

Families in space: a configurational perspective

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Plan

1. The configurational perspective on families
2. The Stepout study
3. Spatial localisation of family configurations

The configurational perspective on families

Configuration=collection of individuals of any size, from the smallest personal networks, which he termed social atoms, to humanity as a whole, in which meaningful ties link individuals with each other.

Individuals are interdependent in a configuration because each one fulfills some of the others' needs for social recognition, power, emotional proximity, financial and practical resources, sexuality, or other socially defined needs. Interdependencies are not dyadic in nature but rather organized in large networks which shape individual identity.

The Stepout study

300 women who lived on a regular basis with at least one child aged between 5 and 13 and a partner (cohabiting or married) were randomly selected and interviewed during Spring 2009 and Winter 2010 in Geneva (Switzerland).

Two subsamples:

In subsample 1 (stepfamilies), the child aged between 5 and 13 is the biological child of the respondent but not of her coresident partner. The partner or the respondent may have other children, either with the respondent or with another partner, living with them or elsewhere.

Subsample 2 (first-time family) is a matched sample in which the child aged between 5 and 13 is the biological child of both the respondent and the partner.

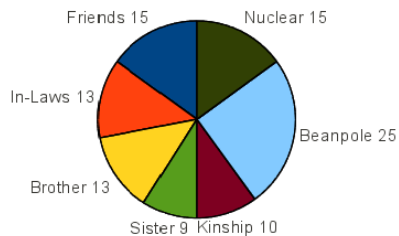
Research funded by the *Swiss National science Foundation*

Nine family configurations found

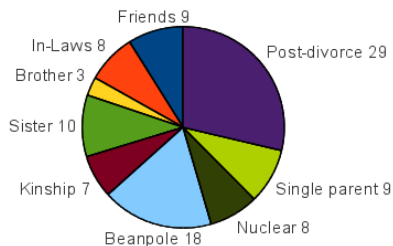
1. Friends
2. In-laws
3. Brothers
4. Sisters
5. Kinship
6. Beanpole
7. Nuclear
8. Post-divorce
9. Single-parent

Distribution of family configurations (%)

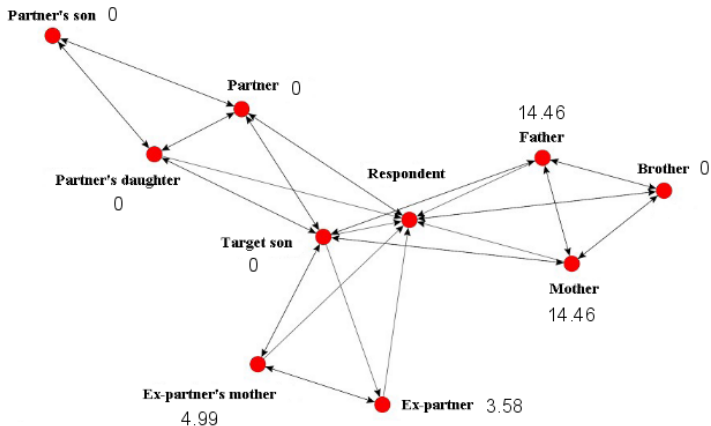
First time families



Stepfamilies



Case study: A post-divorce family configuration



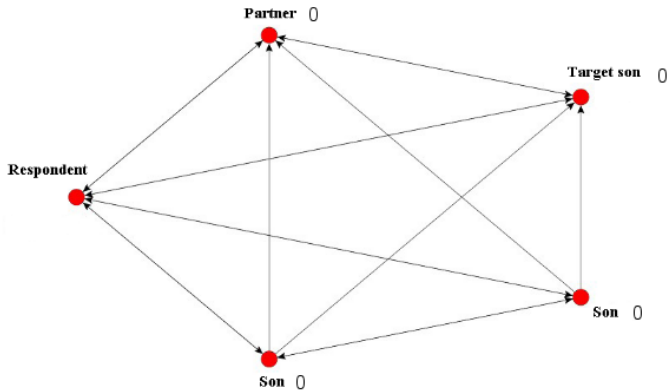
Network density: 0.39

Respondent's betweenness centrality: 0.19

Average distance respondent-alter: 4.17 km

Average distance between all network members: 6.68 km

Case study: A nuclear family configuration



Network density: 0.8

Respondent's betweenness centrality: 0.33

Average distance respondent-alter: 0 km

Average distance between all network members: 0 km



Case study: A single-parent configuration

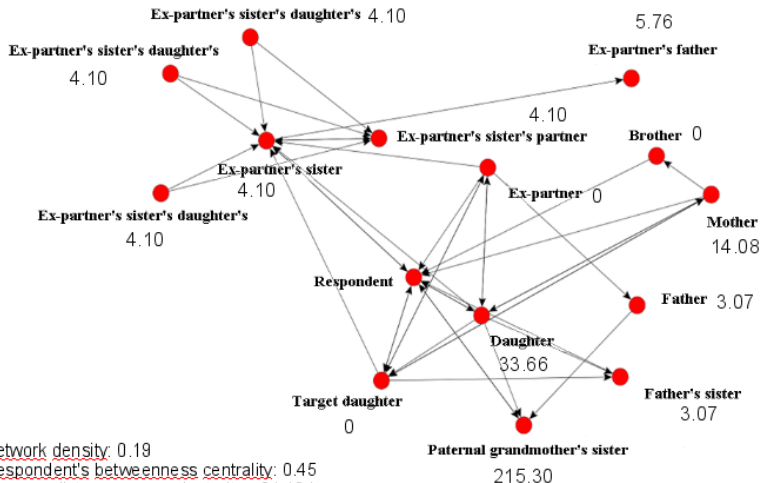


Table: Spatial dispersion of family configurations. Average distance between configuration members (natural log)

Types of family configurations	Total	Stepfamilies	First-time
Friends	3.48	3.16	3.66
In-laws	3.43	3.25	3.55
Brothers	3.01	2.97	3.03
Sisters	4.05	3.54	4.64
Kinship	4.03	4.27	3.88
Beanpole	3.35	3.55	3.20
Nuclear	1.87	1.46	2.09
Single-parent	4.27	4.27	–
Post-divorce	3.08	3.08	–
Average	3.30	3.28	3.33
Sig	4.5**	2.8**	3.19**

Table: Distance between respondents and their alters (natural log)

Types of family configurations	Total	Stepfamilies	First-time
Friends	3.05	2.75	3.22
In-laws	3.07	2.84	3.21
Brothers	2.71	2.79	2.69
Sisters	3.81	3.32	4.39
Kinship	3.70	3.90	3.56
Beanpole	3.00	3.19	2.88
Nuclear	1.66	1.29	1.86
Single-parent	4.28	4.28	–
Post-divorce	2.73	2.73	–
Average	2.99	2.98	3.00
Sig	4.6**	2.9**	3.06**

END

Thank you !

Table: Spatial dispersion of family configurations and Indices of Social Capital. Pearson Correlations

Indices of Social Capital	Average Dist.	Dist.Resp.-alters
Density Emotional Support	-.28**	-.26**
Density Domestic Support	-.29**	-.28**
Density Influence	-.31**	-.30**
Centrality Emotional Support	-.19**	-.22**
Centrality Domestic Support	-.15**	-.12*
Centrality Influence	-.09 ns	-.12 ns