidly than networks in which resources would flow to some members through longer chains (cf. Bott, 1971).

This focus on structural patterns is quite different from normatively-driven analyses which study how people first become socialized and then behave in accord with their internalized norms. Such normative explanations, based on internalized motives for action, are ultimately individualistic. Moreover, as they tend to assume that community members share attitudes, they often assume that viable communities are solidary bodies.

The difference in the two approaches is clear in Third World studies of urban social networks. Normatively-driven analyses are plausible for studying differences among persons whose lives are totally contained within such concrete, bounded groups as solidary villages. Yet migrants from rural areas to cities are no longer members of village solidarities. Conventional modernization theory, as heavily indebted to Durkheimian anomie as the old "loss of community" argument, suggests

that when rural villagers migrate to cities, they are ripped asunder from their local solidarities to become rootless, normless members of urban "mass society" (e.g., Kornhauser, 1968). Their only hope, according to normative analyses, is to receive a healthy inoculation of achievement norms upon leaving home so that they can become modern operators on the urban scene (cf. McClelland & Winter, 1969).

Normative, "uprooting" analyses received a jolt when researchers discovered that migrants rarely come to the city alone and disconnected. Rather, they use links with kin and village mates who have migrated earlier to find friends, housing and jobs. Nor are their old ties disconnected: the migrants use links both in the cities and their ancestral villages to gain access to diverse resources. Thus, normative analyses just do not have the necessary payoff: many migrants' norms do not change in the city, and the migrants' heterogeneous, crosscutting social networks contradict explanations of their behaviour in terms of local solidary group norms (cf. Howard, 1974; Mayer with Mayer, 1974; Roberts, 1973).

From Personal Attributes to Social Relations: Network analysts also started interpreting behaviour more in terms of social relationships and less in terms of personal attributes (cf. Burt, 1981; Berkowitz, 1982; Wellman, 1982a). They were concerned that studies based on personal attributes (such as "gender" or "socioeconomic status") inherently treated social system members as astructural, independent units of analysis. Because such studies analyze the aggregated attributes of discrete individuals, their inherent "methodological individualism" leads them "to the neglect of social structure and of the relations among individuals" (Coleman, 1958: 28). At best, such analyses use personal attributes as proxy measures of how social structure constrains behaviour.

The shift from personal attributes to relational analysis is quite evident in the study of "community support systems." Early social studies of health usually had related the aggregated personal attributes of individuals to their symptoms and well being (cf. Srole, et al., 1975). However, support system researchers have recently begun to link network phenomena to mental and physical health. They have shown that supportive ties and densely-knit networks foster good health directly, provide useful resources for dealing with stress, and give network members helpful feedback about their behaviour. There is some evidence that network characteristics explain more about social support than do the personal attributes of network members (cf. Gottlieb, 1981; Hammer, 1981; Wellman, et al., 1973). Thus network analysts have become more inclined to study social structural patterns directly and to avoid using personal attributes as proxy measures of structured social relationships.

THE FIRST EAST YORK STUDY

Background

In the late 1960s, the first East York study entered directly into the then-heated "loss of community" debate. We wondered if English-Canadians continued to maintain communities in a modern metropolis, and if their close community ties were giving them social support to deal with stressful situations (Wellman, 1968; Coates, et al., 1970). Rather than studying "community", we studied "community ties". That is, we did not study a local area comprehensively, but asked a large number of urbanites about their informal relationships with persons outside of their households. This enabled us to find out how both local and more distant ties fit into "personal communities", i.e. networks of community

ties providing sociable companionship and supportive resources to participants.

We concentrated on studying the residents of East York, a densely-settled, inner residential "Borough" of Metropolitan Toronto (1971 population = 104,785). East York then had a broad housing mix of low-rise and high-rise dwellings. Its population was homogeneously British-Canadian in ethnicity and a mixture of working-class and middle-class in socioeconomic status. The respondents' relatively homogeneous social backgrounds enabled us to focus on the effects of ties and networks on the provision of support, without having to allow for potentially confounding differences in ethnicity and social class (see Gillies & Wellman, 1968).

Many East Yorkers saw their borough as a tranquil, integrated community, insulated from the metropolitan hurly-burly. Certainly, it had had a long tradition of active social service agencies and communal aid (see East York, 1976). Yet East York had also participated integrally in the postwar transformation of Toronto: it had always been a part of the metropolitan--and North American--economic system; its basic municipal political decisions had been taken over in 1954 by a metropolitan government; it had long been integrated into regional transportation and communications systems. Although the British-Canadian residents remained staunchly in their small homes, their children and kin were dispersed throughout North America. Thus the Borough and its residents were quite thoroughly knit into larger social structures, despite their insular self-images.

The Survey

We based the original study on a two-hour survey of 845 randomly-sampled adult East Yorkers. The survey gathered information about each

respondent's socially-close community ties: their relationship to the respondent, where they lived, how often they were in contact (both in person and by telephone), the strength of their closeness (or intimacy), and whether they helped each other out in everyday or emergency situations.

