

Personal Community in Transition : Marital Relations in Local and Extra-local Networks

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Traditional arguments on community changes have largely ignored changes in extra-local and intra-family relations. Although some findings from recent personal network studies in North America suggest that extra-local ties are, at least, as important and supportive as local ties, it is yet to be fully analyzed if there is any association between living in more or less local networks and having more or less supportive marital relations. In an exploratory study, I examine the relationships between the quality of marital relations and the locality of personal networks, using survey data from a sample (N=126) of married women with young children, living in Shizuoka city, Japan. Results of Multiple Classification Analyses show the following. 1) Wives with the least emotional support from husbands tend to live in extra-local-tie-dominated networks ; 2) Wives with no close friends shared with husbands tend to have the smallest local networks ; 3) The more dependent wives are on emotional support from husbands, the more shared with husbands their close friends are. The findings suggest that emotionally supportive marital relations are compatible with local/overlapping community networks, while extra-local/separate networks tend to contend with marital ties.