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ABSTRACT

Predictors of fathers' involvement in childrearing activities were investigated as part of a study of the ecology of urban childrearing in five western societies. Selected on the basis of a stratified random sample technique, participants were 96 white fathers from intact families having a 3-year-old child. Network theory provided three hypotheses regarding how a father's social network might affect his involvement in childrearing. A variable was constructed for each hypothesis; these variables were "percent male network," a measure of the percentage of the exchange/activity network who are male; "network range," a measure of the size and diversity of the social network; and "non-kin intensity," a measure of the degree of choice operative in social network selection and involvement. The index of childrearing involvement was labeled "childrearing advice." The review also provided a causal path hypothesis in which social network was proposed as a link mediating the effect of education on childrearing involvement. Data were gathered in social network interviews designed to generate a multifaceted picture of parents' social worlds; total network membership was obtained on the basis of results on a series of role context probes. To analyze the data, the three network variables were entered into a multiple regession along with a set of eight demographic and situational variables, including father's work hours, mother's work hours, sex of child, swing shift (dummy variable), father's education, occupational status, family ethnicity, and father's age. Only non-kin intensity strongly predicted childrearing advice, and the causal path hypothesis was confirmed. (RH)

SOCIAL NETWORK INFLUENCE ON FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREARING

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ABSTRACT

An ecological orientation predicts that a man's social ties outside the family will affect his involvement in childrearing within the family.

A hypothesis was tested and confirmed, that men whose networks are constructed of highly selective, volitional relationships will be more involved in childrearing. Five measures are combined into a single variable to index such a network. The measures reflect a network with many non-kin, and highly supportive ties to non-kin; the composite variable is called NON-KIN INTENSITY. The hypothesis was derived from community-of-choice (or subculture) theory, which posits that people who are able to actively select and construct their social networks are better able to construct new lifelstyles or roles, including a more active fathering role. The theory gained support, not only in that NON-KIN INTENSITY predicted greater childrearing involvement, but also because it operated specifically through the kinds of kin and non-kin relationships over which we have the most choice: collateral kin and non-kin "others" (non-kin not associated with a role context like work, neighborhood, organization).

A causal path hypothesis was also tested, in which the social network was proposed as an intermediate link, mediating the effect of education on childrearing involvement. The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of education, mediated by network NON-KIN INTENSITY, accounted for about a third of the overall effect of education. Education is conceptualized as a personal resource that allows more choice in personal relations.

The results are discussed in terms of the concept of choice in interpersonal ties, the meaning of this particular measure of childrearing involvement, the hidden but crucial role of nuclear kin, and the ecology of parenting. Clearly, parenting is not an activity isolated within family boundaries, requiring protection from outside influences. Rather it is supported, to a greater or lesser extent, by the wider social relations each of us are given or develop around us.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research has established the importance of fathers in child development. Father involvement has become important enough as a predictor variable, in fact, that we now need to treat it as an outcome variable as well, asking what predicts a father's involvement in childrearing.

In studying childrearing involvement by fathers, it is important to remember that the father and child are not isolated in a vacuum. The ecological context of father-child interaction must be taken into account, not only to establish the extent of external validity in research, but also just to gain a basic understanding of important causal processes in people's lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The father's involvement is clearly affected by others in the family setting, notably by his wife, and the family as a whole is in constant adaptive interaction with larger systems around it.

Several researchers have called our attention specifically to the interplay between the social environment and family childrearing processes. Cochran & Brassard (1979) have proposed that the social network affects the family childrearing environment by (a) providing emotional and material support that directly or indirectly affects childrearing, and (b) by socializing the parents into

particular childrearing attitudes and actions, both by direct interaction with the family and by serving as role models for observational learning (see also Powell, 1979). Thus a sibling or friend with older children may provide a new parent with used clothes and toys, swap babysitting evenings, provide emotional support generally and childrearing advice specifically, and may unknowingly serve as a positive (and/or negative) role-model for certain aspects of parenting. In recent research with mothers, social support from intimates and friends indeed predicted mother-infant attachment (Crockenberg, 1982), and satisfaction with parenthood and infant behavior (Crnic et al, 1983).

But this research has been exclusively with mothers. What effect might a father's network of relationships have on his childrearing interaction? We turn now to the hypotheses of this research.

Hypothesis 1: The Bott Hypothesis.

Following Bott (1971), we might expect that men who are greatly involved with a male friendship group will be less involved in the home. To test this a variable has been constructed representing the percentage of the exchange/activity network who are male. It is called PERCENT MALE NETWORK.

Hypothesis 2: Diffusion-of-Innovation.

While men's home role participation has been very slow to compensate for women's increasing labor force participation, there have recently been reports indicating, for the first time, that this may be changing. Not only among special populations of non-traditional families (Lamb, 1982), but also in studies of general populations (Pleck, 1979) it appears there is some movement toward men participating more in home role tasks. It may be possible, then, to liken the active fathering role to a social innovation that is slowly rising and spreading through our society. This would give us some power to predict it, since there exists a respectable body of research and theory on the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1962; Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971).

Drawing on both diffusion-of-innovation theory and relevant network research (Granovetter, 1973; McLanahan et al, 1981; Mitchell, 1969) a composite variable has been constructed, named NETWORK RANGE (Table 1). A high score on this factor predicts a network that is large and heterogeneous, with contacts who are likely to bring influence from diverse social worlds.

Hypothesis 3: Community-of-Choice.

Claude Fischer's network research has provided some support for the theory "that new ideas, behaviors, and values are created...in innovative subcultures" (Fischer, 1982: 76). He found that some networks had more non-kin, fewer kin, highly

supportive ties to non-kin, and were composed of network members who were highly similar to the respondent; such a network predicted non-traditional values in the respondent. Fischer found such personal networks primarily in urban centers, where there is a great number and variety of people from which to select friends. His findings indicate that (Fischer, 1982: 230):

> in urban centers social relations were more culturally specialized: urbanites were relatively involved with associates in the social world they considered most important and relatively uninvolved with associates, if any, in other worlds... Urbanism, by this logic, fosters social involvement in the subculture(s) of choice, rather than the subculture(s) of circumstances.

