Social Networks and Stigmatization.

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SOCIAL NETWORKS AND STIGMATIZATION

A Dissertation

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in

The Department of Sociology

by

William Craig Carter
B.A., William Penn College, 1994
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1996
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ABSTRACT

An extensive body of literature on stigma exists in both sociology and psychology. However, the literature has virtually ignored how an individual's pattern of interactions might be affected as a result of being stigmatized. This dissertation develops theory concerning the nature of stigma management strategies and their consequences for social networks. Specifically, the theory predicts that stigmatized individuals tend to have relatively smaller and sparser personal networks, participate less in foci of activity, and draw fewer pairs of associates from the same focus than do nonstigmatized individuals. The data analyzed in this dissertation are especially useful for examining social networks and stigmatization. The sample consists of almost the entire population of students at a small Midwestern college. The data set includes information about the students' sentiments toward each other, the amount of time they estimated spending with each other, and the types of activities in which each individual participated. I conducted my analyses with all students together and then separately for men and for women. This provides a relatively independent replication of the findings. The results for men and women together support all major predictions concerning social networks and stigmatization.
INTRODUCTION

To be stigmatized is to be socially discredited. In *The Scarlet Letter*, the fictional character Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale described the level of rebuke imputed to Hester Prynne when he said,

> Lo, the scarlet letter which Hester wears! Ye have all shuddered at it! Wherever her walk hath been,—wherever, so miserably burdened, she may have hoped to find repose,—it hath cast a lurid gleam of awe and horrible repugnance round about her (from *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne).

In the story, *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne seriously violated the norms of her community by committing adultery. Because of Hester’s almost unforgivable behavior, she was stigmatized and made to wear a scarlet A. However, individuals do not necessarily have to engage in extreme behavior or have especially outrageous attitudes to be stigmatized. Individuals are often stigmatized for harmless differences and worse, for imagined differences. Most individuals need only think back to their school days to remember the little girl that stuttered and how her classmates called her dummy and other names. Or perhaps one can recall how athletic boys made attributions about some young boy’s sexual orientation because that boy was overweight or refused to fight.

There are many different examples of stigma, and stigmatization is not a rare event. In fact, it is common for individuals to contend with the potential of being stigmatized at some point in their lives (Goffman 1963). Individuals who are stigmatized may have limited access to emotional, psychological, and instrumental support. The consequences of being stigmatized can range from minor disruptions in an individual’s interactions to that individual’s complete ostracization.
An extensive body of literature on stigma exists in both sociology and psychology. The majority of the literature on stigma has focused on the cognitive and affective aspects of stigma, virtually ignoring how stigmatization might influence patterns of social interaction. My dissertation develops theoretical predictions about how stigmatization affects individuals' social networks and how basic social network principles help explain the interpersonal relations of stigmatized individuals.

This dissertation has 6 chapters. In the first chapter, I define terms and discuss key concepts such as the distinction between the various types of stigmata. In the second chapter, I present literature that suggests how stigmatization might affect individuals' pattern of interactions. I also include a review of the literature examining how aspects of social networks vary by gender. In Chapter 3, I develop theoretical predictions that stigmatization affects (1) the size of personal networks, (2) the number of formal activities in which stigmatized individuals are likely to participate, and (3) the composition of personal networks. A compendium of the theoretical arguments is presented at the conclusion of Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4, I describe the data used in this dissertation, the operationalization of variables, and I explain how the data were manipulated and analyzed. These data are especially useful for examining social networks and stigmatization. The sample consists of almost the entire population of students at a small Midwestern college. The data include information about the students' sentiments toward each other, the amount of time they estimated spending with each other, and the types of activities in which each individual participated. In Chapter 5, I present results and discuss the analyses of the
arguments developed in Chapter 4. Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss implications of my study and directions for future research on stigma.
CHAPTER I
DEFINING TERMS
STIGMA AND MARKS

A stigma is a real or imagined trait that serves to discredit the person to whom it is attributed (Goffman 1963). A stigmatized individual is one who is not completely socially acceptable. Dictionary definitions say that stigmatization is a state of being described or identified in opprobrious terms. In other words, stigmatized individuals are disliked, loathed and/or rebuked. Understanding the definition of stigmatization is somewhat complicated because there are at least three different perspectives which one might adopt. First, there is the perspective of ego. Individuals may feel stigmatized, in that they feel disliked, loathed and/or rebuked. The limitation of this perspective is that feeling stigmatized is contingent upon individuals perceiving cues, such as being avoided, treated badly, or given perfunctory attention. Second, particular traits may be considered stigmatizing. While it is true that some traits tend to be consistently stigmatizing in some sociohistorical contexts, those same traits might be positively evaluated in other sociohistoric contexts. For example, Americans’ views on individuals’ weight has changed over time. In the 1700s, over-weight individuals, both men and women, were perceived as being healthy and wealthy. In contrast, contemporary Americans associate being over-weight with poor health and in some instances, with being of a member of a lower socioeconomic class (Laslett and Warren 1975).

Finally, stigmatization can be conceptualized from the perspective of those who impute stigma. The act of imputing stigma is to dislike, loath, or rebuke someone based
on some trait. However, there is nothing inherent in any given trait that makes it stigmatizing. Stigmatization occurs when attributional processes link negatively differentiating traits to perceived dispositions that disqualify individuals from legitimate interactions (Elliott, Ziegler, Altman, and Scott 1982; Jones, Farina, Hastorf, Markus, Miller, and Scott 1982). From this perspective, it is not necessary for individuals to feel stigmatized or even be aware of their stigmatization for others to impute stigma. In this dissertation, I consider stigmatization from this third perspective; individuals are stigmatized when others impute stigma to them.

Not all negatively differentiating traits are necessarily stigmatizing. The term *mark* is used to distinguish between having potentially stigmatizing traits and being stigmatized. Marks can be physical, embedded in behavior, part of one’s biographical ancestry, or based on group membership. For example, consistently dressing very casually in social contexts in which individuals usually dress formally is a mark that is potentially, but not necessarily, stigmatizing. A mark does not automatically initiate the stigmatization process; although, it can interfere with interactions between individuals possessing a mark and individuals perceiving the mark.

Several different terms have been used to designate individuals who evaluate marked individuals and stigmatized individuals. For example, individuals performing the evaluative role have been called *markers, labelers, observers* (Jones et al., 1984), and *normals* (Goffman 1963). I believe that these terms fail to capture the nature of the relationship between marked individuals and the interactants who evaluate and assess them. The terms evaluator or assessor might be adequate, but I have decided to use the
term *judge* to indicate those individuals who evaluate marked individuals and stigmatized individuals. Individuals can be judges regardless of their own degree of stigmatization.

**COLLECTIVE STIGMATIZATION**

Stigmatization results from the attributional processes of a given individual. Thus, stigmatization occurs when a given judge imputes stigma to a marked individual. To be imputed stigma by a single judge might be problematic under conditions in which that judge is in a structural position to control or destroy the stigmatized person. For example, imagine a graduate student with a distinctive southern drawl who is attending a prestigious northern university with hopes of studying under a professor who has a strong prejudice about people who speak with southern accents. Now imagine that the professor forms negative attitudes about the student’s academic abilities based on the way the student speaks. Under such circumstances, the professor may consider the student unworthy and even dislike him/her. Graduate students depend on professors for education, socialization, and professional connections. In this scenario, a graduate student who is stigmatized by even a single professor is vulnerable to a variety of negative outcomes.

However, the consequences of being stigmatized by a single judge will usually be relatively minor. All things being equal, the negative consequences of stigmatization will be most severe under conditions in which individuals are stigmatized by a collective of others. Implicit in the literature is the idea that stigma is imputed by multiple others. Sociocultural perspectives of stigma suggest that group members generally agree about what categories of people are to be stigmatized. Even perspectives that emphasize
affective and cognitive processes that allow individuals to construct their own interpretation of what is labeled stigma suggest that individuals experience stigmatization from multiple alters. The cumulative effects of being stigmatized by a collective of judges will usually be worse than being stigmatized by any single judge, and the greater the overall level of ego's stigmatization, the more severe will be the consequences for ego.

**TYPES OF STIGMATA**

Goffman (1963) maintained that there are three types of stigmata: abominations of the body, tribal stigma, and blemishes of individual character. Abominations of the body are physical attributes such as facial disfigurement, obesity, or even a minor lisp (c.f., Ellis 1998). Physical marks are most likely to be stigmatizing under conditions in which judges perceive the marked individual as responsible for the mark (Elliott et al. 1982; Jones et al. 1984; Katz 1981; Orcutt 1976).

Tribal stigma is imputed based on affiliation with disenfranchised groups, such as racial, ethnic, or religious groups. Racial, ethnic, and religious identifications are often salient characteristics and as such, members of these groups tend to provide support to each other and exhibit some loyalty (Goffman 1963). Nevertheless, all types of stigmatized individuals may avoid interacting primarily with similar others in order to minimize the centrality of the trait. This is the case for individuals that have been stigmatized based on tribal stigma. For example, consider an ambitious well-spoken African American man who wishes to disassociate himself from the negative stereotypes projected onto many African American men. He may choose to minimize his public interactions with African American men who tend to use slang and dress in
unconventional clothing. In his efforts to distinguish himself from society’s negative stereotypes about African American men, he may strategically interact with many white associates or participate in activities that are predominated by individuals other than African Americans.

Finally, stigma may be imputed to individuals who are perceived to possess blemishes of individual character. Character blemishes can be inferred from actions (e.g., speaking with a southern drawl), orientations (e.g., homosexuality), events (e.g., being arrested) and circumstances (e.g., being unemployed). Possessing a character blemish is often considered evidence of an individual’s true nature because judges tend to believe that the discrediting trait is evidence of moral deficiency, and that it could be removed if the marked individual chose to do so (Elliott et al., 1982; Katz 1981; Orcutt 1976). Judges will tend to perceive a mark as evidence of the marked individual’s true self under conditions in which (1) a mark is a persistent trait of an individual, (2) an individual possessed the mark in the past as well as in the present, and (3) there is reason to believe the individual will possess the mark in the future (Silverman 1974).

It is important to recognize that individuals may be stigmatized because of misinformation or false accusations. A mark does not have to be real to be real in its consequences. For example, a judge may link a young woman’s provocative style of dress to other negative dispositions about her sexual behavior. Thus, a virgin can be labeled a slut. Similarly, some judges may view individuals with southern draws as dummies or losers. Character blemishes such as being labeled dork, slut, jerk, wimp,
bitch, or loser are particularly insidious because they may be unwarranted, and they can be assigned to almost anybody at any time.

