

The background of the cover features several stylized, light green leaf motifs scattered across the surface. These motifs consist of a small stem with two leaves, appearing to float or drift across the page.

THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF OLDER PEOPLE

A Cross-National Analysis

Howard Litwin

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A Cross-National Analysis

Edited by
Howard Litwin

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Dedicated to the memory of
Zeev Ben-Sira,
mentor and colleague

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THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF OLDER PEOPLE

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1

Introduction

Howard Litwin

The sociological construct of *social network* is increasingly being invoked around the world in the policy debate on the social care of elderly people (Abrams, 1980; Litwin and Auslander, 1992; Schilling, 1987; Steinbach, 1992; Wellman and Hall, 1986; Wenger, 1994a; Yoder, Leaper, and Jonker, 1985; Zarit, Pearlin, and Schaie, 1993). A social network constitutes the collection of interpersonal ties that individuals maintain and that provide them with several possible benefits, such as the augmentation of self-concept, the fostering of feelings of belonging, and the provision of both cognitive guidance and tangible assistance in fulfilling the tasks of daily living (Cohen and Syme, 1985; Ell, 1984; Litwin, 1995a). The term frequently implies family and friendship ties, but may also encompass other forms of interpersonal contact, such as relationships with neighbors, work associates, and service personnel (Chappell, 1991b; Gottlieb, 1981; Kendig, 1986; Litwak, 1985). Given the potential for informal support that may be forthcoming from one's social network, the relevance of the network phenomenon for the elderly and for frail elements of society has been underscored in a variety of settings (Hooyman, 1983; Sauer and Coward, 1985; Shuval, Fleishman, and Shmueli, 1982).

Accordingly, the network phenomenon has become the object of social research over the past few decades. This emerging field of inquiry includes a variety of approaches and a range of methodologies. Some researchers, for example, employ a comprehensive interpretation of the network notion. In studies that address a range of populations, they call for the measuring of the broad range of

possible social ties in a respondent's immediate social milieu (Cochran, Larner, Riley, Gunnarsson, and Henderson, 1990; Fischer, 1982; McCallister and Fischer, 1978; Norbeck, Lindsey, and Carrieri, 1981; Wellman, 1979). Several recent studies of the social networks of elderly people echo this orientation, seeing the elder's network as the locus of a wide variety of social ties (Auslander and Litwin, 1990; Gallo, 1984; Litwak, 1985; Lubben, 1988; Sauer and Coward, 1985; Taylor and Chatters, 1986).

However, some utilizations of the social network concept tend to adopt a more partial or specialized view of the phenomenon. These may range from focused consideration of specific support network configurations (Adams, 1986; Campbell and Lee, 1992; Dykstra, 1993), to analysis of paths of familial exchange (Coward and Dwyer, 1990; Stoller, Forster, and Duniho, 1992), and examination of other informal caregiver groupings in the locality (Felton and Berry, 1992; MacRae, 1992). Indeed, the term "social network" may variously reflect the structure or content of social relationships (House and Kahn, 1985), the actual or perceived availability of social support (Wethington and Kessler, 1986), or any of a range of dynamics that comprise social interrelationships, to name but a few of the construct's recent manifestations.

The presumed widespread existence of informal social support networks is currently cited as justification for the delimiting or the refocusing of governmental intervention on behalf of needy sectors of the population (Baldwin, 1993; Gordon and Donald, 1993; Langan, 1990; Walker, 1982). This is particularly the case in regard to the long-term care of older adults in the community. As the debate on the relationship between social networks and social policy intensifies, however, it seems that the frames of reference concerning the social construct in question are becoming ever more elusive.

It is not at all clear, for example, whether the notion of social network used to support social policy development in different national settings is being applied in similar ways. Nor is it evident whether the means for measuring the phenomenon are methodologically compatible. Nonetheless, policymakers from several countries are looking to each other for guidance in this burgeoning area of social provision. It is timely and important, therefore, to consider the social network construct in a comparative international perspective, and to examine its application critically in relation to evolving policies of social care.

This book thus constitutes an attempt to address critically the state of the art of gerontologically focused network analysis, and to clarify the emerging interrelationship between informal support networks and social policies for the elderly. It presents a unique collection of social network studies that focus upon elderly populations in nine different countries. The country reports presented in this book were solicited especially for inclusion in this comparative analysis. Most of them draw upon contemporary empirical research in their respective countries. All of them, nevertheless, offer their findings in a new light, as follows

from the guidelines for preparation of the chapters for the cross-national comparison.