Urbanism, actually, was only one of several variables that predicted networks-of-choice; a variety of personal resources did as well (education, financial resources, status in the labor force, ethnic membership). Thus variation in the degree of choice in social involvement will exist even within a single city. Such choice is represented in this research by a composite variable, NON-KIN INTENSITY. This variable is constructed of five measures, and is associated with a network with many non-kin, and highly supportive ties with non-kin (see Table 2). The community-of-choice hypothesis is that people who actively select and construct their social networks are better able to construct new lifestyles or roles. They will have built around themselves a selective social environment, within which a new social form may find nurturance. One such social form is the childrearing father.

Hypothesis 4: Network as Mediator.

Education, as a component of social class, has often strongly predicted men's parenting attitudes and actions (Kohn & Carroll, 1960; Komarovsky, 1962; Rainwater, 1965). Education has also been cited as the most powerful socio-economic variable predicting a variety of social network characteristics (Campbell & Cochran, 1983; Fischer, 1982). Fischer (pp. 151-2) reports that

> Other things equal, the more educational credentials respondents had, the more socially active they were, the larger their networks, the more companionship they reported, the more intimate their relations, and the wider the geographic range of their ties. In general, education by itself meant broader, deeper, and richer networks. . . The more education respondents had, the more they drew upon nonkin rather than kin, and the more they drew especially upon that informal category "just friends."

These findings suggest a causal path hypothesis, with education having a portion of its effect on childrearing involvement indirectly, through its effect on the social network. In essence, this hypothesis suggests that education can connect a person into a new social world, separate from family and the old crowd of friends. Even after relationships with school chums have faded, the person's social network is likely to retain a different structure, being more heterogeneous in composition, and with greater dependence upon non-kin for informal support. In this way education might have an indirect and continuing effect upon the father's childrearing involvement.

METHOD

Sample.

The subjects are 96 white fathers, from two-parent families, living in Syracuse, New York. Each is employed at least 35 hours per week, and has a three-year-old child. The data are part of a larger, ongoing panel study of the ecology of urban child-rearing in five western societies (Bronfenbrenner & Cochran, 1976). The present data are part of the first wave of observations from that project, and were collected in 1978.

The subjects were selected by door-to-door recruitment using a stratified random sample technique, with neighborhood, SES, race, and family structure as the stratification units. Recruitment and data collection were accomplished by a trained staff who were themselves recruited from the target neighborhoods. Of the families asked to participate, slightly over 75% agreed. Out of 276 participating families, 126 had a father present who participated. Of these, 96 were non-Black, fully-employed, and had family incomes over $10,000 for the previous year; these made up the present research sample.

Instruments.

The social network interview was designed to generate a multifaceted picture of the parents' personal social worlds. A list of total network membership was generated using a series of role context probes. The parent was asked to think of people who "are important to you in one way or another,"

thinking first of neighbors, then relatives, organizational or agency friends, work or schoolmates, and finally all others. Information was then gathered on each network link. First, each contact was checked by the respondent for participation in each of ten interpersonal exchanges/activities (child care help, adult sickness help, child-rearing advice, borrowing, financial assistance, emotional support, work-related support, sports activities, social activities, other activities). A contact who is flagged for one or more of these ten interpersonal functions is identified as a member of the Functional Network. Next, the Primary Network was identified, being those contacts who are "most important" to the respondent. Finally, background information was collected, for example the sex, residential proximity, and duration of relationship of each contact. Inter-coder reliability in coding the network interviews averaged .95 for all items.

Measures.

Father Involvement. After validity and distributional criteria had been applied, only one of the original five dependent measures was left. This variable is called CHILDREARING ADVICE. It was constructed using data from the social network interview. One of the ten interpersonal exchanges surveyed by the interview was: "Do you share childrearing advice with any of the people on your network?" The CHILDREARING ADVICE variable is a count of such contacts

for each network. Thus it is an indirect measure of father involvement in childrearing. It represents a man's tendency to present himself to his social circle as a father, to use his network (and be used by it) in the service of parenting, and his willingness to report this to the interviewer. It can be thought of either as a self-report of parent-role behavior, or as an indication of the availability of parent-role support. In either case, it indexes involvement in childrearing. The raw scores on this measure (range 0 - 35, mean 4.3) were transformed into a four-level variable. About a quarter of the fathers reported no one with whom they shared childrearing advice.

Network Measures. The measures used to contruct NETWORK RANGE and NON-KIN INTENSITY are self-explanatory, as labeled, with the following exceptions:

Functionally Weak Ties: A count of network contacts who are reported to engage in none of the ten interpersonal exchanges or activities with the respondent.

Activity Multiplexity: The average number of exchanges/activities engaged in by those who engage in any. This is a measure of how multi-purpose the functional relationships are.

NON-KIN PRIMARY CIRCLE. A count of the number of network non-kin who the respondent places in the primary network of "most important" relationships.

NON-KIN EMOTIONAL SUPPORT. A count of the number of non-kin who the respondent reports sharing emotional support with.

NON-KIN ALLIES. A count of network non-kin who meet a dual criteria: the respondent reports engaging in social (or sports) activities with these contacts, and reports engaging in two or more of the 6 functional exchanges (child care help, adult sickness help, borrowing, financial assistance, emotional support, and work related support).

Social-Demographic Covariates. A review of the research literature indicates eight situational or socio-demographic variables likely to affect father involvement in childrearing. These eight variables have been entered as covariates in the regression analysis, to eliminate them as alternate (third variable) explanations of the results, and to clean extraneous variance (noise) from the analyses. They are also of substantive interest in their own right. Social network influences on childrearing involvement, to be understood, must be viewed in the broader context of men's overall lives.