The survey had a number of strengths: it used a large, well-designed and well-collected sample; it obtained separate, systematic information about each of the six socially close "intimates"; it did not assume, a priori, that these intimate community members were kin or neighbours; it enabled some structural analysis by obtaining reports from respondents on the ties between their intimates; it differentiated crudely both between everyday and emergency assistance and between the help that respondents and intimates each gave to the other.

The study's basic conceptual strength was that it treated community as a network of ties and not as a local area containing sets of potential relationships (for some similar treatments, done at about the same time, see Shulman, 1972, 1976; Laumann, 1973; Fischer, et al., 1977; Verbrugge, 1977; Walker, 1977; Caulkins, 1980). This switch in perspective enabled us to look for community ties which extended well beyond neighbourhoods. It helped dethrone local or group solidarity as the criterion for viable communities. It encouraged us to evaluate different types of ties--kin or friends, strong or weak, local or long-distance--in terms of the access they provided to resources.

By defining community as a network phenomenon, we found that most ties were not local; indeed, three-quarters of them stretched beyond East York's boundaries. Neighbouring in East York remained an important, but less intense, relationship (see Gates, Stevens & Wellman, 1973). Furthermore, the availability of assistance from intimates in both everyday and emergency situations depended more on whether they

lived within the Metropolitan Toronto area than on whether they lived in the same neighbourhood.

We found that most East Yorkers had a differentiated set of intimate community ties. While kin--especially parents and adult children--played very important roles in most East Yorkers' lives, half of the intimate ties were with unrelated friends, neighbours and workmates. Intimate networks were not solidary wholes: only one out of every three potential ties between an East Yorker's intimates actually existed (i.e., network density equalled 0.33). Furthermore, East Yorkers did not count on most of their intimates to provide them with assistance in dealing with either everyday or emergency situations, although most East Yorkers had at least one intimate they could count on for such help (see Wellman, 1979 for more detail).

Limitations

Despite such useful findings--preventing community from being "lost" even if it had moved out of the neighbourhood--we were troubled that our research had some serious limitations:

1. By emphasizing networks, these studies had de-emphasized the role of neighbourhoods (and other spatial areas) as real ecological entities in which all inhabitants must rub shoulders. What was the effect on personal communities of differences in the opportunities and constraints available in various neighbourhoods? Did being isolated in suburbia or packed in the downtown core make a difference? To what extent did the pool of available choices--of people and resources--affect the kinds of ties they formed and resources they used?

2. We had limited our inquiries to only six close ties. However, many persons had far more than six ties in their personal communities and their ties did not form homogeneous sets. How did the composition,

structure and use of these less intimate ties affect the ways in which personal communities were connected to the larger world?

3. We had thin, albeit extensive, data. We had collected closed-ended information for computerized analysis. We had only minimal information about the nature of the resources which network members transmitted to each other. We knew nothing about the opportunities and contingencies which these individuals confronted in their lives.

4. We had treated network variables as just a few among many, rather than as a basic conceptual approach. Since the time of our original study, the network approach had developed into a thoroughgoing structural formulation of sociology (Wellman, 1982a)--a sensibility that could profitably inform our entire study design.

5. For a study that had billed itself as "network analysis," we did not know much about the structure of the respondents' networks. We had only the respondents' reports of the structure of these small, six-person, "intimate" fragments of their larger "personal communities." We had treated all ties as symmetric and voluntaristic. Our only measures of network structure were density and centrality.

6. We were not well-equipped to relate what happened in these small-scale personal communities to the structured opportunities and constraints created by large-scale divisions of labour. Our concentration on small-scale inter-personal networks often had led us away from considering the macrostructural contexts in which these networks were embedded (but see Laumann, 1973). In order to address the Community Question more adequately, we needed to know more about how capitalism, bureaucratization, industrialization, technological change, and urbanization affected the structure and content of personal communities.

THE NEW EAST YORK STUDY

Strategy

It is interesting that Claude Fischer's and our research group have taken two different, but complementary, routes to dealing with the limitations of the early community network surveys. Fischer (in press) analyzes the effects of urbanization comparatively, using a series of surveys administered in California localities ranging in size from rural villages to San Francisco. We, in contrast, have sought to understand a small number of personal communities in depth, using lengthy re-interviews with a subsample of the original East York survey respondents.

Our basic strategy has been to juxtapose the original survey's statistical precision and diverse population with the new interview's richer and more extensive information about the composition and dynamics of a small number of personal communities. We explicitly designed our interviews to fill the gaps left by the original survey. The interviews provide information about many more ties than the six intimates studied in the original survey and more information about each tie. We are especially concerned with the kinds of resources which flow between community members and the ways in which location in the larger social network affects interaction between network members. The interviews' information about a much greater number of ties helps to place in perspective our survey-based knowledge of intimate ties and to give more information about the structural complexities of these networks. At the same time, the original large, random-sample survey provides information about subgroups which is difficult to obtain in a small set of focused interviews.