The countries selected to be included in the analysis are: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, and Israel. These specific countries reflect national settings, particularly in Europe, in which populations have aged most dramatically (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992) and where governments are actively seeking ways to constrain the growth of social welfare expenditures. Moreover, outstanding researchers in each of these settings are involved in the analysis of aged cohorts, providing a first-hand opportunity to examine the potential and the means for inclusion of social network factors in the formulation of social policy for the elderly in the respective countries.

The book begins here with an introductory presentation of the organizational framework that guides the inquiry, including a selective review of the factors that led to formulation of the analytic framework. Nine chapters, each devoted to a network study carried out in a separate country, follow. The work concludes with a summary chapter which applies a meta-analysis to the data presented in the country reports, critically comparing the state of knowledge of social networks of elderly people in each setting, and drawing conclusions as to the future interchange between social network research and social policy development on behalf of the eldest cohorts of society.

THE ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

The county reports were prepared in relation to a series of guiding questions which reflect nine areas of inquiry: (1) study methodology, (2) the study sample, (3) structural analysis of the social network, (4) structural network variations by sociodemographic characteristics, (5) measures of social support, (6) classification of network types, (7) the interface between informal networks and formal care services, (8) implications of the findings for social policy, and (9) directions for future research. Chapter authors were encouraged to relate to as many of these topics as their data allow in order to permit the execution of the concluding cross-national analysis. The result is an impressive array of network data providing both up-to-date within-country accounts as well as a base for cross-country comparison.

The specific areas of inquiry upon which this analysis focuses reflect the particular aspects of social network analysis that are most relevant to the consideration of the role of networks in the care of elderly people. They are spelled out in the following sections, with attention to the central issues that emerged in each area and that contributed to the formulation of the preparation guidelines. The actual questions posed to chapter authors are included in each corresponding subsection.

Study Methodology

The perceived essence of the phenomenon known as social network may vary according to the method by which its measurement is operationalized. One major difference in this regard pertains to whether the nature of the network is conceptualized prior to data collection and hence shapes the construction of the survey instrument, or whether it is derived as a result of the trends found in the data themselves. The former case may be characterized as an “inferred network” approach; the latter might be termed a “derived network” methodology.

An example of the inferred approach is a French study in which the elderly respondent’s potential network is measured in terms of predetermined network variables—in this case, household composition, marital status, number of living children, and frequency of visits from family, friends, and neighbors (Curtis, Bucquet, and Colvez, 1992). Wenger (1995a) refers to such predetermined network markers as proxy measures and cautions that they may not provide an accurate reflection of the actual social network in question. The derived network methodology, on the other hand, is exemplified by a study in New York State in which survey data are used to establish the composition of care networks, and in which a pattern of network expansion is subsequently identified (Stoller and Pugliesi, 1988).

The connection between the theoretical conceptualization of social networks and their measurement has been more fully spelled out by van der Poel (1993), who cites four different approaches to network measurement: (1) the “interaction approach,” which focuses upon the contacts between network members, (2) the “role relation approach,” which sees the type of role relationships as the primary determinant of one’s network, (3) the “affective approach,” which is based upon subjective evaluation by respondents of the people most important to them, and (4) the “exchange approach,” which views specific rewarding behaviors as the foundation for determining the composition and the scope of one’s network. Each approach entails differing perceptions as to the nature of the network phenomenon, and differing means by which to capture its essence.

Yet another manner of conceptualizing the social network, with implications for measurement, is the ego-centered approach. In this mode, the network is generated by each respondent in response to a particular probe, such as requesting respondents to name the people with whom they interact the most and with whom they have close personal ties (Dykstra, 1990a). The ego-centered generated network methodology thus attempts to combine both qualitative and quantitative aspects of social network measurement and, as such, is considered to be the most comprehensive of the various approaches. Given the depth and the scope of the approach, however, and the time required for data collection, it usually produces studies of limited sample size.

Perhaps in response to the logistic difficulties inherent in the generated network approach, another means of network measurement has recently been attempted. This method may be termed a “deductive network approach” and is

reflected in the work of Lubben (1988) and Wenger (1994e). Both of these researchers have constructed abbreviated network inventories stemming from previous extensive empirical work. In the former case, Lubben created a network scale for the elderly based upon relevant network variables drawn from the oft-cited longitudinal analyses of Berkman and Syme (1979). This scale has been subsequently validated and applied in new comparative network research. Wenger's short network form, on the other hand, is derived from her own previous qualitative and quantitative work and has been used continuously since (Wenger, 1984, 1986, 1989).

