

but rather a result of increased demands and expectations. When these are not met, there is a tendency in modern society to dissolve the marriage; however, this does not necessarily affect one's concept of the importance of marriage and family in general.

## 12. PRIVATE NETWORKS

(Martin Diewald)

Private networks are defined as networks of social ties among individuals outside their own households. The importance of these relationships lies in multiple types of services, which are exchanged between persons or households through private networks:

- material support
- personal and manual services
- advice and information
- social life
- emotional support
- social integration by embedding individuals in social relations, thereby creating a sense of togetherness.

These services add to those which are provided by household members. They are also partly provided by the welfare state and market supply.

### 12.1 FREQUENCY OF NETWORK-CONTACT

Personal contact is an essential prerequisite for exchange of support. Ninety percent of the respondents have close relatives living apart from the respondents' own household. Relatives who have lived with each other in the same household in the past visit each other frequently (see Table 12.1). Above all, parents and their children who have left home visit each other frequently. Personal contact with grandparents or among siblings are somewhat less frequent. The relatively frequent visits with parents-in-law indicate

LIVING CONDITIONS

Table 12.1: Frequencies of network-contact: relatives, friends and neighbours

Type of relatives <sup>a</sup>	respondents having				among them: frequency of visits			
	relatives/ friends/ neighbours in percent	nearly every day	at least once per week	at least once per month	less frequent	never		
Child(ren)	45	26	37	19	17	1		
Parents	52	25	32	24	18	1		
Parents-in-Law	40	19	26	28	22	6		
Grandparents	22	10	18	24	42	6		
Siblings	71	10	19	28	40	3		
Other Relatives	63	4	12	24	56	4		
Close friendship	73	19	46	27	8	.		
Good relations to neighbours	82	19	24	13	28	16		

a) Relatives living apart from own household.

Data source: Wohlfahrtssurvey 1984.

a further important aspect of networks among relatives: the contact is not only based on intimacy but also on additional regulations and obligations.

Little variation was found among social groups or classes in the number of visits between relatives. The particularly high frequency of contact between parents and their children, as well as to a lesser degree among siblings, confirms a continuation of the "enlarged nuclear family" after the original family household has dispersed. The frequency of contact within the "enlarged nuclear family" is by and large independent of the number of relatives with whom contact is possible. In contrast, the frequency of contact with grandparents and other close relatives is markedly higher if there are no or only few relatives.

In 1978, 74% and in 1984, 73% of the respondents reported having at least one "really close friend". In 1978, 6% of the respondents had only one really close friend, 14% had two, another 14% had three, 21% had four to five, and 17% had even more than five.

With increasing age, friendships become more rare. Furthermore, the type of household in which a respondent lives plays an important role. In the case of young respondents, living together with a partner resulted in fewer encounters with a best friend, although the frequency and the number of close friends did not decline. In the age group of 60 years and over, the impact of the respondents' family background on their personal contact with friends becomes apparent. If we compare the following groups – married couples whose adult children are living in the household, married couples without children, and widows, the frequency of having a "really close friend", as well as the number of corresponding visits, increases from the first group mentioned to the last.

Moreover, significant stratum-specific differences were found: Respondents who see themselves as belonging to the working-class have close friends less frequently, and have also fewer of them. But on the other hand, they have more personal contact with their best friends and form denser networks compared to both middle- and upper-class respondents.

In contrast to contact with friends, the likelihood of good relations with neighbors increases the higher the age. The respondents were asked whether they knew "neighbors with whom they have good relations". The proportion of those who report good relations with their neighbors increases continuously from 57% in the age group of 18- to-30 years up to 90% in the group of 65 years and over. In the life-cycle, the phase of frequent neighborhood contacts

begins with the foundation of the family when the first child is born. A mere 67% of married couples up to 35 years of age without children had good neighborhood contacts, as opposed to 84% of those with children. Urban-rural differences are surprisingly small. Although, good neighborhood relations are most common in a rural-village milieu (91%), these relations are only slightly less frequent in metropolitan areas (80%), and they are similarly common in small and middle sized towns, as well as in suburbs and villages in the vicinity of metropolitan areas and large-scale towns.

Home-ownership promotes integration into the neighborhood; this is born out of the fact that 88% of private owners report good relations with their neighbors compared to a mere 77% of tenants. Apart from this, the share of respondents with such relations decreases, according to the increase in number of households per building, from a share of 87% of the respondents living in one-family housing to 67% living in buildings with more than 20 households.

Apparently, the image of good neighborhood relations does not always require frequent contact; it encompasses different neighborhood relationships as well. Nineteen percent of the respondents reporting "good neighborhood relations" visit their neighbors daily, 24% at least once a week, 13% at least once a month, 28% visit them even less often, and 16% not at all. In contrast to the share of those reporting good neighborhood relations, the concrete form of neighborhood relations, i.e., frequency of contact, varies only slightly between various social groups, housing situations, and community types. A significant difference is found, however, in the age group of 65 years and over between married couples and singles living alone. For the latter group, frequent contact with neighbors provides compensation for contact which is otherwise lacking.

#### 12.2 SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR OTHER HOUSEHOLDS

For a sample of personal services and material goods, Table 12.2 indicates the frequency of support given to relatives, friends, and neighbors.