Picturing Community

Our new study has four linked aims: Our first aim is based on the realization that much of the debate about the Community Question has been about sheer description: just what do contemporary communities look like? Hundreds of survey analysts and ethnographers have gone forth to find out if they could now best describe community as a Lost mass of disconnected souls, a Saved solidarity joyously communing, or Liberated networkers manoeuvring among their differentiated ties (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). While most urban scholars now agree on the continuing abundance of community ties--the initial concern of the Community Question--we still wonder about their composition, structure, and content.

Studying Network Structure

Our second aim comes from the developing network analytic paradigm which de-emphasizes explanations of behaviour based on internalized norms or personal attributes, but looks instead to explanations of behaviour in terms of the structural patterns of networks. We want to study network structures in a variety of ways since the traditional structural measure, network density, has both conceptual and methodological limitations.

When community theorists think principally in terms of network density, they get a chronic case of "pastoral syndrome": they nostalgically compare contemporary community networks with the well-integrated solidary networks supposedly prevalent in preindustrial communities (cf. Bender, 1978). This high density norm leads analysts to treat complex, ramified networks as tattered residues of defunct solidarities. By removing the normative criterion of density, analysts can inquire into the effects different structural forms have on the

availability of resources to network members. We are especially interested in the extent to which respondents have the structural ability to manoeuvre and "shop around" for appropriate help among their multiple social circles.

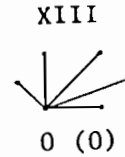
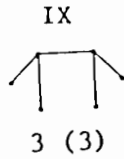
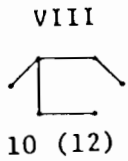
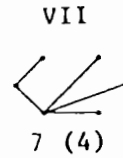
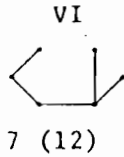
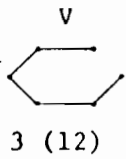
Density also is an ambiguous variable because networks with the same density value may have markedly different structural forms (Friedkin, 1981). Hence, while a density statistic reveals the amount of connectivity within the overall network, at intermediate values it gives poor information about network structure. Figure 1, for example, shows the comparative prevalence in the original East York survey data of fifteen different structural forms of intimate networks, all containing six intimates and five ties between these intimates. (The ties between the East Yorkers at the centre of the networks and their intimates are omitted.) These networks vary markedly in their number of subgroups, number of triads, size of largest clump, and degree of centrality. When compared with a random distribution, these networks show more prevalent clustering within the overall network. Two-thirds of the networks contain at least one triad, significantly more than would be expected by chance for networks with this number of persons and ties. The most common structural forms (III and X) have well-connected cores, while no observed networks have ring-like or star-like forms (XIII, XIV and XV).²

Large-Scale: Small-Scale

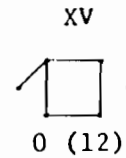
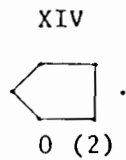
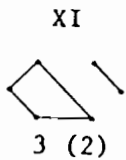
Our third aim is to consider some of the ways in which large-scale structural phenomena--such as bureaucratization, capitalism, industrialization, technological change and urbanization--affect the composition, structure, and dynamics of personal communities. Since Tönnies (1887), sociologists have argued over the extent to which such

FIGURE 1: ACTUAL (AND EXPECTED) PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF EAST YORKERS' INTIMATE NETWORKS CONTAINING 6 INTIMATES AND 5 TIES BETWEEN INTIMATES (DENSITY = 0.33)

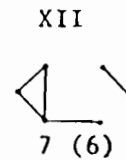
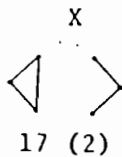
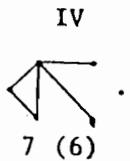
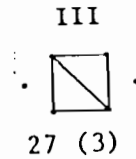
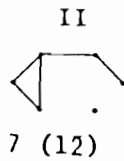
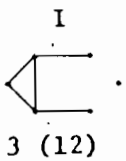
No Clump



Quadrads



Triad



Notes: N = 30

Roman numerals refer to network types enumerated in Harary (1969)

Chi-square = 8.96; 2df (no clump/quadrads/triad); $p < .05$

= 8.17; 1df (no triad/triad); $p < .01$

large-scale phenomena are the principal causes of our contemporary community condition. Indeed, even those who agree on a cause cannot agree on its effects: they debate, for example, whether capitalism has destroyed, saved, or liberated community (cf. Shorter, 1973; Scott & Tilly, 1975).