In light of the potential differences in interpretation of network data due to the differing methodologies at work in this field, chapter authors in this collection were asked to specify the approach employed in their respective studies. The instructions given to them in this regard were as follows:

Methodology/approach: How was network studied, which instruments were employed, which assumptions were there behind the methodological approach, and how does the approach relate to theories of social network.

Study Sample

While the size and nature of the sample of empirical studies of social networks of elderly people are important factors in determining the generalizability of their findings, there is actually a wide range of sample types evident in this field of inquiry. A review of close to 100 articles on the topic published in *Sociological Abstracts* over the past decade revealed that about two-thirds of them provide specific data on the study sample. Of these, the majority category (40 percent) reflect studies based upon small samples of 200 respondents or fewer. Only one-fifth of the studies, on the other hand, utilize large data bases of 1,000 respondents or more.

Differences are also evident in the nature of the respective samples. The larger samples tend to be drawn from regional or national surveys utilizing probability sampling (Angel and Angel, 1992; Baldassare, Rosenfield, and Rook, 1984; Levitt, Antonucci, Clark, Rotton, and Finley, 1985–86; Olsen, Olsen, Gunner-Svensson, and Waldstrom, 1991; Starrett, Todd, Decker, and Walters, 1989). The smaller samples are more frequently purposive aggregates reflecting a particular characteristic of interest to the researcher, as, for example, bereaved spouses (Lund, Caserta, van Pelt, and Gass, 1990), new residents of residential care facilities (Bear, 1993), and relocated urban dwellers (Eckert, 1983).

An additional frequent source of study sample is the framework of social services to which respondents may belong. Such samples range from the relatively small, as in the case of 200 random day-hospital and senior center attendees (Chappell, Segall, and Lewis, 1990), to the very large, as in a study of 3,559 participants in California's Multipurpose Senior Services Project (Mor-Barak

and Miller, 1991). Still other samples focus upon ethnicity or national origin as the inclusion principle. Among these, for example, may be cited studies of Maltese-born elderly people in Australia (Cauchi, 1990), African-American elders in Ohio (Petchers and Milligan, 1987), and a comparative analysis of elderly Swedes and Turks (Imamoulu, Küller, Imamoulu, and Küller, 1993).

Finally, the representativeness of study samples is yet another matter of concern. While probability sampling is the principal means in a great many of the reported studies reviewed here, a few others clearly focus upon convenience samples. In one case, a snowball approach is noted as the method of sample construction (Johnson and Barer, 1992). In another, focus group interviews serve as the basis for data collection (Morgan and March, 1992). Given the range of styles and foci in existing network study samples, therefore, chapter authors in this book were asked to specify the following information in their country reports:

Description of the setting and study sample, its degree of representativeness of the country's elderly population, where and how it differs from selected groups of elderly people in the country, and other relevant sample characteristics.

Structural Analysis

Underlying a great many network studies in the literature is a descriptive analysis of the structural components of the social entity in question (Seeman and Berkman, 1988). This may include both morphological and interactional aspects of the phenomenon (Mitchell, 1969). Examples of the former are size, density, and range of the network. Expressions of the latter may be found in frequency of contact, relationship intensity, and reciprocity of exchange among network members.

While a great many of the network studies incorporate structural characteristics of the social network in their analysis, however, the specific structural variables chosen for inclusion tend to vary from study to study. Kaufman (1990), for example, cites the use of network size, composition, and dispersion as the morphological variables of interest, and relational dynamics, intensity, orientation, and content as the interactional aspects under consideration in his study of functionally impaired older persons. In their study of elderly African-Americans, on the other hand, Bryant and Rakowski (1992) choose to focus on contacts with family members, contacts with friends, and social involvement outside the home as the primary network structure variables under consideration.

It is important to specify the included structural variables in network studies, for two reasons: (1) the need to clarify the structural means by which a social network is defined; (2) the benefit that can be gained from comparisons of network structure across studies. For example, if network size is a variable that is

addressed in most studies of the social networks of elderly people, a normative network size can potentially be determined to serve as a basis for future comparative analyses. The same may be said for other structural network variables of interest.

Authors contributing chapters to this book were requested, therefore, to specify the structural aspects of the network addressed in their respective studies. Specifically, they were asked to provide the following information:

Description of the structural characteristics of the networks under study: size, composition, interactional aspects such as frequency and mutuality of interaction, duration of ties, degree of residential proximity, degree of interpersonal closeness (intimacy), and so on.