The stigmatization process is the same whether or not it results from tribal stigma, physical stigma, or a blemish of individual character. Nevertheless, the contingencies that individuals experience vary by the type of stigma that they possess. For example, face-to-face interactions provide the members of devalued groups the opportunity to positively distinguish themselves as individuals. Conversely, face-to-face interactions tend to underscore the discrediting traits of people who possess blemishes of individual character. Further, individuals with physical stigmata may be limited in their ability to participate in some social contexts, whereas individuals with character blemishes are usually able to function in the same types of social contexts as anyone else. For example, a one-armed man may have difficulty swimming but ex-convicts should be able to swim as well as anyone. Nevertheless, while I acknowledge that the three basic types of stigmata are distinct from each other, the stigmatization processes and manifestations of tribal stigma, physical stigma, and character blemishes will be similar.

PERSONAL NETWORKS

A personal network is the set of others to whom a particular actor, termed ego, is linked. A personal network might also be referred to as an ego-centered network (Scott 1991; Wasserman and Faust 1994). The theoretical arguments developed in this dissertation are most applicable to non-familial personal networks. Interactions between kin are often complicated by obligation and family commitment (Bott 1957; Fischer...
For example, it is easier to disengage from most foci of activity than it is from family. The present arguments are most useful in describing the relationship between stigmatization and the type of personal networks in which individuals have discretion about with whom they interact.

Finally, in this dissertation, I refer to the density or sparseness of a personal network. The relative density of a personal network is represented by a numeric value indicating the extent that ego's associates are linked to each other. In network analytic terms, density is measured as the number of actual ties between participants in a given network divided by the number of possible ties between participants within that same network. A completely dense network would have a value of one. Personal network density refers to the proportion of actual ties between ego's associates out of all the possible ties that could exist among ego's associates. Networks are seldom completely dense. Inevitably, some network members do not interact with each other.

In network analytic terms, a sparse network is one in which none of the members know each other. A completely sparse network is the opposite of a completely dense network. A completely sparse network has an average density of zero. I use the term sparseness to emphasize that some networks have relatively low degrees of density. I do not use the terms density or sparseness to indicate propinquity or population concentration.

FORMAL FOCI OF ACTIVITY AND CONSTRAINT

In this dissertation, I draw on Focus Theory (Feld 1981) to develop many of my theoretical arguments. Feld suggested that individuals tend to organize their social
relations around shared foci of activity. A focus of activity is defined as "a social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around which joint activities are organized" (p. 1016). According to focus theory, joint activities are sources of interpersonal relations, and that selection into and/or participation in these activities is associated with certain individual characteristics. Foci of activity may be activities, environments, ideologies, or attitudes that constrain individuals to interact.

An important concept in focus theory is constraint. Constraint refers to the extent that a given focus of activity requires participation and the frequency with which participants interact with one another. Some foci of activity are very constraining while others only minimally constrain participants. Under conditions in which an entity does not constrain participants, it is not a focus of activity. For example, imagine that several graduate students in the sociology department smoke cigarettes. Now imagine that the department has a no-smoking policy. The students may congregate on the front steps to smoke. To the extent that the students are constrained to frequently interact with one another in the course of smoking, then smoking might be considered a psychological focus of activity and the front steps might be considered a physical focus of activity. However, if the students smoke together infrequently and they tend not to interact with each other either while smoking or on the front steps, then neither smoking or the front steps are foci of activity. In other words, if a given entity does not constrain participants to frequently interact, it is not a focus.

Foci of activity can be entities that are formally established and maintained, or they can originate in informal interactions. I define formal foci of activity as those entities
that are established to fulfill goals that are social in nature. Examples of formal foci of activity could be sororities, clubs, the work place or sports teams. Informal foci of activity are entities whose manifest functions are instrumental. For example, a particular copy machine might be considered an informal focus of activity under conditions in which it facilitates interactions among workers who need to make several copies a day. To the extent that workers are both required to make copies using a particular machine and frequently interact with other workers at the copy machine, it can be considered an informal focus of activity.

I suggest that formal foci of activity tend to be more constraining than are informal foci of activity. This is because, on average, formal foci require more consistent participation than do informal foci. Participants in formal foci of activity tend to adopt schedules and have meetings. By contrast, participants in informal foci of activity rarely make explicit demands on each other. I would also argue that the more that foci require participation, the more likely will participants frequently interact with one another.

Focus constraint is an especially important aspect of the theoretical arguments presented in this dissertation, thus, I am particularly interested in formal foci of activity. However, I do not wish to minimize the importance of informal foci of activity. Under certain conditions informal foci of activity could be highly constraining. It would be useful to examine informal foci along with formal foci. Unfortunately, the data used in this dissertation include only information about formal foci of activity. Thus, my theoretical predictions about stigmatization and foci pertain specifically to formal foci of activity.
In this chapter, I have defined terms and discussed key concepts. Specifically, I have distinguished between being marked and being stigmatized, the various types of stigmata, formal and informal foci of activity, and being stigmatized and being collectively stigmatized. I have also included the definitions of key network terms such as personal network, density, sparseness, foci of activity and constraint.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW
AVOIDANCE AND NETWORK SIZE

Stigmatized individuals are attributed a wide range of imperfections, such as being incompetent, unpredictable, inconsistent, unworthy, or threatening to interaction and social stability (Goffman 1963; Bord 1976). Judges may react to stigmatized individuals by ignoring them, treating them as nonpersons, or offering them only occasional and perfunctory responses (Elliott et al., 1982; Gibbons 1986; Kinney 1993; Snow and Anderson 1997). Further, judges routinely view stigmatized individuals as unworthy of interaction and consequently, deliberately avoid interacting with them (Goffman 1963; Worthington 1974). For example, in Newman’s (1988) study of downwardly mobile families, she found that associates were often embarrassed by individuals’ economic hardships to the extent that they withdraw from relationships in order to avoid awkward interactions (see also Wills 1981).

Casual acquaintances avoid stigmatized individuals because it is usually easy to do so. In contrast, family members and intimate associates are less likely to use avoidance because of their personal investment in the relationship and feelings of obligation. For example, Birenbaum’s (1970) study of mothers of retarded children showed that fifty percent of the mothers’ friends withdrew from the relationship after discovering the children’s retardation. By contrast, only twenty-four percent of the mothers’ relatives discontinued their relationships with the mothers.

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Some individuals avoid stigmatized individuals because they are afraid of being stigmatized by virtue of their association with a given stigmatized individual (Elliott et al., 1982; Gibbons 1986; Kinney 1993). Goffman (1963) refers to stigma resulting from associations as courtesy stigma. Courtesy stigma tends to be imputed when: (1) marked-unmarked interactions are believed to indicate similarity between the two individuals; (2) unbalanced triads are created; and (3) marked-unmarked interactions are perceived by judges as voluntary (Sigelman, Howell, Cornell, Cutright, and Dewey 1991). Often, relatives of stigmatized individuals receive courtesy stigma because judges presume that relatives have negative traits in common (Birenbaum 1970; Neuberg, Smith, Hoffman, and Russell 1994; May 2000). For example, Powell-Cope and Brown (1992) found that AIDS family caregivers can experience severe courtesy stigma. A caregiver in the authors' study said,

I could get upset about a lot of things people do. The fact that I am a partner with someone with AIDS, that they naturally assume that I am going to come down with AIDS, and that I too will die in the future, or the near future. They are looking at me like I'm this time bomb waiting to go off (p. 575).

Contagion is a powerful factor in the stigmatization process. Goffman (1963) suggested that courtesy stigma may also be imputed to the friends of the friends of stigmatized individuals, albeit in diminishing intensity.

If judges wish to avoid courtesy stigma, they must make it clear to observers that their interactions with stigmatized individuals are appropriate to clearly defined roles (Jones et al., 1984). For example, studying HIV related issues can raise suspicions about a researcher's sexual orientation, promiscuity, or drug use. Since choosing a research
topic is largely voluntary, sociologists that conduct research on various forms of
deviance are especially susceptible to courtesy stigma. Studying sex industries such as
stripping, prostitution, or swinging can raise suspicions about a scholar’s values,
motivations, and behaviors. Even when legitimate roles have been defined, judges who
interact with stigmatized individuals may still be vulnerable to courtesy stigma (Kirby

Goffman (1963) maintained that stigmatized individuals tend to withdraw from
all interactions, with only a few exceptions. Stigmatized individuals tend to interact with
alters that share a similar stigma, or with professionals and relatives. In other words,
stigmatized individuals try to restrict their interaction to those persons that are most
likely to be kind to them and avoid others by whom they anticipate being treated badly
(Elliott 1982; Link 1987; Link, Cullen, Struening, Shrout, Dohrenwend 1989; Major and
Gramzow 1999). For example, in their efforts to conceal past misconduct, many ex-
convicts avoid interactions with others that might treat them badly (Ericson 1977).
Hood’s (1988) study of custodians revealed that they minimized their own feelings of
being stigmatized by working at night when they were usually alone, or in areas in which
there were no other employees. Hood reported,

A 51-year-old black woman spoke of how embarrassing it was to be a janitor,
especially since Urban University had no service elevators. At night, at least the
elevators were likely to be empty, but on days, she would have to push her cart
and mop bucket onto elevators already crowded with people (p. 105).

Further, to the extent that stigmatized individuals perceive themselves as burdensome,
they may avoid their associates (Jones et al., 1984). One of the custodians in Hood’s
study expressed his frustration by saying, "Because even if you think they (professors) aren't in, they come in and start bitching about all the noise. And the professors don't care about the cleaning, but the boss does" (p. 108). Unfortunately, by avoiding others, stigmatized individuals might be perpetuating their stigma. Avoiding interaction makes it more difficult for judges to obtain alternative information about a person which in turn creates a sense of unpredictability that increases the likelihood that judges will impute stigma (Ericson 1977).

May (2000) reported in her qualitative study that the relatives of convicted murderers attempted to alleviate the experience of being stigmatized by avoiding all public interaction. May quoted one mother as saying, "I was two months off work when it happened. I couldn't face people, I couldn't go out shopping, I daren't go out on my own. I was terrified that someone would come up and start shouting at me" (p. 207). Further, the family members of convicted murderers restricted themselves to interactions with each other. A mother of a convicted murderer was quoted as saying, "I'd get in the car with our Nick's wife. I'd get in the car with my brother-in-law. I'd get in with the social worker. But I'd not go on the street on my own" (p. 208). Clearly, stigmatized individuals restrict their nonfamilial interactions.

The tendency for stigmatized individuals to be avoided frustrates their ability to interact with others but when combined with their own tendencies to avoid others it makes it unlikely that they will interact with as many alters as nonstigmatized individuals. Several studies have found that rejected and unpopular children have relatively smaller networks than their more popular counterparts (George and Hartmann 1996; Ladd 1983;
Patterson, Kupersmidt, and Griesler 1990). Ladd (1983) explained that differences in network size among children is due to both the effects of withdrawing from interaction and being avoided.

Research shows that many individuals who possess negatively differentiating traits have relatively small networks. For example, Brugha and colleagues (1993) found that the long-term users of day care psychiatric facilities had smaller personal networks than did the control subjects. Similarly, Link et. al., (1989) found that the tendency for mental patients to withdraw from interaction produced smaller personal networks than those of untreated community residents.