Our study cannot address such ultimate questions comprehensively, as it is not comparative and tracks only the 1968-1978 decade. However, we can tease out some implications of these large-scale factors by looking at how East Yorkers' structural location in systems of production and reproduction affects both their access to resources, and the opportunities and pressures which come their way. We are doing this by treating such "personal attributes" as occupation, stage in the life-course, and sex as structural locations in contemporary divisions of labour. For example, we are analyzing community members' occupations according to the types of control they have over capital, information, their own labour power and the labour power of others (see, for example, our Social Class coding scheme, Table 1).³

Preliminary analyses have already shown some of the ways in which East Yorkers' structural location affect the composition, structure, and content of their personal communities (see Table 2). For example, the networks of "Singles," living alone, resemble "Community Lost" depictions of urban life--transitory, sparsely-knit, with few links to friends and kin--while the networks of "Houseworkers," raising children and husbands, resemble Community Saved depictions--neighbourhood and kinship-based support groups exchanging much emotional aid, small services, and household items.⁴ We hope that our study will discover something about the "political economy of community": the place of personal communities in large-scale systems of reproduction and

TABLE 1: EAST YORK OCCUPATIONAL CODING SCHEME

Large Employer (Owns Firm larger than Family which Employs more than 10 Persons. Has Large Capital Accumulation and Has No Direct Involvement in Production Process. Separation of Conception and Execution in Work)

Small Employer (Owns Firm Larger than Family which Employs 10 or less People. Has no Large Capital Accumulation and Has Direct Involvement in Production Process. Unity of Conception and Execution in Work)

Self-Employed/Family Operation (No Regular Non-family Employees. Unity of Conception and Execution in Work)

Top Manager (Minimal to Partial Control Over Investments and Legal Ownership. Substantial Control [3-Level Span] Over Physical Means of Production and Labour Power of Others. Unity of Conception and Execution in Work)

Middle Manager (None to Minimal Control Over Investments and Legal Ownership. Partial Control over the Immediate Work Unit: Physical Means of Production and Labour Power of Others. Partial Separation of Conception and Execution in Work)

Foreman/Supervisor (No Control over Investments and Legal Ownership. Minimal Control over Physical Means of Production in Immediate Work Unit. Partial Control over the Labour Power of Those People in Immediate Work Unit. Minimal Control over Conception and Execution in Work)

Technocrat (Participates in Organizational Decisionmaking, but Not Part of the Organizational Hierarchy, Has Influence, but Only Minimal Control over Broad Physical Means of Production. May Have Immediate Assistants, but No "Line Subordinates." Partial to Substantial Control over Immediate Subordinates. Has Partial to Substantial Control over Own Work, e.g., staff lawyers, industrial engineers, etc.)

Semi-Autonomous Employee (Employed by Others, but Has Substantial Control over Immediate Means of Production: What Is Produced, Pace of Work, or How Work Is Done. Unity of Conception and Execution in Work)

Skilled Worker (Employed by Others, but Has Substantial Control over How something is Produced. Minimal Control over What is Produced, i.e., Execution but Not Conception, e.g., craftsperson, plumber, etc.)

Regular Proletariat (Securely employed by Others. Minimal Control over What is Produced and How it is Produced, i.e., Minimal Control over Execution and Conception)

Casual Proletariat (Irregular Workers Who Depend on Other's Immediate Discretion for Securing and Retaining a Job)

TABLE 2: SUMMARY TABLE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE COMPOSITION, STRUCTURE, AND CONTENT OF PERSONAL COMMUNITIES, BY JOB STATUS, MARITAL STATUS, AND SEX

STRUCTURAL TYPE	"PRODUCERS"	"REPRODUCERS"	"DOUBLE LOADERS" (prod. & reprod.)	"SINGLES" (prod. & reprod.)
Employment Status	Employed	Houseworkers, Retired	Employed	Employed, Students
Marital Status	Married	Married, Single Mothers	Married, Single Mothers	Single, Live Alone
Sex	Men	HW: Women Ret.: Women, Men	Women	Women, Men
Network Composition	Predominantly kin Some workmates	Neighbour intimates Kin non-intimates No non-local friends	Kin Some workmates No neighbours	Predominantly friends No neighbours
Structure	Solidary kin Women central	Solidary neighbours Women central	Solidary kin Women central	Sparsely-knit
Content	Sociable Exchange of small services and items No emotional aid	Sociable Exchange of much emotional aid Exchange of many small services and items	Exchange of much emotional aid Sociable	Emotional aid Small services and items Sociable

production. We are finding, for example, that adult women with families often serve as a "reproduction reserve army," providing low-cost, flexible support services to kin and neighbours at times of overloading stress.

From Support System to Social Network

Our fourth aim is to specify the conditions under which personal communities provide supportive resources to members. We want to go beyond documenting and celebrating the supportiveness of contemporary communities to understanding the circumstances under which resources do--and do not--flow through them. For example, "support system" research into community mental health often has assumed unwisely that communities are solidary groups composed only of supportive ties. This goes against empirical reality and creates the dubious expectation that solidary systems are invariably more desirable. Furthermore, by ignoring conflicts of interest between community members, the "support system" approach has inherently invoked the false premise of a common good (see the reviews in Gottlieb, 1981; Hammer, 1981).