In general, the highest over all frequency is reported for support given to relatives, whereas the lowest is always reported for support provided to neighbors. Between 1980 and 1984 only few changes can be detected; only the typical do-it-yourself activities, such as gardening and apartment renovation increased significantly during that period. Of all respondents, the share

Table 12.2: Support in private networks: type by recipient of support

Type of support within last 2-3 years <sup>a</sup>	Recipient							
	Relatives		Friends		Neighbours		Total	
	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984
	in percent							
Personal services								
helping with								
personal problems	18	19	21	25	8	8	33	36
child care	16	17	9	9	8	6	27	28
care for sick or disabled persons	11	11	4	4	4	3	16	16
Services referring to goods								
apartment renovation	17	20	11	14	3	4	25	29
moving	15	15	15	15	3	3	27	28
gardening	14	15	5	7	4	7	19	24
construction work	9	10	6	6	2	2	14	16
car repair	5	6	7	8	2	3	10	12
Total	52	52	42	42	24	24	69	69

a) Multiple responses.

Data source: Wohlfahrtssurvey 1980, 1984.

remained constant at 31% for those who had not extended one of the types of support listed in the survey.

Helping out with personal problems is the most common type of support. The sociopolitical importance of support provided by relatives is primarily indicated by the private care of sick or disabled persons, as well as by private child care. Particularly in regard to the care of the sick, neighbors and friends play only a minor role, while friends very often help in dealing with personal problems, as well as with do-it-yourself work, like moving, renovation, and repairs – which is not continuously requested. Help from neighbors is obviously limited to emergence situations.

In general, the form and frequency of support depends on the abilities and special knowledge of the person offering the support. Older respondents

generally help out less, especially in regard to helping friends and extensive do-it-yourself work, while the decline in frequency is less clear for child-care, care of the sick, and helping out with personal problems. Car repairs and construction work are domains of skilled workers – this indicates that a part of the support network includes services for which special qualifications are necessary. As anticipated, there is a gender specific division of labor. Men assist with do-it-yourself work three times more than women; women take care of children or care for sick people twice as often as men.

Payments for helping relatives, friends and neighbors are fairly uncommon.

### 12.3 RECEIVING SUPPORT

For the majority of households, the potential opportunities for receiving support vary only slightly between various types of support. For all types, the proportion of those respondents who are able to ask someone for help averages, with one exception, about 30% (see Table 12.3). The share of those respondents who had actually received support in the last year, varies (with

Table 12.3: Types of support: Potential and actually received support in private network

	could ask for help potential	actually received as percent of households supported	as percent of total of households
in percent			
Support services			
TV/radio repair	28	55	11
Kitchen utilities repair	35	53	17
Furniture repair	30	47	12
Car repair	34	61	18
Tailor's work	31	58	16
Brick works	27	42	10
Wallpapering	57	56	30
Legal advising	33	57	17
Tax advising	34	66	19

Data source: Wohlfahrtssurvey 1984.

the same exception) between 10% and 20% of the interviewed households. This indicates that informal support networks are of some economic importance to the participating households; and indeed these opportunities are often taken advantage of.

However, it is very seldom that a person has a source of support for all services. A mere 10% of the households interviewed obtained at least seven of the nine mentioned services, but 21% of the households had none of these at their disposal through their private networks.

Whether a household can or actually does receive a large spectrum of support services is not only dependent on the number of personal contacts but also on a number of support services given by the respective household to others. This indicates that the exchange of support through private networks relies at least partially on the principle of mutuality and is therefore selective.

#### 12.4 EVALUATION OF RECEIVED SUPPORT

The large majority of households interviewed which received various types of support evaluate these as "just okay" (see Table 12.4). Only few households report that the support received is more than desired; it is seen as an un-

Table 12.4: Subjective evaluation of the extent of support received in private networks by source of support

Evaluation	Relatives		Friends		Neighbours	
	1980	1984	1980	1984	1980	1984
Rather to little <sup>a</sup>	11	14	10	9	4	3
"Just okay"	83	81	87	89	82	81
Rather more than desired	6	5	3	2	4	3

a) As percent of households actually received support.

Data source: Wohlfahrtssurvey 1980, 1984.

desired intrusion of outsiders into the private sphere. Excessive help is most frequent between relatives. It seems to be more difficult to protect oneself against excessive help from relatives than from neighbors or friends.

Between 10% and 14% of the respondents stated that the support received was too little, this was more often the case in regard to relatives and neighbors than friends.

The share of singles 65 years and over who complain about not receiving enough help is only slightly above average. Thrity percent of this group state that their households receive more support than they give to other households. These results indicate that the principle of mutuality does not function so selectively that weak households are generally excluded from sufficient support through private networks.

### 13. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION (Hans-Michael Mohr)

Social participation is one of the various alternatives individuals have for shaping their lives and exerting influence on the quality of life. It is possible to distinguish social activities on an organizational level (e.g., attending a trade union meeting) from activities on a private level (e.g., going to the theater). In this chapter we concentrate on the organizational level and examine social participation in the areas of politics, labor, religion, culture, and leisure activities. *Of special concern are membership and participation in organizations, as well as closely related basic attitudes and evaluations. We intend to provide insights into the variety of forms and patterns of membership participation.*

#### 13.1 RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION

In the Federal Republic of Germany, church membership is rooted in tradition and still remains widespread. This was only slightly altered in the mid-seventies, a period of considerable membership losses. Currently about 50% of the German adult population are Protestants, 40% are Roman Catholics,