Structural Variation

The structural components of network analysis provide an additional source of important information—that is, they allow comparative analysis of subgroupings of interest, in order to discern systematic differences in network behavior and network influence among different groups. Such intergroup comparisons are frequently executed on relevant sociodemographic variables within the framework of cross-sectional study designs.

A wide range of such comparisons regarding the social networks of elderly people may be found in the literature. Thus, for example, elders' social networks have been differentially analyzed on the basis of ethnicity and social class (Thornton, White-Means, and Choi, 1993), race (Biegel, Magaziner, and Baum, 1991), and nationality (Imamoulu et al., 1993). Another common base for intergroup comparison is the gender of both elderly respondents and their caregivers, although the findings are not always consistent in this regard (Chappell et al., 1990; Cohen, Sokolovsky, Teresi, and Holmes, 1988; Krause and Kieth, 1989). Personal status variables such as age (Morgan, 1988; Palinkas, Wingard, and Barret-Connor, 1990), health and functional status (Chappell, 1989), and marital status (Strain, 1992) constitute additional differentiating characteristics in social network studies of older people. Finally, residential patterns are occasional targets of comparative inquiry of the networks of elderly cohorts. This includes the type of residence (Stacey-Konnert and Pynoos, 1992), the structure of the community in which one resides (Wenger and St. Leger, 1992), and rural–urban differences in general (Lee and Whitebeck, 1987; Wenger, 1995b).

In order to learn about intergroup variations within the different national samples reviewed in this collection, the attention of authors was directed to the issue of sociodemographic factors. Thus, the country reports should include:

Analysis of characteristically differing network structures according to relevant sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, such as age (young–old, old–

old, etc.), gender, marital status, rural/urban dwellings; and according to functional capacity of the elderly anchor (center) of the networks under consideration.

Social Support

Social networks are frequently believed to function as support networks, even though many of them tend to behave in a way that may be most unhelpful (Litwin, 1995a). The terms "social network" and "support network" are, in fact, often used interchangeably in the literature, with insufficient attention paid to the conceptual differences between them and to the measurement implications of these differences (Chappell, 1991b; Wenger, 1995a). When considering the social networks of elderly cohorts, therefore, it is important to distinguish social support behaviors from the structural aspects of the network. This is particularly the case insofar as older adults' social networks are most frequently invoked by policymakers in their capacity as informal sources of ongoing care and support.

Although there are several variations on the social support theme, the phenomenon is generally divided into two major categories of assistance: emotional support and instrumental support. The emphasis in empirical studies may be placed on one of the two types of support, or on both of them equally (Curtis, Bucquet, and Colvez, 1992; Dykstra, 1993). Antonucci and Akiyama (1987b) further distinguish the support function according to its means of measurement, differentiating quantitative measures of social support from qualitative ones. The support phenomenon, thus, is a complex one. While many researchers agree that social support promotes both emotional and physical well-being, however, the precise measurement of support remains problematic (Jacobson, 1987).

There is also lack of agreement as to how social support networks actually contribute to well-being among the elderly. Occasional reports cite the absence of support as the explanation for respondents' lack of welfare. LaGory and Fitzpatrick (1992), for example, found depression related to limited social supports. Kaye and Monk (1991) similarly found gaps in their respondents' social support networks to be closely associated with decrements in personal contentment.

Baldassare and colleagues (1984), on the other hand, adopt a more direct approach, citing the existence of social relations as important predictors of happiness, even after controlling for the effects of sociodemographic and health factors. However, other studies raise doubts as to the possibility of finding a singularly convincing relationship between support and well-being among the aged.

In her study of very elderly people living in a deprived section of London, for example, Bowling (1990) found that physical health status was a stronger predictor of life-satisfaction than were social network characteristics. In a similar vein, Mullins and Mushel (1992) found that social network measures, and particularly

the variable of emotional closeness, had little impact on the experience of loneliness among older persons. They conclude that only partial support for a social support model may be granted.

Given the importance of the support function of the social network and the problematics identified in its measurement, special attention is given here to examples of social support in the country reports, where available. Authors were, thus, requested to specify:

Measures of social support utilized to consider the degree of support available to the elderly, underlying trends found regarding the distribution of supports, and consideration of the contribution of social support availability (or absence) to the well-being of older persons.