Clearly, a support system is an analytically constricted social network which takes into account only supportive ties and which assumes that these ties can only form a single, integrated structure. We can escape these limitations by defining personal communities more broadly--without regard to social support--and only later inquiring about the flows of supportive resources through each of the ties comprising the networks. This approach opens up the consideration of supportive ties to anywhere in an East Yorker's personal community and does not assume that aid is available only from solidary groups or specified social categories (e.g., kin). Moreover it enables us to take into account the

many community ties which are not supportive, to study which kinds of supportive resources flow through which ties, and to analyze the circumstances under which supportive aid is--or is not--symmetrically reciprocated (see also a more extended discussion in Wellman, 1981).

Longitudinal Studies

Our fifth aim is to take advantage of our study's longitudinal design. For one thing, we want to analyze how changes in personal situations affect changes in personal communities. To date, most such studies have looked only at one type of tie (e.g, kin, neighbours) or one type of situational change (e.g., aging, residential mobility). We look forward to studying possible changes in a wide range of community ties as experienced by East Yorkers undergoing three different types of situational change: movement through the life-course, residential mobility and occupational mobility. This should enable us to evaluate differences and similarities in the impact of such situational changes on personal community composition, structure and content.

We cannot assume, though, that the characteristics of personal communities are always passive consequences of changes in personal situations. There also is reverse causality: how do different sorts of personal communities facilitate changes in personal situations by structuring opportunities for East Yorkers? Many East Yorkers use their communities actively to change their situations rather than passively to respond to stressful situations. They use community ties to change jobs, find mates, find housing, and extend their personal communities. Moreover, the composition and structure of personal communities affects the kinds of resources which flow to East Yorkers, whether or not they are aware of it.

We also intend to study longitudinal changes in the composition and structure of the personal communities themselves. Ties and networks also have careers, yet there has been little systematic analysis of how such open systems change. Do they have natural histories? Can they be manipulated? We shall look at the ways in which individuals "network": forging links which can aid them in maintaining and developing their lives. For example, we wonder about the extent to which East Yorkers deliberately forge heterogeneous weak ties in order to get better access to diverse resources (cf. Granovetter, 1973, 1974; Welch, 1980; Lin, Ensel & Vaughn, 1981).

Tactics

Collecting the Data: We re-interviewed (1977-1978) thirty-four of the original respondents for the new study, selecting them equally from four residential mobility categories:

- non-movers since the 1968 survey (8);
- currently residing elsewhere in East York or near its borders (8);
- currently residing elsewhere in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (8);
- currently residing elsewhere in southern Ontario (10).

We chose respondents randomly within each residential mobility category from the subsample of those whom Shulman had re-surveyed in 1969, thereby leaving open the possibility of studying the same persons' communities at three points in time (Shulman, 1972, 1976). Twenty-five percent of the potential respondents we originally selected were not available for re-interviewing, and we randomly replaced them.⁵

The interview design attempts to remedy the limitations of the original survey. Instead of closed-ended forms, interviewers went out

with open-ended guides (Leighton & Wellman, 1978). The tape-recorded interviews usually lasted 10 - 12 hours, over several sessions.

The interviews elicited more information about more community ties than had earlier community network studies. Instead of asking only about six (or fewer) "close" intimates, we asked about all those persons with whom respondents were significantly "in touch" informally.⁶ We recorded detailed information about the personal situations of these "community ties" (CTs): sex, age, family status, residential location, type of housing, income, education, employment status, social class, religious affiliation, ethnic background, and transportation access. We also gathered much information about respondents' accounts of the nature of the relationships between themselves and their ties: formal role (e.g., kin, friend, neighbour, workmate, etc.), level of intimacy, frequency of contact (face-to-face, telephone, 'other'--e.g., letter, CB radio), how relationships began, duration, problems and changes encountered, social and physical contexts of interaction, and component sociable and supportive strands.⁷ In addition, we replicated key questions of the 1968 survey to facilitate longitudinal analysis.

We gave a good deal of attention to studying the reported flows of supportive resources between East Yorkers and their CTs. Instead of asking about generalized support, we asked about specific flows in each direction of fifteen different types of resource, such as nursing care, emotional aid, or help with the mortgage.⁸ We also asked about how respondents had obtained help for dealing with specific problems (or, if the problems had not arisen, how they believed they would obtain such help). This is helping us to study the principles under which a respondent mobilizes available ties, the extent to which assistance flows regardless of mobilization activities, the degree of situational

specialization of these ties, and the articulation of various relationships within the respondents' overall networks.