In a study conducted by Powell-Cope and Brown (1992), individuals that publicly revealed that they were AIDS caregivers experienced harsh rejection and harassment. As a consequence of their stigmatization, the caregivers lost many of their former friends and were avoided by community members. Powell-Cope and Brown quoted one woman as saying,

I feel a lot of distance from others. I’m a single, straight woman and live in the suburbs. You know, AIDS isn’t something that my peer group--I’m the only one dealing with AIDS, and in a way, I’m bringing up something they don’t want to deal with. And they do that by distancing from me. It’s kind of hard... There’s a part of me that wants to refuse to live the straight world of the city, and wants this suburb community to come into the 80’s (p. 577).

Many individuals who have been diagnosed with AIDS report feeling stigmatized as well as socially isolated (Cadwell 1991; Johnson, Stall, and Smith 1995). Similarly, women who have experienced domestic violence also report feeling stigmatized and they report having relatively small personal networks (Fiene 1995).
In sum, I have reviewed literature that indicates that judges tend to avoid stigmatized individuals as well as withdraw from extant relationships with them. I have also presented several studies that show that various types of stigmatized individuals, such as ex-convicts, individuals with mental disorders, and individuals with discrediting occupations used avoidance as a stigma management strategy.

Research shows that stigmatized children have smaller personal networks than do nonstigmatized children. Similarly, several studies suggest that typically stigmatized categories of adults have smaller personal networks. For example, individuals who are AIDS family caregivers, suffer from mental illness, or are victims of domestic violence report feeling stigmatized and have smaller personal networks than would be expected. However, there have been no systematic attempts to examine the personal network size of stigmatized adults more generally. In this dissertation, I develop arguments that the more stigmatized is an individual, the smaller will be that individual’s personal network.

INFLUENCE AND PERSONAL NETWORK DENSITY

Individuals influence each other’s interactions (Bott 1957; Evans-Pritchard 1950). Further, Simmel (1955) suggested that it is easier for individuals to influence each other to treat others badly rather than amiably. This may be because, in general, negative information about individuals is given more weight than is positive information and this can initiate the stigmatization process (c.f., Anderson 1981; Fiske 1980; Ronis and Lipinski 1985).

There are also structural factors that constrain some individuals in ways that allow them to treat others badly but prohibits them from defending stigmatized
individuals, challenging disparaging remarks about them, or basically treating them well. Eder and Enke's (1991) study of middle school girls revealed that both high status and low status girls could start rumors (i.e., impute stigma) about other students. However, only high status girls had the power to stop a rumor from circulating. Lower status girls rarely challenged disparaging remarks made by higher status girls. While any one of the girls in Eder and Enke's study had the ability to influence others to treat a third girl badly, preventing someone from being treated badly was impossible for all but a few high status girls. Other research has found that starting rumors is an effective method of turning clique members against both outsiders and marginalized clique members (Adler and Adler 1998).

Merten (1997) found that junior high school girls in popular cliques were often mean to new members of the clique and to outsiders in order to show support for each other as well as to gain favor with each other. Under conditions in which a given clique member felt her popular status was being challenged by a girl of lower status, the clique member could mobilize other clique members to be mean toward the girl of marginal status. When a clique member disliked someone, then other clique members felt obliged to be mean to that individual. Adler and Adler (1998) reported that the children in their study could gain prestige by being mean to someone deemed unworthy by the members of a popular clique. Further, children's taunts were often imitated by other clique members.

Research shows that the more that network members interact with each other the more likely they will influence each other (Festinger, Schacter, and Back 1950;
Schachter 1951; Farrell 1979; Carley 1991). Frequent interaction among network members is especially likely to be influential when it concerns ambiguous issues like imputing stigma (Festinger 1950; Becker and Arnold 1986; Campbell, Tesser, and Fairey 1986; see also Inverarity 1976). Thus, not only do judges influence each other, but the more they interact, the more they influence each other.

Durkheim (1966) maintained that frequent and intense interactions among group members increases the likelihood that deviants will be negatively sanctioned. Frequent interaction among network members produces a heightened sense of group membership (Dion 1979) and there is a greater likelihood that stigmatized individuals will be negatively sanctioned when the group’s stability is threatened (cf., Lauderdale 1976). Further, the more threatening to group stability is a stigma, the more severe will be the negative sanctions imposed on the stigmatized individuals (c.f., Ainlay and Crosby 1986; Inverarity 1976). Taken together, this literature suggests that a stigmatized individual is especially vulnerable to negative sanctions under conditions in which his/her judges interact with each other.

Stigmatized individuals are probably aware that they are most vulnerable to negative sanctions when they interact among cliques. For example, Eder (1985) observed that middle school girls of relatively low status preferred interacting with more popular girls on an individual basis. Eder reported one girl as saying, “Some girls would be snotty and not talk to you if they were with one group, but if they were away from one or two of the most popular girls, then they would talk to you” (p. 160). Further, it was common knowledge that when clique members were together, they would openly treat outsiders
badly. When the more popular girls gathered together in a group, the lower status girls deliberately avoided interacting with.

Similarly, Ladd (1983) found that unpopular children were most likely to spend their free time in isolation or in dyads. Further, the more unpopular was a child, the more unlikely it was that the child would participate in cliques. Given that individuals act strategically to interact with others (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 1992), it is likely that stigmatized children avoid being treated badly by acting in ways that result in relatively less interaction among their judges.

Hoffinan, Su, and Pach (1997) studied the personal networks of HIV infected intravenous drug users, a commonly stigmatized group. The authors reported that the drug users in their study exhibited a great deal of movement in and out of networks over time, but the relative density of their personal networks did not change over time. However, it is impossible to infer from Hoffinan et al.'s study if these drug users were actually stigmatized.

In sum, this literature suggests that stigmatized adults are most vulnerable to negative sanctions in relatively dense networks. Further, studies have shown that individuals act strategically to interact with others. While there is evidence that the networks of stigmatized children are relatively sparse, there has been no systematic study to examine the relative density of stigmatized adults' nonfamilial networks.

NON-PARTICIPATION IN FOCI OF ACTIVITY

Research has shown that popular children often exclude rejected children from activities (Hepler 1990). For example, Kinney (1993) found that those students who
were labeled nerds in junior high school were not included in as many activities as popular and average students. Popular and average students may feel they must limit their interactions with unpopular students if they are to avoid courtesy stigma (Eder 1985).

Stigmatized individuals also tend to avoid social contexts in which they anticipate negative interactions (Jones et al., 1984; Link et al., 1989). Some of the less popular girls in Eder’s (1985) study purposely avoided sitting near the tables where the popular girls ate together everyday at lunch. At various times during the school year, less popular girls were assigned to clean up the side of the room where the popular girls ate. This caused considerable dread among the less popular girls. Eder said about one girl, “She was going to pretend to be sick and throw up so she could get out of it, because she was just not going to work over there. She said she didn’t like anybody over there and that nobody who sat over there liked her” (p. 161). Similarly, Kinney’s (1999) study of high school students indicated that the members of marginalized groups like the punk rockers disdained the more popular students and subsequently the punk rockers avoided participating in formal school activities. Instead, the student punk rockers associated with older punk rockers outside of school. Schafer, Olexa, and Polk (1970) found that adolescents who were directed to lower educational tracks often felt stigmatized and as a result, they chose not to participate in extracurricular activities and withdrew from academic life generally.

May (2000) described how the relatives of convicted murderers avoided specific social contexts in which they felt their stigmatization would lead to threatening
interactions. Specifically, individuals were particularly apprehensive about interacting with alters who were aware of their relative’s actions. In May’s study, a sister of a convicted murderer was quoted as saying, “I avoid places that I know they work; I avoid the places I know they go” (p. 209). It is unlikely that stigmatized individuals can avoid participating in any activities indefinitely. Still, individuals in May’s study restricted their participation to activities in which they were known prior to their relative’s crimes.

In Ladd’s (1983) study of popular, average and rejected children, he found that popular and average children drew the majority of their companions from organized school activities. Conversely, rejected children did not seem to draw their companions from particular activities. Instead, the personal networks of rejected children were comprised of younger children, other rejected children, and nonschool associates. Rejected children’s interactions did not occur in the contexts of organized activities.

Similarly, George and Hartmann (1996) found that the unpopular children in their study drew friends from diverse sources. Unpopular children were more likely than popular children to name younger children and other unpopular children as friends. They also drew fewer companions and friends from the formal activities of their schools than did popular children. The authors suggested that the reputations of the unpopular children forced them to seek out friendships in nonschool settings.

This literature indicates that stigmatized individuals perceive interaction in certain activities as threatening and they purposely avoid them. Further, stigmatized individuals are often excluded from formal activities. All things being equal, stigmatized individuals probably do not participate in many foci of activity. In this dissertation, I argue that the
more stigmatized is an individual, the fewer will be the formal foci of activity in which that individual participates.

**STIGMATA AS FOCI**

To the extent that stigmatized individuals are aware of each other, they are often sympathetic to similarly stigmatized alters and they may evolve into organized groups (Goffman 1963). Individuals find support in interactions with experientially similar others (Suitor and Pillemer 1996; 2000a; 2000b; Suitor, Pillemer, and Keeton 1995). For example, Lopata (1979) reported that after the death of their spouses, widows were often forced to reestablish their personal networks by developing new friendships with other widows. Stigmatized individuals can gain validation, useful information, and companionship from interacting with experientially similar others (Gibbons 1986; Jindra 1994; Snow and Anderson 1997). Thus, it seems plausible that stigmatized individuals might seek out foci of activity in which they interact with similar others.

It is also possible that stigmatized individuals form relationships with each other unintentionally. It is not uncommon for individuals with similar traits to come into contact with each other unintentionally in the contexts of foci of activity. Foci of activity organize interpersonal relationships such that participants are likely to be similar in a variety of ways (Feld 1981, 1982). Therefore, the relationships of similarly stigmatized individuals might be organized around particular foci of activity. Under conditions in which many similarly stigmatized individuals share a focus of activity, those individuals might be inclined to draw a relatively large proportion of their associates from that focus.
However, similarly stigmatized individuals will not necessarily be aware of each other’s stigma even in a focus of activity (Frable 1993).

May (2000) noted that while stigmatized individuals might benefit from participating together in certain activities, such activities are not always available. For example, with the exception of a support group in Great Britain, the relatives of convicted murderers do not have formal organizations in which they can meet experientially similar others. Until fairly recently, gay and lesbian high school students did not have clubs that drew them together based specifically on their sexual orientation, and such clubs are still rare in high schools in the United States. Similarly, Cummings (1997) reported that there are few support groups available to spousal caregivers of early stage Alzheimer’s patients. An extreme example is that parolees are actually forbidden by law from purposely participating in the same foci.