The eight social-demographic variables are father work hours, mother work hours, sex of child, swingshift (dummy variable), father education, occupational status (dichotomous), family ethnicity (dichotomous), and father age.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting the analyses, it will be helpful to concretely describe the networks. (See Table 3 and Figure 1.) The networks vary greatly. In overall size they vary from five to 87 contacts in number. Some of the men reported no kinfolk in their social networks, while other reported no non-kin; still others reported 40 or more network relationships in these categories.

Looking at the means, the average father in the sample maintains ties with several kin (10.2) and non-kin (14.1). We shall see shortly, however, that these overall statistics obscure differences between groups of fathers who depend predominantly upon either kin or non-kin. Note that the average father in the sample reports several non-kin from each of the role contexts. The greatest average number (6.6), however, come from none of the role contexts we sampled. They are non-kin "others," friendships maintained without the support of such role contexts as work, neighborhood, formal organization, or kinship.

The Network Hypotheses.

The three network variables, each representing a hypothesis, were entered into a multiple regression along with the set of eight demographic and situational variables. The multiple regression technique is ideally suited to estimating the independent effect of each variable, with statistical control for every other. Table 4 presents the results.

The largest effect is for NON-KIN INTENSITY. The greater the intensity of non-kin relations in the network, the greater the overall level of childrearing advice the father has available. The other two network variables do not significantly predict CHILDREARING ADVICE. Of the socio-demographic variables, FATHER EDUCATION and FATHER WORK HOURS also have strong and predicted effects on childrearing advice. Higher educated fathers, and those with shorter work hours, report significantly greater access to childrearing advice. The negative effect of work hours is not due to underemployed men taking more childrearing responsibility, since no men in the sample worked less than 35 hours per week (six unemployed men were dropped from the sample). Rather the effect is due to moonlighting and overtime working men who are very low in childrearing involvement.

These results bear closer scrutiny. The following sections will first explicate the relation of NON-KIN INTENSITY to CHILDREARING ADVICE. Then the indirect effect of education, mediated by the network, will be estimated in a causal path analysis.

The Effect of Non-Kin Intensity.

The community-of-choice hypothesis, for which the NON-KIN INTENSITY variable was constructed, would predict that certain kinds of ties will be used for childrearing advice. It predicts these will be non-kin, especially non-kin "others," with respect to whom we have the most choice in interaction.

It also predicts that selective non-kin bonds will replace, to some extent, dependence upon kin bonds. Are these deductions true?

To see if NON-KIN INTENSITY is having its effects in this way, the specific individuals who provide the childrearing advice will be looked at more closely. I will compare two groups of fathers, who together comprise about half the sample. The first group (n=23) received very little childrearing advice support from their networks, having only one or two network contacts in this category (I'll call such contacts "advice-givers" for brevity). The second group (n=22) was high in availability of childrearing advice, with each father having seven or more advice givers. These two groups form, approximately, the second and fourth quartiles on the distribution of childrearing advice availability, since the first quartile consisted of men who received no childrearing advice (so their advice-givers could not be compaired).

What kind of people are used for childrearing advice? Figure 2 and Table 5 support the contention that low advice networks will supply kin advice-givers, while high advice networks draw support proportionately more from non-kin. The effect is seen, however, only for nuclear kin. This is not surprising. Extended kin may be somewhat more like non-kin; we can drop them from our networks (from our lives), if we desire, much easier than nuclear kin.

Looking just at the non-kin advice givers now, Figure 2 and Table 5 indicate that, for men in both groups, the most likely source of childrearing advice is from an "other." Because these ties have no formal role contexts to buttress them, they are the easiest to exit from, and the most volitional to continue with. We can guess they are relatively strong ties, since the only thing maintaining them is the continuing enjoyment or gain they bring to both parties. People in this "other" category account for almost a third of all advice-givers for men in the high advice group. They account for about one in five advice-givers in the low advice group. This difference is in the direction predicted by the community-of-choice hypothesis, but is not statistically significant.

Looking at the full sample, however, we find a strong relationship between NON-KIN INTENSITY and the percentage of advice givers who are non-kin "others," but little relationship for the other non-kin role contexts (see Table 6). This is supportive of the community-of-choice hypothesis; NON-KIN INTENSITY has its effect on CHILDREARING ADVICE specifically through those relationships over which we have the most choice, the residual category of "others" who fit into no specific role context.

The high advice networks gain a significantly larger share of their advice givers from the neighborhood, about 28%, as compared to only 4% in the low advice group.

Do non-kin replace kin? The community-of-choice hypothesis also predicted that non-kin would replace kin. It is evident, however, that this hasn't happened. See Figure 3 and Table 7. The high advice group does have significantly more non-kin in the network, but also many more kinfolk. Rather than dropping kin as they added non-kin, the men in the high advice group have developed more relationships from all sources. This can partly explain why they have more advice-giving contacts, since they have twice as large (on average) a pool of network relationships from which to select people with whom to discuss childrearing. But the high advice men also shared advice with a larger percentage of their networks (see Figure 3 and Table 7). They not only had larger networks, but also made greater use of the available network potential for childrearing advice. This was true for both kin and non-kin in their networks.

In fact, looking at the overall sample, NON-KIN INTENSITY was significantly correlated with number of kin in the network! This surprizing finding begins to make sense, however, when the kin are divided into close and extended relatives (see Table 8). NON-KIN INTENSITY has its effect on number of kin through collateral kin only, not through nuclear kin. And the number of advice-givers is strongly related to number of collateral kin, but not to nuclear kin. It appears that the relation between NON-KIN INTENSITY and kin childrearing advice operates almost exclusively through

extended kin. Extended kin, apparently, are in some ways like the non-kin in our lives; they can even be predicted by the extent and intensity of our non-kin ties. Personal bonds to collateral kin are more elective, and thus more selective, than bonds to nuclear kin. Note the extremely high correlation (r = .93) between number of collateral kin and total kin. It is much higher than the correlation for nuclear kin. This fits; nuclear kin are, to a great extent, givens. But collateral kin are not, they vary to a much greater extent, in fact they have twice the variance of nuclear kin (see Table 8). They are bonds of choice.