In order to study the structure of these personal communities, we asked the respondents to tell us about the links of personal community members with each other. We confined our question here merely to knowing whether two CTs were "in touch" (the same criterion used to select CTs originally), as we doubted that respondents could give consistently accurate information about their CTs' ties with each other. However, our data collection approach also enables the study of role relationships, as we know which CTs are kin, neighbours, workmates, or friends of each other.

Processing the Data: We have used three complementary methods of recording these data. First, we have transcribed the interviews completely; most transcripts are over 150 pages in length. We have annotated these transcripts with standardized marginal guides in order to locate quickly the respondents' own discussion of issues. As part of these annotations, we have computed some useful indices, such as road mileage and travel time between respondents and CTs, and the occupational status scores of all network members (using Blishen, 1958; Turner, 1964).

Second, to summarize each personal community, we have constructed thirty-three qualitative matrices, with an average size of approximately 2' x 5'.⁹ Each CT in a personal community is recorded on a separate line in a matrix. Through the use of standard headings and keywords, we have recorded items of summary information about the personal situations of CTs and the dynamics of their relationships with respondents. In addition, a submatrix records the kinds of ties which CTs have with each other. By scanning the matrix as a whole, we can obtain an overall

FIGURE 2: MATRIX OF QUALITATIVE NETWORK INFORMATION^a

pages I-1 and II-1	page A1		
Relationship Dynamics	CT ^b Name 1	Face Sheet Information	Name 1 Name N
<p style="text-align: center;">continuation sheets → (more CTs)</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">Name N</p>

^a One matrix for each network

^b CT = Community Tie

picture of the composition, structure and dynamics of each personal community.

Third, we have coded the interviews quantitatively (see Wellman et al., 1981). We have prepared three linked data files: on the personal situations of the thirty-three East York respondents and the summary characteristics of their personal communities (e.g., percent kin); on each of the 526 CTs' personal situations and relationships with the respondents; on the approximately 4,000 potential CT-CT ties between members of East Yorkers' personal communities. In addition, we shall link the respondents' new data files with their 1968 survey data files.

WHAT DO COMMUNITIES LOOK LIKE?

Multiple Definitions of Community

We have started our analyses by describing East Yorkers' community ties and networks. Instead of assuming that East Yorkers participate only in a single community, we have allowed for the possibility that they encounter different sets of community ties for different reasons: the persons with whom they are in touch for routine sociability may be significantly different from those who aid them in major emotional crises.

Hence we have sorted East Yorkers' ties according to three relational criteria: frequency of contact, the content of ties and the respondents' feeling of closeness (or intimacy) to the other (see Table 3). Because our purpose here is accurate description, a community tie can appear in more than one network set. In the extreme case, an intimate contacted five times a week, who gives both sociable companionship and some sort of support, will appear in every set.¹⁰

TABLE 3: COMPOSITION OF COMMUNITY TIES BY RELATIONAL CRITERIA

<u>NET TYPE</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Intimate</u>	<u>Sociable</u>	<u>Routine</u>	<u>Support</u>
N =	526	404	163	274	99	306
<u>NET COMPOSITION</u>						
% of Total Net	--	77	31	52	19	69
% of Active Net	--	--	40	68	25	88
Mean Net Size	16	12	5	8	3	11
<u>ROLE TYPE</u>						
% Immediate Kin	19	21	29	26	14	22
% Extended Kin	24	22	18	19	12	18
% Friend	11	11	26	18	5	12
% Neighbour	15	18	9	13	29	18
% Workmate	10	13	4	6	36	8
% Former Neighbour	8	4	7	7	1	8
% Former Workmate	5	3	4	4	0	5
% Organizational	4	5	1	3	0	4
<u>RESIDENTIAL DISTANCE</u>						
Median Mileage (Quartiles)	10 (2-75)	9 (1.5-49)	10 (3-39)	10 (3-58)	2.5 (0.5-9)	10 (1.5-39)
% Same Building or Block	15	18	11	12	33	18
% Same Neighbourhood (0.2-1 mile)	6	6	8	6	9	6
% Metro Toronto (1.1-30 miles)	45	47	51	49	51	47
% Southern Ontario (31-100 miles)	15	12	15	16	7	16
% Further Away	20	16	15	17	0	13

NET TYPE DEFINITIONS:

TOTAL: All ties which R actively maintains, or are latent but could still be activated.

ACTIVE: All ties which R actively maintains. Typically, this is contact (in-person, phone, letter) at least 1x/year. but may include less frequently contacted and temporarily absent ties. Does not include frequently contacted--but trivial -- ties (e.g. casual office acquaintances).

INTIMATE: All ties whom R defines as "close".

SOCIABLE: All ties whose company R enjoys; whose absence R would miss.

ROUTINE: All ties in contact with R (in-person, phone, letter, etc.) at least 3x/week (156x/year).

SUPPORT: All ties who give R at least 1 of 15 (surveyed) types of supportive aid. (Information available only for 28 networks.)