Even when foci exist in which some similarly stigmatized individuals might participate, other stigmatized individuals may still have limited access to those activities (c.f., Kinney 1993). Research has shown that even where there are formal support groups, many individuals find it difficult to participate in them because they do not have time or they cannot get there (Heller, Roccotorte, and Cook 1997).

Also, despite the potential benefits of interacting with similar alters, many stigmatized individuals avoid other stigmatized people in order not to bring attention to their own mark (Gibbons 1986). Interactions among stigmatized individuals can be interpreted as justification for imputing stigma. Stigmatized individuals often feel ambivalence in that neither embracing similar others or completely disregarding them is
wholly satisfactory (Granfield 1991). Thus, some individuals avoid participating in support groups because they feel uncomfortable with similar others (Heller et al., 1997). Colby (1997) reported that a common criticism of neighborhood-based support groups in general, and alcohol and drug abuse programs in particular, is that participation itself is often stigmatizing.

Even under conditions in which stigmatized individuals interact, they may resist forming close relationships. Sack, Seidler, and Thomas (1976) examined the effects of being stigmatized because of the incarceration of a spouse or parent. Although some of the spouses in the study lived in the same apartment building and knew each other, they did not form intimate ties. Some wives of prisoners shared transportation arrangements, yet even these wives did not develop strong ties to each other. Both the spouses and children of prisoners remained relatively isolated in terms of their personal networks.

In sum, Goffman (1963) suggested that stigmatized individuals can benefit from coming together in organized activities and research has shown that interacting with experientially similar others can be advantageous (Suitor and Pillemer 1996; Suitor, Pillemer, and Keeton 1995). However, the literature also indicates that stigmatized individuals often do not have access to foci in which they might interact with similar alters. Given the many different ways in which a person might be stigmatized, I would suggest that most stigmatized individuals do not have access to foci of activity centered around their stigmata. Further, even when similarly stigmatized individuals have access to foci, their ambivalence towards similar others may discourage them from participating.
in foci that would bring them together. Therefore, I would argue that stigmatized
individuals do not draw many of their associates from the same formal focus of activity.

GENDER, PATTERNS OF INTERACTION, AND STIGMATIZATION

My theory is intended to apply equally to men and women. However, research
has shown that social processes often vary by gender. It is reasonable to consider the
possibility that this is the case in the present context. Therefore, in this section, I review
studies that have attempted to discern differences in the patterns of interactions of men
and women.

Network Size and Gender

The literature on children’s network size shows that young boys tend to belong
to large friendship groups, whereas young girls belong to relatively smaller friendship
groups (Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1993). However, this gender difference does not
necessarily persist into adulthood. Research has shown that women have larger networks
of confidants than do men (Harrison et al., 1995; Matt and Dean 1993). Recent research

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Bernard et al., (1990) have suggested four basic methods for measuring personal
networks. One way to conceptualize personal network is as an emotional support group,
which might also be referred to as a friendship network, or an intimate network.
Researchers determine individuals’ emotional support groups by asking respondents with
whom they share their most intimate thoughts or to whom they turn when they are
lonely. Measuring personal networks as all alters whom one would ask some form of
favor is an example of a social support group or instrumental support network. Some
researchers are concerned about those associates on which ego can depend to
disseminate information outside ego’s network, so they use the Reverse Small Word
technique. Finally, a global network refers to all alters known to a given actor. This type
of network can be measured by asking respondents to indicate all the names they
recognize on some type of list. In this dissertation, my operationalization of personal
network most closely resembles what Bernard and colleagues called a global network.

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by Munch, McPherson, and Smith-Lovin (1997) found that women’s emotional support networks tended to be larger than men’s emotional support networks at all stages of the lifecourse except during the childrearing years. Specifically, women’s networks (including kin ties), decreased significantly more than did men’s networks during the period in which their children were 3 and 4 years of age.

Studies have shown that the instrumental support networks of adult men and women tend to be of similar size (Fischer 1982; Marsden 1987), although women’s networks tend to be comprised of many more kin relationships than are men’s networks (Fischer and Oliker 1983; Wellman 1985; Moore 1990). Consistent with these findings, several recent studies have shown that men have larger nonfamilial instrumental networks than do women (Fischer 1982; Moore 1990; Brass 1988). However, Moore also reported that there was no gender difference in nonfamilial instrumental network size when controlling on variables related to work, family, and age.

All of the above studies conceptualized personal networks as emotional or instrumental support networks consisting of 5 to 15 associates. Using a global network measure of personal networks, Bernard et al., (1990) found that network size did not vary by gender for respondents in the United States, but women in Mexico reported much larger personal networks than did Mexican men. Unfortunately, the authors did not offer an explanation for why gender differences in personal network size existed in Mexico, but not in the United States.

Taken together these studies indicate that gender differences in personal network size might be affected by two factors. First, restricting personal networks to nonfamilial
interactions will produce different sizes and distributions of networks than those networks including kin. Second, estimating the size and distribution of individuals’ networks depends on how personal network is conceptualized. Specifically, research shows that women tend to have larger emotional support networks, whereas men tend to have larger instrumental support networks. The literature on global personal networks is insufficient to make any strong predictions about gender differences in terms of network size.

Network Density and Gender

Extant literature has not systematically examined how personal network density might vary by gender. Nevertheless, Campbell (1988) argued that the tendency for women to have many more kin ties than do men resulted in women having overall more dense networks than do men. Given that, in this dissertation, I am examining nonfamilial global networks, I would argue that the density of an individual’s personal network can best be predicted by the size and constraint of the foci of activity in which that person participates. Specifically, the fewer foci of activity in which an individual participates, the denser will be that individual’s personal network (Feld 1981). Therefore, to the extent that women participate in fewer foci, they will have denser personal networks than do men.

Focus Participation and Gender

There is mixed evidence about how men and women might differ in the type and number of activities in which they participate. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982) suggested that women are likely to participate in activities with fewer participants than
are men. Further, studies show that in the past, women tended to participate in fewer formal group activities than did men (Scott 1957; Booth 1972). However, current literature indicates that women's occupational, educational, and economic status may affect the number of activities in which they participate. Twale and Shannon's (1996) study showed that women faculty members, as well as women involved in educational administration participated in many more professional activities than did their male counterparts. Further, professional women participated in a greater variety of associations than did professional men.

A great deal of literature has revealed gender differences in terms of men's and women's support networks (c.f., Harrison, Maguire, and Pitceathly 1995; Matt and Dean 1993; Suitor and Pillemer 1993, 1996; Suitor, Pillemer and Keeton 1995). However, there is a dearth of studies on global networks. Thus, the differences between men's and women's large nonfamilial networks are not clear.

Stigmatization and Gender

I am unaware of any studies that have directly examined how personal network size or personal network density might vary for stigmatized men and stigmatized women. Further, there are no studies that have examined how the number of activities in which a stigmatized individual participates varies by gender, implicitly or otherwise. However, given that little is known about gender differences in global network size or stigma management strategies, disaggregating by gender in the present study is useful exploratory research. Further, disaggregating on gender serves as an internal replication

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of my statistical tests. Therefore, in this dissertation, I test my theories for the population and I also test them by disaggregating on gender.

In this chapter, I have discussed literature that has focused primarily on how stigmatization might affect an individual's pattern of interactions. Specifically, I have presented research that indicates that the consequences of stigmatization involve being excluded from interaction generally, and particularly from foci of activity. I have also presented studies that show how stigmatization and the perception of being stigmatized might lead individuals to more conscientiously regulate their patterns of interactions. Finally, I have included literature that provides clues to how the stigmatization process structures the personal networks of men and women differently.
CHAPTER III

A THEORY OF STIGMATIZATION AND
SOCIAL NETWORK CHARACTERISTICS

Few empirical studies have been concerned specifically with the personal networks of stigmatized individuals. Nevertheless, aspects of those networks might be deduced from what is known about stigmatized individuals' interpersonal relations. This chapter develops predictions about the composition of stigmatized individuals' personal networks. Specifically, I clarify how stigmatized individuals come to have smaller and relatively less dense personal networks than do nonstigmatized individuals. Further, I argue that their efforts to create sparse personal networks explains the tendency for stigmatized individuals to participate in fewer foci and to draw fewer pairs of associates from the same foci than do nonstigmatized individuals. Also in this chapter, I present the logic behind a basic network principle that the greater the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, the denser will be the network.

Before I systematically develop my theoretical arguments, I present a summary of the theory.

I begin my theoretical arguments with the premise that judges avoid stigmatized individuals because it is often the easiest and safest strategy for reducing unpleasant interactions. I also assume that stigmatized individuals avoid interactions with all but those alters that are likely to accept them. If stigmatized individuals are avoided and/or they avoid others it follows that they will have relatively smaller personal networks than do nonstigmatized individuals.
A key point to my general theoretical argument is that stigmatized individuals purposely avoid interactions with individuals that interact with each other. Stigmatized individuals perceive more risk of being treated badly in interactions with multiple judges than they do with a single judge. While their fears might be exaggerated, there is support for the assumption that it is easier for judges to influence each other to treat stigmatized individuals badly rather than amiably. Stigmatized individuals also fear that indifferent or even friendly judges might be negatively influenced by others. It is unlikely that stigmatized individuals can consistently prevent their associates from interacting, but they can choose associates that do not interact with each other. Thus, stigmatized individuals act in ways that result in relatively less interaction among their judges. In this dissertation, I argue that stigmatized individuals have relatively sparser personal networks than do nonstigmatized individuals.

One way in which stigmatized individuals develop and maintain relatively sparse networks is to avoid participating in foci of activity. The participants of foci of activity are more likely to interact with each other than would be expected at random. I assume that stigmatized individuals are aware that foci of activity tend to be close-knit and that they perceive foci as threatening for that reason. They intuit that interacting with judges in the context of a focus of activity increases the likelihood that those judges interact with each other. Thus, they avoid participating in foci. Either being excluded from foci or avoiding foci can severely restrict the number of foci available to stigmatized individuals. I expect that stigmatized individuals participate in fewer foci than do nonstigmatized.
While avoiding foci completely may be a common stigma management strategy, many stigmatized individuals will participate in one or more foci of activity. Even when stigmatized individuals participate in foci, they will be concerned with interacting with multiple judges simultaneously. In order to protect themselves from potentially negative interactions, they will interact with focus participants that do not interact with each other. It follows that stigmatized individuals will draw fewer associates from foci than will nonstigmatized individuals.

In the following sections of this chapter, I systematically develop theoretical arguments that the more stigmatized the individual, the smaller and relatively less dense will be that person's personal network. I also clarify how efforts to have relatively sparse personal networks leads stigmatized individuals to participate in fewer foci, and draw fewer associates from one or another focus than do nonstigmatized individuals.