NON-KIN INTENSITY, then, is not associated with fewer ties to kin. Rather, it is associated with no change in relations with nuclear kin, but increased relations with collateral kin.

An additional, exploratory hypothesis was suggested by a reading of the interview protocols. Very often it seemed that men were deriving childrearing advice from brother-in-laws. On reflection, a bond to a brother-in-law is a curious thing. A brother-in-law is vaguely a relative, but is really from a different family. He occupies a position parallel to the respondent. He often has children of a comparable age as well. A bond to a brother-in-law is selective in several ways: he is in some ways similar to the father, and the kinship bond (of obligation and duty) may be relatively weak. Therefore we would expect more childrearing advice from this kind of relationship in a network of choice, that is a network

with high NON-KIN INTENSITY. But we wouldn't expect more male nuclear kin advice-givers, since there is less choice in ties with nuclear kin. In fact, these expectations are met. Two variables were constructed: counts of the number of (a) male, nuclear kin advice-givers, and (b) male, collateral kin advice-givers. NON-KIN INTENSITY had no association with the first ($r = .05$), but a substantial relation to male collateral kin advice-givers ($r = .27$, $p < .01$). Once again, higher NON-KIN INTENSITY is associated with greater selectivity in source of interpersonal support.

In sum, a man whose personal social world is more typified by intense relations with non-kin is likely to have access to more interpersonal sources of childrearing advice, and these additional sources are especially likely to be non-kin "others" and extended kin. These are the categories of non-kin and kin ties that offer the man the most volition or choice in interaction. These findings are very much in line with the community-of-choice hypothesis.

The Indirect Effect of Education through Network.

To test the hypothesis that FATHER EDUCATION has a significant indirect effect on CHILDREARING ADVICE, through NON-KIN INTENSITY, a causal path analysis has been performed for these three variables. No attempt has been made to specify a more complete causal model, although several variables in the control set are likely candidates for such a model. Instead the desire here has been to test a single hypothesis.

Since this hypothesis is fully hierarchical (no reverse causality), the model has been estimated by regressing each endogenous variable on its predictors (simultaneous equations are not required). The standardized beta coefficients then estimate path coefficients, so long as the Ordinary Least Squares assumption of uncorrelated errors holds. The most important of these assumptions are that there is no reverse causality, and no important and unmeasured "third variables." Note that the path analysis cannot prove the model; it simply indicates a causal structure that fits the correlations. But if the reader accepts the assumptions of the model, then the path diagram and coefficients add considerably to our theoretical understanding.

The path diagram, in Figure 4, strongly supports the hypothesis that the composition of the social network is affected by education, and that this causal path accounts for a sizeable portion of education's overall affect upon men's childrearing involvement. In this sample, the network-mediated effect accounted for about a third of the overall effect of education. These path estimates, it should be noted, are adjusted for the 7 variables in the control set, and for the other two network variables (PERCENT MALE NETWORK and NETWORK RANGE). Thus the results cannot be attributed to proxy or common cause effects deriving from any of these sources.

CONCLUSION

A review of theory provided three hypotheses regarding the way a man's social network might affect his involvement in childrearing. A variable was constructed for each hypothesis: PERCENT MALE NETWORK for the Bott hypothesis, NETWORK RANGE for the diffusion-of-innovation hypothsis, and NON-KIN INTENSITY for the community-of-choice hypothesis. Only NON-KIN INTENSITY proved to be a strong predictor of CHILDREARING ADVICE. A social network with many non-kin and highly supportive ties with non-kin predicted greater use of network members for childrearing advice. It especially predicted the use of non-kin "others" and collateral kin for childrearing advice. These are precisely the categories of non-kin and kin with whom we have the most choice in forming relationships. Thus the findings are quite consistent with the community-of-choice hypothesis.

It is noteworthy that NETWORK RANGE didn't significantly predict CHILDREARING ADVICE. A large and diverse network isn't the key for this outcome; rather it is the strength of selective ties that predicts greater use of one's relationships for childrearing advice.

The non-result for NETWORK RANGE is also important as a form of discriminant validity. It shows clearly that the strong effect found for NON-KIN INTENSITY is not simply a response bias or instrument artifact deriving from the network interview.

The Effect of Education.

The review of network theory also provided a causal path hypothesis, in which the network was proposed as an intermediate link, mediating the effect of education on childrearing involvement. Assuming the validity of the causal path assumptions, the hypothesis was confirmed. Strongly significant paths joined the three variables. The indirect effect of education, mediated by NON-KIN INTENSITY in the network, accounted for about a third of the overall effect of education. As has been shown by other researchers, education is a powerful predictor of parenting attitudes and behavior. The present research indicates that one of the ways education has its effect is by connecting a person into a very different web of personal relations. The evidence presented here indicates that the key feature of this new web of relations is not having more ties with women (the Bott hypothesis) or with many and diverse non-kin (the diffusion-of-innovation hypothesis). Rather it is having highly selective and supportive ties. Education, I argue, predicts greater choice in personal relations.

The Meaning of Childrearing Advice.

There are two ways to conceptualize the dependent measure, and thus to interpret the results. First, high scores on CHILDREARING ADVICE could index a relatively high involvement father role. In this interpretation, a man who exercises choice in contructing his personal community will be much more

able to resist or defy the traditional role expectations of the larger society. Because it is selective, his network is more likely to support any attempt he makes to adapt his fathering role, or to become a "role maker" as Aldous (1974) has put it.

In the second interpretation, CHILDREARING ADVICE is not a measure of non-traditional fathering behavior; it is conceptualized instead as simply one kind of informal social support that is important to all fathers. A certain basic level of this support can be expected from one's close kin, who are more or less obligated to provide it. But to go beyond this level, interpersonal ties of a different sort must be developed. These are ties in which role obligations are weaker, and personal bonds more important in engendering support. Thus men whose networks had many and intense ties with non-kin also had significantly more support in the form of CHILDREARING ADVICE.