Sorting the ties according to relational criteria reveals marked differences in the composition of personal communities even though our procedure allows the same tie to appear in more than one set. East Yorkers only actively maintain about three-quarters of their total ties; the rest are latent. On the average, they feel intimate with 40 percent of their active ties and are in routine contact with 25 percent. Immediate kin--especially--siblings comprise nearly half of all intimate ties, while neighbours and workmates form a larger majority of routinely seen (3x/week) ties. Twenty-nine percent of the active ties give no support of any kind to East Yorkers. We certainly cannot identify these diversified personal communities as local, solidary "support systems".

Resource Access

While not all ties are supportive, most are, and all East Yorkers receive a broad range of support through their networks. Yet it is clear from Table 4 that community ties vary markedly in the kinds of resources flowing through them; for example, many more network members lend ladders than mortgage money. Moreover, the kinds of resources provided differ widely according to the type of networks. While intimates are most apt to provide emotional assistance and such major help as longterm nursing or child care, persons seen frequently are more apt to provide information about new jobs or housing.

Despite the prevalence of support--and supportive ties--in East Yorkers' personal communities, there are many reasons why it is misleading to describe these communities as solidary clusters of mutual supporters. For one thing, much of the business of these ties is not direct aid but help in getting resources from corporate bureaucracies. With the McDonaldization of life, such corporate entities now operate

TABLE 4 : TYPE AND DIRECTION OF SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES BY RELATIONAL CRITERIA %

NET TYPE	TOTAL	ACTIVE	INTIMATE	SOCIABLE	ROUTINE	SUPPORT
N =	526	404	163	274	99	306
PERSONAL SERVICES						
<u>Minor Household Help</u>						
R → CT only	11	11	20	13	13	13
CT → R only	7	8	10	8	9	9
Both Ways	25	27	33	31	27	35
<u>Minor Services</u>						
R → CT only	13	14	19	13	18	17
CT → R only	6	7	9	8	3	9
Both Ways	29	32	36	37	31	42
<u>Major Household Help</u>						
R → CT only	5	6	10	7	7	8
CT → R only	4	3	4	3	3	5
Both Ways	7	9	12	10	10	10
<u>Major Services</u>						
R → CT only	3	4	7	4	7	5
CT → R only	3	3	5	4	2	5
Both Ways	3	4	6	5	4	5
<u>Organizational Help</u>						
R → CT only	7	7	7	6	7	9
CT → R only	3	4	4	4	6	5
Both Ways	5	6	7	6	8	7
MATERIAL AID						
<u>Household Items</u>						
R → CT	6	6	10	5	9	7
CT → R	5	6	8	6	6	7
Both Ways	27	29	39	36	39	38
<u>Small Amounts of Money</u>						
R → CT	6	7	13	7	9	8
CT → R	5	6	6	6	6	8
Both Ways	7	8	9	8	9	10
<u>Mortgage Money</u>						
R → CT	1	1	2	1	2	1
CT → R	3	3	4	4	3	4
Both Ways	0.2	0.3	0	0.4	0	0.3
<u>Large Amounts of Money</u>						
R → CT	2	2	4	1	1	2
CT → R	3	4	5	4	8	5
Both Ways	0.2	0.3	1	0.4	1	0.3
EMOTIONAL AID						
<u>Family Advice</u>						
R → CT	10	9	13	11	12	12
CT → R	9	10	9	10	8	12
Both Ways	25	29	38	32	28	36
<u>Minor Emotional Aid</u>						
R → CT	9	8	13	7	10	8
CT → R	7	8	7	8	7	10
Both Ways	36	38	53	45	38	51
<u>Major Emotional Aid</u>						
R → CT	9	8	11	11	10	12
CT → R	7	8	8	9	2	10
Both Ways	21	24	37	28	30	30
INFORMATION						
<u>Job Leads</u>						
R → CT	5	6	6	5	4	8
CT → R	5	6	7	6	11	8
Both Ways	1	1	1	1	4	2
<u>Job Contacts</u>						
R → CT	3	3	3	3	4	4
CT → R	4	5	5	5	10	6
Both Ways	0.5	1	1	0	2	1
<u>Housing Leads</u>						
R → CT	5	5	8	4	6	7
CT → R	3	3	4	3	2	4
Both Ways	1	1	2	2	3	2

much of the social reproduction business--food, clothing, housing, education, and emotions. Consequently, people need "connections" as well as "supporters." Instead of directly feeding or nursing their friends, East Yorkers now often help them get government checks and medical connections.

Second, many community ties are not supportive. For example, 24 percent of East Yorkers' total ties reportedly provide no supportive aid in either direction. These ties are purely sociable--or even destructive. Indeed, when East Yorkers fear that seeking aid through a tie may disrupt that tie, they often deliberately limit their claims upon it.