STIGMATIZATION AND PERSONAL NETWORK SIZE

Judges view stigmatized individuals in a variety of unfavorable ways. Stigmatized individuals are considered to be incompetent, unpredictable, inconsistent, or threatening to interaction and social stability. Basically, stigmatized individuals are viewed by judges as unworthy of interaction (A1). It has been well documented that avoidance is an easy and safe way to contend with stigmatized individuals. I assume that judges use avoidance as a strategy for reducing interaction with unworthy individuals (A2). It follows that the more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for judges to avoid ego (P1).

In the following section, I use the capital letter A to denote assumptions, P to denote propositions, and H to denote hypotheses.

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2 In the following section, I use the capital letter A to denote assumptions, P to denote propositions, and H to denote hypotheses.
Stigmatized individuals experience a range of negative consequences from minor disruptions in interactions to complete ostracization. Generally, I assume that the more severe is an individual's stigmatization, the more that individual will experience negative interactions ($A_3$). To the extent that individuals are aware of their stigma, they will also be aware that they are vulnerable to negative sanctions. Further, the more stigmatized is ego, the more negative interactions ego will anticipate ($A_4$). There are many examples in the literature that indicate that individuals use avoidance as a strategy for reducing anticipated negative interactions ($A_5$). Therefore, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for ego to avoid others ($P_2$). All things being equal, individuals who are avoided by others will tend to have smaller personal networks than individuals who are not avoided by others ($A_6$). It is also the case that, all things being equal, individuals who avoid others will tend to have smaller personal networks than individuals who do not avoid others ($A_7$). Given these arguments, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be ego's personal network ($P_3$). Specifically, I hypothesize that the greater is ego's mean negative affect, the smaller will be ego's personal network ($H_1$).

STIGMATIZED INDIVIDUALS HAVE RELATIVELY SPARSE NETWORKS

There is no doubt that dyadic relationships can be influenced by others. I suggest that it is easier for judges to influence each other to treat stigmatized individuals badly rather than amiably ($A_8$). The literature indicates that 1) negative information is given more weight than is positive information, 2) structural factors may restrict judges from prohibiting the bad treatment of others, and 3) there is often more incentive to treat
stigmatized individuals badly than to treat them amiably. Given these factors, influencing judges to treat stigmatized individuals badly will be easier than influencing them to treat stigmatized individuals amiably. Further, social network researchers have shown that the more that judges interact, the more they will influence each other (Aₜ). It follows that the more interaction among judges, the more likely a stigmatized individual will be treated badly (P₄).

The literature shows that the more severe is an individual’s stigmatization, the harsher will be the negative sanctions imposed on that individual. Specifically, I assume that the more stigmatized is ego, the more judges will be predisposed to treat ego badly (A₁₀). While individuals may not be able to express the specific reasons why they anticipate negative encounters in some social situations and not in others, the literature indicates that they tend to intuit the impact of social arrangements (A₁₁). Therefore, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the more ego will anticipate being treated badly under conditions in which ego’s judges interact with each other (P₅). Most people do not like being treated badly. Individuals tend to act in ways that maximize their self-interests while avoiding interactions that result in high social costs. Thus, I assume that individuals act strategically to avoid being treated badly (A₁₂). It follows from the preceding argument, that the more stigmatized is ego, the more ego will act in ways that will result in relatively less interaction among ego’s judges (P₆). Specifically, I hypothesize that the greater is ego’s mean negative affect, the less dense will be ego’s personal network (H₂).
STIGMATIZED INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATE IN FEWER FOCI OF ACTIVITY

Judges view stigmatized individuals as disruptive and even threatening to group stability. Given that courtesy stigma is easy to obtain and difficult to discard, clique members fear damaging their group’s reputation by allowing stigmatized individuals to participate. I assume that judges perceive stigmatized individuals as threatening to the foci of activity in which they participate \( (A_{13}) \). The literature shows that individuals will act in ways that maintains the stability and reputation of the group. Specifically, focus participants exclude threatening individuals from their focus of activity \( (A_{14}) \). Thus, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for ego to be excluded from foci of activity \( (P_7) \).

Stigmatized individuals also purposely avoid participation in foci of activity. Given a stigmatized individual’s desire to avoid interacting with individuals that interact with each other, that individual is led to avoid participation in foci. Two individuals that participate in the same focus of activity are more likely to interact than two individuals that do not participate in the same focus of activity \( (A_{13}) \). It follows that the greater the proportion of ego’s associates that share the same focus of activity with each other, the more of ego’s associates that interact with each other \( (P_9) \). Further, ego’s associates are more likely to share a focus if they share the same focus of activity with ego \( (A_{16}) \). Taken together, Proposition 8 and Assumption 16 lead me to propose that the greater the proportion of ego’s associates that share the same focus of activity with ego, the more of ego’s associates that interact with each other \( (P_9) \).
Proposition 6 stated that the more stigmatized is ego, the more ego will act in ways that will result in relatively less interaction among ego’s judges. Taken with the preceding arguments, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for ego to avoid participating in foci of activity ($P_{10}$). Specifically, I hypothesize that the greater is ego’s mean negative affect, the fewer will be the college activities in which ego participates ($H_{3}$).

**ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM ONE OR ANOTHER FOCUS**

I argued earlier in this chapter that stigmatized individuals act in ways that result in relatively less interaction among their associates, and that one way of accomplishing their goal is to avoid participation in foci of activity. However, stigmatized individuals may be compelled to participate in a focus for some reason. I argue in this section that even when they participate in foci, stigmatized individuals restrict their interactions in ways to avoid being treated badly. Specifically, I argue that not only do stigmatized individuals anticipate more negative interactions with judges that interact with each other, but they are especially apprehensive about interacting with multiple judges at the same time. Given that focus participants are likely to interact at the same time at least some of the time, a stigmatized individual must restrict interactions with focus participants if he/she is to avoid interacting simultaneously with multiple judges.

The literature shows that stigmatized individuals anticipate being treated badly more so under conditions in which they interact with multiple judges at the same time than with a single judge ($A_{17}$). Given Assumption 12, that individuals act strategically to avoid being treated badly. I propose that stigmatized individuals avoid interacting with
multiple judges at the same time \((P_{11})\). Further, I assume that interactions with multiple associates at the same time are likely in a focus of activity \((A_{19})\). Taken with the proposition that a stigmatized individual will act in ways that will result in relatively less interaction among his/her judges, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity \((P_{12})\). Specifically, I hypothesize that the greater is ego's mean negative affect, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another college activity \((H_d)\).

ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM EGO'S GREATEST FOCUS SOURCE

I argued in the previous section that stigmatized individuals will act in ways to avoid interacting with multiple judges at the same time. I also suggested that interactions with multiple associates at the same time is likely in a focus of activity. Given that individuals often participate in several different foci of activity, I proposed that a stigmatized individual would draw a relatively small proportion of pairs of his/her associates from one or another focus of activity. In this section, I argue the more basic assertion that the more stigmatized is an individual, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from a focus of activity.

The greatest single focus source of associates will usually account for a large proportion of the total number of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity \((A_{19})\). Considering Proposition 12 and Assumption 19 together, I propose that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source \((P_{13})\). Specifically, I hypothesize that the greater is
ego's mean negative affect, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from the particular college activity from which ego draws the greatest number of associates (H₂).

ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM ONE OR ANOTHER FOCUS AND DENSITY

The following argument develops a testable hypothesis derived from Proposition 9 which stated that the greater the proportion of ego's associates that share a focus of activity with ego, the more of ego's associates that interact with each other. This proposition is an intermediary step in several of the hypotheses in this dissertation that are more directly related to social networks and stigmatization.

While Proposition 9 refers to the proportion of associates that share a single focus with ego, it seems likely that some individuals participate in many foci while others do not participate in any. I assume that an individual might draw associates from more than one focus of activity (A₂). Thus, I propose that the greater the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, the denser will be ego's personal network (P₁). Specifically, the greater the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another college activity, the more of ego's associates that interact with each other (H₄).

ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM EGO'S GREATEST FOCUS SOURCE AND DENSITY

Proposition 9 considers the proportion of associates that share a single focus of activity with ego. As I explain in the preceding section, individuals often participate in more than one focus. However, the key to this proposition is that under conditions in
which an individual’s associates are drawn from a focus, they will likely interact with each other and that individual. Therefore, in the following paragraph, I develop a testable hypothesis that the greater the proportion of an individual’s personal network that is drawn from a focus, the denser will be that network.

Given that the greatest single focus source of associates will usually account for a large proportion of the total number of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, I propose that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source, the denser will be ego’s personal network (P1₃).

Specifically, the greater the proportion of associates drawn from the particular college activity from which ego draws the greatest number of associates, the more of ego’s associates that interact with each other (H₇).

SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

I have argued that particular characteristics of personal networks can be predicted by knowing the degree to which ego is stigmatized. Hypotheses 1 and 3 are fairly intuitive predictions that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be ego’s personal network and the fewer foci of activity in which ego will participate. However, Hypothesis 2, the prediction that the greater is ego’s stigmatization, the sparser will be ego’s personal network is not especially intuitive. If one assumes that degree of stigmatization is inversely related to personal network size, and that relatively small personal networks tend to be more dense than relatively large networks, then one might expect that degree of stigmatization would be positively related to personal network size.
density. However, I have argued that stigmatized individuals act strategically to maintain relatively sparse personal networks despite their relatively small personal networks.

Both Hypotheses 4 and 5 are derived from the proposition that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of ego's associates drawn from the same focus of activity. For Hypothesis 4, I operationalized the proportion of ego's associates drawn from the same focus as the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity. The proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity is high in face validity, but it is nonintuitive and difficult to discuss. Therefore, I test this abstract principle with a second hypothesis. The overall proportion of associates drawn from the same focus will usually be determined by the focus of activity that serves as ego's greatest source of associates. Thus, for Hypothesis 5, I operationalized the proportion of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus as the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source. I would argue that the strong zero order correlation between the two different operationalizations shown in Table 2 is evidence of high construct validity (r = .94).

Proposition 9 states that the greater the proportion of ego's associates that share the same focus of activity with ego, the more of ego's associates that interact with each other. Feld (1981) argued this basic proposition in his explication of focus theory. However, to my knowledge, it has not been critically tested. While the proposition is intuitive, it is not inevitable. Given that Proposition 9 is an important intermediary step in the arguments for Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 of this dissertation, I have developed
arguments to test it. Specifically, I predicted that the greater the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another college activity, the more of ego's associates that interact with each other. I also predicted that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from the particular college activity from which ego draws the greatest number of associates, the more of ego's associates that interact with each other.

I have no theoretical reasons to expect gender differences in the applicability of these hypotheses. While gender differences in the applicability of the assumptions could exist, I do not anticipate them. Therefore, each hypothesis is tested not only for the full population, but also separately for men and women as a built-in replication of this study and exploration of possible gender differences.