That this support may be important to parents generally is suggested, for example, by the finding that child-abusing parents tend to be socially isolated (Garbarino, 1977). Cochran & Brassard (1979) have suggested that child-abuse is less likely when one has alternate role-models (of parenting), direct help, and direct feedback about one's parenting from important others. These are functions an advice-giving contact could perform for every parent, not just for highly involved fathers.

Clearly this line of research has a great need for replication and extension with other measures of father childrearing involvement. It is unfortunate the other planned measures of childrearing involvement proved inadequate and could not be used. They could have provided a multidimensional view of the outcome variable. Eventually the work must be tied to measures of parent-child interaction and child development. For now we know, at the least, that childrearing advice is important to the fathers themselves. This is indicated by how selective the fathers are in their choice of advice source. Just anyone won't do. For men with greater access to childrearing advice, it tends increasingly to come from the most selective of relationships. The finding that brothers-in-law play a special role as advice-givers is especially intriguing. What do these brothers-in-law and non-kin allies actually talk about when they discuss childrearing? And how does it affect their conduct of parenting? These questions remain.

The Invariant Nuclear Kin.

The results seem to downplay the importance of nuclear kin, but this is misleading. Nuclear kin are not so powerful as predictors in a regression equation(1) or correlation, but this may be largely due to their low variance. Their low variance reflects one contention of this paper, that nuclear

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(1) When total number of kin was added as a covariate to the basic regression equation in Table 4, the change was negligible.

kin can be counted on to be there, whereas relationships with collateral kin and non-kin must be developed and maintained. If a person has few other sources of support, the bonds to close kin, based on obligation and duty, still form a baseline of support (as Campbell & Cochran (1983) found with single mothers). Because they are a consistent and dependable baseline, these ties to close kin make poor predictors in an equation; but it is these very same qualities that make close kin crucially important in the lives of people. For some people they are the only support available. For most of us, they are an ever-present last resort, a safety net far more dependable and caring than any government or insurance company.

Parenting and the Family Boundary.

Finally, looking at the results broadly, it is striking to note that men's relationships outside the family supported their relations within it. This is quite contrary to a popular conception, which I call "the Dagwood hypothesis." In this view, Blondie would like her husband to be more involved around the house, but Dagwood would rather sleep on the couch or sneak out to join "the guys" for poker or bowling. Implicitly, this view tells us that intimate ties outside the family compete with the parenting role. To increase involvement in childrearing, a man would have to cut himself off from outside relationships.

The results of this paper paint a different picture. Strong ties to non-kin increase a man's access to childrearing advice, and may predict his increased involvement in childrearing generally. Clearly, parenting is not an activity isolated within family boundaries, requiring protection from outside influences. Rather it is supported, to a greater or lesser extent, by the wider social relations each of us are given or develop around us.

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TABLE 1

MEASUREMENT MODEL:
NETWORK RANGE

ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION MATRIX FOR MEASURES.

	Percent Non-Kin	Total Network Size	Functionally Weak Ties	n	$\bar{x}$	σ	range
Percent Non-Kin		-		96	55.8	19.8	0 - 100
Total Network Size	.10			96	24.3	15.6	5 - 87
Functionally Weak Ties	.16	.41		96	4.4	7.2	0 - 57
Content Multiplexity	-.11	-.15	-.26	96	1.8	0.4	1 - 2.9

UNROTATED FACTOR PATTERN, FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL COMPONENT EXTRACTION.

Measures	Factor (Network Range)	Final Communality Estimates
Percent Non-Kin	.26	.07
Total Network Size	.75	.57
Functionally Weak Ties	.83	.68
Content Multiplexity	-.52	.27
Eigenvalue:	1.59	
Variance accounted for:	.40	

TABLE 2

MEASUREMENT MODEL:

NON-KIN INTENSITY

ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION MATRIX FOR MEASURES.

	Percent Non-Kin	Number of Non-Kin	N-K in Primary Circle	N-K Emotional Support	n	$\bar{x}$	σ	range
Percent Non-Kin					96	55.8	10.7	0 - 100
Number of Non-Kin	.41				96	14.1	10.7	0 - 57
Non-Kin in Primary Circle	.18	.62			96	2.2	3.0	0 - 18
Non-Kin Emotional Support	.33	.50	.46		96	2.2	2.7	0 - 12
Non-Kin Allies	.35	.39	.30	.43	96	3.4	4.2	0 - 25

UNROTATED FACTOR PATTERN, FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL FACTOR EXTRACTION.

Measures	Factor (Non-Kin Intensity)	Final Communality Estimates
Percent Non-Kin	.60	.36
Number of Non-Kin	.83	.69
Non-Kin in Primary Circle	.73	.53
Non-Kin Emotional Support	.77	.59
Non-Kin Allies	.67	.45