Third, East Yorkers often do not exchange equal amounts of a specific resource, such as financial aid, with other network members. Table 4 shows that most major sorts of resources--e.g., mortgage aid, longterm care, major emotional aid--are transmitted asymmetrically, although minor amounts of resources--such as small amounts of money, quick services, quick sympathy--are more symmetrically exchanged. Furthermore, there is often an imbalance between two persons in overall exchanges of support, when all kinds of assistance are taken into account. East Yorkers make careful distinctions between the support they give to others and the support they get from them.

The prevalence of such asymmetric ties means that community ties are not bound up in solidary clusters, permeated with symmetric support. Many ties are asymmetric, varying in content and intensity, and fitting into unevenly-knit, loosely-bounded networks. While the networks often contain substantial internal differences in power and resources, their structural form also gives members ramifying, indirect connections to other social circles.

Fourth, despite the usefulness of decomposing overall ties into narrower strands, overall ties link persons and not specific strands. Thus the link between Jack and Jill encompasses more than help in carrying a pail of water; we must interpret what came between them on the hill in the context of their overall relationship. When we focus narrowly on types of support, we obscure the ways in which the strands of a tie can change to fit new situations. For example, many East Yorkers count on intimates to bring help in a wide range of situations, without necessarily being able to predict just what these situations will be and what help they will require.

Fifth, we have dealt only with the tie as the unit of analysis, not the network. But for East Yorkers, the crucial question is, will they get mortgage money from anyone in their network--not how many will provide it. They do not expect--nor necessarily want--broad support from everyone. For with support comes often-intrusive invasion of privacy and claims for reciprocity.

STRUCTURES OR CHOICES?

The limited supportiveness of so many ties--even intimate ties--calls into question the "voluntaristic" assumption which many support system analyses make that network members maintain all of their ties because they actually enjoy them or perceive direct benefits to be gained through the dyad. Our data show that about one-quarter of East Yorkers' ties are with persons whom they do not like and with whom they would not voluntarily form a two-some. Such "structurally-embedded" ties become involuntary parts of network membership packages. Most are ties to persons with whom the participants have to deal seriously in their neighbourhoods, in a solidary kinship group, or at work. While such ties often are neither egalitarian nor reciprocal, they can be

important in terms of the time spent on them, the resources which flow through them, the way in which they constrain other network members' activities, and the indirect access they give to other relationships. Communities are not necessarily nice things.

NOTES

1. Brenda Billingsley, Christina Black, Jennifer Gullen, Sharon Kirsh and Edward Lee contributed greatly to the development of the research reported here. Bonnie Erickson commented incisively on an earlier draft. Portions of this paper were discussed at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, Toronto, August, 1981. A shorter version will appear in Nan Lin and Peter Marsden, eds., Social Networks and Social Structure, Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1982.

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Throughout the decade-long course of the East York research, the Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, has been a sociable and supportive base.

2. This assertion is based first on the statistical evaluation of all observed networks comprising six persons and five ties, as compared with their expected distribution (calculated by Ove Frank), and second, on more cursory analysis of the entire data-set by myself and Edward Lee.

3. Our analytic scheme was developed by Barry Wellman and Edward Lee, partially based on Erik Olin Wright's advice and work (1979, 1980). See Wellman (1982b) for our Social Class Coding scheme.

4. Sharon Kirsh has collaborated on this part of the study; see also Kirsh (1981).

5. We chose this sampling design because one research group member had proposed to do doctoral research comparing changes in personal communities under different conditions of residential mobility (see Crump, 1977). Most failures to interview resulted from death, severe illness, or long-distance moves. (We did, however, follow one respondent who moved to Alberta in mid-interview.) While the final sample is not strictly representative of any population, its characteristics broadly resemble that of the original East Yorker survey sample. Note that as the minimum age for the survey sample was 18 in 1968, all our respondents were at least 28.

6. For example, the interview item for kin was: "Please list the relatives you are in touch with who do not live in your household." Similar questions were asked about neighbours, former neighbours, workmates, former workmates, organizational ties, and friends. Compare this with the 1968 survey item: "I'd like to ask you a few questions about the people outside your home that you feel closest to; these could be friends, neighbours, or relatives."

7. Bernard, Killworth, and Sailer (1981) have argued vigorously against trusting the accuracy of respondents' accounts of network composition and dynamics. Certainly, analysts must constantly bear in mind that our data sets (and others like them) are respondents' reports

of interaction and not observed interactions. In analyzing our interviews, we have some problems of recall and sanitization (e.g., only one extramarital affair is reported). Nevertheless, while the reports may be inaccurate in detail, we are persuaded of their broad validity by the consistency of responses to different questions given in multiple interview sessions.

8. Some of this information was elicited in a focused follow-up questionnaire in 1981.

9. One interview was terminated after the "intimates" section because of the death of the respondent's husband.

10. Strictly speaking, these data are about sets of ties (or "stars" in Barnes' [1972] terminology) and not networks: we have aggregated ties from all thirty-three networks and we do not take into account here any information about the structure of these ties in the networks.

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