COMPENDIUM

A₁: Judges perceive stigmatized individuals as unworthy of interaction.
A₂: Judges use avoidance as a strategy for reducing interactions with unworthy individuals.
P₁: The more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for judges to avoid ego.
A₃: The more severe is an individual's stigmatization, the more that individual will experience negative interactions.
A₄: The more stigmatized is ego, the more negative interactions ego will anticipate.
A₅: Individuals use avoidance as a strategy for reducing anticipated negative interactions.
P₂: The more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for ego to avoid others.
A₆: Individuals who are avoided by others will tend to have smaller personal networks than individuals who are not avoided by others.
A7: Individuals who avoid others will tend to have smaller personal networks than individuals who do not avoid others.

P3: The more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be ego’s personal network.

H1: The greater is ego’s mean negative affect, the smaller will be ego’s personal network.

A4: It is easier for judges to influence each other to treat stigmatized individuals badly rather than amiably.

A5: The more that judges interact, the more they will influence each other.

P4: The more interaction among judges, the more likely a stigmatized individual will be treated badly.

A6: The more stigmatized is ego, the more judges will be predisposed to treat ego badly.

A11: Individuals tend to intuit the impact of social arrangements.

P5: The more stigmatized is ego, the more ego will anticipate being treated badly under conditions in which ego’s judges interact with each other.

A12: Individuals act strategically to avoid being treated badly.

P6: The more stigmatized is ego, the more ego will act in ways that will result in relatively less interaction among ego’s judges.

H2: The greater is ego’s mean negative affect, the less dense will be ego’s personal network.

A13: Judges perceive stigmatized individuals as threatening to foci of activity.

A14: Focus participants exclude threatening individuals from their focus of activity.
P7: The more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for ego to be excluded from foci of activity.

A15: Two individuals that participate in the same focus of activity are more likely to interact than two individuals that do not participate in the same focus of activity.

P8: The greater the proportion of ego’s associates that share the same focus of activity with each other, the more of ego’s associates that interact with each other.

A16: Ego’s associates are more likely to share a focus if they share the same focus of activity with ego.

P9: The greater the proportion of ego’s associates that share the same focus of activity with ego, the more of ego’s associates that interact with each other.

(Recall P6): The more stigmatized is ego, the more ego will act in ways that will result in relatively less interaction among ego’s judges (i.e., associates).

P10: The more stigmatized is ego, the greater will be the tendency for ego to avoid participating in foci of activity.

H3: The greater is ego’s mean negative affect, the fewer will be the college activities in which ego participates.

A17: Stigmatized individuals anticipate being treated badly more under conditions in which they interact with multiple judges at the same time than with a single judge.

(Recall A12): Individuals act strategically to avoid being treated badly.

P11: Stigmatized individuals avoid interacting with multiple judges at the same time.

A18: Interactions with multiple associates at the same time are likely in a focus of activity.
P₁₂: The more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity.

H₄: The greater is ego's mean negative affect, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another college activity.

A₁₉: The greatest single focus source of associates will usually account for a large proportion of the total number of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity.

P₁₃: The more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source.

H₅: The greater is ego's mean negative affect, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from the particular college activity from which ego draws the greatest number of associates.

A₂₀: An individual might draw associates from more than one focus of activity.

P₁₄: The greater the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, the denser will be ego's personal network.

H₆: The greater the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another college activity, the more of ego's associates that interact with each other.

(Recall A₁₉): The greatest single focus source of associates will usually account for a large proportion of the total number of pairs of associates drawn from foci.

P₁₅: The greater the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source, the denser will be ego's personal network.
H₇: The greater the proportion of associates drawn from the particular college activity from which ego draws the greatest number of associates, the more of ego’s associates that interact with each other.
CHAPTER IV

METHODODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The data used for this study were collected by Walter Wallace from students attending a small Midwestern College. The college was located in a town with about 33,000 residents. The college was ranked among the top 50 in the United States, in terms of producing men scholars. The unit of analysis in this study is an individual. In November 1959, students were administered questionnaires to determine the frequency with which they interacted with each other student, their sentiments toward each other student, and their participation in college activities.

The student body was very homogeneous in terms of religion, race, and parents' educations. Seventy-nine percent of the students were Protestant, 8 percent were Catholic, 6 percent reported religion other than Christian, and 7 percent reported no religious affiliation. The student body was 98 percent white. Eighty-four percent of the students' parents graduated from high school, 51 percent of the students' fathers completed a Bachelor's degree, and 38 percent of their mothers completed a Bachelor's degree. In brief, the students were white, middle-class Christians largely drawn from a nearby metropolitan area.

This dissertation uses personal network information about 999 (98 percent) of the 1005 students enrolled in the Fall of 1959. However, only students whose personal networks contained at least 15 members were included in this study because a few errors in small networks can produce dramatic changes in their measured characteristics. This is

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important because in this dissertation, I use several variables that are based on proportions which are sensitive to small numbers. For example, imagine that a student reported drawing 3 of 5 alters from a focus of activity. This particular student would be recorded as having drawn 60 percent of his/her alters from a focus. Now imagine that the student made a mistake and he/she really drew 4 of 5 alters from a focus. In reality, this student drew 80 percent of his/her alters from a focus. Because of a small mistake, the proportion of alters drawn from a focus attributed to the student would be incorrect by 20 percent. In order to avoid this kind of problem, 35 students who had personal networks smaller than 15 were excluded from the analyses, leaving a sample of 964.3

Included in the final analyses, were 500 men and 464 women.

The near equal enrollment by gender was unusual for private colleges in 1959. The total fall enrollment for four-year private colleges in 1959 was 878,164 men and 461,205 women (U.S. Department of Education 1960). The similar distribution of men and women at this Midwestern college resembles the types of distributions currently found in most private four-year colleges in the United States.

I analyzed 63 formal college activities.4 Activities included sport teams, student government associations, journalistic organizations, drama clubs, scientific clubs, musical

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3 I have chosen to omit the cases with unreliable measures. However, omissions can create other problems (c.f., Berk 1983). To be most confident about my analyses, I re-calculated all the statistics with these 35 cases. All of the statistics were similar and substantively the same as those shown in Table 2.

4 There were 33 other activities sanctioned by the college. However, each of these activities had between 1 and 4 members. I maintain that these were activities in name only. Thus, they were excluded from these analyses.
groups, fraternities, and sororities. Only 912 (91 percent) of the students provided information about their participation in college activities. Therefore, the analyses using the number of activities in which individuals participated or an estimate of the proportion of associates drawn from activities are based on the 912 students that provided information about activities. Of those students that responded, 118 students reported that they did not participate in any activity. Men students participated in a slightly greater number of different college activities than did the women. While participation in foci of activity for both men and women ranged from 0 to 8, only 3 individuals reported participating in as many as 8 activities.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

The independent variable for the first four hypotheses is each student’s degree of stigmatization. I conceptualized stigmatization as being disliked by many others. As discussed in an earlier section, stigmatization is a state of being disliked, loathed, and/or rebuked. It seems reasonable to assume that the students who were disliked by many others were being stigmatized. Further, the more disliked is an individual, the more severe is the stigmatization.

I operationalized degree of stigmatization as the mean negative affect of network members toward ego. Mean negative affect was measured as the mean response of all network members toward ego in terms of a like-dislike scale. All students were asked to respond to a like-dislike question measuring their affect toward each of the students with

The names, size, and density of each activity included in my analyses, as well as the proportion of women that participated in each activity are provided in Appendix A.
whom they interacted. The question consisted of five possible responses, (5) dislike very much, (4) dislike, (3) neutral, (2) like, and (1) like very much. Operationalizing the degree of individuals’ stigmatization as their mean negative affect is appropriate because using the average of the like-dislike responses toward each student is more reliable than any type of dichotomized variable that could be constructed from these data. As shown in Table 1, the mean degree of stigmatization of the student population was 2.05 (SD = .30). The mean degree of stigmatization for men was 2.08 (SD = .31), and for women it was 2.02 (SD = .29).

My first hypothesis states that the more an individual is stigmatized, the smaller will be that individual’s personal network. The dependent variable is the size of ego’s personal network. I operationalized personal network as the set of students that indicated that they spent at least \(\frac{1}{2}\) hour per week with ego.\(^6\) The most obvious way to ascertain the size of someone’s personal network is to ask them. However, it is possible that some individuals will under-estimate or over-estimate their responses. These types of response biases introduce potential measurement error. I have minimized measurement error by operationalizing personal network from the perspective of associates instead of from the perspective of ego because the aggregated responses of many students will be more reliable than the responses of any single student. As shown in

\[^6\] There are several ways to measure personal networks. An exploratory analysis (not shown) revealed that the finding that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be ego’s personal network was substantively the same regardless of whether ego’s personal network is measured using indegrees (i.e., alters that choose ego), outdegrees (i.e., alters that are chosen by ego), or reciprocal ties (alters that both choose ego and are chosen by ego).
Table 1, the mean personal network size for the entire student population was 96 (SD = .44). For men, the mean personal network size was 87 (SD = .40), for women it was 107 (SD = .46).

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<td>2.02</td>
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<td>(.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proportion of Associates</strong></td>
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<td>(1.19)</td>
<td>(1.14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses

I predicted that the more an individual is stigmatized, the less dense will be that individual’s personal network (H2). The dependent variable is the relative density of ego’s personal network. Personal network density was measured by dividing the number of actual ties between ego’s associates by the number of possible ties between ego’s associates. Each of ego’s associates that reported spending at least ½ hour per week with another of ego’s associates represented a tie. Table 1 shows that the mean density for all personal networks was .14 (SD = .06). Men’s mean personal network
density was .16 (SD = .07), and women’s mean personal network density was .12 (SD = .03).

Hypothesis 3 states that the more an individual is stigmatized, the fewer will be the foci of activity in which that individual participates. The dependent variable for the third hypothesis is the number of foci of activity in which ego participated and it was operationalized as the total number of formal college activities in which ego participated. As shown in Table 1, the mean number of foci in which the entire student population participated was 2.16 (SD =1.48). The distributions of foci were almost identical for men and women. The mean number of foci in which men participated was 2.07 (SD =1.45). Women’s mean number of foci in which they participated was 2.25 (SD =1.49).

I predicted that the more an individual is stigmatized, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus (H4). The dependent variable is the proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus. I measured this dependent variable by adding the number of possible ties of associates from each focus in which ego participated and then dividing that number into the total possible number of ties of ego’s associates. As shown in Table 1, the mean proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus was .12 (SD = .11). For men, the mean proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus was .13 (SD = .12). Women’s mean proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus was .10 (SD = .08).

Hypothesis 5 states that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of ego’s associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source. The
dependent variable for this hypothesis is the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source. I defined ego’s greatest single focus source as the formal focus of activity from which ego draws the most associates. This variable was measured as the number of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source divided by the total number of individuals in ego’s personal network. Table 1 shows that the mean proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source was .27 (SD = .17). For men the mean number was .29 (SD = .19). For women the mean proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source was .25 (SD = .14).