Network Types

A recent and still relatively rare development in the study of social networks is the classification of network types within populations of interest. Rather than correlating specific structural or support measures with a particular outcome variable, the goal of typology construction is to discover systematic covariance among groupings of network characteristics. Such typologies may, in turn, provide a new means for tracing the development of social networks, for mapping the shifts that occur as people move from one type of network to another, and for predicting differential service needs on the basis of network type.

In certain instances, the classification of network types is carried out as a secondary part of network analysis. The findings in such studies are largely preliminary and exploratory. Adams (1986), for example, categorized the social networks of unmarried elderly women in Illinois as either (1) small and intimate, or (2) local, new, and dense, on the basis of a primary or secondary friendship orientation. Lieberg and Pederson (1983) distinguish between "loose" networks and "tight" networks in a comparative study of residential areas in a Swedish city. Auslander and Litwin (1990) identified "close" and "distant" networks among the elderly in Jerusalem by means of factor analysis of the role relationship categories in respondents' personal networks.

However, studies giving more focused and systematic attention to the task of typology construction are emerging in the literature. Mugford and Kendig (1986), for example, conceptualize network types of the elderly in Australia on the basis of two variables: network size and multiplexity of ties—that is, singularly focused versus multifaceted relationships. The network types they posit range from "intense" (small and multiplex) to "diffuse" (large and uniplex), with three variations between these two extremes: "complex," "balanced," and "attenuated" networks.

Wenger's extensive work in social network classification stems from both a quantitative survey approach and intensive qualitative study of elderly persons in

Wales (Wenger, 1984, 1989, 1990). She has identified five distinct network types on the basis of three primary factors: (1) the availability of close kin in the locality, (2) the level of involvement of family, friends, and neighbors, and (3) degree of interaction with community and voluntary groups. Subsequent use of computer algorithm has produced an assessment instrument that makes it possible to classify one's network type as: (1) local-family-dependent, (2) locally integrated, (3) local self-contained, (4) wider-community-focused, or (5) private restricted.

Finally, Litwin (1995b) has made use of computerized analysis in the identification of network types among elderly Soviet immigrants to Israel. Cluster analysis based on six discriminating criterion variables—network size, composition, percentage of intimates, frequency of contact, duration of ties and proximity—has produced four identifiable network types, termed (1) the kin network, (2) the family-intensive network, (3) the friend-focused network, and (4) the diffuse-tie network, which have proven in subsequent analyses to predict different levels of social support among respondents.

The classification of network types is, thus, a growing endeavor, with particular relevance for the development of social policy. If prior knowledge of different network types can, indeed, help predict formal service needs of elderly people, it would seem that typology construction can contribute much to the policy debate. It is interesting and useful, therefore, to clarify the degree to which network classification is on the research agenda of different countries. Toward this end, chapter authors were requested to respond to the following questions:

Did the study uncover characteristic variations in network structure and function such that differing network types may be identified? How was this done, and what were the results? What is the relationship of network types to measures of well-being, functional need or disability, service utilization, etc.?

The Interface between Informal Networks and the Formal Sector

A question of particular importance in addressing the role of social networks vis-à-vis social policy for the elderly is what occurs in practice when the informal components of social care (the social network) encounter the agents of social policy, usually in the form of formal care services. Do the two systems proceed to function in a complimentary manner, or does a new situation arise, in which one of the care systems overcomes the other? Does one's initial contact with one of the systems preclude or otherwise influence subsequent contact with the alternative system? In short, what are the dynamics of the interface between older adults' informal networks and the formal service sector that is designed to serve them? (See Bass and Noelker, 1987; Bulmer, 1987; Hoch and Hemmens, 1987; Litwin and Auslander, 1988; Twigg, 1989; Whittaker, 1986.)

There is, as yet, only limited data available offering the opportunity to respond to these questions, even though the answers to these probes would seem to be critical for the development of a policy of social care. The trends revealed in the data, moreover, are not unequivocal. A selected review of recent studies on this topic demonstrates the state of knowledge at hand.

A Swiss study examined, for example, whether the establishment of a formal neighborhood aid agency served to supplement or to replace informal support among elderly residents (Meyer-Fehr and Suter, 1992). The data indicate that three years following entry of the formal agency into the neighborhood, respondents reported receiving less assistance from friends, relations, and neighbors, and providing less to them in return. An increase was reported, on the other hand, in the amount of informal aid received from family members. The investigators characterize the result of their study as reflecting a partial replacement effect.