Eigenvalue: 2.61

Variance accounted for: .52

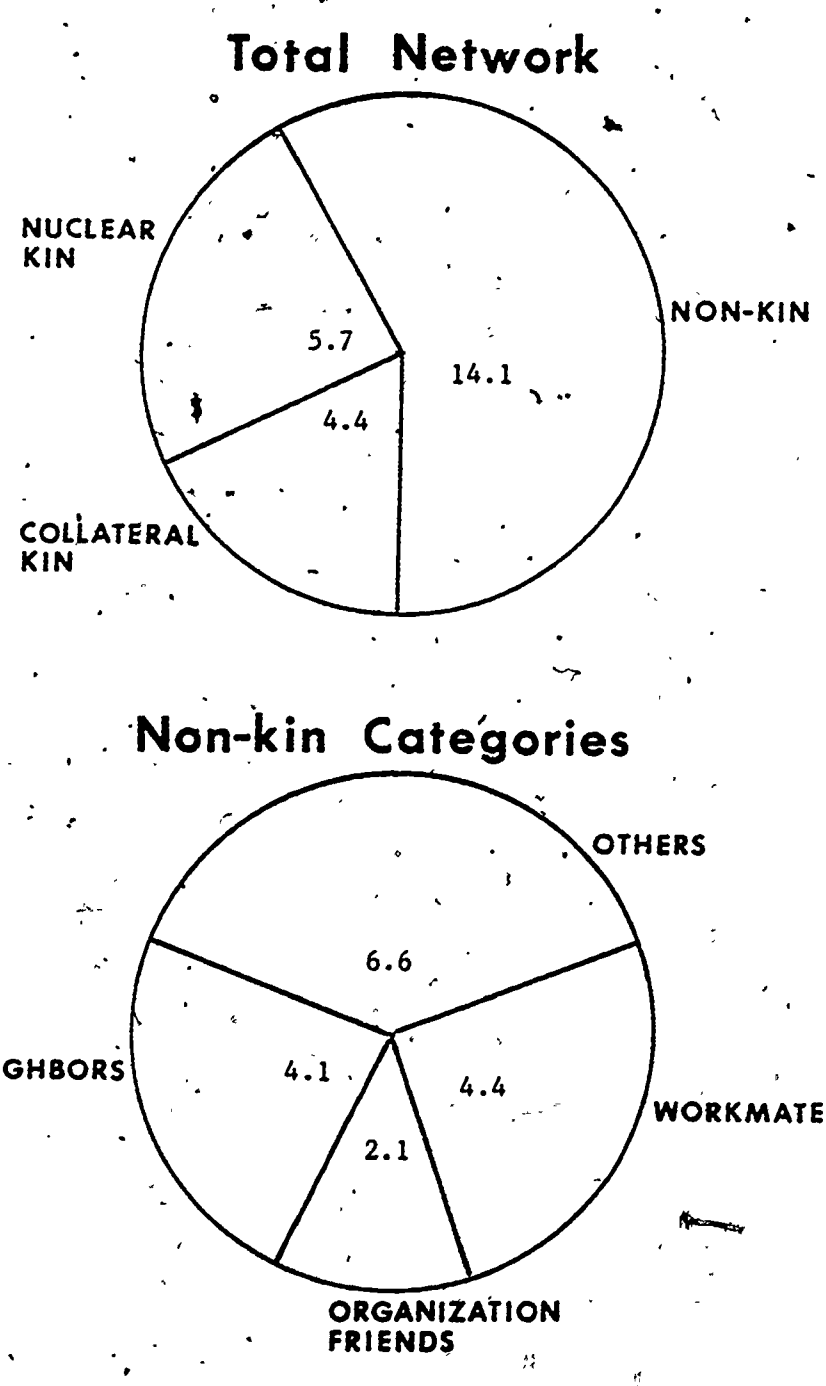


Figure 1. Membership in the average personal network, based on 96 fathers of three-year-old children.

NOTE: The number of non-kin is accurate, although it does not equal the sum of the four categories of non-kin. This is because some network contacts are counted in more than one category (e.g. both neighbor and workmate).

TABLE 3

NETWORK SUMMARY STATISTICS

	n	$\bar{x}$	σ	range
Overall size	96	24.3	15.6	5 - 87
Number of kin	96	10.2	7.4	0 - 40
Nuclear kin	96	5.7	2.8	0 - 16
Collateral kin	96	4.4	5.8	0 - 28
Number of non-kin	96	14.1	10.7	0 - 57
Neighbors	96	4.1	3.4	0 - 18
Workmates	96	4.4	4.6	0 - 20
Organization friends	96	2.1	4.2	0 - 23
Others	96	6.6	6.7	0 - 32

TABLE 4

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Predictors:	Dependent Variable: NETWORK CHILDREARING ADVICE	
	beta	F ratio
Network Variables.		
MALE NETWORK	-.09	--
NETWORK RANGE	-.16	--
NON-KIN INTENSITY	.45	18.53***
Social-Demographic Variables.		
FATHER WORK HOURS	-.21	5.84*
MOTHER WORK HOURS	.00	--
SEX OF TARGET CHILD	.11	--
SWINGSHIFT	-.12	--
FATHER EDUCATION	.31	8.40**
FATHER OCCUPATION	-.15	--
FAMILY ETHNICITY	-.01	--
FATHER AGE	-.14	--

Overall Equation:

F ratio = 5.08***

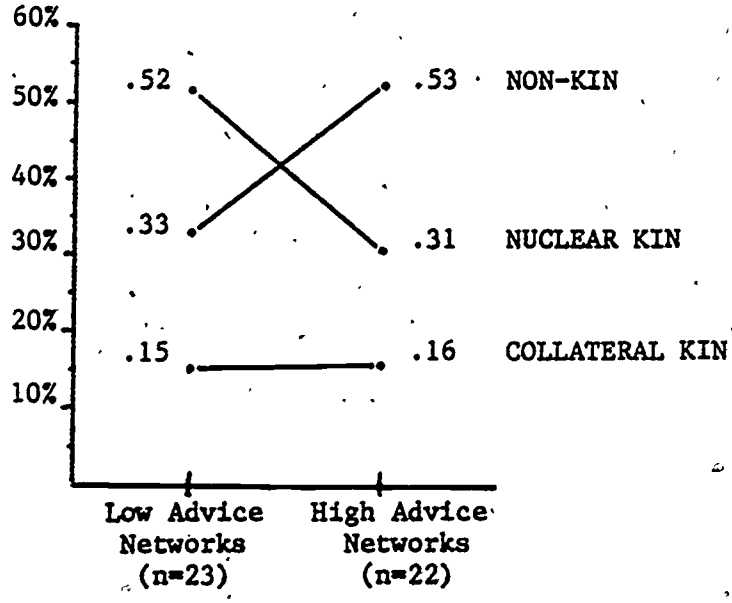
R^2 = .40

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .0001$

KIN VS. NON-KIN SOURCES



SPECIFIC NON-KIN SOURCES

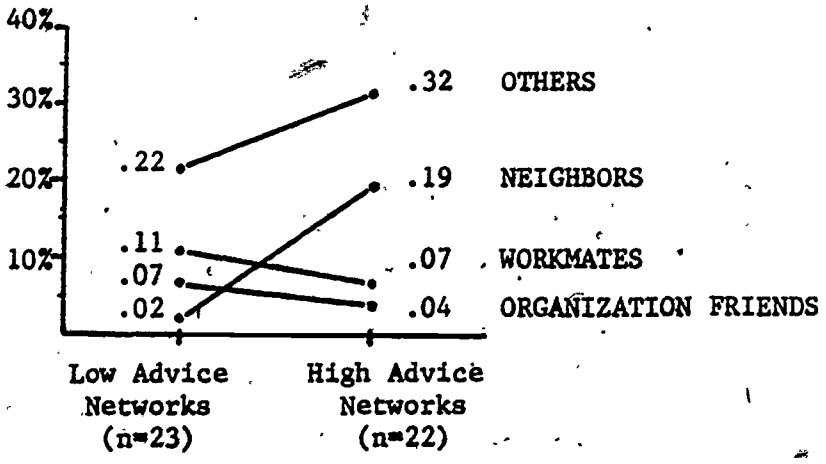


FIGURE 2. Percent sources of advice-giving contacts, by low and high advice groups.

TABLE 5
Percentage Sources of Childrearing Advice
in High and Low Advice Networks.

VARIABLE Group	n	mean	S.D.	Range	t	p(t)
Nuclear Kin						
Low Advice Group	23	52	46	0-100		
High Advice Group	22	31	17	0-62	2.05	.05
Collateral Kin						
Low advice group	23	15	35	0-100		
High advice group	22	16	16	0-50	-.11	--
Non-Kin						
Low advice group	23	33	44	0-100		
High advice group	22	53	29	0-100	-1.81	.08
Non-Kin Neighbors						
Low advice group	23	02	10	0-50		
High advice group	22	19	23	0-86	-3.15	.01
Non-Kin Workmates						
Low advice group	23	11	30	0-100		
High advice group	22	.07	28	0-38	-.98	--
Non-Kin Organization						
Low advice group	23	07	23	0-100		
High advice group	22	04	07	0-29	.52	--
Non-Kin Others						
Low advice group	23	22	39	0-100		
High advice group	22	32	28	0-88	-.98	--

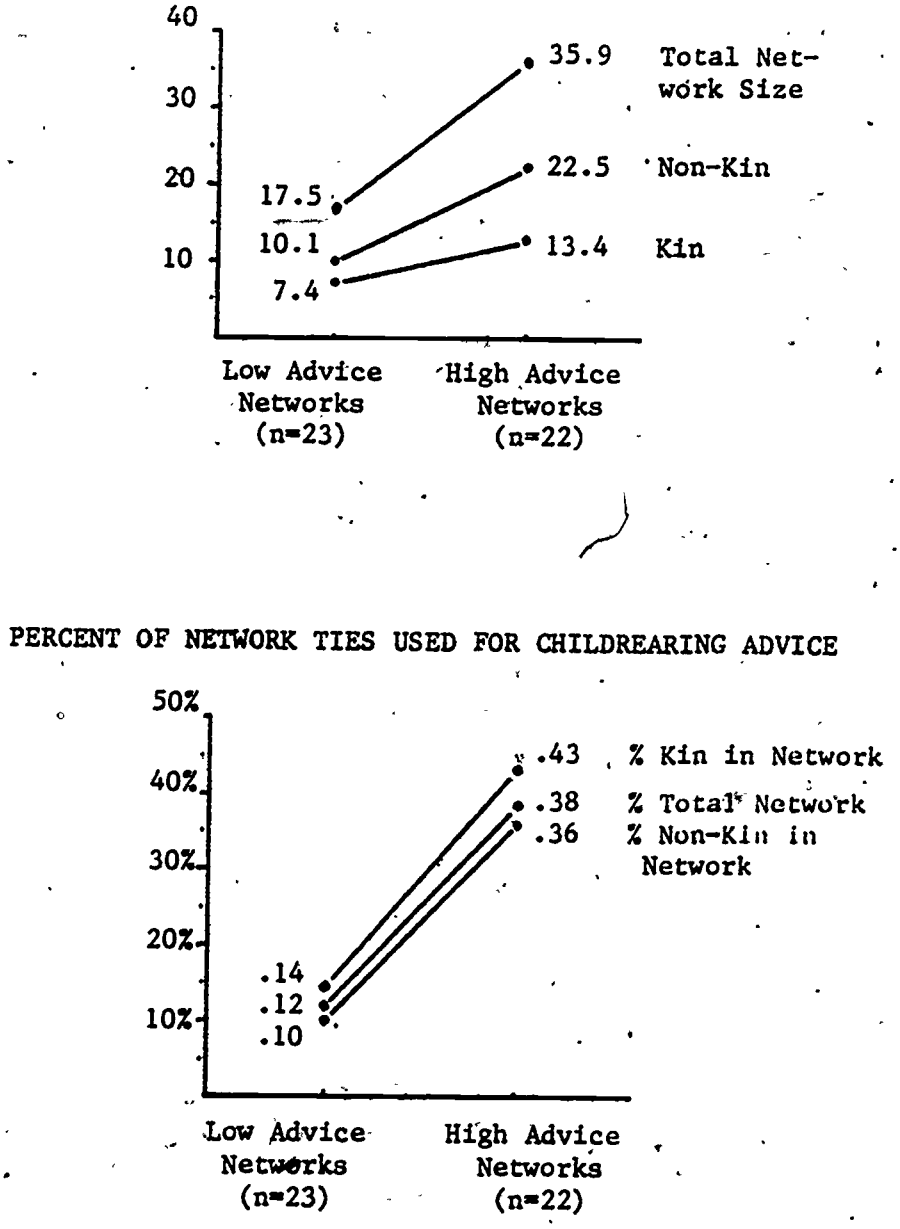


FIGURE 3. Network size, and available network use, by low and high advice groups.