I predicted that the greater the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, the denser will be ego’s personal network (H6). I also predicted that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source, the denser will be ego’s personal network (H7). The operationalizations of the dependent variable, the density of ego’s personal network and the independent variables for Hypotheses 6 and 7 are described above.

FILE MANIPULATION AND ANALYSIS

My theoretical arguments pertain to both men or women. Nevertheless, in this dissertation, by testing my theoretical arguments disaggregated by gender, I provide a built-in replication of my overall analyses. Further, subpopulations may experience conditions that mask associations in the population. For example, the women in these data have larger personal networks than do the men. Given that the personal networks of women are much larger on average than are men’s networks, it is possible that an
association between degree of stigmatization and personal network size could be masked. Further, the personal networks of the men at this particular college are relatively more dense than are the personal networks of the women. Network size and density are key aspects of many of my theoretical arguments, so I tested all hypotheses using the population of students for analyses and I tested them again disaggregating by gender.

I began by constructing a pairs file\(^7\) that shows who among this population knew each respondent and the affect between all ties. I manipulated the data using Feld's (1997) method of path lists to construct a triples file that includes (1) those students who interacted with ego, and (2) whether or not the students that were tied to ego were tied to each other.\(^8\) I used the triples file to calculate the relative density of all personal networks and to calculate the variation of people's feelings towards ego.

The following paragraphs clarify how my predictions were tested. I predicted in Hypotheses 1 and 3, respectively, the more that an individual is stigmatized, the smaller will be that individual's personal network, and the fewer will be the foci of activity in which that individual participates. I estimated a zero order correlation coefficient to determine the relationships between the two dependent variables (i.e., personal network size, and number of foci in which ego participated) and stigmatization.

I predicted in Hypothesis 2 that the more stigmatized is ego, the less dense will be ego's personal network. This hypothesis is somewhat complicated because personal

\(^7\)
A pairs file is a list of all tied ordered pairs to be studied.

\(^8\)
A detailed explanation of how the method of path lists was used in this dissertation is provided in Appendix B.
network size is a factor that counters a stigmatized individual’s efforts to produce a relatively sparse personal network. Specifically, the more stigmatized an individual, the smaller will be that individual’s personal network, and the smaller is a network, the more dense will be that network.

The first half of this statement merely reiterates Hypothesis 1. My proposition that relatively small networks tend to be more dense than large networks is based on two assumptions. First, I assume that the larger is an individual’s personal network, the more likely that individual has drawn his/her associates from many diverse foci of activity. Second, I assume that individuals drawn from many diverse foci are not likely to interact with each other (Feld 1981). To the extent that network size is inversely related to personal network density, a stigmatized individual will have difficulty acting in ways that result in relatively less interaction among his/her judges. Therefore, I tested Hypothesis 2 by regressing personal network density on degree of stigmatization, controlling on personal network size.

Hypothesis 4 states that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one focus or another. I estimated a zero order correlation coefficient to test the relationship between the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one focus or another and the degree of ego’s stigmatization. Similarly, Hypothesis 5 states that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source. I estimated a zero order correlation coefficient to test the relationship between the proportion of
associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source and the degree of ego's stigmatization.

Hypothesis 6 states that the greater the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, the denser will be ego’s personal network. I estimated a zero order correlation coefficient to show the association between the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity and the relative density of ego’s personal network. Similarly, I predicted in Hypothesis 7 that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source, the denser will be ego’s personal network. I estimated a zero order correlation coefficient to show the association between the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source and the relative density of ego’s personal network.
CHAPTER V
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PERSONAL NETWORK SIZE

I have argued that avoidance is one of the most frequently and easily used stigma management strategies available to stigmatized individuals. Further, being avoided by alters is a common consequence of being stigmatized. Thus, it should be expected that all things being equal, stigmatized individuals probably interact with fewer alters than do nonstigmatized individuals. I hypothesized that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be ego’s personal network ($H_1$). As shown in Table 2, there is a fairly large negative correlation between personal network size and the degree of ego’s stigmatization ($r = -0.36$). The inverse relationship between personal network size and degree of stigmatization provides solid support for the prediction that the more stigmatized is an individual, the smaller will be that individual’s personal network. As shown in Tables 3 and 4, personal network size is negatively correlated with degree of stigmatization for both men ($r = -0.32$) and women ($r = -0.38$). Disaggregating by gender functions as a built-in replication of my overall analyses and these findings provide further support that, regardless of gender, stigmatized individuals experience smaller personal networks than do nonstigmatized individuals.

NETWORK DENSITY

I predicted in Hypothesis 2 that the more stigmatized is ego, the less dense will be ego’s personal network. Table 2 shows a zero order correlation of 0.08 between personal network density and degree of stigmatization. Although this correlation is
Table 2. Zero Order Correlations for All Cases

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**p<.01
Table 3. Men's Zero Order Correlations

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<th>Source</th>
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*p<.05, **p<.01
weak, it is important in that it is consistent with my theoretical prediction that a stigmatized individual acts to produce a relatively sparse personal network even when that individual's personal network is relatively small. Recall, I explained in Chapter 4, personal network size is a factor that counters a stigmatized individual's efforts to produce a relatively sparse personal network.

In order to account for the counter effects of personal network size, I regressed personal network density on degree of stigmatization, controlling on personal network size. Table 5, shows that when controlling on personal network size, degree of stigmatization has a standardized coefficient of - .21. The findings indicate that degree of stigmatization has a moderate inverse effect on ego's personal network density. The more stigmatized an individual, the less dense will be that individual's personal network.

Next, I disaggregated on gender and the zero order correlations revealed a surprising finding. The relationship between personal network density and degree of stigmatization is different for men and women. Table 3 shows a moderate negative correlation between density and stigmatization for men (r = -.21). Table 4 shows that for women, there is a weak positive correlation between density and stigmatization (r = .11). As noted earlier, personal network size has a counter effect on the relationship between personal network density and stigmatization. For women, the correlation between personal network size and personal network density is so strong (r = -.55) that the effect of stigmatization on personal network density is masked.

Nevertheless, the regression coefficients shown in Table 5 support the expectations for men as well as women. After controlling on personal network size, the
standardized coefficient in the men's model indicates that degree of stigmatization has a moderate to strong effect on ego's personal network density ($\beta = -0.28$). For women, the regression model indicates a weak association ($\beta = -0.11$), but the direction of the relationship is the same as that for the population. Despite the differences in the strength of the relationships, these findings show that the effect of stigmatization on network density is substantively the same for men and women.

**Table 5. Regressing Personal Network Density on Degree of Stigmatization**

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<td>Personal Network Size</td>
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</table>

**p < 0.01

FEWER FOCI OF ACTIVITY

I hypothesized that the more ego is stigmatized, the fewer will be the foci of activity in which ego participates ($H_3$). Table 2 shows that the number of foci in which ego participated is negatively correlated with ego's degree of stigmatization ($r = -0.13$). This correlation coefficient provides some support for Hypothesis 3, the more stigmatized an individual, the fewer will be the foci of activity in which that individual participates.

There is weak to moderate support that for men, the greater the stigmatization, the fewer will be the foci of activity in which the individual will participate. Table 3
shows that for men, the zero order correlation between the number of foci in which ego participated and ego's degree of stigmatization is -.16. The findings for women are weaker. Table 4 shows that for women, the zero order correlation between the number of foci in which ego participated and ego's degree of stigmatization is -.08.

The degree that a woman is stigmatized is only weakly related to her participation in foci, whereas the effect for men is moderate. Nevertheless, these findings indicate that stigmatized men as well as stigmatized women tend to participate in fewer foci than will a nonstigmatized individual.

ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM ONE OR ANOTHER FOCUS

Hypothesis 4 states that the more stigmatized is ego, the smaller will be the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity. As shown in Table 2, there is a moderate to strong zero order correlation between the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity and stigmatization (r = -.22). This finding supports the prediction that stigmatized individuals tend to draw a smaller proportion of pairs of associates from one or another focus of activity than do nonstigmatized individuals.

Next, I disaggregated on gender. Table 3 shows that for men, the zero order correlation between the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus of activity and degree of stigmatization is -.23. As shown in Table 4, for women the zero order correlation is -.25. These findings provide further support for Hypothesis 4. For both men and women, the more stigmatized is an individual, the smaller will be the
proportion of pairs of that individual's associates drawn from one or another focus of activity.

ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM THE GREATEST FOCUS SOURCE

Table 2 shows a moderate to strong negative correlation between the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source and degree of stigmatization \( (r = -0.24) \). This finding provides support for the prediction that the more stigmatized is an individual, the smaller will be the proportion of associates drawn from a focus of activity. As expected, this finding is consistent with the previous finding that a stigmatized individual will tend to draw a smaller proportion of pairs of associates from one or another focus. Thus, it provides further support for the more general proposition that a stigmatized individual will tend to draw a relatively small proportion of associates from the same focus.

Disaggregating by gender shows that men and women are similar in the degree to which stigmatization influences the proportion of the associates they draw from their greatest single focus source. Table 3 shows a moderate to strong zero order correlation between the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source and degree of stigmatization for men \( (r = -0.26) \). As shown in Table 4, for women, the zero order correlation between the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source and degree of stigmatization is -0.25. Once again, disaggregating by gender functions as a built-in replication of my overall analyses. I argue that these coefficients provide fairly strong support that the more stigmatized is an individual, the smaller will be the proportion of associates that individual will draw from the same focus of activity.

66
DENSITY AND THE PROPORTION OF PAIRS OF ASSOCIATES
DRAWN FROM ONE OR ANOTHER FOCUS

I hypothesized that the greater the proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, the denser will be ego’s personal network (H*). This prediction is an intermediary step in several of the hypotheses in this dissertation that are more directly related to social networks and stigmatization. The zero order correlation shown in Table 2 provides strong support for Hypothesis 6 (r = .57). The implication of this finding is that individuals’ perception about the relationship between participation in foci and network density is actually based in reality.

This finding is consistent with a basic proposition in my overall theory. I have argued in this dissertation that individuals intuit how social arrangements might affect them. A stigmatized individual intuits that participation in a focus increases the likelihood that he/she will interact with judges that interact with each other. Given that stigmatized individuals are especially apprehensive about being treated badly under conditions in which their judges interact with each other, they participate in fewer foci than do nonstigmatized individuals. Similarly, the finding that drawing associates from the same focus increases the likelihood that they will interact with each other helps clarify why stigmatized individuals draw a smaller proportion of associates from the same focus. Stigmatized individuals do not want a dense network, and therefore, they are careful not to draw to great a proportion of their associates from any one focus.

Hypothesis 6 was derived to test a basic network principle that is applicable to both men and women. However, disaggregating by gender shows a difference in this
relationship for men versus women. Table 3 shows that for men, an increase in the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another focus tends to increase personal network density \( r = .74 \), but the correlation shown in Table 4 indicates no such relationship for women \( r = -.01 \). The large difference in these findings for men and women is surprising. However, I believe the difference is probably due to individuals’ participation in foci not measured in these data.