An Israeli analysis similarly finds evidence for a substitution effect when informal social networks encounter formal social services (Litwin and Auslander, 1993). However, a study in London found network variables to have little predictive value regarding elders' contact with physicians (Bowling, Farquhar, and Browne, 1991), and a Dutch study found no significant network influence on the use of home health-care services (Kempen and Suurmeijer, 1991). The informal network did, on the other hand, constitute the primary source of referral of elderly relatives to residential care facilities in Florida, even though one-third of the elders who relocated felt the move to be unnecessary (Bear, 1989).

The interface between informal components of the social network and formal service representatives is, thus, a topic that requires further investigation. However, few studies relate directly to this area in data collection efforts. Discussion of the issue, at least in part, stems frequently from inference. Accordingly, chapter authors in this collection were asked to specify, in any way they could, the relationship between informal support networks and formal social care services in their respective countries. This includes:

Identification of the types of members of the social network from the formal care system, discussion of the relations between informal networks and formal care services, and characterization of these relations as primarily reflective of mutual cooperation and exchange (interweaving), reinforcement of the informal network by the formal care system, or substitution of the informal network's caregiving by the formal care system.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Following from the previous topic, it is clearly efficacious to tie research findings on social networks to planning and development decisions in the sphere of social policy. Few sources in the literature, however, actually spell out the implications of their findings for policy and practice. Outstanding in this regard are a

few selected works that detail the practice suggestions (Kaufman, 1990; Mor-Barak, Miller, and Syme, 1991) or the policy ramifications of study outcomes (Curtis et al., 1992; Schreck, 1991; Wenger, 1993). The planning recommendations raised thus far in such discussions are variously aimed at clarifying service needs (Ezell and Gibson, 1989), targeting high risk groups (Levitt et al., 1985–86), or augmenting the social network for preventative reasons (Kaye and Monk, 1991).

In order to address this significant but relatively untapped topic, participating researchers in this book were requested to include, if possible:

Discussion of selected findings and their implications for maintenance of current social policy arrangements, or for change. What is the prognosis for implementing a social policy based upon community-based care in which the informal network plays a significant and ongoing role in caregiving?

Needed Future Research

Finally, and necessarily, an inquiry of this nature is bound to uncover unanswered questions and to underscore unresolved dilemmas in the area under investigation. As such, authors of the country reports were each asked to indicate:

Areas for needed future research and conclusions.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Network analyses from nine different countries are arranged in two general groupings for the purpose of presentation. First are those that reflect an essentially inferred network approach—that is, they explore relevant network characteristics but do not relate to the social network as a holistic entity that is defined *a priori* by the respondent. Within this grouping there is a further division in that some of the reports view the network features individually, whereas others consider selected variables in combination in order to derive comparative network formations.

Thus, Andersson and Sundström begin the inquiry with a secondary analysis of network-related data on the Swedish elderly, which emanates from various sources of survey data. Attias-Donfut and Rozenkier carefully consider the exchanges that take place within multigenerational family systems among the elderly French population. Béland and Zunzunegui go one step further in their exploration of the social networks of elderly Spaniards. Their data set is, indeed, a collection of individual network features, but they view these variables collectively in a multivariate analysis.

The remaining two chapters in the first grouping reflect an approach that may be considered a derived network methodology. Both studies apply cluster ana-

lytic techniques to selected network characteristics drawn from national social surveys. Stone and Rosenthal address social network types among elderly people in Canada, and Melkas and Jylhä consider the different network constellations of the elderly in Finland.

The second major group of studies similarly combines two somewhat different approaches to network investigation within a more general theme. The four country reports in this grouping all relate to the social network as a predefined social entity. However, two of the studies utilize prevalidated network inventories to consider the social networks of the elderly in their respective countries. Wenger applies her Practitioner Assessment of Network Type (PANT) questionnaire to a sample of British older persons. Lubben utilizes the network scale (LSNS) he developed as a means to address the networks of a sample of elderly people in Los Angeles, California.

The final two country reports, on the other hand, reflect a direct ego-centered approach to network delineation in which respondents identify the people whom they personally consider to comprise their social networks. Broese van Groenou and van Tilburg present findings from their analysis of the social networks of the Dutch elderly. Auslander reports the results of a network analysis of elderly Jewish residents of Jerusalem in Israel.

The concluding chapter, which follows the country reports, considers the data from each country in a comparative analysis. Thus, similarities are cited and significant divergences are pointed out. The implications of both common trends and exceptions to the rule are addressed in this summary discussion in relation to the social care of older people.