TABLE 6

Correlations of NON-KIN INTENSITY
With Percentage Sources of Non-Kin Childrearing Advice

PERCENT OF ADVICE-GIVERS WHO ARE:	r	n	$\bar{x}$	σ	range
NEIGHBORS	.13	70	.09	.18	0 - 100
WORKMATES	.17	70	.10	.21	0 - 100
ORGANIZATION FRIENDS	-.05	70	.04	.14	0 - 100
OTHERS	.35**	70	.24	.32	0 - 100

** $p < .01$

Reduced n is due to 26 networks having zero advice-giving contacts.

TABLE 7
Size and Use of Network
in High and Low Advice Networks.

VARIABLE Group	n	mean	S.D.	Range	t	p(t)
Overall Network Size						
Low Advice Group	23	17.5	16.3	5-87		
High Advice Group	22	35.9	16.1	17-83	-3.80	.001
Number of Kin in Network						
Low advice group	23	7.4	5.9	0-30		
High advice group	22	13.4	6.9	6-31	-3.11	.01
Number of Non-Kin in Network						
Low advice group	23	10.1	11.1	2-57		
High advice group	22	22.5	12.5	5-52	-3.50	.01
% of Total Network Used for Childrearing Advice						
Low advice group	23	12	08	02-33		
High advice group	22	38	17	13-82	-6.54	.0001
% of Kin Used for Childrearing Advice						
Low advice group	23	20	18	0-50		
High advice group	22	46	28	0-100	-3.66	.001
% of Non-Kin Used for Childrearing Advice						
Low advice group	23	10	14	0-50		
High advice group	22	36	26	0-86	-4.30	.0001

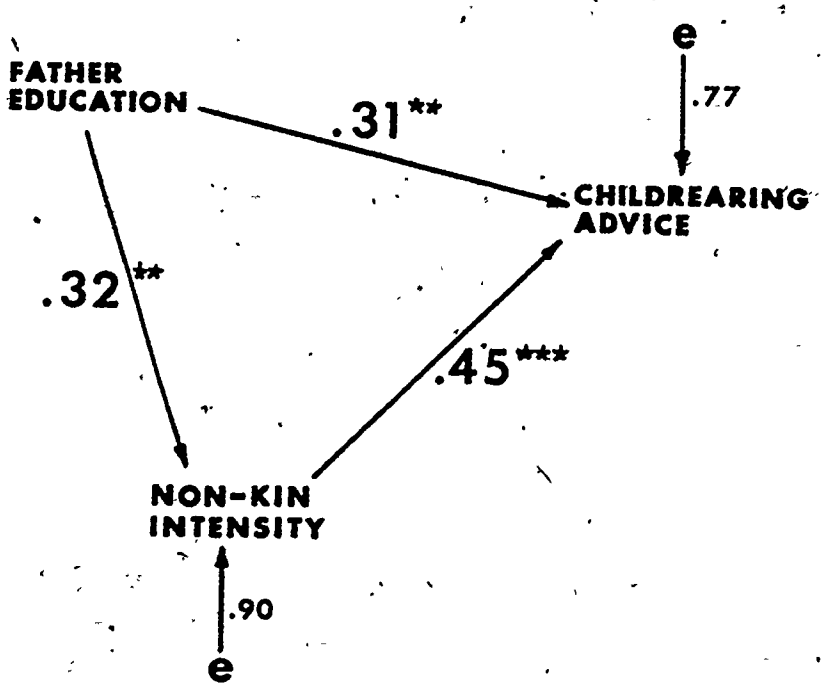
TABLE 8

Correlations

NON-KIN INTENSITY and Kin Variables

	Non-kin intensity	Kin advice-givers	Kin in network	Nuclear Kin	Collateral kin	n	$\bar{x}$	σ	range
1. Non-kin intensity						96	0.0	1.0	-1.9 - 4.1
2. Number of kin advice-givers	.26*					96	2.3	2.8	0 - 12
3. Number of kin in network	.20*	.35***				96	10.2	7.4	0 - 40
4. Number of nuclear kin	.06	.19	.69***			96	5.7	2.8	0 - 16
5. Number of collateral kin	.22*	.36***	.93***	.40***		96	4.4	5.8	0 - 28

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $P < .001$



VARIABLE	DIRECT EFFECT	INDIRECT EFFECT	OVERALL EFFECT
FATHER EDUCATION	.31	.14	.45
NON-KIN INTENSITY	.45	–	.45

** p <.01

*** p <.001

Figure 4. Network as mediator.

NOTE: That the overall effects are equal for the two variables is a coincidence.

APPENDIX 1

	Childrearing Advice	Non-Kin Intensity	Network Range	Percent Male Network	Father Work Hours	Mother Work Hours	Sex of Child	Swingshift	Father Education	Father Occupation	Family Ethnicity	Father Age	N	$\bar{X}$	σ	RANGE
Childrearing Advice									1				96	2 45	1.12	1 - 4
Non-Kin Intensity	.46												96	.00	1.00	-1.86--4.07
Network Range	.06	.46											96	.00	1.00	-2.21--3.29
Percent Male Network	-.10	.07	-.03										96	.59	.14	.22 - .94
Father Work Hours	-.24	.02	.14	.09									96	47.0	9.9	35. - 80.
Mother Work Hours	-.02	-.01	.02	-.08	-.05								96	11.5	17.0	0. - 65.
Sex of Child	.13	.11	.00	.14	.11	-.03							96	1.5	0.5	1 - 2
Swingshift	.00	-.01	-.06	.01	-.12	-.06	-.02						96	.09	.29	0 - 1
Father Education	.41	.38	.20	-.21	-.16	-.01	.01	.09					96	13.7	2.6	6 - 20
Father Occupation	.13	.28	.22	-.15	-.09	.00	.03	-.22	.49				96	1.6	0.5	1 - 2
Family Ethnicity	-.06	-.09	-.19	.16	-.02	-.06	.08	.03	-.07	-.02			96	1.5	0.5	1 - 2
Father Age	-.15	-.05	.00	-.03	-.02	.36	-.07	-.20	.03	.17	.12		96	33.3	4.9	24. - 47.