While I used 63 different college sanctioned activities in this study, it is likely that there were other foci at this college and in the community that could have organized the interpersonal relationships of the students. Certainly, students might have participated in informal foci at the college in which they and their associates interacted. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing if the students interacted with each other in the contexts of informal and formal foci in the community. Lastly, at least some of the interactions among students at this college probably occurred unintentionally.

As shown in Table 1, the average proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another formal focus was .12 (SD = .11). This means that 88 percent of the students’ pairs of associates were not drawn from any of the formal college activities analyzed in this study. If women drew their associates from many different foci not measured in these data their overall personal network density might not be affected by the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from formal foci. The more different foci in which an individual participates the more likely that individual’s associates will not interact with each other (Feld 1981).
Since I do not have information about the informal foci at the college or in the community, I can only speculate. However, it is clear that women had larger personal networks than did the men and I suggest that network size can be used as a surrogate for knowing how diverse are the foci from which an individual draws his/her associates. As I explained in Chapter 4, the larger is an individual’s personal network, the more likely that individual has drawn his/her associates from many diverse foci of activity. Women had on average 107 associates, while men had only 87 associates. Based on the large difference in personal network size, I suggest that the women at this college drew their associates from more different informal foci than did the men. Assuming my assertion is accurate, the proportion of pairs of associates drawn from one or another formal focus would have less effect on the density of women’s personal networks than it would on men’s personal network density.

In order to test my assertions, I regressed personal network density on the proportion of pairs of ego’s associates drawn from one or another focus of activity, controlling on personal network size and disaggregating by gender. Table 6 shows that for men, the association did not meaningfully change (β = .76) but for women, including personal network density in the regression produced a weak to moderate association (β = .12). The regressions provide some support that Hypothesis 6 is applicable to both men and women. However, the large difference in strength of these coefficients indicates that there were probably meaningful differences in the nature and number of foci of activity accessible to men and those accessible to women.
Table 6. Regressing Personal Network Density on the Proportion of Pairs of Associates Drawn from One or Another Focus of Activity

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**p<.01

NETWORK DENSITY AND THE PROPORTION OF ASSOCIATES DRAWN FROM EGO'S GREATEST FOCUS SOURCE

The prediction that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source, the denser will be ego's personal network (H7) is strongly supported. As shown in Table 2, there is a zero order correlation of .50 between personal network density and the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source. However, disaggregating on gender shows different results for men and women. As shown in Table 3, for men there is a strong association between personal network density and the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source (r = .65). Table 4 shows that for women, the correlation between personal network density and the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source is -.02.

Following the logic as laid out in the previous section, the effect of the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source on the relative density of ego's personal network is probably affected by personal network size. In order to test my assertions, I regressed the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest
single focus source on personal network density, controlling on personal network size and disaggregating on gender. As shown in Table 7, for men, the initial relationship increased slightly ($\beta = .72$). For women, controlling on personal network size produced a standardized coefficient for the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source of .13. While these regressions lend support to the prediction that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from ego’s greatest single focus source, the denser will be ego’s personal network ($H_7$), there is still considerable difference in the size of standardized coefficients for men and women. It is likely that the gender difference in the strength of the standardized coefficients is because women drew their associates from many more different foci not analyzed in this study than did the men.

Table 7. Regressing Personal Network Density on the Proportion of Associates Drawn from Ego’s Greatest Single Focus Source

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**p<.01
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have developed theoretical arguments that suggest why a stigmatized individual’s pattern of interactions will be different from nonstigmatized individuals. Further, I have systematically tested my theory to clarify how an individual’s degree of stigmatization affects that individual’s pattern of interactions. I have shown that stigmatized individuals tend to have smaller and sparser personal networks, participate in fewer foci, and draw proportionately fewer pairs of associates from the same focus than do nonstigmatized individuals. These findings are consistent with previous research and lend support to my theory of social networks and stigmatization. Specifically, the theory suggests that the more severe is an individual’s stigmatization, the more likely his/her patterns of interactions will look different from less stigmatized individuals. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the contributions and implications of my findings.

Previous research suggests that apparently stigmatized individuals tend to be socially isolated, have small support networks (Brugha et al., 1993; Link et al., 1989; Powell-Cope and Brown 1992), and avoid interactions in general (Ericson 1977; Hood 1988; Link 1987; Link et al., 1989; Major and Gramzow 1999; May 2000). The present theory suggests particular mechanisms that lead stigmatized individuals to have small networks. Further, my study provides systematic empirical support for the theoretical predictions. There is a tendency for both stigmatized men and women to have small personal networks. Further studies are required to separate out the impact of the actions
of others toward ego, and of ego towards others; both could produce the present findings.

Similarly, previous research suggests that stigmatized individuals avoid interacting with others in groups (Eder 1985; Ladd 1983). My theory systematically clarifies these ideas. I predicted that stigmatized individuals would have sparse personal networks, draw a small proportion of their associates from the same focus, and draw a small proportion of pairs of associates from one or another focus. These predictions were supported for both men and women in the data. The theory specified a process in which stigmatized individuals used stigma management strategies to regulate their interactions with others. I derived predictions consistent with the theory, but that could also be produced by other processes. Further research is needed to provide direct evidence that individuals are consciously using stigma management strategies like those discussed here.

Previous studies have suggested that stigmatized individuals are excluded from foci, as well as purposely avoid participating in foci (Schafer et al., 1970; Kinney 1993, 1999). The present theory clarifies the underlying processes that lead stigmatized individuals to participate in relative few foci of activity. My findings were consistent with the theoretical predictions for both men and women. It would be useful for future studies to directly test measures of these stigma management strategies.

I have argued that a stigmatized individual will draw a relatively small proportion of associates from the same focus in order to reduce the likelihood of his/her judges interacting with each other. I tested this intermediary step and my results showed that
both the proportion of pairs of ego's associates drawn from one or another focus and the proportion of associates drawn from ego's greatest single focus source were positively related to personal network density. These findings support the basic network principle that the greater the proportion of individuals in a network drawn from a focus, the denser will be the network (Feld 1981).

My findings indicated that this particular proposition was strongly supported for men, but only weakly supported for women. The gender difference in the strength of association for this particular proposition is probably due to characteristics of the activities in which they participated in this context. Men participated in larger, denser, and more different foci than did women. Thus, the effect of drawing associates from the same focus was more dramatic for men. Given this weak finding for women, it is especially interesting that stigmatized women still drew a smaller proportion of their associates from the same focus. Assuming that stigmatized individuals are concerned about interacting with their judges at the same time, they might perceive that the likelihood of that occurrence is greatest in a focus of activity.

This study is based upon a single college at one point in time. Nevertheless, I would expect to find similar findings in other sociohistoric contexts in which the assumptions of the theory are met. The usefulness of any theory will vary to the extent that its assumptions are relevant to a particular context. Consequently, under social conditions in which individuals are only minimally stigmatized, their patterns of interactions would vary only in degree from what I have argued in this dissertation. This college appears to have been unique in that it was fairly progressive for a school in the
late 1950s. If stigmatization is less likely in progressive environments, the effects predicted by my theory would be weaker in a progressive environment than would be expected elsewhere. Thus, my tests of the theory would seem to be conservative. Of course, this is the first test of the theory, and our understanding of the range and applicability of these theoretical arguments would benefit from replication.

In my analysis, dissaggregating on gender served as exploratory research and an internal replication of the present study. The replicated findings provided further support for my overall central theoretical principles. However, the findings revealed a gender difference regarding the proposition that the greater the proportion of associates drawn from the same focus, the more dense would be the personal network. This proposition was derived in the development of focus theory, and it has been previously tested (Feld 1981, 1982). However, the findings from my replication raise questions about the applicability of focus theory for women. This is an empirical question that requires further research.

The findings presented in this dissertation have a broad range of practical and theoretical implications for stigmatized individuals. Possibly the most important findings are that the personal networks of stigmatized individuals are both small and sparse. There are several disadvantages to having small personal networks. Individuals with small personal networks typically have fewer sources of social support. Unfortunately, having a sparse network may also reduce an individual’s access to social support (Wilson 1983). Thus, stigmatized individuals might be doubly burdened by having both small and sparse personal networks. Research is needed to determine the degree to which having
small sparse personal networks further exacerbates these negative consequences of stigmatization.

Further, many stigmatized individuals would benefit from participating in the very foci they purposely avoid. Choosing not to participate in formal foci may be an effective stigma management strategy, but it also restricts individuals' opportunities. Various types of foci provide access to information, educational experiences, and entertainment that is lost to many stigmatized individuals.

My dissertation is unique in that I used social network analytic techniques to make predictions about how the composition of a personal network can be affected by an individual's stigmatization. Specifically, I have shown that stigmatized individuals have very different patterns of interactions than do nonstigmatized individuals. Further, I have developed theoretical arguments that clarify the processes that could produce such patterns. I suggest that this type of approach will provide useful information about a common societal problem. This dissertation takes the first steps toward understanding the specific consequences of stigmatization by understanding stigmatized individuals' patterns of interactions.
REFERENCES


## APPENDIX A. ACTIVITY LIST

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Social Science Clubs (continued)
APPENDIX B. METHOD OF PATH LISTS

The method of path lists (Feld 1997) can be used to determine the transitivity of triples that exists in a given network. As I explained in Chapter 5, the students at a small Midwestern college provided information about their interaction with each other student at the college. I used the method of path lists to determine the relatively density of each student’s personal network. I began with a list of ordered pairs of ties. This ordered pairs list reflected all existing ties between students and the tie between each identification number represents a single path (e.g., 1-2, 1-3, 1-5, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4, 3-5). The first individual identified reports interacting with the second individual identified. I then concatenated the ordered pairs file to create an ordered triples file. Concatenation uses two path lists to construct a third path list in such a way that the third path list contains a common element (i.e., a student). For example, a given path in the new path list could be 1-2-3. Specifically, ID1 is tied to ID2, and ID2 is tied to ID3. Given that concatenating an ordered pairs file is a fairly complicated procedure, I refer the reader to Feld’s original explication of the method of path lists for an example of a specific application of concatenation. It is suffice to say, the number of ID2’s associates that are tied to each other can be estimated by computing a variable in the new path lists file indicating whether or not ID1 interacts with ID3, and aggregating by ID2. The personal network density of ID2 can be estimated by taking the number of possible ties of associates and dividing by the actual number of ties of associates.
VITA

William (Craig) Carter was raised in rural southeast Iowa. He has spent most of his life as a musician, but in 1991 he began his academic career. In May 1994, he received his bachelor of arts degree in sociology from William Penn College in Oskaloosa, Iowa. He earned his master of arts degree in sociology in May 1996 at Louisiana State University, and he will earn the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in August 2000. Craig is married to Rebecca S. Carter, also a sociologist.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: William Craig Carter

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Dissertation: Social Networks and Stigmatization

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination: 5/8/00

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